

TO VEGETABLES  
**with love**

## Salad of pears, hazelnuts and cashel blue cheese

© by Diana Henry, from Roast Figs, Sugar Snow, excerpted with permission by Hetty Lui McKinnon for To Vegetables, With Love.

Sweet pear and salty blue cheese are a timeless pairing and here they are brought together with aplomb, teamed with silky roasted onions, crisp toasted hazelnuts and a simple-yet-punchy vinaigrette to create a deeply satisfying winter salad. I loved it and my kids loved it too. It reminded us of a pear, blue cheese and rocket (arugula) pizza which we ate at [Vacanza](#) in Surry Hills, Sydney many winters ago (sadly it's not on the regular menu, it was a special).

From Diana: *The Irish cheese Cashel Blue is one of my favourites. It's a rich, creamy blue and I always think it tastes slightly of smoky bacon. If you can't get hold of it, use Gorgonzola or Dolcelatte instead. This dish is based on a classic French bistro salad, for which they generally don't sauté the pears or include roast onion, so go down that route if you're feeling lazy. Apples can be used instead of pears, and walnuts instead of hazelnuts.*

serves 6

### **for the salad**

1 small red onion  
olive oil  
3 pears, not too ripe  
30g (1oz) unsalted butter  
150g (5½oz) salad leaves, a mixture of watercress, chicory and baby spinach  
75g (2¾oz) hazelnuts, lightly toasted but not skinned, halved  
175g (6oz) Cashel Blue cheese, crumbled  
sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper

### **for the dressing**

2½ tsp cider vinegar  
1 tsp Dijon mustard  
½ tsp caster sugar, or to taste  
4 tbsp hazelnut oil, or walnut oil  
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil (fruity rather than grassy)

Preheat the oven to 180°C fan (375°F), Gas 5.

Halve the red onion and cut it into crescent-shaped slices. Put into a small ovenproof dish, drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast in the preheated oven for 20–30 minutes, or until soft with slightly caramelized tips. Keep warm.

Make the dressing by whisking all the ingredients together. Season.

Halve and core the pears, then cut them, lengthways, into slices 0.75cm ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch) thick. Melt the butter in a frying pan and quickly sauté the pear slices on each side until golden. Don't overcook them, they should still hold their shape.

Toss the salad leaves with the nuts, using most of the dressing, then divide between 6 plates. Add the pear slices and warm onion and scatter with the cheese. Drizzle each plate with the rest of the dressing and serve.

Credit: © Recipe excerpt from Roast Figs, Sugar Snow by Diana Henry, Aster 2023

*'Rien en n'est perdu dans la noix, sauf le bruit qu'elle fait en se cassant.'* *'Nothing is wasted in the nut, except the sound it makes when cracked.'* saying in south west france