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BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE FOR ARUGULA

Because arugula is such a peppery salad green, it is difficult to pair it with a dressing that will stand up to the green without drowning out its unique flavor. I have found that the complexity of balsamic vinegar does just the trick. Unlike most vinaigrettes, which use a 1:2 ratio between vinegar and oil, this dressing uses a 1:3 ratio to tone down the flavor of the vinegar. Because the olive oil is such a large component of the vinaigrette, use the best olive oil you have to make the dressing.

¼ cup balsamic vinegar	¾ cup olive oil, extra-virgin if you have it
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard	2 garlic cloves, mashed with the side of a kitchen knife
1 teaspoon sugar	Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

1. Add the vinegar, mustard and sugar in a small bowl and whisk until thoroughly mixed.
2. Add the olive oil, a few drops at a time, whisking constantly while you add it. If you get tired, you can take a break at any time, but make sure that you are always whisking the dressing as you add the oil.
3. When it is all combined, you should have a dressing that is the consistency of a thick gravy. Add salt and pepper to taste and toss with the arugula.
4. One nice addition to this salad is roasted red peppers, sliced into strips. You can purchase roasted red peppers in a jar, in which case they should be rinsed under cold water and patted dry before adding to the salad. You can also make your own roasted peppers by placing a whole red pepper under your broiler until the skin is blackened and blistered. As the skin of the pepper blackens, turn the pepper to expose an unblackened portion to the heat. Once the skin is entirely blackened, place in a bag (paper or plastic is fine) and let sit until cool. Remove the pepper from the bag and rub the skin with paper towels to remove the blackened skin. Cut off the stem of the pepper, deseed it, and slice.