

Braised Fennel With Meyer Lemon

2 fennel bulbs, fronds attached
3 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

½ cup chicken stock
Zest and juice of 1-2 Meyer lemons
¼ cup grated Parmigiano

Wash and dry the fennel. Roughly chop about 3 tablespoons of the feathery fronds, which look like dill. Cut off the stalks and discard. Halve each bulb through the core, and cut it into 1/2-inch-thick slices.

Heat a large skillet and use enough olive oil just to film the pan. Add half of the sliced fennel to the skillet over medium-high heat, and leave it untouched for about 3 minutes. Flip or stir the slices, which will separate, until lightly browned. Remove from the skillet into a bowl.

Do the same with the remaining half, adding a bit more olive oil only if necessary. Remove to the bowl, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Return the fennel to the skillet over medium-high heat, and add the chicken stock, the zest and juice from either 1 large or 2 small Meyer lemons, and bring to a boil. (If you can't find Meyer lemons, add a bit of orange juice to ordinary lemon juice.)

Cook for about 3-4 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the liquid is reduced to a syrupy state. The fennel should remain somewhat crisp.

Transfer the fennel to a baking dish, and spread the feathery fronds over the top. This vegetable dish can be made well ahead of serving. Just set the dish aside until about 10 minutes before serving time.

Preheat the oven to 350°. Sprinkle the grated Parmigiano over the fennel, and bake in the oven just until heated through, about 10 minutes.