

# vegetarian salad for dinner



INVENTIVE PLANT-FORWARD MEALS

80 recipes

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# breaded baked goat cheese, frisée, wild mushrooms, asparagus

4 SERVINGS

I remember eating and loving several iterations of baked goat cheese salad when I was an exchange student in the southwest of France, but the first time I made the dish, I followed Alice Waters's recipe from her seminal *Chez Panisse Menu Cookbook* carefully, to excellent results. Her Baked Goat Cheese with Garden Salad inspired so many chefs that the simple French starter nearly became a California cuisine cliché. I could never tire of warm goat cheese and greens, though, and this version, unlike the original, is chunky with big, crunchy bits of country bread. Sitting on a “nest” of frisée, roasted mushrooms, and asparagus, the Franco-Californian standard transforms into a fine main course.

## Goat Cheese

1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 garlic clove, finely grated or crushed with a garlic press

2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves, or a pinch of dried thyme, crumbled

6 ounces soft fresh goat cheese log, cut into 4 rounds

8 ounces fresh or day-old country or ciabatta loaf

## Dressing

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

2 1/2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

2 tablespoons finely chopped shallot

1 teaspoon honey

1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1/4 teaspoon salt

## Salad

1 bunch asparagus, well trimmed

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

12 ounces wild mushrooms, such as oyster, chanterelle, or morel

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

4 cups frisée (torn into bite-sized pieces)

**For the goat cheese:** Mix the oil, garlic, and thyme in the bottom of a large pie dish. Using your hands, carefully flatten the goat cheese into 1/2-inch-thick rounds. Place the cheese rounds in the oil and gently turn to coat the cheese with oil.

**For the breadcrumbs:** Position racks in the top and bottom thirds of the oven and preheat to 400°F.

Trim away the bottom and end crust of the loaf. Using a food processor, pulse the bread until broken into 1/4- to 1/2-inch crumbs. You should have approximately 3 cups. Spread the crumbs evenly over a heavy large sheet pan and lightly toast in the oven for about 5 minutes. If you're working through the rest of the recipe now, increase the oven

temperature to 425°F. Transfer the crumbs to a shallow bowl. *(The cheese and crumbs can be prepared ahead. The cheese will keep at cool room temperature for up to 4 hours or can be refrigerated overnight. The crumbs can be prepared up to 1 day ahead and stored in an airtight container at room temperature.)*

**For the dressing:** Whisk together the ingredients to blend in a small bowl.

**For the salad:** If you made the breadcrumbs in advance, preheat the oven to 425°F now.

Toss the asparagus with 1 tablespoon of the oil on a heavy large sheet pan. On another heavy large sheet pan, toss the mushrooms with the remaining 3 tablespoons oil. Sprinkle the asparagus and mushrooms lightly with salt and pepper and roast until tender and browned, about 6 minutes.

Press the crumbs into the cheese, flattening the patties slightly and coating them entirely. Toss the remaining crumbs with the excess marinating oil and mound them atop the cheese rounds. Bake until golden brown, about 10 minutes.

Toss the frisée with half the dressing and divide it among plates. Top the frisée with the asparagus and mushrooms and drizzle with additional dressing. Top with the warm goat cheese and serve.