



now *that's*  
a MOUTHFUL

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Emily Fiffer and Heather Sperling of Botanica, Silver Lake

## ROMESCO, COMPOSED OR DEVoured SOLO

This is hands down the best romesco I've ever had. A Spanish dish that falls somewhere between a sauce, a dip, and the star of a meal, romesco is as thick as hummus, as textured as pesto, and as vivid as a Rothko. In Spain, it's traditionally served with grilled seafood. Here, Fiffer and Sperling let it take center stage, pairing it with charred peppers, crisped potatoes, seared leeks, a garland of grilled broccolini and a fluttering of cilantro flowers. It couldn't be prettier. But it's also delicious lavished on a thick slice of grilled bread that's been brushed with good olive oil and rubbed with a clove of garlic.

### ROMESCO

**4 red bell peppers**  
**1 cup toasted blanched almonds**  
**¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro**  
**1 jalapeño chile, seeded 2 garlic cloves**  
**¼ cup olive oil**  
**1 tablespoon good sherry vinegar**  
**zest and juice of 1 small lemon**  
**2 teaspoons Spanish smoked paprika**  
**salt**

**Serves 4**

To make the romesco, preheat the oven to 450°F and roast the bell peppers until blistered and soft. Transfer the peppers to a bowl or, even better, a paper bag, cover, and let sit for 10 minutes. Once cool enough to handle, remove the seeds and stems and whatever skin can easily be peeled away, working over a bowl to catch all of the good juices.

### TO SERVE

**20 tiny potatoes, boiled in salted water until just tender**  
**excellent olive oil, as needed**  
**flaky sea salt and pepper**  
**Spanish smoked paprika, for sprinkling**  
**3 or 4 small leeks, white and light green parts only, halved lengthwise**  
**12 shishito peppers**  
**2 or 3 bunches broccolini**  
**zest and juice of 2 lemons, to taste**  
**cilantro flowers, micro cilantro, or fresh cilantro leaves**

In a food processor, combine the roasted peppers with the remaining ingredients, plus a splash of liquid from the peppers. Process until fully incorporated, but not fully uniform; some texture is ideal here. Taste and add more almonds, cilantro, olive oil, vinegar, and salt, as needed; the romesco should be smoky, savory, and punchily acidic.

Use immediately or store in a sealed jar in the fridge for up to 1 day. After 1 day, the romesco will still be good, if given a stir, but the garlic will be more pungent.

Lightly crush each boiled potato with the side of a knife. Pour in enough olive oil to lightly coat the bottom of a frying pan and set over medium heat. Add the potatoes and sauté until the bottoms are just starting to crisp, then flip and crisp up the other side. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate with a slotted spoon, season well with salt, pepper, and a sprinkle of paprika.

While the potatoes are crisping, prepare a grill or heat a large skillet over high heat. If using a skillet, pour in enough olive oil to lightly coat the bottom of the pan. Cook the leeks, cut side down, until they start to caramelize, then flip them and cook for a few minutes on the other side, until softened throughout. Repeat with the shishito peppers.

Toss the broccolini with enough olive oil to lightly coat and season with salt and pepper. Either grill or sear them in the skillet until al dente and lightly charred.

To serve, mound the romesco in the center of the dish and place the potatoes, leeks, peppers and broccolini in a ring around the perimeter so that they look like a vegetable garland or crown. Finish with a squeeze of lemon juice, a good drizzle of excellent olive oil, lots of lemon zest, a sprinkle of flaky sea salt, and lots and lots of cilantro flowers.

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The quantity of almonds may be increased to make the romesco milder.

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