

BURNT GEM, AVOCADO & WASABI

Charred gem lettuce, kombu-lemon marinade, avocado wasabi, lemon gel, pistachio and fresh herbs.



Gem lettuce gets proper restaurant treatment here. Charred hard on one side for bitterness and smoke, then vacuum-packed with lemon, kombu and vegetable stock before a short water-bath cook allows all that flavour to penetrate the lettuce. Creamy avocado and wasabi, bright lemon gel, fresh herbs and pistachios turn something simple into a seriously elegant plate.

PREP

30 min

COOK

20 min

TOTAL

50 min

SERVES

4

DIFFICULTY

Medium

INGREDIENTS

- FOR THE GEM LETTUCE
- 2 gem lettuces, halved lengthways
- 200ml good-quality vegetable stock
- 10g kombu
- 1 lemon, zest and juice
- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- Pinch Maldon sea salt
- Pinch black pepper
- FOR THE AVOCADO & WASABI PURÉE
- 2 ripe avocados
- 1–2 tsp wasabi paste, to taste
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- Pinch Maldon sea salt
- FOR THE LEMON GEL
- 150ml fresh lemon juice
- 100ml water
- 50g caster sugar
- 2.5g agar agar
- TO FINISH
- 40g pistachios, toasted and roughly crushed
- Fresh dill
- Fresh chervil
- Fresh coriander

- Pea shoots or micro herbs
- Extra virgin olive oil

METHOD

01 FOR THE GEM LETTUCE

- 02 Heat a heavy frying pan until very hot.
- 03 Lightly coat the cut side of each gem lettuce with rapeseed oil.
- 04 Place cut-side down into the hot pan and cook without moving until heavily charred. You actually want some proper blackening here because that bitterness will contrast with the avocado and lemon.
- 05 Remove from the pan and allow to cool slightly.
- 06 Place the charred gems into vacuum bags with the vegetable stock, kombu, lemon zest, a little lemon juice, salt and black pepper.
- 07 Vacuum seal carefully without crushing the lettuce completely.
- 08 Place into a preheated water bath for approximately 10 minutes. The aim is to soften and season the lettuce while retaining enough structure to plate cleanly.
- 09 Remove from the bag and drain thoroughly. Pat away excess liquid before plating so the finished dish doesn't become watery.

10 FOR THE AVOCADO & WASABI PURÉE

- 11 Blend the avocado, wasabi, lime juice and salt until completely smooth.
- 12 Taste before adding more wasabi. You want warmth through the avocado rather than wasabi overpowering everything.
- 13 Pass through a fine sieve if you want a very refined finish.
- 14 Transfer into a squeeze bottle and refrigerate until required.

15 FOR THE LEMON GEL

- 16 Place the lemon juice, water, sugar and agar agar into a saucepan.
- 17 Bring to the boil while whisking and cook for approximately 1 minute to activate the agar.
- 18 Pour into a shallow container and refrigerate until completely set.
- 19 Transfer the set gel to a blender and blitz until completely smooth and glossy.
- 20 Pass through a fine sieve and transfer into a squeeze bottle.

21 TO PLATE

- 22 Place the charred gem lettuce slightly off-centre on the plate with the blackened side visible.
- 23 Pipe dots of avocado and wasabi purée around and partly onto the lettuce.
- 24 Add smaller dots of lemon gel to provide little hits of acidity rather than covering the lettuce.
- 25 Scatter over the toasted pistachios.

- 26** Dress with dill, chervil, coriander and pea shoots.
- 27** Finish with a few drops of extra virgin olive oil and a little Maldon salt.

PUNK CHEF TIP

Don't be frightened of burning the lettuce. That dark char is important. The bitterness from the blackened gem, creamy avocado, wasabi heat and sharp lemon gel are what make the dish work. Just keep the inside of the lettuce vibrant and juicy rather than cooking it until completely soft.

DIETARY INFORMATION

Allergens: Nuts / Mustard

KEEP COOKING



SCAN TO VIEW THIS RECIPE ONLINE

<https://www.punkchef.co.uk/recipes/burnt-gem-avocado-wasabi>