

GRILLED VEGETABLE SALAD

2 punnets of cherry tomatoes 3 bunches of asparagus 3 zucchinis 100gms baby spinach leaves 500 gms Haloumi cheese (please try to get a Cypriot one - others don't come close) 120 mls extra virgin olive oil sea salt black pepper

Dressing 2 tbs basil pesto 30-40 mls extra virgin olive oil

Preheat oven to 170C

Rinse, dry and halve cherry tomatoes, mix them with 1/2 of the olive oil, season with sea salt and pepper and spread them out in a baking pan. Roast for about 50 minutes, until they are semi-dried and starting to caramelize. Leave to cool. Chop off and discard the ends of the asparagus and blanch in boiling water for 2-4 minutes, then immediately refresh in cold water. Trim off ends from zucchinis and slice very thinly lengthwise, with either a vegetable peeler or - if very brave and confident - a mandolin. Toss asparagus and zucchini slices in rest of the olive oil and season to taste. Preheat the bbq or a ridged pan, if cooking inside, and briefly char grill the asparagus and zucchini, until they get those nice dark marks. Slice the haloumi into 2 cm slices and char grill, also. Combine all the cooked vegetables with the baby spinach and cheese, tossing gently to display all the different bits. Blend the pesto with enough olive oil to loosen it up nicely and drizzle this over the salad just before serving.

Variation - Next time I make this I will add some char grilled eggplant to the vegetables, substitute a good feta for the haloumi and dress it with tahini mixed with yoghurt in place of the basil dressing. What the heck - I think that I'll sprinkle it with some chopped, toasted almonds or some toasted pine nuts, too!!