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Chef Curt Robair Recipes - Menla Mountain Retreat and Mahasukha Spa, Phoenicia, New York

Executive Chef Curt Robair of [Menla Mountain Retreat and Mahasukha Spa](#) located in the **Catskill Mountains** in **Phoenicia, New York**, graciously shares his recipe for **Kale and Avocado Salad** to tempt your palate with "food for the mind and body."

I met Chef Curt Robair during an R&R Getaway Weekend at Menla Mountain Retreat and Mahasukha Spa when Edward and I were staying there in October 2013 and had the opportunity to get to know him and his culinary style. Chef Curt Robair grew up in Pittsfield, Massachusetts in the Berkshire Mountains. He grew up in the business, and when he was about to apply to culinary school, Executive Chef Steven Mungeon who had gained acclaim when he was working at the famous Red Lion Inn in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, approached him with an offer to work for him at a restaurant for four years and forego culinary school for the time being. He decided to accept the offer and instead of going to culinary school, he honed his culinary craft the apprenticeship way working under Chef Mungeon, and later working at other impressive restaurants.

From the Berkshires, he moved to Woodstock, New York in the Catskill Mountains, and for five years he was the chef owner of Elijah's Café, named for his son, where the focus was on natural food. In May 2013, he joined Menla Mountain Retreat and Mahasukha Spa as the Executive Chef where the focus is on healthy vegetarian cuisine, which is no stretch for him as his wife is a raw vegan.



Chef Curt Robair

Chef Curt Robair's favorite cooking gadget is a dehydrator; his favorite ingredients are love, passion, and anything that comes from the earth. On a less philosophical level, he likes to use kale as it is very versatile, he will use it raw, sauté it, and create kale chips, and also likes to use quinoa and kamut, which are two ancient grains, as part of his culinary repertoire.

Asked about new culinary challenges, he stated that it is getting harder to find non-GMO products which affect many corn, wheat, soy, and canola oil (made from rapeseed) products. He tries to find local

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non-GMO vegetables and products to use at the restaurant.

When not in the kitchen working or creating new recipes, Chef Curt Robair enjoys spending time with wife and son, Elijah, goes Salsa dancing twice per week with his wife, and works on his 7-acre hobby farm where he has (1) pony, (2) horses, (5) goats, which he and his wife rescued, along with (6) chickens, some of which were rescued, (4) dogs, turtles, and fish. He also has a commercial greenhouse where he grows his own vegetables, herbs, and fruits.

His advice for those considering a culinary career is to get a job in a restaurant first before going to culinary school, work in the job for awhile, learn to watch the chef, which can be magic or a horrifying experience, and make sure that this is the career for you. As a chef for almost 2 decades, he said that he is always challenging himself because he loves what he does. His philosophy is that it is not all about him, but rather it is important to listen to his sous chef, and be open to new ideas from his team. Most importantly his advice to future chefs is simply, "enjoy what you do."

Chef Curt Robair graciously shares his delicious and healthy recipe for Kale and Avocado Salad.



Kale and Avocado Salad

Ingredients:

1

Bunch

Green Kale

1

Ripe Avocado

1

Lemon

1

Small

Tomato

1

Small

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Red Onion

0.25

Cup

Olive Oil

Salt and Pepper

Method: Strip the kale from the stalk and wash well. Put through a salad spinner to dry. Slice into quarter inch ribbons. Put the kale in a large mixing bowl. Add olive oil, avocado, juice of half a lemon, and a quarter teaspoon of salt.

Now with your hands, mash the avocado into the kale (it is called massaging the kale) until the kale is tender and well coated with the avocado.

Dice the tomato and onion into half inch (1.27 cm) cubes. At this point, add as little, or as much, tomato and onion to your liking. Stir them in, do not mash. Add pepper and more salt if needed.

Remember to use organic wherever possible. Enjoy!

Menla Mountain Retreat and Mahasukha Spa are located in Phoenicia, New York, twenty minutes from the iconic town of Woodstock, New York. Check the website for upcoming R&R Getaway Weekends and R&R Cleanse Weekends at www.MenlaMountain.org.

Read about the **Menla Mountain Retreat and MahasukhaSpa** in the **Hotels and Resorts** and **Spas** sections.

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