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fennel and apple salad with toasted pumpkin seeds recipe

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Fennel and apples are at their very best in the late autumn or early winter. When choosing fennel, try to find the big, fat bulbs, not the tall, lanky ones (which are beginning to draw out and can be stringy). I like this salad as a starter, but it's also good with chicken, and delicious with almost any fish.

Serves 6 as a starter or side salad, or 4 as a main course

- 4 fennel bulbs (about 900g), plus tops
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Black pepper
- Juice and grated zest of 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon toasted, crushed fennel seeds
- 3 tablespoons crème fraîche or fromage frais (or a mixture of crème fraîche and natural yoghurt, or natural yoghurt on its own, as lower-fat alternatives)
- 2 crunchy eating apples (such as Braeburn or Cox's)

For the roasted seeds:

- 2 tablespoons pumpkin seeds
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- Good pinch of flaky salt
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper

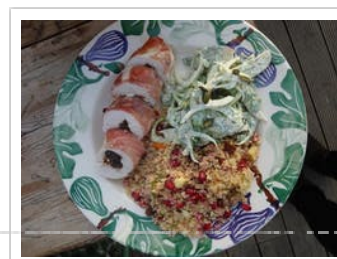
Preheat the oven to 170°C/gas mark 3.

Chuck away any tough or discoloured outer layers from the fennel. Slice the bulbs as thinly as possible – a mandolin is the best tool for this – and finely chop the ferny tops, reserving a few to decorate. Arrange the sliced fennel and chopped tops in a deep bowl with a little extra virgin olive oil, black pepper, lemon juice and zest and the fennel seeds. Fold in the crème fraîche, fromage frais or yoghurt.

Peel, core and finely slice the apples, then add them to the bowl. Fold gently to combine. Transfer to a shallow bowl or serving plate and decorate with the reserved chopped fennel tops.

Put the pumpkin seeds in a roasting tin, add a drizzle of olive oil, a pinch of flaky salt and the cayenne. Toss them all together and roast in the oven for 5-10 minutes, until the seeds begin to brown. Scatter them over the salad and serve.

This recipe appeared on page 263 of Sarah's [Food for Friends and Family Cookbook](#).



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