

Roasted Radicchio and Shrimp with Warm Bacon Vinaigrette

By EmilyC

Food52 Editors' Comments: WHO: EmilyC is a cook who lives in Arlington, Virginia. WHAT: A radicchio salad that brings bitter, sour, and sweet together in perfect balance. HOW: While balsamic-kissed radicchio roasts in the oven, the bacon vinaigrette simmers on the stove. Toss the shrimp in at the last minute, toss it all together, and serve. WHY WE LOVE IT: This one is as good warm from the oven as it is at room temperature -- perfect for potlucks, picnics, and lunches.

This dish is inspired by a warm radicchio and shrimp salad I had at FIG in Charleston SC. That dish left a lasting impression – not just for me but my dining companions. The combination of slightly warmed radicchio with sautéed shrimp was unexpected and delicious. Back at home, I decided to do a roasted version instead of preparing its components stove top. I love the mellowed bitterness of roasted radicchio – and roasting is one of my favorite methods of cooking shrimp. To dress the salad, I opted for a warm bacon vinaigrette that can be prepped during the last few minutes of roasting. The saltiness of the bacon, the hit of acidity from the balsamic vinegar, and the subtle sweetness from the maple syrup tie all of the flavors together – and then cherry tomatoes, slightly warmed by the vinaigrette, lend a nice freshness. It's not the salad I remember, yet it's a pretty delicious version of it. Bonus points that it's easy enough for a weeknight dinner but special enough for entertaining.

Serves 2 to 3 as a main course; 4 to 6 as a side dish

- 2 small heads radicchio
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, divided
- Kosher salt + freshly ground black pepper
- 1 pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 3 strips of bacon (about 3 ounces), cut into lardons
- 1 small shallot, minced (about 2 to 3 tablespoons)
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons maple syrup (or to taste; see note in step 5)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley or chives

1. Heat the oven to 425°F.
2. To prep radicchio: Remove any wilted or bruised outer leaves, then cut the radicchio in half lengthwise through the core. Place the halves cut side down, then cut each half into four wedges, leaving the root end intact. In a large bowl, gently toss the wedges with 2 tablespoons olive oil, 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar, 1 teaspoon kosher salt, and pepper. Place the wedges cut side down in a casserole dish—you want them to fit snugly in the pan. Let the radicchio marinate at room temperature while your oven is preheating.
3. To prep shrimp: Toss the shrimp with 1 tablespoon of olive oil, 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt, and pepper; then arrange on a baking sheet or casserole. (Note: Use separate pans for roasting the

shrimp and radicchio because they'll have different cooking times.)

4. To roast radicchio and shrimp: Roast the radicchio about 15 to 18 minutes, turning once, or until tender and the leaves are starting to caramelize and slightly wilt and crisp around the edges. When the radicchio is close to done, put in the shrimp. Cook the shrimp just until they're pink and firm, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove both from the oven, and place the radicchio wedges on a cutting board. Chop them into bite-size pieces, and combine with shrimp in a large bowl.
5. To prepare warm bacon vinaigrette: In a large skillet cook the bacon in 1 tablespoon of olive oil over moderately high heat until it's rendered its fat and is starting to crisp, about 5 minutes. Add the shallots and cook another minute, just to warm through and soften. Remove from the heat and stir in the remaining 2 tablespoons of balsamic vinegar, mustard, maple syrup and cherry tomatoes. (Since balsamic vinegars vary so much in their sweetness, you may want to add more or less maple syrup. Taste a piece of your roasted radicchio as well -- let its level of bitterness guide the sweetness of your vinaigrette.)
6. Add the vinaigrette to the radicchio and shrimp, and toss to combine. Place salad on large serving platter. Scatter the parsley or chives over the top and serve warm or at room temperature.