

From LIDIA'S ITALY by Lidia Bastianich

## **Fennel and Orange Salad**

INSALATA DI FINOCCHI ED AGRUMI

The following is a simple recipe that will give you all the sensations of fresh fennel as the vendor would have it.

2 pounds fresh fennel, trimmed and sliced into thin shavings  
4 large oranges  
1 cup oil-cured black olives, pitted and sliced in half (or quarters, if large)  
½ teaspoon coarse sea salt, or to taste  
Freshly ground black pepper to taste  
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, or to taste  
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice, or to taste

### **Serves 6**

Shave the fennel as detailed on page 217, and drop the slices into ice water to crisp.

With a sharp thin-bladed knife, trim the orange and cut out the sections of pure fruit (called *supremes*) as follows.

First slice off the top (stem) and bottom ends of one orange; shave off the peel and *all* of the bitter white pith, so only the fruity flesh is showing.

Slice into the center of the orange, running the blade along each of the thin membranes that hold the fruit sections, so the slivered fruit is released—let these fall into a bowl. Peel and cut out the fruit section from all the oranges; you should have about 4 cups of segments. (After the fruit is removed, squeeze out the juice from the empty membranes and enjoy it!)

Drain the fennel slices, and pat dry on paper towels. Pile them in a large bowl with the orange segments and sliced olives, and toss together lightly.

Sprinkle ½ teaspoon salt on top, grind on some black pepper, and drizzle the olive oil all over; toss again. Spoon the lemon juice over, and toss. Taste; add more of any dressing component your salad needs, and give it another tossing.

Arrange portions of the salad in nice mounds on plates, and serve.

