

CICORIA CATALOGNA PUNTARELLA A FOGLIA STRETTA

If you happen to be in Rome in the spring, you're bound to see puntarelle on the menu. This is a slightly bitter green chicory that is traditionally eaten as a salad in Lazio, and Italians eagerly await the arrival of puntarelle at market in Campo de Fiori. Whenever we are in Rome visiting markets and looking for seeds in early spring, eating fresh puntarelle salad with merluzzo (fried cod) is always one of the highlights of our trip.

STORING YOUR PUNTARELLE

Fresh-cut puntarelle are best used right away, but if you need to store them for a day or two, here's the best method: wash the puntarella head in cold, clean water. Drain, and then wrap loosely in paper towels. Place the wrapped puntarella in a plastic bag (end opened), in your refrigerator's crisper/vegetable drawer.

Puntarelle alla Romana

2 puntarella heads
5 salted anchovies (heads removed, cleaned & filleted)
(tip: you can also use 1-2 tbsp of anchovy paste as a substitute)
2 tbsp red wine vinegar
1 garlic clove, very finely chopped
1 tsp black pepper
4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 lemon, cut into wedges

Fill a bowl with cold water and ice cubes. Strip the leaves from the head, and with a paring knife, carefully cut away the green parts of the leaf (leaving only the ribs). If your puntarella head has a center stalk, julienne it. Next, cut the ribs into 4 inch sections, and drop both the ribs and julienne stalk segments into the ice water for one hour.

Cut the anchovy fillets into ½ inch pieces. Place in a bowl, add the vinegar and stir/smash until well incorporated. Next, add the garlic as well as the pepper and let stand for 15 minutes; then add in the olive oil.

Drain the puntarelle segments well, and place in a new bowl. Spoon the sauce over the puntarelle, and serve with lemon wedges.

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