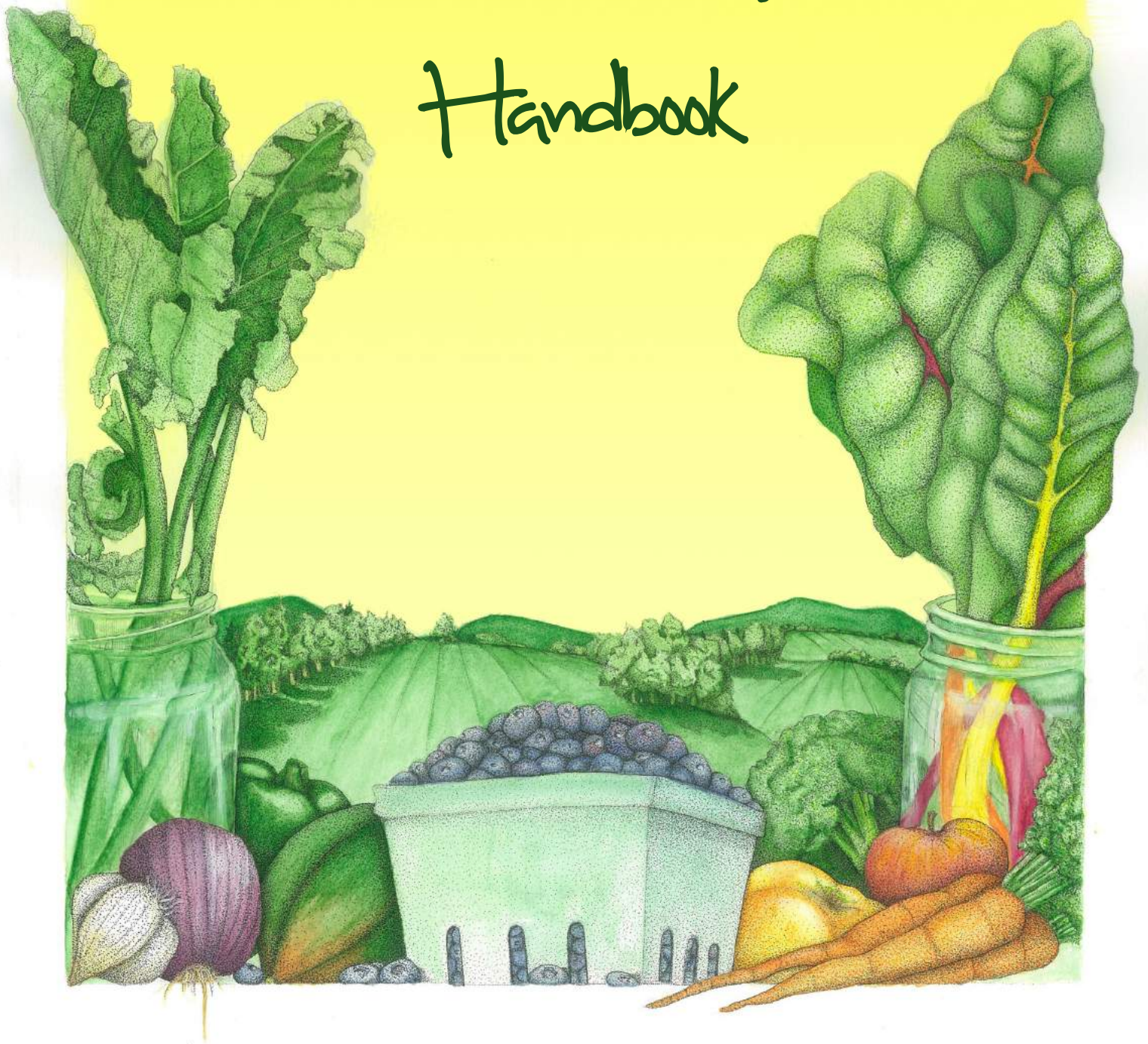


# Vermont Fresh

*A Fruit And Vegetable*

*Handbook*



# Vermont Fresh: A Fruit and Vegetable Handbook

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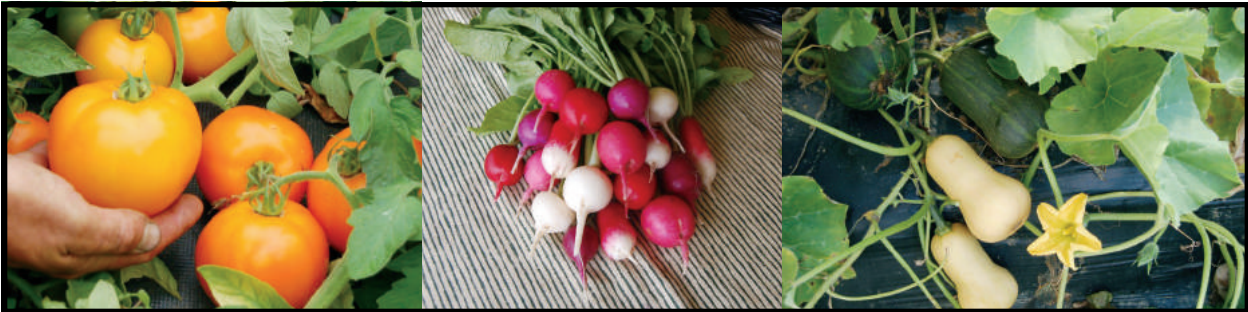
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# Introduction



Photos courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

Welcome to *Vermont Fresh: A Fruit and Vegetable Handbook*. The purpose of this book is to help Vermonters better understand how to grow, choose, store, and prepare fresh fruits and vegetables. Not only is it important from a health standpoint to eat fruits and vegetables; there are also other advantages to eating fresh produce. Fruits and vegetables are often less expensive than processed foods, especially for those who have home gardens.

Doctors, nutritionists, and scholars all tend to agree that eating a lot of fruits and vegetables is good for your health. Dr. Marion Nestle, one of the country's top experts on food and nutrition, puts it simply: "Eat more fruits and vegetables," she says.<sup>1</sup> "Eat mostly plants," adds celebrated food writer Michael Pollan.<sup>2</sup>

They offer this advice for many good reasons. Fruits and vegetables contain vitamins and minerals that are essential for the human body to stay healthy. If our diets regularly lack certain nutrients, we can become at-risk for certain diseases. Although malnutrition-related diseases are a bigger problem in developing countries, certain populations in the United States struggle with iron, Vitamin A, folate, and calcium deficiencies. Some vitamins and minerals also work as antioxidants. Antioxidants are substances that help protect cells and the immune system from getting damaged by harmful chemicals. They may be a protective factor in helping to prevent heart disease, cancer and other ailments by protecting and repairing cells.

In addition to crucial vitamins and minerals, plant-based foods also contain phytochemicals, naturally occurring compounds that have many long term health benefits. Plants produce these compounds for many reasons, including protection from insects, viruses and the sun. Some phytochemicals give plants their color, flavor and aroma. Scientists are discovering a host of ways these compounds benefit humans.

Interestingly, phytochemicals only appear to be effective when they are consumed as part of a whole food. If the compounds are extracted and turned into a supplement, their benefits become minimal. The same is true of many vitamins and minerals, which leaves us with an important lesson: supplements and vitamin pills, while they can be important, are not a good substitute for eating whole fruits and vegetables. For example, some vitamins are hard for the body to absorb when not accompanied by other nutrients. Luckily, nature has conveniently packaged vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals, fibers, and other nutrients into the form of fresh, whole foods that are ready to be eaten. As foods become more processed and contain more preservatives, their health benefits begin to shrink.

When we eat whole foods, we are doing our bodies many favors. We boost our resistance to illness, battle certain types of cancer cells, influence the production of cholesterol, and may help protect ourselves against diseases such as cancer, heart disease, high blood

pressure, and a form of blindness caused by aging. On top of all that, fruits and vegetables can help us maintain a healthy bodyweight. Although produce is very nutrient-dense, it is lower in calories than many processed foods. Some fruits and vegetables are also high in fiber, which not only contributes to a healthy weight but helps regulate blood sugar levels and keeps us “regular” as well. Some nutritionists advise trying to “eat the colors of the rainbow daily.”<sup>3</sup> By eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, we improve our intake of the diverse nutrients they have to offer.

Choosing to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables can have an impact beyond our health. Growing some of our own fruits and vegetables at home can be an inexpensive and rewarding way to get our families the freshest produce available. Seeds can be purchased for a few dollars and, with a sunny growing space, some good soil, water, and a little time and effort, almost anyone can create a small garden. If having a home garden is not possible, consider getting some produce from a local farm. Here in Vermont, many of our farms excel at producing high quality fruits and vegetables that are raised with minimal chemical inputs. Plants raised without lots of pesticides and chemical fertilizers are not only better for humans, but are better for the environment as well. Furthermore, when we support our local farms, we are also supporting our local economy.

Despite the many reasons to eat fresh fruits and vegetables, there are numerous obstacles to incorporating more produce into our diets. First of all, fruits and vegetables can take some time to prepare, which can seem intimidating at first. Many have a short shelf life and will spoil easily, especially if not properly stored. Some markets sell expensive fruits and vegetables that may not seem appealing compared to cheaper, more familiar foods. Compared to other foods, produce does not appear often in advertisements, vending machines, or mainstream restaurants. Finally, fruits and vegetables are not always prepared in tasty, appealing ways, especially for kids.

In these pages, there is information that can help us overcome some of the obstacles to eating many different fruits and vegetables. From growing hints to tried-and-true recipes, we will find tips to make fruits and vegetables better fit our needs. Armed with new ideas and the willingness to try some new things, we will be able to create healthy, tasty meals on a budget. Enjoy!



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

<sup>1</sup> Nestle, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Pollan, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Kowtaluk, 2005.

## About the contributing partners:



### Salvation Farms

Salvation Farms is a non-profit organization founded on the philosophy that farms are, were, and will always be our salvation. The organization's mission is to build increased resilience in Vermont's food system through agricultural surplus management. For almost ten years, Salvation Farms has been developing and putting into practice methods for capturing Vermont's farm surplus, specifically community-based gleaning. Gleaning is the act of reaping after the harvest or putting to use what is thought useless.

Salvation Farms estimates that each year, at least 2 million pounds of fruits and vegetables go to waste on Vermont farms. By mobilizing Vermont communities to capture and redistribute this excess, Salvation Farms is both reducing waste and improving access to healthy food. The organization is dedicated to ensuring that all Vermont citizens, including the young, sick, elderly, and hungry, have the opportunity to eat locally raised food. In addition to supporting statewide gleaning, Salvation Farms is working to turn large volumes of surplus produce into lightly processed products for use out of season.

Providing access to local food options will improve the health of our population, reduce hunger, and build familiarity with local foods. Engaging citizens in the management of available food resources will strengthen communities, foster the long-term stewardship of available food resources, lessen Vermont's dependence of food from far away, and build a great appreciation for Vermont agricultural heritage and future. For more information, visit [www.salvationfarms.org](http://www.salvationfarms.org) or contact Salvation Farms at [info@ourfarmsourfood.org](mailto:info@ourfarmsourfood.org) or 802-522-3148.

### Sterling College

Sterling College is a small, progressive, liberal arts college located in Craftsbury Common, Vermont. Sterling's motto, "Working hands, working minds," illustrates the college's unique dedication to direct learning and hands-on experience. Areas of study include sustainable agriculture, outdoor education, natural history, environmental humanities and conservation ecology. Sterling is strongly committed to environmental stewardship and community engagement. It is one of only seven Work-Learning-Service colleges nationwide.

A year-round college, Sterling has a complete summer semester in addition to the traditional spring and fall terms. Attending college year-round, working together in the classroom, and doing chores on the Sterling Farm helps foster a strong campus community, and this sense of community is at the heart of the Sterling experience. Graduates go on to careers in conservation, agriculture, and education, and many choose to settle in rural Vermont. For more information, visit [www.sterlingcollege.edu](http://www.sterlingcollege.edu).

### **The Vermont Foodbank**

For over forty years, food banks across America have rescued food from going to waste, instead sharing it with people in need and thereby improving access to safe, nutritious food for all. In 1986, the Vermont Foodbank opened its doors in response to a growing hunger problem in Vermont. With support from neighbors and friends, the Vermont Foodbank secures large quantities of food and non-food products for distribution to a statewide network of service providers. As the state's largest hunger-relief organization, the Vermont Foodbank serves communities in all 14 counties and distributes millions of pounds of food through a network of 280 food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, senior centers and after-school programs. Annually the Foodbank serves as many as 86,000 Vermonters in need of food assistance. With a focus on gathering and sharing nutritious food, the Vermont Foodbank's programs encourage the growth and development of children and provide adults with the necessary nourishment to help them sustain healthy and productive lives.

In 2008, with the help of Salvation Farms co-founder Theresa Snow, the Foodbank began the Gleaning Program. Gleaning is the act of harvesting excess or unmarketable produce from a farm. The Gleaning Program at the Foodbank uses volunteers to glean produce at Vermont farms. The food is then distributed through Foodbank network partners to Vermonters in need. The Vermont Foodbank, a member of Feeding America, is nationally recognized as one of the most effective and efficient nonprofits and food banks in the nation. To learn more about hunger in your community and to take action against hunger and poverty in Vermont, visit the Foodbank on the web at [www.vtfoodbank.org](http://www.vtfoodbank.org).



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds





## The story behind *Vermont Fresh: A Fruit and Vegetable Handbook*

Jen O'Donnell, co-founder of Salvation Farms, built the first page of this document in 2005 as part of her senior project at Sterling College. Looking for an innovative way to improve community food security in Vermont, Jen teamed up with Sterling alumna Theresa Snow to establish Salvation Farms. Together, the two set out to build a model for community-based gleaning that could be replicated in towns across Vermont. They believed that through gleaning and increased access to locally grown, fresh foods, Vermonters would once again be able to rely upon farms as the cornerstones of their communities. Salvation Farms was created to address some of the critical gaps in the food system.

Both founders considered education to be an essential component of their new organization. From hands-on knowledge gained in the fields during gleaning to formal, food-based workshops, education was proven crucial in improving local foods access. The first pages of *Vermont Fresh: A Fruit and Vegetable Handbook* were created to educate Vermonters on the basics of commonly available produce. The spinach sheet, part of Jen's senior project, was the original proto-type.

Salvation Farms has been closely tied with Sterling College from the outset. During the pilot year, when Salvation Farms was based on Craftsbury farm Pete's Greens, Sterling students volunteered regularly as gleaners. In later years, students interned and worked with the organization as it grew. Allison Van Akkeren, one of Jen's senior project advisors, was instrumental in facilitating cooperation between Salvation Farms and Sterling. When Salvation Farms embarked on the project of putting together a fruit and vegetable handbook, Allison enlisted her students. For four years, students in her class, Human Nutrition: A Whole Approach, created individual vegetable fact sheets as part of their coursework. Salvation Farms interns also contributed.

When Salvation Farms joined the Vermont Foodbank in 2008, the organization pursued the original goal of assembling a true handbook, rather than individual fact sheets. AmeriCorps VISTA members Andy Laine and Jackie Yenerall assembled a complete document for initial distribution. All pages were combined into a document that the Vermont Foodbank made available to their 280 network partners in printed and electronic form. In the fall of 2011, Salvation Farms, Sterling College, and the Vermont Foodbank collaborated to produce a handbook for publication and widespread distribution. Anna Schulz, formerly an AmeriCorps VISTA at Sterling College, was enlisted to rewrite and edit the handbook. Theresa Snow worked with Wolcott-based High Mowing Seeds to provide the majority of the images.

Salvation Farms, Sterling College and the Vermont Foodbank are all proud contributors to this document and are honored to be partners in its publishing and distribution.





# Fruit and Vegetable Storage Requirements

Crop	Storage Requirements	Shelf Life
Apples	Refrigerate in perforated plastic bag	3-4 weeks
Arugula	Refrigerate in plastic bag	5 days
Asian Greens	Refrigerate in plastic bag	5 - 7 days
Asparagus	Refrigerate, stems in water	5 days
Beans (string)	Refrigerate in perforated plastic bag	5 days
Beets	Refrigerate (greens off!) in plastic bag	3 weeks
Blueberries	Refrigerate dry berries in sturdy containers	4 days
Broccoli	Refrigerate in perforated plastic bag	7 days
Cabbage	Refrigerate in plastic bag	4 weeks
Carrots	Refrigerate (greens trimmed!) in plastic bag	4 - 8 weeks
Celeriac	Refrigerate in plastic bag	4 - 8 weeks
Collards & Cooking Greens	Refrigerate in plastic bag	7 days
Corn	Refrigerate (husks on!) in plastic bag	3 days
Cucumber	Refrigerate tightly wrapped in plastic	8 - 10 days
Eggplant	Refrigerate in plastic bag	7 days
Fennel	Refrigerate in plastic bag	8 - 10 days
Garlic	Store in a cool, dry, dark place	1 - 4 months
Garlic Scapes	Refrigerate in plastic bag	7 days
Herbs	In water like bouquet (room temp) or refrigerate	2 - 7 days
Kale	Refrigerate in perforated plastic bag	7 - 10 days
Kohlrabi	Refrigerate (greens and roots off!) in plastic bag	2 - 3 weeks
Leeks	Refrigerate in plastic bag	1 - 2 weeks
Lettuce	Refrigerate in plastic bag	5 - 10 days
Melons	Musk melons: room temp; watermelons: refrigerate	5 - 10 days
Onions	Store in a cool, dry, dark place	1 - 3 months
Parsnips	Refrigerate (greens off!) or store in root cellar	1 - 3 months
Peas	Refrigerate in plastic bag	5 - 7 days
Peppers	Refrigerate in paper bag in crisper drawer	1 - 2 weeks
Potatoes	Store in a cool, dark space	2 - 4 months
Radishes	Refrigerate (greens off!) in perforated plastic bag	1 - 3 weeks
Rhubarb	Refrigerate in plastic bag	7 - 10 days
Rutabaga	Refrigerate (greens off!) in perforated plastic bag	3 - 8 weeks
Spinach	Refrigerate in plastic bag	7 - 10 days
Sprouts	Refrigerate in perforated plastic bag	3 - 5 days
Strawberries	Refrigerate dry berries in sturdy containers	3 days
Swiss Chard & Beet Greens	Refrigerate in perforated plastic bag	3 - 5 days
Tomatillos	Store at room temperature	5 - 7 days
Tomatoes	Store at room temperature	5 - 7 days
Turnips	Refrigerate (greens off!) in perforated plastic bag	3 - 8 weeks
Winter Squash	Store uncut in cool, dry place	2 - 3 months
Zucchini & Summer Squash	Refrigerate in perforated plastic bag	7 - 10 days

## Additional Resources:



Photos courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

**3SquaresVT:** Formerly known as the food stamp program, 3SquaresVT provides assistance for purchasing food at many farmers' markets, grocery stores, convenience stores, and co-ops. Benefits are stored on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card—similar to a credit card—helping to protect privacy when shopping. 3SquaresVT can also be used to purchase seeds and fruit/vegetable bearing plants; this is a great way to stretch your food dollar. For more information, visit: [www.vermontfoodhelp.com](http://www.vermontfoodhelp.com) or call 1-800-479-6151.

**WIC (Women, Infants, and Children):** WIC is a supplemental nutrition program specifically designed for low-income women who are pregnant, postpartum, or breastfeeding, as well as children under the age of five. WIC participants get healthy foods delivered to their homes for free as well as a small stipend for purchasing fruits and vegetables. WIC participants can also access nutrition education and kids' health screenings, among other things. Visit [www.healthvermont.gov/wic/about.aspx](http://www.healthvermont.gov/wic/about.aspx) or call 1-800-649-4357 to learn more.

**Vermont Farm-to-Family Program:** Open to low-income families and/or those participating in WIC, this program provides coupons to help you buy fresh produce at participating farmers markets. Nearly one in four families qualifies! Distribution begins in June and coupons are available on a first come, first served basis. For more information, visit [www.dcf.vermont.gov/esd/farm\\_to\\_family](http://www.dcf.vermont.gov/esd/farm_to_family) or visit your local community action agency. WIC participants can call 1-800-464-4343 ext. 7333 for more information.

**NOFA Vermont Farm Share:** The Vermont chapter of NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association) assists low-income Vermonters by providing partially subsidized CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) shares from various farms around Vermont. More than 1,400 Vermonters benefit from the program annually. Shares are available year-round. To apply, visit [www.nofavt.org/programs/farm-share](http://www.nofavt.org/programs/farm-share) or call 802-434-4122.

**Local Food Shelves/Food Pantries:** The VT Foodbank has a network of hundreds of food shelves and meal sites across the state. Thousands of Vermonters in need have access to food through local food shelves. Dial 211 or visit [www.vtfoodbank.org](http://www.vtfoodbank.org) to find resources in your community. To assist others in need, consider volunteer opportunities at these locations in your community.

### **Additional resources, continued:**

**Farmers' Markets:** To find the freshest produce, visit your local farmers' market and farm stands. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture can help you find the markets and stands closest to you at [www.vermontagriculture.com/buylocal/buy/farmersmarkets\\_map.html](http://www.vermontagriculture.com/buylocal/buy/farmersmarkets_map.html). Many markets accept EBT cards. Visiting your local farmers' market helps you get to know your neighbors and enables you to support your community.

**Willing Worker Arrangements:** Several farms in Vermont may be willing to exchange fresh food for a few hours of labor each week. To find farms near you, visit NOFA-VT at [www.nofavt.org](http://www.nofavt.org) or the VT Agency of Agriculture at <http://www.vermontagriculture.com/buylocal/buy/index.html>.

**Home Gardening and Community Gardens:** If you can't have a garden at home, your community may have a public garden space for you to use. Find out at [www.burlingtongardens.org/Vermont\\_garden\\_directories.html](http://www.burlingtongardens.org/Vermont_garden_directories.html) or by calling the Vermont Community Garden Network at 802-861-GROW. You can also learn more about gardening by visiting the UVM Extension website at [www.uvm.edu/extension](http://www.uvm.edu/extension) or the master gardener website at [www.uvm.edu/mastergardener](http://www.uvm.edu/mastergardener). The National Gardening Association ([www.garden.org](http://www.garden.org)) has lots of tips and how-to articles available as well. Gardens are one of the best forms of food security.

**Cooking and Nutrition Education:** UVM's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program offers many resources to individuals in need, including fruit and vegetable fact sheets, information on how to manage budgets, and small group classes. More information can be found at [www.uvm.edu/extension/food/?Page=grow.html](http://www.uvm.edu/extension/food/?Page=grow.html) or by calling 802-656-2311. Cooking classes are also offered to Vermonters in need by Hunger Free Vermont: [www.hungerfreevt.org](http://www.hungerfreevt.org) or 802-865-0255. The classes, called "The Learning Kitchen" are a series of six classes for adults or children and may be offered in your town.

**Local Agriculture and Food Network Organizations:** Many Vermont communities have organizations that act as local food and agriculture hubs. From Green Mountain Farm to School in Newport to Post-Oil Solutions in Brattleboro and the Rutland Area Farm & Food Link (RAFFL) in Rutland, there are networks in every corner of the state. Contact Salvation Farms, the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund or NOFA-VT to find the organization nearest you. Friends, neighbors, and your local Chamber of Commerce or Town Clerk's office may be able to direct you to the right organization as well.

**Local Libraries:** Libraries are a wealth of information on many subjects. Most libraries have free computer and internet access in addition to books on gardening, food preservation, and cooking. Stop by your local library to learn more about all of the resources available to you there. Many of the books used in the creation of this handbook can be accessed through your public library.

# Apples



## Background

The possible varieties of apples are unlimited. Each seed contains unique genes from its parent, so the fruit of each tree grown from seed will be unique. Today's cultivated apple trees are not grown from seed, however, but from grafts of tried-and-true varieties. Wild apples probably originated in present-day Kazakhstan, but apples are now grown in almost every area of the world. In Vermont's early days nearly every farm had a small apple orchard, but the fruit was often unpleasant and was turned into cider or brandy. Nowadays, apple varieties are cultivated to suit many purposes, from fresh eating to cooking to long-term storage. Apples are popular worldwide for their durability, portability, and capacity to grow in many different climates.

## Growing Tips

If you do not yet have apple trees, visit a local nursery and ask for an easy-to-grow, cold-hardy variety. Ask for directions on how to train and prune the branches, too. If you have old trees that need some new life, they may need some heavy pruning (best done in late winter). Apple trees are very prone to pests, from fruit-eating moths to deer, which can demolish young trees. Because apple trees require care over many years, there are many growing tips. For more information, check out *The Apple Grower* by Michael Phillips (see bibliography).

## Storage

Apples that ripen later in the season, especially tart ones with thicker skins, tend to store much better than those that ripen early. Always choose firm apples without bruises, as one rotten apple can spoil the rest. The best way to store apples is loosely wrapped in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of your fridge. If space is tight, you can try wrapping them individually in newspaper and putting them somewhere cool, like a cellar. Be careful not to let the apples freeze, however, or they will spoil.

## Preparation

Before eating, rinse apples in warm water to remove the wax with which they're sometimes coated for storage. Eating the skin is good for you! Peeling apples can remove up to half of the Vitamin C in the fruit. Apples are versatile: they are tasty raw, cooked, dried, processed into sauce, apple butter, or cider, and integrated into a variety of sweet and savory recipes.

## Nutritional Benefits

Containing only 100 calories on average and packed with fiber, apples make a superbly healthy snack. Fiber works hard for your body—not only does it keep cholesterol from building up in your blood vessels, but it also helps keep your intestines clear, meaning that it aids in the digestion of the food you eat. Apples are a good source of vitamins A and C as well as potassium and folate. To top it all off, apples are sodium- and fat-free!

# Recipes

## Easier-Than-Pie Apple Crisp - serves 6

### Ingredients

- 7 or 8 apples (preferably tart and crisp)
- 1 ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup flour
- ¾ cup rolled oats
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup chopped nuts (optional)
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter or margarine

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375° F and grease a 2-quart baking dish.
2. Core and cut apples into ½ inch-thick slices. Put slices in large bowl, then sprinkle on ½ teaspoon cinnamon, ½ cup flour, and ¼ cup brown sugar. Mix with a wooden spoon, then heap into baking dish.
3. Cut butter into pieces. Combine remaining ingredients in small bowl and incorporate butter with a pastry blender or your fingers. Scatter over top of apples.
4. Bake about 45 minutes or until top is golden brown and apples are bubbling. Cover with foil if necessary. Serve warm.

## Homemade Applesauce - serves 8

### Ingredients

- 8-10 large apples of a cooking variety (almost anything except Red Delicious), peeled, cored, and cut into chunks
- ½ cup water
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ¾ cup sugar or packed brown sugar

### Crockpot Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients in a crockpot, cover, and cook on low heat 6-8 hours.
2. Puree in blender for smoother sauce (with caution if the sauce is still warm).

### Stovetop Instructions

1. Put apples, water, and cinnamon in large, heavy-bottomed pot. Cover and cook over low heat until apples are soft (20-25 minutes, depending on variety). Stir occasionally.
2. Stir in sugar, increase heat, and stir regularly, cooking the sauce until it thickens.
3. If desired, puree in blender for smoother sauce.

## Canned Apples

Canning is a good way to preserve apples. You may want to use an anti-browning solution, which will keep the apples from turning an unappealing brown color. To can, you will need quart jars, fresh lids, and bands, as well as a very large pot and jar holder (or something similar to extract the cans from boiling water). Beginning canners should check out *The Joy of Cooking* (see "Rombauer" in bibliography). Canning uses very hot ingredients and tools and requires caution.

### Canning:

1. Select uniform apples (you will need 2-3 pounds per quart jar). Wash, peel and core. Cut into wedges about ½ inch thick.
2. Soak in anti-browning solution (below) for approximately 10 minutes. Meanwhile, set large pot of water on to boil.
3. Drain. Boil apples for 4 or 5 minutes in thin syrup (below), then pack into jars to within 1/2 inch of top.
4. Fill jar to within 1/2 inch of top with boiling syrup. Put on lid and screw band firmly tight.
5. Process quart jars for 25 minutes in boiling water bath.

### Anti-browning solution:

Ascorbic acid (vitamin C) does the trick to prevent discoloration. You can make a solution a few different ways, depending on what you have handy:

1. Let 5-6 plain vitamin C (ascorbic acid) supplement pills dissolve in a gallon of water, or
2. Add 1 teaspoon of lemon juice or citric acid to a gallon of water; or
3. Use a manufactured anti-browning solution.

### Syrup:

Boil 1 cup sugar with 4 cups water until sugar is dissolved.

### To Can Applesauce:

1. Prepare applesauce as directed to the left, leaving slightly watery.
2. Bring sauce to boil and ladle into quart jars (up to ½ inch of top). Cap jars and screw on bands.
3. Process jars in hot water bath for 20 minutes.





### **Background**

Arugula, also known as rugula, rucola, roquette, and garden rocket, is a leafy green with a flavor often described as “peppery” or “mustardy.” Native to the Mediterranean region, arugula is thought to have been enjoyed long ago by the Romans, who used the seeds for flavoring as well as eating the leaves. Arugula remains popular in Italian cuisine and is now cultivated in other temperate regions around the globe. Commonly found mixed into salads with other raw greens, arugula can also be lightly cooked. Because arugula is fairly hardy, it is often one of the first greens available in the spring. Although the green enjoys a somewhat upscale reputation, it is easy to grow and is often reasonably priced at farm stands and markets.

### **Growing Tips**

Arugula is relatively cold-tolerant and grows best from spring to mid-summer. Heat can cause the leaves to be smaller and spicier. Direct-sow seeds in mid-spring, barely covering them with soil. Keep well watered. Leaves will be ready to harvest in only about a month! Floating row cover is very useful when growing arugula, which is very prone to attack by flea beetles (who will eat tiny holes in it, making it ugly though still perfectly edible). For a consistent crop of arugula, treat it like a lettuce mix and sow seeds every 3-4 weeks. If planting well into the summer, try to choose an area with partial shade. As plants mature, the flavor of the leaves becomes increasingly intense, so if you prefer a milder flavor, you may wish to harvest baby leaves. Most varieties of arugula will continue to produce for weeks if the leaves are picked individually. Arugula flowers are edible, too!

### **Storage**

Like most greens, arugula deteriorates quickly after being picked. If you grow it yourself, avoid picking the leaves until just before you are ready to use them. Otherwise, arugula will keep for a few days when stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

### **Preparation**

Arugula is best when dark green, young, and tender. It can be eaten raw or cooked. Wash before using and dry in a salad spinner or by blotting gently with a clean towel. Try substituting arugula for spinach in some of your favorite recipes for an added kick! To cook arugula, sauté it lightly or add it to a dish right at the end of cooking.

### **Nutritional Benefits**

Despite being very low in calories (less than 10 per serving), arugula is packed with vitamins and minerals, including Vitamins A and K, folic acid, zinc, potassium, calcium, and iron. Folic acid is known to lower your risk of heart disease and even some types of cancer. Eating arugula is a great way to incorporate a wide variety of vitamins and minerals into your diet!



# Recipes

## **Arugula Pasta** - serves 5

(adapted from the L.A. Times Test Kitchen)

### *Ingredients*

1 pound pasta  
¼ cup olive oil  
1 onion  
3 cloves garlic  
4 cups (approximately) coarsely chopped arugula  
¼ - ½ cup dry bread crumbs (chopped dry/stale old bread works perfectly)  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Parmesan cheese (optional)

### *Instructions*

1. Cook pasta according to instructions. Salt water lightly and add splash of olive oil.
2. While water is coming to a boil and pasta is cooking, heat olive oil in frying pan and dice onion.
3. When pasta is al dente, remove from heat and drain, reserving ¼ cup of the water. Put pasta in heavy serving dish, cover, and set aside.
4. Brown onion in oil; meanwhile, peel garlic cloves and finely chop garlic. Add to onion. Cook until garlic is light gold.
5. Add arugula, bread crumbs, and reserved pasta water. Stir regularly until arugula has become wilted and very dark green.
6. Combine mixture with pasta in serving dish. Add salt and pepper to taste and sprinkle with cheese if desired. Serve warm.

## **Lemony Arugula Salad** - serves 2

(adapted from Tori Ritchie: *Bon Appétit*, April 2009, and epicurious.com)

### *Ingredients*

4 cups arugula (smaller leaves are better for this)  
1 large tomato, chopped  
½ sweet onion, finely chopped  
2 gloves of garlic, finely minced, or 1 teaspoon powdered garlic  
1 lemon  
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese  
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
2 teaspoons maple syrup or honey  
Pinch of salt and pepper

### *Instructions*

1. Combine arugula (chopped if the leaves are larger than bite-sized), tomato, onion, and garlic in large bowl.
2. Using a fine grater, grate lemon peel until you have about 1 teaspoon of zest. Set aside, then squeeze 1 ½ tablespoons of juice from the lemon.
3. Mix together lemon zest, lemon juice, Parmesan, olive oil, syrup or honey, salt, and pepper to make a dressing. For a smoother dressing, blend quickly in a food processor.
4. Drizzle dressing over vegetables, toss, and serve.

Note: this salad is also great atop pasta or served with potatoes!

## **Simple Serving Suggestions**

Arugula can be added to countless dishes. Recipes aside, here are some great ways to incorporate arugula into dishes that you may already love:

1. Throw atop spaghetti or pizza (as soon as you take it out of the oven)
2. Add to a quiche or omelet
3. Sauté lightly and eat atop a fried egg or in a breakfast sandwich or scramble
4. Try with cheeses or cheesy dishes
5. Add to a simple green salad and top with a vinaigrette or your favorite dressing
6. Add to sandwiches or burgers in place of (or in addition to) lettuce
7. Throw into pesto for a spicy kick and serve atop pasta!



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

# Asian Greens

## Background

“Asian Greens” is a general term for several leafy vegetables that originated in eastern Asia, including bok choy (also called pac choi), tatsoi, and Napa (or “Chinese”) cabbage. While these vegetables have been used in Asian cuisine for centuries, they are starting to become more popular in the West, too. Tatsoi and bok choy are very similar, both growing in loose heads with long, succulent stems and dark green leaves. Napa cabbage, which resembles an oblong version of the more familiar European cabbage, forms a tight head and has wrinkly, thick-veined leaves. Many more Asian greens exist (such as komatsuna, mizuna, and mibuna), and while their tastes and textures differ, almost all can be prepared similarly.

## Growing Tips

Asian greens tend to be fairly hardy, making them a great crop for spring and fall. Tatsoi is especially cold-tolerant, able to withstand temperatures below 20°F. Asian greens are commonly added to salad blends, in which case the leaves are cut when the plants are immature. Mature plants will yield heads of varying sizes. Seeds can be transplanted or directly sowed, but transplanting is recommended to grow full heads in the early season. For baby greens, harvest when leaves are 3-4 inches tall. For full heads, be sure to leave plenty of room between plants. Hot temperatures can cause plants to bolt prematurely, so try to avoid growing full heads in midsummer. Many Asian greens are susceptible to attacks from flea beetles, which can be fended off by protective row cover.

## Storage

Heads of tatsoi and bok choy will keep in the fridge for several days if washed, dried, and loosely wrapped in a plastic bag. Napa cabbage will store much longer. Individual leaves and sliced cabbage will only stay fresh for a few days, so use as soon as possible. For long-term storage, tatsoi and bok choy can be blanched in water and frozen. Napa cabbage has traditionally been made into kimchi and canned or refrigerated for long-term preservation.

## Preparation

Avoid choosing greens with yellowing or wilted leaves. Napa cabbages should have firm, tight heads that are free of worm holes and major blemishes. Wash your greens and shake or spin dry. The sturdier the green, the longer it can be cooked (napa cabbage being quite sturdy, tatsoi being more fragile). Asian greens can be steamed, boiled, sautéed, stir-fried, or eaten raw. Try slicing and adding to salads for extra crunch and flavor. Take care not to overcook, as that will diminish flavor and texture.

## Nutritional Benefits

Asian greens are notable for their high calcium content. Calcium is important for the body to build strong, healthy bones. Asian greens are also high in vitamins A and C and various phytochemicals that are believed to help boost the body’s resistance to cancer.

# Recipes

## Home-style Greens and Pasta - serves 5

### Ingredients

1 pound pasta  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 onion, chopped  
1 pound chicken breast, diced  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 large tomato, chopped  
Oregano and thyme, chopped (optional)  
1 pound tatsoi (or other hardy green)  
Salt and pepper  
Cheddar cheese, grated (optional)

### Instructions

1. Cook pasta according to instructions on package.
2. Heat oil in saucepan. Cook onions until translucent.
3. Add chicken and cook until no longer pink in the middle, about 8 minutes.
4. Add garlic, tomato, and herbs. Cover, turn heat to medium-low, and simmer for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Add greens and cook, covered, until completely wilted.
6. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve over pasta and top with cheese.

## Bok Choy Stir-fry with Roasted Peanuts



Photo courtesy  
High Mowing  
Organic Seeds

serves 4 - (adapted from Deborah Madison:  
*Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*)

### Ingredients

3 tablespoons raw or roasted peanuts  
2 tablespoons olive or peanut oil  
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes  
1 head bok choy  
4 cloves of garlic, finely chopped  
2 teaspoons fresh ginger, minced  
2 tablespoons soy sauce  
1 teaspoon cornstarch  
3 tablespoons stock or water

### Instructions

1. If using raw peanuts, heat 1 teaspoon of oil in heavy saucepan and cook peanuts until golden.
2. Remove peanuts from heat and chop them up with the pepper flakes and a pinch of salt. Set aside.
3. Cut the bok choy stems off of the leaves. Chop stems into 1-inch pieces and, if leaves are large, cut into strips.
4. Heat a wok or frying pan on medium-high. Add remaining oil and, when oil is hot, add garlic and ginger and stir-fry for 1 minute.
5. Add the bok choy stems and stir-fry until just tender. Then add leaves and cook until wilted and shiny.
6. Add soy sauce, cornstarch, and stock or water. Cook mixture another 1-2 minutes.
7. Remove from heat, add peanut/pepper mixture, and serve immediately over rice or noodles.

Note: for variations on this recipe, try adding additional vegetables (such as carrots, onions, peppers or green beans), tofu, or chicken.

## Spicy Napa Cabbage Slaw - serves 4

(adapted from Ruth Cousineau: *Gourmet*, August 2008 and epicurious.com)

### Ingredients

1 small head Napa cabbage  
2 carrots  
¼ cup rice vinegar (or another kind of vinegar)  
1 teaspoon ginger (powdered or fresh ginger, peeled and grated)  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
1 chili pepper, finely chopped  
½ cup cilantro, chopped  
2 teaspoons sugar or maple syrup  
Salt and pepper

### Instructions

1. Cut the base off the cabbage, remove any damaged outer leaves, and slice into thin strips.
2. Shred carrots with grater or vegetable peeler.
3. Mix together remaining ingredients to make a dressing.
4. Toss cabbage and carrots with dressing and chill for an hour or more. Serve cold.



# Asparagus

## Background

Asparagus is native to the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Wild varieties of the plant grow in northern Africa, western Asia, and Europe, but asparagus is also cultivated far from its original roots. Heralded as a true sign of spring, asparagus spears shoot up from the ground as the weather begins to warm. Asparagus stalks are green or sometimes purplish by nature, though they can be grown to be white, too. Prized as a delicacy in fine restaurants, asparagus is also a longtime homegrown vegetable that lends itself to simple cooking. Unharvested asparagus stalks grow into tall, bushy plants with feathery foliage.

## Growing Tips

People start asparagus beds one of two ways: either they start the plants from seed or, more commonly, they plant “crowns,” segments of established asparagus roots. Plants started from seeds typically take about 3 years to produce good spears, so planting crowns is a good alternative for the impatient. Plant crowns in mid-spring in trenches about 6 inches deep. The closer you plant the crowns, the more slender your spears will be, but 10-12 inches is adequate space. Cover with 3 inches of soil initially, and then again in a few weeks. Asparagus grows well in rich, well-drained soil, meaning that you should apply compost regularly and plant in a location where water won’t puddle. Do not harvest spears the first year! When your asparagus has been growing for 2 or 3 years, harvest spears (either by snapping or by cutting close to the ground) that are about the thickness of your finger and 8-10 inches tall. Harvest for 4-6 weeks and then allow the remaining spears to develop into full-sized plants. The adult foliage nourishes the underlying crown; avoid cutting it back until it dies in the fall.

## Storage

Asparagus is best eaten right away but it can be stored for a few days. Trim the bases of the asparagus stalks, set the bundle upright in a small bowl of water (like a bouquet), loosely set a plastic bag over the top, and store in the refrigerator.

## Preparation

Before cooking asparagus, remove the tough bottom ends by snapping them off where they naturally break. Some people choose to peel the skin off thicker spears as well. Asparagus can be simply boiled or steamed and served with butter. Cook until tender (5-10 minutes, depending on the size of the spears). Also great to eat raw.

## Nutritional Benefits

Asparagus is one of the best sources of folic acid, which lowers the risk of heart and liver disease as well as certain cancers. In addition to a wide variety of vitamins and minerals, asparagus also contains antioxidants and the phytochemical rutin. Rutin is believed to promote healthy blood vessels and capillaries. Asparagus is low in calories, too!

# Recipes

## Oven-Roasted Asparagus - serves 4-6

### Ingredients

1 or more bunches asparagus  
1-2 tablespoons olive oil  
Salt and pepper  
Lemon juice (optional)

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400°.
2. Meanwhile, trim tough lower ends off asparagus as indicated in "Preparation."
3. Spread the spears in a single layer on a lightly greased baking sheet.
4. Drizzle olive oil over the asparagus and sprinkle

lightly with salt and pepper.

5. Bake until tender and browning at the tips, about 15 minutes.
6. Drizzle very lightly with lemon juice.
7. Serve warm with butter (optional).



## Asparagus Pasta - serves 6

(adapted from fitnessmagazine.com)

### Ingredients

1 pound pasta (linguine or fettuccine)  
1 bunch asparagus  
1 tablespoon butter  
1 tablespoon garlic, minced  
1 pint cream or half-and-half  
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese (optional)  
Juice of 1 small lemon  
Salt and pepper

### Instructions

1. Bring 2 pots of water to boil (one for asparagus, one for pasta). Cook pasta as directed on box.
2. Boil asparagus for 3-4 minutes and drain.
3. In a large saucepan, melt the butter over low-medium heat, taking care not to burn it. Sauté garlic and asparagus in butter for a few minutes. Pour in cream and Parmesan, if desired, and simmer over low heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Stir in lemon juice. Add salt and pepper to taste. Pour over pasta and serve immediately.

Note: goat cheese (chèvre) can be substituted for a tangy alternative.

## Creamy Asparagus Soup - serves 6

(adapted from Rombauer et al: *The Joy of Cooking*)

### Ingredients

3 tablespoons butter  
1 onion  
1 ½ pounds asparagus  
¼ cup flour  
4 cups broth or stock (chicken works well)  
1 cup half-and-half or milk  
Salt and pepper  
Grated cheddar cheese (optional)

### Instructions

1. Melt butter in a heavy-bottomed pot over low-medium heat.
2. Chop onion. Trim asparagus ends and cut into 1-inch pieces.
3. Cook onion and asparagus in butter until just tender and fragrant (up to 10 minutes). Keep the pot covered to seal in the steam.
4. Stir in flour.
5. Turn heat to high and stir in broth.
6. Once broth is bubbling, reduce heat and simmer about 25 minutes or until asparagus is soft.
7. Process mixture in blender until smooth, then return to pot.
8. Stir in milk or cream and reheat mixture, but do not bring it to a boil!
9. Add salt and pepper to taste and serve hot. Garnish with cheese if desired.



# Beans (String)



Photos courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

## Background

Native to South or Central America, string beans did not appear in Europe until the Age of Exploration. String beans are very similar to dried beans but are harvested earlier in the growing cycle, meaning that the seeds (beans) are immature and the pod is still tender. String beans are sometimes called “snap” or “green” beans, even though they appear in several different colors. Early varieties of the string bean had a tough, string-like fiber running along their pods, hence the name. In the late 1800s, American growers developed the string-free beans that we know today. Green, yellow, and purple varieties are common. Some types are “bush” beans, which have short, sturdy vines, and others are “pole” beans, meaning they climb upwards. Today, beans are one of the most common vegetables in the country.

## Growing Tips

Beans are tender and cold-sensitive, meaning that you should not plant them until frost is no longer a threat. Transplanting is not recommended for beans; instead sow the seeds directly. Beans should be planted in sunny, warm, well-drained soil to reduce the risk of rotting. If planting pole beans, you will need to construct a trellis or teepee for the vines to climb. Bean teepees are a fun garden project for kids and can be made with just a few sticks and/or string. For a steady supply of beans, sow seeds every 3 weeks and pick often. If oversized beans stay on the vine, production will slow, so be sure to pick off old beans even if you do not intend to eat them. Try to pick beans in dry weather to prevent the spread of disease among plants.

## Storage

It is best to use string beans as soon as possible after picking, but they will keep well in the refrigerator for several days if loosely wrapped in a plastic bag. Do not wash or cut the beans until you are ready to use them.

## Preparation

Rinse beans. Snap the stem-like ends off the beans with your fingers (snapping rather than cutting prevents breaking the inner beans, but cutting will also work). Beans can be simply steamed or incorporated into a variety of recipes. To freeze: snap or cut beans into desired lengths. Steam 2-3 minutes, drain, chill, and pack into freezer bags. When you are ready to use the beans, remember that they are already partially cooked!

## Nutritional Benefits

Beans, technically legumes and not vegetables, are rich in protein. String beans are high in vitamins A, B-1 (thiamin), and B-2 (riboflavin), calcium, and potassium. They also contain significant quantities of iron, which is vital to red blood cell health.

# Recipes

## Garlicky Green Beans - serves 4

### Ingredients

- 1 pound green (string) beans
- 1 tablespoon olive oil or butter
- 4 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Salt and pepper

### Instructions

1. Bring a saucepan of water to a boil.
2. Wash beans and snap off stem ends. Throw beans into boiling water and cook until tender, about 5 minutes. When beans are done, drain in colander and allow to steam dry.
3. Heat oil or butter in saucepan and sauté garlic. When garlic begins to brown, add the lemon juice.
4. Remove pan from heat and return beans to pan, tossing gently. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot.

Note: For a tasty variation of this recipe, try adding 1 cup of grated cheddar or Parmesan cheese and a ¼ cup of white wine during step 3 to make a cheesy sauce.

## Easy String Bean Casserole - serves 6

(adapted from Diana Rattray: about.com)

### Ingredients

- 1 can condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 pound string beans, trimmed and chopped, **OR** 2 cans string beans, drained
- 1 ½ cups fried onions or crumbs of buttery crackers, such as Ritz

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Mix soup, milk, and pepper together in a 1 ½ quart casserole dish.
3. Stir in beans and ¾ cup fried onions or cracker crumbs.
4. Bake for 30 minutes, stirring once. Top with remaining onions or crumbs and bake 5-10 minutes longer, until top is golden. Serve warm.

## Green Bean and Potato Salad - serves 10

(adapted from *Gourmet*, May 1995, and epicurious.com)

### Ingredients

- 2 pounds small red or fingerling potatoes
- 1 pound string beans
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic or apple cider vinegar
- ¼ cup mixed fresh herbs, finely chopped (optional)
- Salt and pepper

### Instructions

1. Scrub potatoes and chop into bite-sized chunks. Snap ends off beans and cut into 1-inch pieces.
2. Bring large pot of water to a boil and cook potatoes until tender when stabbed, about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, bring about 2 inches of water to a boil in a medium saucepan and cook beans until barely tender, about 4 minutes.
3. Drain both potatoes and beans and put in large bowl together.
4. In small bowl, mix olive oil, vinegar, and herbs together with a dash of salt in pepper. Pour mixture over potatoes and beans and stir to coat.
5. Serve warm or at room temperature.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

## Simple Serving Suggestions

Try using green beans some of the following ways:

- Serve raw or very lightly steamed, with a vegetable dip
- Toss in stir fries with other fresh vegetables
- Chop into pieces, cook lightly, and add to curries
- Throw into soups
- Make a fresh bean salad with nuts and a creamy cheese, like chèvre
- Make “Dilly Beans,” much like making dill pickles but using green beans instead of cucumbers



# BEETS

## Background

Grown now for thousands of years, beets are a truly old-fashioned vegetable. The wild ancestor of the beet we eat today is native to the Mediterranean region, where it still grows today. The Greeks and Romans used beets primarily for their leaves, however, and it wasn't until the Middle Ages that the red roots of the plant became popular. Like many vegetables, beets were selectively bred to become the crop we know today. While the majority of beets are strikingly red in color (particularly when cut), golden and candy-striped varieties are popular as well. The beets that we eat are closely related to sugar beets, which are grown in extensive quantities in America for the production of sugar. Recently, the pigment producing compounds in beets have been found to help fight against heart disease and cancer, particularly colon cancer.

## Growing Tips

Beets are hardy roots that actually thrive in cooler weather. Seeds can be sown directly into the soil in early spring or started inside and transplanted later. If transplanting, take care not to disturb the roots. Either way, beets will probably need to be thinned as they begin to grow—each seed cluster can produce more than one plant, and the roots need room to develop. Beet greens can be harvested as the roots grow but several leaves do need to be left intact for the plant to continue growing steadily. Beets grow best in loose soils with plenty of water and nutrients. Compacted soil will make it harder for the plants to grow, resulting in tougher, smaller roots. For a steady supply of beets, try sowing seeds every 3 or 4 weeks until midsummer. Light frosts will not damage beets, but they should be harvested before regular heavy frosts set in.

## Storage

For long-term storage, beets are often pickled and canned. For a more short-term approach, store in your refrigerator (with 2-3 inches of stem attached) for about 3 weeks. Cooked beets can be frozen, but raw beets freeze poorly. You can also try storing beets in a root cellar or cool (but not freezing) garage. Submerged in a bucket of sand, they will keep for months.

## Preparation

Beet juice can stain, so take care when preparing beets, which can be eaten raw, boiled, steamed, roasted, or pickled. If boiling, leave the skins on until the roots are fully cooked, when you can rub off the outer layer. It is otherwise advisable to peel beets, especially if they are older and have tougher skins. For information on preparing beet greens, see "Swiss Chard/Beet Greens."

## Nutritional Benefits

Beets are high in sugar, making them often very sweet, but that does not make them unhealthy. Beets are very rich in nutrients such as Vitamin C, magnesium, and potassium. Furthermore, they are packed with phytochemicals and antioxidants and are thought to contribute to a healthy heart.



# Recipes

## Roasted Roots - serves 6

### Ingredients

2 beets  
4 potatoes  
2 carrots  
1 turnips  
2 parsnip  
2 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped  
Olive oil  
Salt and pepper

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375° F.
2. If any of the roots have tough or scabby skins, peel them.
3. Chop roots into bite-sized chunks.
4. Throw roots and garlic in large bowl, drizzle with olive oil, add salt and pepper, and mix until roots are lightly coated.
5. Dump into large roasting pan and cook until roots are tender when pierced with a fork. Serve hot.

Note: the recipe need not be limited to roots—winter squash makes a great addition. Feel free to add other veggies, but keep in mind that more tender vegetables will have a shorter cooking time, so add them a bit later to avoid burning.

## Traditional Borscht - serves 6

(adapted from Rombauer et al: *The Joy of Cooking*)

### Ingredients

3-4 medium-sized beets, unpeeled  
1 lb stew beef  
¼ cup all-purpose flour  
2 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil  
2 large tomatoes, diced  
Beef bouillon or stock (optional)  
¼ - ½ head cabbage, chopped  
2 carrots, diced  
1 onion, coarsely chopped  
2 stalks of celery, chopped  
1 tablespoon vinegar  
2 cloves garlic, chopped (or 2 teaspoons powdered)  
Salt and pepper  
Sour cream (optional)



Photo courtesy  
High Mowing Organic Seeds

### Instructions

1. Bring 2 quarts of water to a boil and cook beets until tender, about 30 minutes.
2. While beets are cooking, dredge beef in flour. In heavy-bottomed soup pot, heat oil, then add meat and cooked until browned.
3. Remove beets from water (do not discard!), and if desired, rub off the skins under running water.
4. Pour beet water into soup pot with beef, add tomatoes, and simmer over low heat until beef is tender, about 30 minutes. Add bouillon or stock if desired.
5. Add cabbage, carrots, onion, celery, vinegar, and garlic. Simmer until vegetables are tender, adding more water or stock if necessary.
6. Add salt and pepper to taste and serve hot with sour cream.

## Beet and Goat Cheese Salad - serves 4

(adapted from Jennifer Segal: [onceuponachef.com](http://onceuponachef.com))

### Ingredients

6 small beets, unpeeled  
4 ounces (approximately) creamy goat cheese, such as chèvre  
3 cups raw spinach  
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1 tablespoon honey or maple syrup  
1 tsp Dijon mustard (optional)  
Salt and Pepper

### Instructions

1. Bring pot of water to a pot. Cook unpeeled beets until tender, about 30 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, mix together vinegar, olive oil, honey/syrup, Dijon, and a dash of salt and pepper to make a dressing.
3. Once beets are cool enough to handle, rub off skins under lukewarm running water. Trim off the stem end and slice into small, bite-sized chunks.
4. In a large salad bowl, mix spinach, beets, and goat cheese. Dress and serve.



### **Background**

Unlike so many other fruits, blueberries are native to North America. Different varieties of the plant, including bilberries, have grown in Europe and beyond, and there are countless names given to fruits in the blueberry family. For centuries, blueberries grew only in the wild. It wasn't until the twentieth century that farmers began to selectively breed the berries. In parts of Maine, wild blueberries still constitute a major harvest, but the small wild berries are not as popular as their larger, cultivated relatives. Highbush blueberries are now a common addition to home gardens. Not only are the shrubs producers of tasty fruit, but they also turn bright red in the fall and are an attractive backyard addition.

### **Growing Tips**

If you are just starting out on a blueberry-growing expedition, start by purchasing some shrubs for your local nursery—do not attempt to grow the plants from seed. Blueberries appreciate full sunlight, some shelter from the wind, and rich, well-drained, acidic soil. To get your planting site ready, add plenty of organic matter such as peat moss (which will also increase the acidity) or compost. You can also mulch your plants later with pine needles, which will contribute to the soil's acidity as they break down. Plant early in the spring, being sure to leave 6-8 feet between plants. Dig holes deep enough to sink the roots all the way in without needing to mound the soil on top. Water well until the plants are established. After a few years, you may need to prune the bushes to encourage productivity; do so by removing excessive, twiggy growth.

### **Storage**

First, follow the steps in "preparation" to ensure that the berries are clean and dry. Once dry, ripe berries should be refrigerated. If berries are sour and have white or pink areas near the base, they may be under-ripe and can be left out to ripen. Refrigerated berries should be eaten within a week. For long-term storage, pour the berries into freezer bags, taking care not to squish any, and freeze for up to several months. Blueberries can also be made into jam and then canned.

### **Preparation**

Rinse berries in a colander, being sure to pick out any leaves and stems. Then, spread out on a cookie sheet or clean dish towel and allow to air dry out of direct sunlight. If berries are still white or pink near the bases, allow to sit out for a few days continue ripening. Ripe berries are fully blue and should be more sweet than sour in flavor.

### **Nutritional Benefits**

Blueberries are often high on the list of "super foods," and for good reason: they are full of anthocyanins, a class of phytochemicals that work as antioxidants. Antioxidants can help fight free radicals, compounds that damage cells. More simply put, antioxidants can help your body battle compounds that are related to cancer and chronic disease.

# Recipes

## **Buttermilk Blueberry Muffins** - serves 12 (adapted from joyofbaking.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 stick butter
- 2 ½ cups all-purpose flour (substitute up to half whole wheat if desired)
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup buttermilk (see below for alternative)
- 1 – 2 cups blueberries, fresh or frozen

If you don't have buttermilk, try the following substitute: put 1 tablespoon lemon juice or white vinegar in a measuring cup. Add enough milk to make up 1 cup. Let stand 5-10 minutes.

### *Instructions*

1. Preheat oven to 375F.
2. Melt butter on stovetop or in microwave.
3. In a large bowl, mix together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and sugar. In a separate bowl, beat together eggs, buttermilk, and melted butter.
4. Pour wet ingredients into dry ingredients, stirring until just combined. Mixing too much will cause your muffins to be tough. Fold in berries.
5. Ladle batter into well-greased muffin tins, filling each about halfway full.
6. Bake 18-20 minutes, until nicely browned. Serve warm.

## **Blueberry Pancakes** - serves 6

(adapted from Marion Cunningham: *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook*)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour (if you like, substitute in ½ cup whole wheat flour)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted, or vegetable oil
- ½ cup blueberries, fresh or partially thawed (beware, thawed berries will result in bluish pancakes!)
- Maple syrup

### *Instructions*

1. Mix flour, salt, baking powder, and sugar together in a large bowl.
2. In a separate bowl, beat egg, add milk and butter/oil, and beat together.
3. Pour into dry ingredients and mix briefly; fluffy pancakes are made from fairly lumpy batter! Stir in blueberries.
4. Heat frying pan or griddle over medium heat and grease lightly with butter or oil.
5. Using a small ladle or ¼ cup measuring scoop, pour dollops of batter into the pan, being sure to leave enough room for the cakes to spread.
6. Cook until browned on the underside (often when bubbles start appearing in the top), then flip each pancake. When both sides are browned, remove to plate.
7. Serve hot, drizzled with maple syrup.

## **Blueberry-Banana Smoothie** - serves 2

### *Ingredients*

- 1 banana, peeled
- ½ cup – 1 cup blueberries (fresh or frozen)
- ½ cup yogurt (plain or flavored)
- ½ cup milk or juice
- Other fruit if desired
- 1 cup ice cubes

### *Instructions*

Put all ingredients into and blender and blend until smooth, adding more milk or juice if necessary. Serve immediately.



# Broccoli



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

## Background

Broccoli comes to us from the Mediterranean, where it has grown for centuries. It is a member of the Brassica family, meaning that is related to mustards, kale, and cabbage. Indeed, it probably originated from a form of flowering cabbage. Broccoli has been crossed with other plants to create some unique vegetables such as “broccolini” (a cross between broccoli and a Chinese green). Not surprisingly, the tree-shaped broccoli is also closely related to cauliflower. Broccoli heads are collections of tiny, immature flower buds atop branching stems; some types form tight heads, while others are “sprouting” varieties. Italians were the first to truly appreciate broccoli, but the vegetable slowly spread and is now popular worldwide both fresh and frozen.

## Growing Tips

Broccoli likes to grow in cooler temperatures, making it a good spring and fall crop. For spring, transplanting is recommended; even though seedlings are hardy, they will grow better if you start them inside 4 weeks before setting out. Broccoli is also a heavy feeder, meaning that you should provide plants with plenty of compost and rotate them around your garden from year to year. Considering that full plants need about 1 square foot each, give seedlings plenty of room. Like its relatives, broccoli is susceptible to attack by cabbage worms, which can be warded off with applications of *Bacillus thurengensis*, a low-impact pesticide. If you notice the roots of your plants becoming club-like, try adding limestone to the soil. Broccoli heads and/or florets should be harvested when the buds are still tightly closed and have not formed yellow flowers, which signal that the harvest window has gone by.

## Storage

Cool broccoli immediately after harvesting or purchasing—do not wash it, as it stores better if not saturated with water. Wrap broccoli in a plastic bag and store it in the crisper drawer of your fridge, using as soon as possible. For long-term storage, you can easily freeze broccoli. Cut the stalks into bite-sized pieces, blanch in boiling water for 2-3 minutes, and then plunge into cold water. Drain, pack into freezer bags, and store in your freezer for up to 8 months.

## Preparation

Rinse broccoli before using and check for any worms or caterpillars. Using a small, sharp knife, separate the florets from the main stalk, then dissect the head into pieces. The main stalk is also edible (and tasty), though you may want to peel it if the skin is tough. Stalks take longer to cook than florets, so start cooking them 2 minutes in advance. Broccoli is delicious steamed, boiled, sautéed, thrown into soups, or cooked into casseroles.

## Nutritional Benefits

Broccoli contains the compounds sulforaphane and indole, both which have anti-cancer effects. Broccoli is also a great source of vitamins K, C and A, as well as fiber, B vitamins, folate, and minerals such as phosphorous, potassium and magnesium.

# Recipes

**Creamy Broccoli Soup** - serves 4  
(adapted from Rombauer et al: *The Joy of Cooking*)

## Ingredients

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 head broccoli, cut into pieces
- 2 teaspoons chopped garlic
- 4 cups chicken broth or stock
- ½ cup milk or cream
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

## Instructions

1. Heat olive oil in a heavy-bottomed stock pot. Add onion, cook 5-8 minutes, then add broccoli and garlic. Sauté for a few minutes.
2. Once garlic is golden brown, add broth. Bring to a boil then reduce heat and simmer 15 minutes or until broccoli is tender.
3. Transfer to blender or food processor and process until smooth, taking care not to burn yourself on the hot liquid (do several small batches if necessary).
4. Return to pot, add milk or cream (and cheese if desired), add salt and pepper to taste, and serve hot.

Note: this recipe is a great way to use broccoli that is slightly past its prime!

**Simple Broccoli Alfredo** - serves 6  
(adapted from recipelion.com)

## Ingredients

- 1 pound pasta
- 1 small head broccoli, cut into pieces (you may also use frozen broccoli)
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 teaspoons garlic, minced
- 1 ½ cups milk or cream
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 pinch salt

## Instructions

1. Cook pasta as directed on package.
2. Put an inch of water in the bottom of a large pot and steam broccoli until slightly tender.
3. Meanwhile, melt butter over medium-low heat and sauté garlic until golden. Add milk /cream, pepper, and salt, then simmer over low heat 10 minutes. Take care not to boil. Stir in Parmesan.
4. Add broccoli to sauce and serve over hot pasta.

Note: Cooked chicken can also be added to this dish. For a thicker sauce, try adding a few spoonfuls of plain yogurt.

**Easy Broccoli Quiche** - serves 6  
(adapted from allrecipes.com)

## Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 head broccoli
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 9-inch unbaked pie crust
- 1 cup grated cheese (mozzarella or cheddar work well)
- 4 eggs, well beaten
- 1 ½ cups milk
- 1 pinch each of salt and pepper

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a large saucepan, melt butter over medium-low heat. Add onions and broccoli and cook until soft, stirring occasionally. Transfer cooked vegetables to crust and sprinkle with cheese.
3. Beat milk, eggs, and salt and pepper together. Pour over vegetables and cheese.
4. Carefully place in oven and bake until center has set, approximately 20 minutes.

Note: Additions can easily be made to this recipe. Carrots, bacon, ham, and corn all compliment the dish.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds



# Cabbage



Photos courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

## Background

Cabbage is a truly old-fashioned vegetable that was praised by the Greeks and Romans for its various health benefits. Back then, cabbage probably looked a little leafier, but it has been bred over the years to form tighter heads. Cabbages are most often green, but red and purple varieties are now popular, as are varieties with savoyed (wrinkly) leaves. Although cabbage sometimes gets a bad reputation as a boring vegetable, it is in fact very versatile, edible raw, cooked, or fermented into sauerkraut. Additionally, it is a very hardy vegetable that can thrive in difficult climates. For information about Napa or Chinese Cabbage, see “Asian Greens.”

## Growing Tips

Like many brassicas, cabbage grows best in cooler conditions. For earlier cabbages, start seeds inside and plant outdoors when the soil begins to warm and frosts are unlikely. For cabbages that you plan to store, plant seeds or transplant seedlings in late June. To avoid fungi that commonly plague cabbages, plant your crop in a different spot each year. Harvest heads while they look to still be in their peak. Heads should be firm and tight. Keep an eye out for cabbage worms, which can chew holes through the leaves.

## Storage

Cabbage can be refrigerated for several weeks (if not cut open), but it is also a great vegetable for root cellaring. Wrap individual heads in newspaper and store in a cool, dark area without excess humidity. Before using, peel off any rotten-looking outer leaves. Don't be alarmed if the cabbage that you have stored look terrible at first—you may go through several layers of bad leaves before reaching an unblemished interior. Cabbage can also be made into sauerkraut for long-term storage.

## Preparation

Peel off any damaged leaves, rinse, and check for worms. Slice cabbage in half and remove any tough portions attached to the stem. Most recipes will call for thinly sliced or shredded cabbage. It can be eaten raw in slaws, cooked into stir-fries or stews, or made into sauerkraut. If cooking, take care not to overcook, which reduces both flavor and nutritional value. Sauerkraut, which is made by salting sliced cabbage, cooking it, and then allowing it to ferment over several weeks, is a traditional way of preparing cabbages that goes back many hundreds of years. To make sauerkraut, consult the “further reading” section.

## Nutritional Benefits

Raw or very lightly cooked cabbage is a good source of calcium, fiber, folate, Vitamin C, and the amino acid glutamine, which may have anti-inflammatory qualities. When made into sauerkraut, some of a cabbage's nutrients are more easily absorbed by the body. Like most vegetables, cabbage's nutritional benefits can be diminished when it is stored for very long periods of time.

# Recipes

## **Traditional Coleslaw** - serves 8

### *Ingredients*

- 1 small head cabbage (any type)
- 2 large carrots
- ½ cup plain yogurt or mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

### *Instructions*

1. Chop or grate cabbage and carrots into thin strips.
2. Mix together remaining ingredients in small bowl to make a dressing.
3. Toss shredded vegetables and dressing. Chill and serve cold.



## **Braised Bacon Cabbage** - serves 4

(adapted from Jamie Oliver: *Jamie's Food Revolution*)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 5-6 strips bacon, chopped into small pieces
- 2 teaspoons garlic (minced or powdered)
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 medium head cabbage
- 1 chicken bouillon cube
- Salt and pepper

### *Instructions*

1. Quarter and core the cabbage. Slice leaves into thin strips.
2. Heat olive oil in large saucepan. Add bacon, cook until crisp. Stir in garlic.
3. Add Worcestershire sauce, butter, and cabbage. Stir well.
4. Dissolve bouillon in 1 cup hot water and add to sauce pan. Cover and simmer 5 minutes.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot.

## **Scalloped Cabbage with Ham and Cheese** - serves 5

(adapted from Jeanie Bean: [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com))

### *Ingredients*

- 1 medium head cabbage, cored and chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 ½ cups cooked ham, diced
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup shredded cheese (almost any kind will work!)
- 2 tablespoons dry bread crumbs

### *Instructions*

1. Preheat oven to 300°F.
2. On the stovetop, steam cabbage and onion with a little water until just tender. Add ham.
3. Pour cabbage and onion into a greased baking dish.
4. Melt butter in small saucepan over low heat. Stir in flour and add milk, stirring until smooth, and then add cheese and salt. Stir until cheese is melted.
5. Pour cheese mixture over cabbage and top with bread crumbs.
6. Bake for 30 minutes. Serve hot.





### **Background**

While we tend to think of carrots as being orange, they historically grew in a broad range of colors, from purple to yellow to white. Nowadays, some of these heirloom varieties of carrot are making a comeback. Carrots are thought to have originated somewhere around present-day Afghanistan, though the roots were probably scrawny and branching. After centuries of selective breeding the roots became thicker, sweeter, and less inclined to grow odd-looking arms and legs. Surprisingly, the orange variety of carrot probably wasn't developed until the 18th century. According to one legend, the orange carrot was bred as a patriotic gesture by Dutch growers who were loyal to the House of Orange, the Royal Family of the Netherlands. It is more likely, however, that the orange vegetable was selectively bred for its flavor and was later adopted by the House of Orange for its color. Carrots have a very high sugar content for a vegetable, making them well-liked by kids around the world.

### **Growing Tips**

Carrots should be seeded directly into the garden as soon as the soil can be worked. Transplanting is not recommended. Carrots generally like looser soils without competition from weeds. Rocky soils may cause the roots to branch. For both summer carrots and storage carrots, sow seeds through midsummer. Keep seedlings well-watered. To determine when carrots are ready to harvest, try pulling up a few and checking for size, color, and flavor. Carrots hold well if left in the soil, even after a frost, but be sure to dig them up before the ground completely freezes.

### **Storage**

Once you pull carrots, cut off the greens, wrap the roots in paper towels, tuck loosely into plastic bags, and store in the refrigerator (the colder, the better). Carrots can be stored unwashed, too, if you grow them yourself. If you have a root cellar, carrots can be stored in damp sand for many months without deteriorating!

### **Preparation**

Always rinse and scrub carrots before eating. If the greens are still attached, chop them off and discard them. The skin can be left on, but many people choose to peel their carrots, especially if they are old and tough. Carrots can be eaten either raw or cooked; they lend themselves well to steaming and roasting. Be careful not to overcook, as that will damage flavor, texture, and nutritional value.

### **Nutritional Benefits**

Carrots are known for being packed with Beta-carotene, which makes them their characteristic orange color. The human body processes beta-carotene into vitamin A, an essential vitamin for good eyesight. Carrots are also full of potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin C, and various other minerals and antioxidants.



# Recipes

## **Carrot-Ginger Soup** - serves 6

(adapted from Maxine Bonneau: foodnetwork.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 onion, chopped
- 6 cups broth (chicken or vegetable)
- 4-5 large carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 tablespoons grated ginger (or 1 tablespoon powdered)
- 1 cup milk or cream
- Salt and pepper

### *Instructions*

1. Melt butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Add onions and cook until translucent and soft, stirring often.
2. Pour in broth, carrots, and ginger. Turn heat to low and simmer until carrots are tender.
3. Puree mixture until smooth, either with immersion blender or in a standard blender (careful not to over-fill with hot contents and take caution when removing lid).
4. Return contents to pan, stir in milk, and reheat until piping hot. Add salt and pepper to taste.

## **Carrot Fritters** - serves 3

(adapted from Nigel Slater: *Tender*)

### *Ingredients*

- 2 large carrots
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon garlic
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup milk or cream
- 1 egg, beaten
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup grated cheddar
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

### *Instructions*

1. Shred carrots with a grater.
2. In a small bowl, mix together carrots, onion, garlic, milk, egg, cheese, and flour.
3. In a shallow fry-pan, heat olive oil over medium heat. Drop spoonfuls of the carrot mixture into the pan, making small patties. Fry gently until golden on each side.
4. Remove to paper-towel covered plate (to remove any excess oil) and eat hot.

Note: for variations, try adding some grated beets, sunflower seeds, or a handful of herbs (such as cilantro).

## **Carrot Cake** - serves 10

(adapted from Rombauer et al: *the Joy of Cooking*)

### *Cake Ingredients*

- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon allspice
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup vegetable oil
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 4 medium-large carrots, shredded
- 1 cup chopped walnuts or almonds

### *Frosting Ingredients*

- 8 ounces cold cream cheese
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 3 cups confectioners' sugar

### *Instructions*

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease and flour a 9 x 13-inch pan.
2. Mix together dry ingredients.
3. Stir in eggs and oil until just incorporated, then add carrots and nuts.
4. Scrape the batter into the pan and shake the pan gently to distribute it.
5. Bake 30-35 minutes.
6. While cake is baking, make the frosting: beat together cream cheese and vanilla with electric mixer. Add confectioners' sugar gradually until frosting reaches desired consistency.
7. Allow cake to cool, then frost.

Note: raisins and orange zest make great additions to the cake, which can be eaten as a bread if left unfrosted.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

# Celeriac

## Background

Celeriac is closely related to celery, as you will notice as soon as you taste or smell it, but the root is eaten instead of the stems. Although celeriac tops look a lot like celery, the edible root portion closely resembles a gnarled rutabaga or turnip. Like many other vegetables, celeriac is probably native to the Mediterranean region. Widely used in Europe, celeriac is a little-known vegetable in the United States, perhaps in part because it looks so inedible. Don't be fooled, though—it's delicious! Celeriac can be substituted for celery in almost any recipe and has the advantage of storing much better.



## Growing Tips

For the home gardener, celeriac is an easier alternative to celery. Celeriac has a long growing season, start it indoors in early April. Soak the tiny seeds overnight and sprinkle atop your potting soil, gently pressing them down. Transplant seedlings once temperatures are reliably warm, being sure to harden them off first (in this case, by reducing water, not temperature). If consistently exposed to cold temperatures for too long, celeriac will bolt instead of producing a full root. Though they might be small at first, plant the seedlings about 6 inches apart so the roots have room to swell. Celeriac likes rich, well-watered soil, but requires little attention while growing. Harvest in early fall, before heavy frosts, or earlier for a smaller, slightly more tender root.

## Storage

Celeriac can be stored in the refrigerator for a few weeks. Cut off the stems and wrap loosely in plastic, being sure to leave the skin of the root intact (don't worry too much about getting it perfectly clean). For long-term preservation, celeriac can be frozen. Trim off stems and small roots, then slice off the skin and cube the flesh. Blanch in boiling water for a few minutes, then chill in ice water. Pack into a freezer-safe bag and store in freezer for months. Celeriac can also be root cellared. For longest preservation, store in damp sand at near-freezing.

## Preparation

Extremely large roots often have a pithy center, so choose slightly smaller, heavy-feeling roots if possible. Roots should feel firm and, if freshly harvested, they will be slightly green near the top. If you purchase celeriac with the greens attached (or grow it yourself), discard the tops before cooking or storing the vegetable. Celeriac needs to be peeled before eating, but the skin is too aggressive for a vegetable peeler. Slice the skin off in sections with a large knife. Try raw or cooked!

## Nutritional Benefits

Eating celeriac is a great way to incorporate fiber, vitamin C, potassium, calcium, and iron into your diet. Compared to many root vegetables, it is low in starch.

# Recipes

**Cream of Celeriac Soup** - serves 4-6  
(adapted slightly from seasonalchef.com)

### Ingredients

- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 pounds celeriac, peeled and finely diced
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt
- 2 cups milk
- 4 cups broth (chicken or vegetable)

### Instructions

1. In a heavy-bottomed pot, melt butter over medium heat.
2. Cook onions until tender. Sprinkle with flour and stir until flour begins to brown.
3. Pour in milk and heat, then add celery, salt, and broth.
4. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer until vegetables are tender.
5. Using a blender or immersion blender, puree the contents of the pot, being careful not to burn yourself (be cautious when opening the blender, as hot liquids may "burp" out).
6. Return to pot and heat through. Serve hot.

**Mashed Celeriac** - serves 4

(adapted from *Bon Appetit*, February 2005, and epicurious.com)

### Ingredients

- 1 large celeriac, peeled and diced
- 1 large potato, cubed
- ¾ cup milk or cream
- 2 tablespoons butter

### Instructions

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add celeriac, cook 15 minutes, and then add potato and cook until both are very tender. Drain and return to the pot, stirring over medium heat about 2 minutes.
2. Remove from heat, add butter and milk, and mash to desired smoothness. Add salt and pepper to taste and serve hot.

Note: for variations on this recipe, try adding garlic, sour cream, or just a pinch of nutmeg.

**Simple Steamed Celeriac** - serves 4

### Ingredients

- 2 medium celeriac, peeled and diced
- 1 ½ tablespoons butter
- 1-2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon parsley
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions

1. Cover the bottom of a small saucepan with about ½ inch of water and bring to a boil.
2. Add celeriac and steam until tender, about 10 minutes.
3. Remove from heat and toss in butter, lemon juice, and parsley. Add salt and pepper to taste and serve hot, as a side dish.

Other simple suggestions for celeriac:

- Short on celery? Try replacing it with celeriac in your favorite recipes!
- Add celeriac to soups, salads, coleslaw, roasts, casseroles, stuffing, and anything that would benefit from the taste of celery. Celeriac's soft texture (when cooked) makes it a very versatile veggie.



# Collards and Cooking Greens



Photos courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

## Background

Collard greens are some of the most well-known cooking greens, though in reality there is quite a wide variety. From kale to arugula to mustard greens, not all cooking greens even belong in the same family. The one trait shared by all greens in this category is that they lend themselves to cooking, unlike many salad greens. Collards, a well known southern comfort food, are most closely related to kale but have smoother, thinner leaves. Being more heat-tolerant than kale, it makes sense that collards are more often associated with warmer climates than some of the other cooking greens.

## Growing Tips

Collards can be started indoors or sown outside as soon as the soil can be worked. You can begin picking individual leaves after the plant has been growing steadily for about 6 weeks—pick the lower leaves first and the plant will keep producing. Collards also make a delicious baby green. For a steady supply of baby collards, sow seeds every 4-5 weeks. Collards will grow best with regular watering, though they are more drought-tolerant than many other cooking greens. Like other members of the cabbage family, collards are susceptible to green cabbage worms, but *Bacillus thuringiensis* can be used to control the pests. Note: for growing tips on other cooking greens, such as Swiss chard, look for them by name in this book.

## Storage

Once picked, collards and other greens can be chilled in cold water, but they should not be stored sopping wet. Shake or spin leaves mostly dry, pack loosely into plastic bags, and refrigerate (in crisper drawer) immediately. Cooking greens will generally only last a few days in the fridge, so use soon. For longer storage, greens can be blanched and frozen. Once frozen, they will store for months and can be thawed in the microwave for easy use.

## Preparation

Choose sturdy, unwilted, dark-green leaves without any bruises. Before using, rinse greens under cold running water and spin or blot dry. Most cooking greens can be consumed raw if thinly sliced and added to salads or other dishes, however, as the name suggests, they are most often cooked. Cooked greens are a traditional vegetable side dish. Try steaming, blanching, or lightly sautéing for the best flavor.

## Nutritional Benefits

With 226mg of calcium per cup, cooked collards are one of the vegetable world's biggest contributors to healthy bones. In addition to being so rich in calcium, collards are high in vitamins A, C, B1, and B2. For their low calorie content, collards provide a significant dose of vitamins and minerals. The minerals in collards are more easily absorbed by the body if the greens are cooked, but overcooking will cause the greens to lose some of their vitamins. To retain vitamins, leave the greens slightly crunchy or incorporate cooking liquid.

# Recipes

**Kickin' Collards and Rice** - serves 6  
(adapted from Ken Adams: allrecipes.com)

## Ingredients

2 cups rice  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
3 slices thick-cut bacon  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 teaspoons garlic  
1 large bunch fresh collards, chopped  
3 cups broth (chicken or vegetable)  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon ground black pepper  
1 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)



## Instructions

1. Cook rice according to instructions.
2. Heat oil in saucepan over medium heat. Cook bacon in saucepan until crisp, then chop it roughly with a spatula.
3. Add onion and cook until tender, stirring often.
4. Add garlic and collards. Cook until the greens become slightly limp.
5. Add chicken broth, salt, and pepper.
6. Reduce heat and simmer until greens are very tender, about 20 minutes. Serve greens and broth over rice.

**Tangy Sautéed Greens** - serves 4

## Ingredients

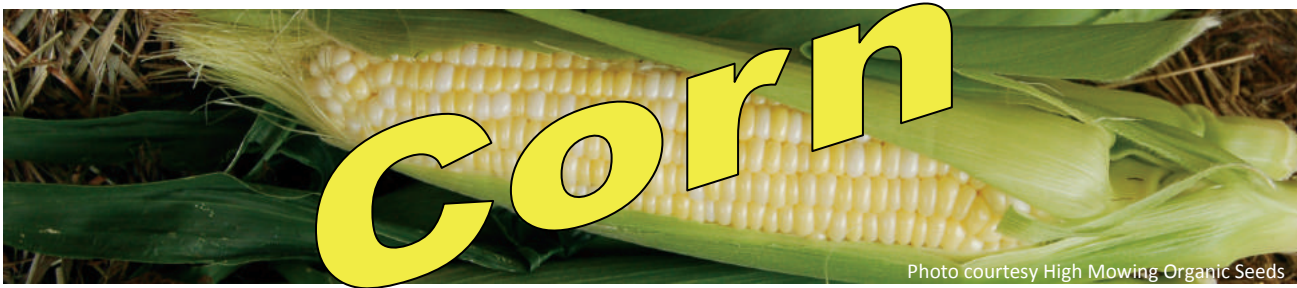
1 tablespoon butter or olive oil  
2 teaspoons garlic  
1 large bunch collards (or other cooking greens), chopped  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
Lemon zest (optional)  
Salt and pepper to taste

## Instructions

1. Heat butter or oil over medium heat in a large saucepan. Add garlic and cook until golden.
2. Add greens, salt, and pepper. Cook until greens are just tender, about 5 minutes.
3. Remove from heat, drizzle with lemon juice, garnish with zest, and serve warm.

## Other Simple Suggestions:

- Add cooking greens, finely chopped, to your favorite spaghetti sauce.
- Throw frozen greens into a soup or hearty stew.
- Add chopped greens into quiches, lasagnas, or casseroles.



### **Background**

Corn is one of North America's oldest and most symbolic foods. Together with winter squash and beans, corn was one of the "three sister" foods that were staples of the Native American diet for centuries. Fossilized grains of corn date the crop to many thousands of years ago. Corn was one of the first crops to be cultivated and traded by Native Americans; there were widespread fields of it by the time European explorers appeared. Also called "maize," corn was integral to the diet of early American colonists, who learned how to grow it from Native Americans. Corn, which is actually a grain, can be ground into flour like wheat, but some varieties are eaten in their immature state as "sweet corn," which is commonly considered a vegetable. Second to rice, corn is the world's most widespread crop, with the United States leading production. It is perhaps the world's most heavily genetically modified crop. Today, corn is grown for livestock feed, corn-syrup production, ethanol fuel, and plain old eating (which is probably the most well known-type of corn).

### **Growing Tips**

Sweet corn is most often seeded directly into the garden once the soil has warmed and frost is no longer a threat, but it can also be transplanted to get a jump on the growing season and avoid kernel-eating pests (start seeds 4 weeks before setting outside). Corn is a warmth-loving vegetable that needs full sunlight. Seeds should be planted about 1 inch deep with about 6 inches between plants. Don't forget to leave walking space between rows! Corn needs to be well fertilized with compost. Corn is ready to harvest when the ears are fat, have dried-down silk tassels, and their kernels squirt liquid when pierced. You can peel the husk back on an ear to check for readiness, but leave the remaining ears fully intact to avoid damage from pests. Corn is susceptible to attack from raccoons.

### **Storage**

Corn is best eaten as soon as possible after it is picked. It can be refrigerated for a short period of time. Once an ear of corn is removed from the stalk, the kernels' sugars begin turning to starch, making the corn mealy. If your corn cannot be consumed fresh, freeze loose kernels or on the cob after blanching.

### **Preparation**

When buying corn, choose full ears with bright green husks, avoiding ears with shriveled or overly large kernels. Classic corn on the cob is shucked, boiled in salted water, and served with butter. With the husks left on, ears of corn can be soaked in water and roasted in the oven (or in a fire if wrapped in foil). Also great eaten raw right off the cob.

### **Nutritional Benefits**

Sweet corn has a high fiber, protein, and potassium content. Sweet corn is very easy for humans to digest. The fresher the corn, the less starch it will contain and the more vitamins and minerals.

# Recipes

## Roasted Corn on the Cob - serves 3

### Ingredients

6 ears of corn (or as many as desired)  
Butter

### Instructions

1. Soak ears of corn, husks on, in a sink or bucket full of water for 1-2 hours.
2. Pre-heat oven to 450°F (note: you can also put them on a grill). Roast soaked ears (husks still intact) for 15 minutes directly on the rack. Turn once with tongs for even cooking.
3. Remove from oven and, when ears are cool enough to handle, remove husks and silk.
4. Serve hot with butter. Salt, pepper, grated cheese, and chili powder are also tasty toppings!

## Corn Fritters - serves 3

(adapted from Rombauer et al: *The Joy of Cooking*)

### Ingredients

1 large egg  
Kernels from 5 ears of corn  
2 teaspoons flour  
¼ teaspoon salt  
2 tablespoons butter

### Instructions

1. Separate egg into yolk and white. Beat white until stiff and set aside.
2. Mix together yolk, corn kernels, flour, and salt.
3. Fold in the egg white.
4. Heat butter in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Drop in spoonfuls of batter (leaving plenty of space), reduce heat to medium, and cook until both side are golden. Serve immediately with maple syrup.

## Fresh Corn and Bean Salsa - serves 10

(adapted from Heather Voeltner: allrecipes.com)

### Ingredients

2 cans black beans, drained and rinsed  
1 can corn, drained (or about 2 cups fresh corn kernels)  
2 cans diced tomatoes (or 2 large fresh tomatoes, diced)  
1 onion, finely chopped  
1 pepper, finely chopped  
2 teaspoons garlic  
2 tablespoons lime juice (optional)  
Handful cilantro leaves, chopped (optional)

### Instructions

1. Mix together all ingredients.
2. Chill and serve.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds



### **Background**

The modern cucumber has come a long way from its ancient, wild ancestor, which grew in Mesopotamia and India. Whereas the cucumbers of old were small and very bitter, the type of cucumber we're most familiar with today is the large, almost flavorless cylinder found in the produce aisle. Cucumbers have now been bred for sweetness, uniformity, and storability. Varieties do grow in many shapes and sizes, however, from small, yellowish pickling cucumbers to long, dark green European ones. Cucumbers have been appreciated since Roman times, when they were used both as a food and a remedy for various ailments.

### **Growing Tips**

Cucumbers are very susceptible to damage from cold, so they should be started indoors and transplanted when the soils have warmed. Cover young cucumbers with row cover to protect from decimation by striped cucumber beetles. Covers can be removed when the plants start to flower; at that point they will need to be uncovered so they can be pollinated and set fruit (for most varieties, anyway), but they will also be hardy enough at that size to survive beetle attacks. Cucumbers can be trellised to save space and keep the fruits clean. Apply fertilizer for increased yields and pick regularly. If overgrown, old fruits persist on the vine, production will slow. Cucumbers can be picked while still small, but will deteriorate in quality if overgrown, so harvest before fruits show any sign of yellowing. Plants will produce for many weeks on end, slowing down toward the end of the summer.

### **Storage**

Cucumbers are best eaten as soon as possible after harvesting. They can be wrapped tightly in plastic and stored in your refrigerator's crisper drawer for several days. For longer storage, cucumbers are most often pickled. Pickles can be canned or made into "refrigerator pickles," a less sturdy (but equally tasty) version that can be stored in the fridge for several weeks.

### **Preparation**

Cucumbers purchased from a supermarket are often coated with wax to prolong shelf-life and decrease moisture loss. Peeling waxed cucumbers is preferable, but fresh, unwaxed cucumbers do not need to be peeled. The skin is full of nutrients and fiber. Try cucumbers raw, sprinkled with salt or vinegar, or make into pickles.

### **Nutritional Benefits**

Cucumbers, which consist primarily of water, contain few calories but do have some nutrients. The skin also contains silica, a compound that helps our bodies form collagen, a protein that supports our connective tissues. Silica contributes to healthy skin, hair, and nails. Because cucumbers are so water-dense, they can help you stay hydrated too!



# Recipes

## Quick Dill Pickles - serves 10

Note: before pickling or canning for the first time, it is advised that you familiarize yourself with a more comprehensive overview (see Rombauer in bibliography).

### Ingredients

- 4-5 pounds pickling cucumbers
- 2 cups clear vinegar (like apple cider vinegar)
- 1 packet "pickling mix," found at most stores

### Instructions

1. Wash the cucumbers in very cold water, chop off both ends, and slice into spears (or whatever shape you like your pickles).
2. Sterilize the jars you plan on using, either in the dishwasher or in a large pot of boiling water.
3. Get your canner ready: bring a large pot of water to a boil, remembering that you will need to submerge full jars in it without overflowing the pot. If you wish to store your pickles in the fridge instead of canning them for a longer shelf-life, you may skip preparing the canner.
4. Mix the vinegar and pickling mix together in another pot and bring to a simmer. If the pickling mix calls for additional ingredients, such as water, add that now.
5. Pack the jars with the cucumbers and pour the vinegar mix over them, filling jars to within about ½ inch of the top.
6. Clean the rims of each jar, put on the lids, and gently tighten the rings. If you'd rather store your pickles in the fridge for use within a few weeks, you're finished! If you want to can them for storage out of the fridge, proceed.
7. Submerge the sealed jars into the boiling water bath. Process quart jars for 15 minutes and pint jars for 10.
8. Remove jars from the water bath and let cool undisturbed. For best flavor, let pickles sit for a few days before consuming. If any jars did not seal (the lid pops when you push on it), put those jars in the fridge and eat within a few weeks.



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## Cucumber-Beet Salad - serves 5

(adapted from Russ Parsons: *How to Pick a Peach*)

### Ingredients

- 3-4 beets, stems trimmed off
- 3 medium cucumbers
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 small bunch chives, minced
- 1 teaspoon garlic
- 4-5 ounces soft cheese, such as feta or chèvre

### Instructions

1. Simmer beets in a large saucepan of water until they can be pierced easily with a knife, about 45 minutes. Drain and rinse them under cold running water, rubbing off the skins with your fingers.
2. Peel cucumbers if desired, then chop into small chunks. Chop beets as well, and combine with cucumbers in large bowl.
3. Mix together, oil, vinegar, chives, garlic and salt. Drizzle over vegetables and toss.
4. Crumble the cheese and sprinkle atop the cucumbers and beets.

## Cucumber-Mint Raita - serves 8

(adapted from *Bon Appétit*, August 2004, and [epicurious.com](http://epicurious.com))

### Ingredients

- 2 cups plain yogurt
- ½ cup fresh mint, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 medium cucumber, finely chopped

### Instructions

1. Mix together yogurt, mint, and cumin in a medium-sized bowl.
2. Squeeze excess moisture out of cucumbers with a paper towel, then add to the yogurt mixture.
3. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to a day and serve cold.

Note: Raita is a great accompaniment to spicy Indian food!

# Eggplant



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

## Background

Although eggplant is often associated with Italy due to the famous eggplant Parmesan, it actually originated in southeast Asia. Also called aubergine, eggplant didn't spread to Europe until the 16th century. The Spanish called the odd-looking fruit the "apple of love," as they believed it to be an aphrodisiac. In contrast, the more suspicious British called it the "mad apple"—as part of the poisonous nightshade family, eggplant was originally suspected of being detrimental to health. The earlier varieties of eggplant may have been more bitter than those that are popular today. There are many varieties of eggplant, from the well-known purple, oblong fruit to small, white ones that look like eggs. The eggplants that are popular in the United States today were developed for their size and ability to hide bruises. Other cultures value eggplants of different sizes, shapes, and colors.

## Growing Tips

Eggplants like it hot! Seeds should be started indoors 2-3 months before planting outside (which you should do after all danger of frost has passed and the ground has warmed). Seeds germinate best at very warm temperatures. To boost the temperatures around the plants, you may wish to use black plastic mulch and/or floating row cover. Some Vermonters have even had success growing eggplants in large pots set atop their paved driveways! Take care not to over-fertilize, as that will cause plants to produce more leaves than fruit. Harvest eggplants when their skin becomes shiny and your fingerprints don't leave an impression on the fruit. To avoid slowing production, harvest regularly. Brown seeds indicate overripe fruit.

## Storage

Eggplants are relatively fragile despite their sturdy appearance. They are best when used as soon as possible, but if the skin is undamaged, they will keep for about a week in the refrigerator (or a few days out of it). To freeze: rinse, cut off both ends, and peel the fruit. Cut into half-inch thick slices and boil in 1 gallon water plus 1 cup lemon juice for 4 minutes. Chill slices in ice water, drain, and pack into freezer bags.

## Preparation

Whether or not you peel the eggplant is purely a matter of personal preference, though some larger fruits will have tough skins. Before frying eggplant, many cooks like to "sweat" it, which means sprinkling cut-up pieces with salt, letting them sit for 30 minutes, then rinsing with water. This has the effect of tenderizing the flesh slightly. Eggplant can be baked, roasted, fried, sautéed, and steamed.

## Nutritional Benefits

Eggplant is high in fiber and potassium. It is also a good source of vitamin B6, folate, magnesium, and niacin. Furthermore, eggplant has phytochemicals that are believed to help protect the body against lifetime illnesses.

# Recipes

## **Moroccan Couscous and Eggplant** - serves 4 (adapted from Leanne Kitchen: *The Produce Bible*)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 eggplant
- 3/4 cup olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 teaspoons cumin
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 handful fresh parsley, chopped (optional)

### *Instructions*

1. Put couscous in large, heat-proof bowl with 1½ cups boiling water. Let stand 10 minutes, then fluff.
2. Pour a few teaspoons olive oil into heavy fry pan, using enough to coat the bottom. Heat oil, then add onion and cook until browned. Transfer onions to a bowl.
3. Slice eggplant into half-inch rounds, then chop those into bite-sized pieces. Toss pieces with spices and salt.
4. Add remaining oil to the fry pan and heat. Fry eggplant until browned, about 20 minutes. Remove eggplant to bowl with onions.
5. Melt butter in fry pan, add couscous, and cook until warm. Stir in eggplant, onion, and parsley. Serve at room temperature.

## **Eggplant Parmesan** - serves 6 (adapted from eggplantrecipes.net)

### *Ingredients*

- 2 medium eggplants
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 quart (32 fluid ounces) of your favorite tomato sauce
- 8-16 ounces mozzarella cheese, grated
- 4 ounces Parmesan cheese, grated
- Additional olive oil, for frying

### *Instructions*

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Slice the eggplants lengthwise into thin slices.
3. Beat together the eggs and olive oil. Pour into a shallow dish. Spread out flour in another shallow dish.
4. Coat the eggplant slices with flour, then dip into the egg mixture.
5. Pour enough olive oil into a heavy saucepan to thickly cover the bottom and heat over medium heat. When oil is hot, slide in coated eggplant slices, taking care not to splash yourself with hot oil. Fry on both sides until golden brown.
6. Remove to plate layered with paper towels (to absorb excess oil).
7. Put a thin layer of tomato sauce in the bottom of a casserole dish. Top with a layer of eggplant, then sprinkle with cheeses. Repeat layers, finishing with cheese.
8. Bake 35-40 minutes. Serve warm.

## **Simple Grilled Eggplant**

### *Ingredients*

- 1 eggplant
- 1 teaspoon garlic
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 handful fresh herbs of choice
- Salt to taste

### *Instructions*

1. Cut the eggplant lengthwise into slices that are about ½ -inch thick.
2. Mix the garlic into the olive oil, then brush both sides of the eggplants slices with the oil.
3. Grill strips over medium heat until tender. Brush several times with remaining oil while cooking and try not to char the eggplant too much.
4. Meanwhile, chop herbs.
5. When eggplant is done, remove from heat, sprinkle with herbs and salt, and serve hot.



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# Fennel



Photos courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

## Background

Fennel has feathery leaves that grow from a white, swollen stem often mistaken for a bulb. Although it was widely used in Greek and Roman times, fennel didn't make it to the United States until the nineteenth century. Italians, however, have appreciated the anise-flavored vegetable for ages, even when the rest of the world did not. An American official abroad in Italy discovered the delights of fennel in 1824, when he mailed seeds back home to former President Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson grew the seeds in his famous garden and came to regard it as one of his favorite vegetables. Some people find the strong, anise-like flavor of fennel too intense, but cooked properly and tempered with other flavors, fennel can be a true delicacy.

## Growing Tips

Despite the fact that fennel originated in warm climates, it is a fairly hardy annual that appreciates cool weather and plenty of water. Well fertilized soils (enriched with compost) will produce the largest, sweetest "bulbs." There are two primary types of fennel: bulbing and non-bulbing. Non-bulbing fennel is used as an herb and is grown for both leaves and seed, so it is indeed useful, but don't be disappointed if you grow that type and it doesn't have a bulb-like base! Direct-seed fennel in mid-spring, sowing seeds again in mid-summer for another crop in the fall. If you wish transplant seedlings, start them indoors about 4 weeks before planting outdoors. If the plants start to bolt (go to seed), remove the bolting stalks. Harvest fennel when the bulbs are about 3-4 inches across.

## Storage

Fennel is sensitive to drying out, so it needs to be wrapped in plastic before being stored in the refrigerator. The bulb will store longer if the stems and leaves are removed, so if possible, use the greenery first. On its own, the bulb will keep for about a week. Keep fennel as close to freezing as possible without actually freezing it, which will damage quality.

## Preparation

The greenery on fennel is a good indication of its freshness; never choose fennel with wilted or dull tops. Bulbs should be firm, largely unblemished, and white-green in color. Smaller bulbs are milder, making them better suited for eating raw. Larger bulbs can be trimmed at the base, quartered, and then cooked in a variety of ways. Fennel is especially tasty when roasted or braised.

## Nutritional Benefits

Fennel's flavor comes from a compound called anethole, which may be an anti-inflammatory agent. In addition to being full of Vitamin C, fennel is a good source of potassium, dietary fiber, folate, iron, phosphorus, and magnesium.

# Recipes

## **Fennel Salad** - serves 6

(adapted from Russ Parsons: *How to Pick a Peach*)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 large fennel bulb
- 1 pound button mushrooms (or other mushrooms)
- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1 handful onion greens or chives, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon garlic
- 2 ounces Parmesan cheese, grated

### *Instructions*

1. Remove the stalks from the bulb-like portion of the fennel, reserving a handful of greens and chopping them finely. Quarter the bulb like you would an apple and cut away the tough base. Quarter each quarter lengthwise again, then chop in half.
2. Chop the mushrooms into small pieces.
3. In a medium bowl, mix together olive oil, lemon juice, thyme, onion greens, salt, garlic, and chopped fennel greens. Toss the fennel in the mixture, then remove to serving platter with a slotted spoon.
4. Toss mushrooms in the mixture, then arrange atop fennel. Top with Parmesan and serve.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

## **Braised Fennel and Potatoes** - serves 4

(adapted from *Gourmet*, February 2006, and epicurious.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 large fennel bulb with greens
- 1 onion, chopped
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 pound red (or other waxy-skinned) potatoes

### *Instructions*

1. Quarter bulb and remove the tough base before slicing lengthwise into ¼ -inch thick strips.
2. Heat oil in heavy skillet over medium heat. Add fennel, onion, pepper, and salt and cook, covered, until onion is just tender. Stir occasionally.
3. Chop potatoes into ¼ -inch thick rounds. Add to fennel mixture and cook, uncovered, about 3 minutes, stirring often.
4. Add ½ cup water to the mixture, cover, and cook until potatoes are tender, about 10-12 minutes more.

## **Simple Roasted Fennel** - serves 4

(adapted from Diana Rattray, about.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 2 bulbs fennel, greens removed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- Other seasoning as desired

### *Instructions*

1. Heat oven to 375°F.
2. Line a medium-sized baking dish with aluminum foil.
3. Quarter fennel, remove tough base, and slice into thin wedges.
4. In a bowl, gently toss fennel wedges with olive oil, salt, pepper, and lemon juice (as well as other seasonings if desired). If you prefer, use a brush to coat fennel with oil and seasonings.
5. Transfer fennel to baking dish and bake until tender, about 30 minutes. Stir slices midway through baking. Try serving alongside pork!



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

# *Garlic and Garlic Scapes*

## **Background**

Garlic, which is native to central Asia, dates back thousands of years and is used worldwide. It is unknown precisely when garlic came into mainstream culinary use, but it has been used medicinally since ancient times. If you haven't ever seen garlic growing, you may have never seen garlic scapes. Like onions, garlic sends up a long stalk in the spring with an immature bud at the top. On garlic, this stalk is very curly at the end. If left to mature, it will form a capsule filled with bulbils, which will eventually fall from the plant and cause it to re-seed itself (genetically speaking, the offspring are the clone of the parent garlic). Growing garlic from bulbils, however, results in small heads of garlic, so many growers choose to grow garlic by planting cloves instead. In this case, the scapes are cut off so the plant can put its energy into producing a larger subsurface bulb. The scapes themselves are a tasty treat.

## **Growing Tips**

In Vermont, garlic should be planted in the fall about four weeks before the ground begins to freeze regularly (this allows the garlic to take root but not to form above-ground growth that will get damaged by cold). For planting, choose several heads and break them into cloves, being careful to leave the cloves intact. Each clove will ultimately form one full head of garlic. The larger the starting clove, the larger the resulting head will be. Plant cloves between 2-4 inches deep with the pointy end up and mulch thickly with straw or hay. Leave 4-6 inches between cloves. Plants will sprout the following spring. Keep them well weeded and apply compost at least once. Harvest scapes (which are only found on hardneck varieties) when long and curly. Harvest bulbs when lower leaves have dried down (using a garden fork if necessary). Allow to "cure" (air-dry) in a dim, dry area for 2-3 weeks.

## **Storage**

For homegrown garlic, trim tops and roots after curing. Bulbs should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place. Softneck varieties will store longer than hardneck varieties. Scapes should be refrigerated in a plastic bag and used as soon as possible. Scapes are also great pickled. Garlic cloves can also be peeled and frozen.

## **Preparation**

Regardless of how you prepare the garlic, you will first need to pull the cloves off the bulb and peel them. To peel, squash the clove gently with the flat of a knife, breaking the papery skin. You may wish to rinse cloves after peeling to wash off any gritty residue. Garlic can be eaten raw, roasted, sautéed, and added to countless dishes, including soups, sauces, and spreads.

## **Nutritional Benefits**

Garlic has been used for hundreds of years as a cure-all to battle various types of illness, from those as simple as the common cold to much more complex diseases. The pungent herb may aid in battling certain cancers, cardiovascular diseases, and high blood pressure. Garlic also contains a lot of sulfur and vitamin C.

# Recipes

**Roasted Garlic** - serves 2  
(adapted from Joy Wilson: joythebaker.com)

### Ingredients

- 1 head garlic
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

### Instructions

1. Preheat toaster oven or oven to 400°F.
2. Using a sharp knife, chop the top (pointy end) off the head of garlic, trying to slice through the top of most of the cloves so the flesh is exposed.
3. Place the garlic on a sheet of aluminum foil large enough to wrap around it. Drizzle olive oil into the head so it sinks down between the cloves.
4. Sprinkle generously with salt and pepper, then wrap up in foil, place on baking sheet, and roast for 35 minutes or until completely tender.
5. Allow to cool slightly before handling, then squeeze the cloves out of their skins. Try serving spread on warm bread.

**Annie's Garlic Croutons**

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups old bread, cubed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 5 cloves of garlic, chopped

### Instructions

1. Heat oven to 375°F.
2. In a heavy, ovenproof skillet (such as cast iron), heat olive oil over medium heat.
3. Add bread and toss to coat in oil. Cook on stovetop 3-4 minutes, stirring frequently, then add salt and garlic. Cook another 2 minutes, then transfer to oven.
4. Bake until croutons are golden-brown and crispy, about 10 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to cool slightly. Try serving atop your favorite soup or salad.

**Garlic Scape Soup** - serves 4  
(adapted from farmerdaves.net)

### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 cups garlic scapes, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 3 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 cup cream or milk
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions

1. Heat olive oil in saucepot over medium heat.
2. Add onion and scapes and sauté until both are tender. Add thyme a few minutes before removing from heat.
3. Transfer cooked vegetable and herb mixture to a blender or food processor, add a cup of the broth, and process until smooth.
4. Return to pot, add remaining broth, and reheat to a simmer.
5. Turn off heat, stir in cream or milk, add salt and pepper to taste, and serve warm.

Note: This recipe can also be made with garlic cloves instead of scapes—simply chop the garlic and add to the onion near the end of cooking (chopped garlic will cook much faster than scapes). Another variation is to add very soft, boiled potatoes before processing in blender or processor to make potato-garlic soup. More stock may need to be added.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds



# Herbs

For more information about these and other herbs, take a look at *Herbs and Spices* by Jill Norman (see bibliography)



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## **Basil**

Basil, which is believed to have originated in India, is a staple herb in Southeast Asian cuisines. The herb is featured in many Italian dishes as well, though it is generally a slightly different variety. Basil compliments tomatoes and garlic and is often found on pizzas or in spaghetti sauces. Cooking can damage basil's delicate flavor, so it is generally added to dishes near the end of cooking or eaten fresh. Store bunches of basil like a bouquet, trimming the stems and setting out at room temperature in a glass of water. Use within a few days.

## **Chives**

Chives are a perennial and the only member of the onion family that may be native to both Europe and North America. As a perennial, chives make a dependable addition to the garden. They have a flavor similar to onions but lighter. They are commonly used in soups, spreads, sauces, and dips, but chives are perhaps most loved as a topping for baked potatoes. They can be used to add a splash of green to dishes. Use as soon as possible after harvesting or, if necessary, store in the refrigerator loosely wrapped in plastic for a few days.

## **Cilantro**

Cilantro comes from the leaves of the plant that, when mature, forms the seeds known as "coriander." The plant comes from Southern Europe and Northern Africa and was probably transported to the Americas by Spanish explorers. Cilantro is now a staple in Mexican cuisine, though it's also popular in Southeast Asia and China. Try adding to salsa, guacamole, burritos, or dishes with coconut milk. The leaves have a very strong flavor, so it is wise to start by adding a small amount and increasing to taste. Store like basil, though in the refrigerator.

## **Dill**

Dill, which probably comes to us from the Mediterranean, is a versatile herb that pairs well with dairy, fish, and perhaps most famously, pickles. Both the leaves (called "dill weed") and the seeds are used. The leaves are best used fresh. You may be able to store them using the bouquet method, but dill is tender and may wilt.

## **Parsley**

Parsley is one of the most commonly used herbs and appears in European, Middle Eastern, and American cuisines. It hails from Italy and is used on potatoes, rice, fish, meats, and in soups and salads. Furthermore, parsley is a popular garnish. Parsley is a biennial, but its flavor will be bitter in the second year. Store in the refrigerator like a bouquet.

## **Thyme**

Thyme has a lovely fragrance as well as taste; the ancient Greeks used it as incense. Commonly added to sauces and soups, thyme also makes a great addition to dishes with beans, fish, or eggs. Use only the leaves, not the woody stem, unless making stock. To store, wrap in a damp paper towel and refrigerate for up to a week.



# Recipes

## Garlic Chive Butter - serves 10

### Ingredients

- 1 stick unsalted butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon chives, chopped

### Instructions

1. In a sturdy bowl, cream butter and herbs (you can also beat them together with a mixer for a fluffier texture).
2. Refrigerate 2-3 hours before using. Use within several days. Serve atop warm bread or baked potatoes.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

## Pesto Sauce - serves 3

(adapted from foodnetwork.com)

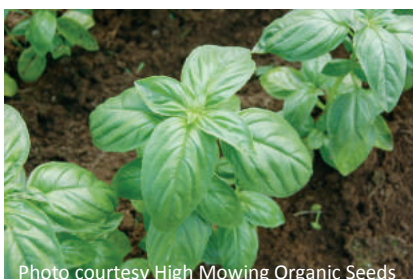


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### Ingredients

- 2 cups basil leaves, packed
- 3 cloves garlic (adjust to taste)
- ¼ cup pine nuts, sunflower seeds, or other nuts
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- ½ cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions

1. In a food processor, finely chop basil, garlic, and nuts.
2. Add cheese and then gradually add oil, processing until smooth.
3. Add salt and pepper to taste. Most popular served atop pasta, pesto is also great on potatoes and chicken.
4. To freeze: spoon into ice-cube trays (slightly flexible ones work best), freeze, then pop out of trays, bag, and store in freezer for several months.

## Tabouleh - serves 4

(adapted from Saad Fayed: about.com)

### Ingredients

- ½ cup medium-grain bulgur
- 2 bunches fresh parsley
- 1 large handful fresh mint leaves
- 1 small onion, minced
- 1-2 large tomatoes, diced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon garlic
- ¼ cup olive oil

### Instructions

1. Soak bulgur in cold water until soft, 1-2 hours. Drain in sieve, pressing down from top with a small plate to squeeze out excess moisture.
  2. Remove stems from parsley, then finely chop both parsley and mint. Combine herbs with onion, tomato, and bulgur in large bowl.
  3. In a small bowl, combine, salt, pepper, lemon juice, garlic, and olive oil. Whisk together, pour over other mixture, and toss to coat.
  4. Serve immediately or chill 1-2 hours in refrigerator.
- Note: there are endless variations on this dish! Try adding different veggies (like cucumber) or substituting other herbs, such as dill or cilantro, for the parsley and mint.

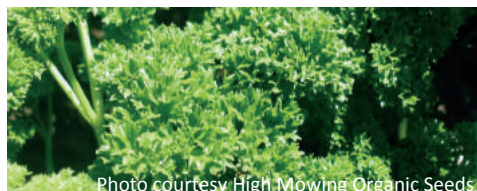


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### **Background**

A relative of cabbage, Kale is an old-fashioned vegetable whose ancestors were popular among the ancient Greeks and Romans. Types of kale very similar to those we eat today were commonly eaten in the middle ages. Because kale is so-cold hardy, it has historically been an important crop that remains available long after the traditional growing season ends. Unlike cabbage, kale leaves do not form a tight head, but instead branch off from a thick, central stem. Kale can be found in curly and flat-leafed varieties in colors that range from blue-black to bright green to purplish. In World War II, kale was a common component of victory gardens due to its ease of growing. Kale is enjoying a comeback today for many of the same reasons that have made it intermittently popular for centuries.

### **Growing Tips**

Kale can either be grown as a baby green or allowed to mature to its full size. A very cold hardy vegetable, kale can be direct seeded as soon as the soil can be worked or started indoors 4 weeks prior and transplanted. For baby leaf kale, sow seeds every 4 weeks until the first frost. For full-sized kale, harvest the bottom leaves first and the plant will continue to produce, sprouting new leaves out of the center. Kale often becomes sweeter after a frost, but will eventually die off after prolonged freezing temperatures. Keep an eye on plants for cabbage worms. Some varieties (particularly Red Russian) are prone to flea beetles when young, but you can protect plants with row cover.

### **Storage**

After harvesting leaves, dunk in very cold water and shake to dry slightly. Wrap loosely in plastic and store in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator for up to a week. Because kale will hold so well in the field, home growers can afford to delay harvesting until just before use. For long-term storage, kale can be blanched (dunked in boiling water for a few minutes), chilled, drained, then packed into freezer bags and stored in the freezer for several months.

### **Preparation**

Rinse fresh kale before using. For kale with large, tough stems, rip (or cut) the leafy portion from the central rib and discard the tough portion. Young, tender kale is tasty raw if chopped and added to salads, but older kale generally lends itself better to cooking. Kale can be steamed, boiled, sautéed, baked, and added to a wide variety of dishes.

### **Nutritional Benefits**

Kale is one of the best things you can eat! Packed with a huge variety of vitamins and minerals, kale delivers lots of benefits with few calories. Like other members of the cabbage family, kale contains sulforaphane, a compound that is believed to have anti-cancer properties. Kale is also a good source of iron and dietary fiber.

# Recipes

## Simple Sautéed Kale - serves 4—6

### Ingredients

- 1 large bunch kale, any variety
- 2-3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and finely sliced
- ½ cup broth (chicken or vegetable)
- 1 tablespoon vinegar (apple cider or red wine)
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions

1. Chop kale, removing tough center ribs.
2. Heat olive oil in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add garlic and cook until just tender but not yet beginning to brown (only a few minutes).
3. Turn heat to high and add broth. Add kale, stir, cover, and cook about 5 minutes.
4. Uncover. Cook until the liquid has evaporated, stirring frequently.
5. Remove from heat, toss with vinegar, and season with salt and pepper.

## Baked Kale Chips - serves 4—6

### Ingredients

- 1 large bunch kale (curly types work best)
- 1-2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon coarse salt (adjust to taste)

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 325°F.
2. Cut center rib out of kale and then chop or rip the leaves into big pieces.
3. In a bowl, toss kale with olive oil and salt, doing your best to coat the kale with the oil.
4. Arrange kale in a single layer on a baking sheet (or several baking sheets).
5. Bake about 15 minutes, or until kale is beginning to crisp. Watch carefully—once kale begins to crisp, it can burn quickly!
6. Cool slightly before serving.

## Kale and Bean Soup - serves 6

(adapted from Dave Lieberman: foodnetwork.com)

### Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 large stalk of celery, chopped
- 3 teaspoons garlic
- 1 bunch kale, chopped, stems discarded
- 4 cups broth
- 2 cans cannellini or other white beans
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- Salt and pepper to taste



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

### Instructions

1. Heat oil in large saucepot over medium heat. Add onion, carrot, and celery and cook until just tender, about 5 minutes.
2. Add garlic and kale and cook until garlic is beginning to brown.
3. Add broth, beans, tomatoes, vinegar, and seasoning. Reduce heat and simmer, partially covered, about 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Add salt and pepper to taste and serve hot.

Note: homemade garlic croutons make a great topping for this soup!

# Kohlrabi



## Background

Kohlrabi, also sometimes called "German turnip," is a member of the cabbage family. The part of kohlrabi that is most commonly eaten does in fact resemble a turnip, but it isn't a root at all. Kohlrabi plants form a very swollen, bulbous stem just above the ground and small, kale-like leaves shoot up off of it. The edible bulbous portion is usually pale green but can also be purple depending upon the variety. Kohlrabi has a flavor similar to that of broccoli stems or mild cabbage, but it is generally sweeter, juicier, and more tender. Kohlrabi greens can also be prepared like other cooking greens. Some varieties of kohlrabi are grown for animal feed and, in general, the vegetable is much more common in Europe than in the United States. It is native to the cooler climates of northern Europe.

## Growing Tips

Like almost all members of the cabbage family, kohlrabi prefers somewhat cool, mild weather. Seeds will germinate in very cold temperatures, so you may sow seeds as soon as the soil can be worked in the spring. For a bit of a jump on the season, start seeds indoors a few weeks early. It takes only about 6-8 weeks for a young kohlrabi seedling to reach maturity, so you may plant another crop if you wish to have a second harvest. You also may wish to stagger several seedlings if you don't want to wind up with too much kohlrabi at once! Kohlrabi appreciates well-drained soil, consistent watering, and soil with plenty of compost mixed in. Most kohlrabi is best if harvested when the plant reaches 3 - 4 inches in diameter--any larger and the flesh will become tough and woody (with the exception of a few varieties, such as Gigante). Plants can withstand light frosts but not prolonged freezing temperatures.

## Storage

To store, trim off the leafy stems and any roots still attached. Rinse, towel dry, and refrigerate in plastic bags for up to several weeks. For long-term storage, kohlrabi can be frozen. Simply peel, chop into chunks, blanch for 2-3 minutes, cool, and then freeze. To keep the chunks from all sticking together, you may first freeze them on cookie sheets and then transfer them to freezer bags.

## Preparation

Kohlrabi is tasty both raw and cooked. Smaller kohlrabi will have tender skin, but you may want to peel larger, tougher ones before eating. Try throwing raw kohlrabi into salads or chopping it into strips and eating with a veggie dip as you would broccoli. Kohlrabi can be steamed, sautéed, boiled, roasted, braised, or added to many of your favorite dishes.

## Nutritional Benefits

Eating kohlrabi is a great way to get more vitamin C, dietary fiber, and potassium into your diet! It also contains Vitamin A, folic acid, and calcium. Like many vegetables, kohlrabi is low in calories and fat. Its high fiber content makes it reasonably filling.

# Recipes

**Kohlrabi Soup** - serves 6  
(adapted from cookitsimply.com)

### Ingredients

3 medium kohlrabi  
4 strips bacon  
1 onion, chopped  
1 carrot, chopped  
2 large potatoes, diced  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
3 teaspoons garlic  
8 cups stock or water  
Salt and pepper

### Instructions

1. Peel and dice kohlrabi.
2. Heat a large saucepot over medium heat and fry the bacon until crispy. Set bacon aside, then cook onions in bacon grease (discarding some if you like) until tender and translucent.
3. Add kohlrabi, carrot, potatoes, and olive oil and sauté for 2 minutes. Add garlic and cook 2 minutes longer.
4. Add stock or broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer about 40 minutes, or until vegetables are tender.
5. Chop cooked bacon, add to soup, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot.

**Scalloped Kohlrabi** - serves 6  
(adapted from cookitsimply.com)

### Ingredients

2 tablespoons butter  
1 onion, thinly sliced  
4 medium kohlrabi  
Salt and pepper  
1 cup milk  
Chopped fresh parsley to garnish (optional)

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter in a heavy saucepan over medium heat, then cook onions until slightly tender. Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly.
3. Peel kohlrabi and slice thinly.
4. Grease a casserole dish with some of the butter. Layer the kohlrabi and onions in the dish, seasoning the kohlrabi layers with salt and pepper.
5. Pour the milk over the top of the vegetables and dot with any remaining butter.
6. Cook for about 1.5 hours or until vegetables are very tender.
7. Serve hot, garnished with parsley.

**Roasted Kohlrabi and Butternut Squash** - serves 6  
(adapted from *Gourmet*, November 2006, and epicurious.com)

### Ingredients

3-4 medium kohlrabi  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
½ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon black pepper  
1 butternut squash (or another winter squash that is easily peeled and good for baking)  
2 teaspoons thyme, chopped

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. Lightly grease a shallow baking dish.
2. Peel and chop kohlrabi into ¾-inch chunks. Toss with half of the olive oil, salt and pepper. Transfer to pan and roast 10-15 minutes.
3. Peel squash, quarter it, scoop out seeds, and chop flesh into ¾-inch chunks. Toss with the thyme and remaining oil, salt, and pepper.
4. Add squash to roasting kohlrabi, stirring the mixture. Cook about 30 minutes or until vegetables are tender and beginning to brown, stirring at least once during roasting. Serve warm.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

# Leeks

## Background

Leeks belong to the Allium (onion) family, as you may have been able to guess from the way they look, but their more delicate flavor and texture makes them a specialty vegetable. Popular in upscale restaurants, leeks also lends themselves to simple home-cooking. Leeks were highly esteemed by the ancient Romans and have remained popular through the centuries. Instead of forming a bulb beneath the soil, leeks form a long cylinder of tightly bunched leaves that branch out at the top. The firm, white, base of this cylinder is the part that is generally eaten. To keep the base of the leeks white, soil is generally pushed up around them, which keeps that part of the plant from producing chlorophyll. As a result, dirt often lodges in the crevices around the base of the leaves, meaning leeks need careful cleaning.

## Growing Tips

Leeks can be found in winter and summer varieties with different stem heights and thicknesses. Winter leeks are hardier, so choose those varieties for the earliest plantings. You can begin seeds indoors as early as March and transplant as soon as the soil can be worked. Seedlings should be transplanted into troughs 4-6 inches deep, with only about half of the leaves showing above the ground. Leeks take from 3-4 months to reach maturity, so be sure to leave plenty of time for them to grow to full size (though baby leeks are a delicacy, too). Leeks prefer very fertile, well-drained soil with plentiful nitrogen and will benefit from frequent weeding. For longer, whiter stalks, hill soil up around the stems a few times over the summer as the plants grow.

## Storage

Leeks store best in chilly root cellars, hilled in sand with the leaves poking out. They can also be wrapped in plastic bags in stored in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator, though they will only last a few weeks at best that way. Some leek growers report being able to leave leeks in the ground to overwinter for spring use, but extreme freezes will damage quality, so mulch heavily if going that route.

## Preparation

Cut off the base of the leek, just trimming off the roots but leaving the stem as intact as possible. Trim the leaves and discard or set aside for use in stock. If you are planning to chop the leeks for use anyway, proceed to chop and then wash the leek segments very thoroughly afterward. If serving whole, slit the upper portion into quarters. Then soak and rinse repeatedly.

## Nutritional Benefits

Leeks are a good source of potassium and iron. They also contain beta carotene and Vitamin C. Like other members of the allium family, leeks are touted for their health benefits and for preventing against long term diseases.

# Recipes

## Leek & Potato Soup - serves 6

(adapted from *Bon Appétit*, May 1996, and epicurious.com)

### Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 leeks, trimmed, chopped, and thoroughly washed
- 3 cloves of garlic, sliced
- 6 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 3-4 large, waxy potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup cream or milk
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt (or to taste)
- Chopped chives, onion greens, or parsley for garnish (optional)

### Instructions

1. Melt butter in a large, heavy-bottomed pot over low-medium heat. Add leeks and sauté until tender, about 15 minutes. Add garlic and continue to cook until garlic is golden and soft, a few minutes more.
2. Add the stock and potatoes. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer, covered, until potatoes are very soft, about 30 minutes.
3. Remove mixture from heat and process with immersion blender or in standard blender, taking care not to burn yourself on the hot liquid (process in small batches if necessary).
4. Once smooth, return mixture to pot. Stir in cream, pepper, and salt. Garnish and serve hot.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

## Braised Leeks - serves 5

(adapted from Hank Shaw: [www.simplyrecipes.org](http://www.simplyrecipes.org))

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 5 leeks, trimmed, washed, and quartered lengthwise
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 cup broth or white wine

### Instructions

1. Heat butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add leeks (cut side down) and cook 2 minutes. Flip, sprinkle with half the salt, and cook another 2 minutes.
2. Flip leeks again (back to cut side down), sprinkle sugar and remaining salt, and add broth or wine.
3. Bring to a simmer, cover, and cook approximately 40 minutes over low heat, until leeks are tender.
4. Bring liquid to a boil and cook until it is reduced by about half. Remove from heat and serve warm as a side dish.

## Potato-Leek Pancakes - serves 4

(adapted from [petesgreens.blogspot.com](http://petesgreens.blogspot.com))

### Ingredients

- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons flour
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 leek, trimmed, finely chopped, and rinsed
- 5 medium, waxy potatoes, grated
- ¼ cup vegetable oil

### Instructions

1. In a mixing bowl, beat eggs. Add flour, baking powder, salt, and pepper and stir to combine.
2. Mix in leek and grated potatoes and stir until veggies are coated.
3. Heat oil in heavy frying pan (such as cast iron) over medium heat.
4. Spoon ½ cup blobs of batter into the hot oil. Fry on each side until golden and crisp.
5. Remove to a paper-towel covered plate (to soak up excess oil). Serve warm.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

### **Background**

Lettuce, one of the world's most popular vegetables, is a leafy plant that is most commonly eaten raw in salads. While most people are familiar with only a few kinds of lettuce, such as iceberg and romaine, there are actually hundreds of varieties. Lettuce can be divided into five distinct categories: butterhead, crisphead, loose-leaf, romaine, and stem (or "Chinese") lettuce. It is believed that the ancient Egyptians grew lettuce alongside some of the world's first cultivated crops thousands of years ago. Modern lettuce cultivars descended from a variety of wild lettuce that is native to Asia. For the home grower, it is worth pursuing some of the lesser-known varieties of lettuce. Industrial agriculture tends to favor firm, hardy lettuce varieties that can be shipped and stored with little damage, which has unfortunately led to the decline of some much tastier lettuces.

### **Growing Tips**

Lucky for New Englanders, almost all varieties of lettuce prefer cooler temperatures. Lettuce can be seeded directly into the garden as soon as the soil can be easily worked, but lettuce can also be started indoors and transplanted. If you are growing a leafy salad mix, however, transplanting is not recommended—it works much better for heading lettuces. Avoid planting outdoors when there is still a risk for consistent hard frosts. Most lettuce varieties reach maturity in less than two months, so if you plant in May, you will certainly be feasting by July! Be sure to stagger lettuce plantings to avoid an overabundance all at once. Starting a few heads every two weeks will ensure a steady supply. Lettuce may not germinate well in hot temperatures and it will also become bitter during periods of extended heat or drought, so keep it well watered. Pick once mature to avoid bolting.

### **Storage**

Heads of lettuce can be stored unwashed, wrapped loosely in plastic, in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator. Wet lettuce will deteriorate quickly, so if you purchase sopping leaves, spin them dry or wrap them in a paper towel to absorb excess moisture before refrigerating. Use as soon as possible—lettuce lasts only days.

### **Preparation**

Lettuce should always be washed before eating. For especially gritty lettuce, fill a large bowl with cold water and throw in the lettuce leaves (it's easier to wash leaves than the whole head). Swirl them around, then dry in a salad spinner or, if you don't have one, shake vigorously in a colander and then gently blot with a clean dish towel.

### **Nutritional Benefits**

Lettuce is made up almost entirely of water, which helps explain why it is so refreshing in the summer heat. It also contains vitamins A and C, beta carotene, and folic acid.



# Recipes

## Basic Vinaigrette Dressing - serves 12+

### Ingredients

- ½ cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 teaspoons maple syrup or brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup good quality olive oil

### Instructions

1. Pour all ingredients into a mason jar or a used salad dressing bottle.
2. Shake vigorously to combine.
3. Serve over green salads. Refrigerate after using. If the oil solidifies, microwave the dressing for a few seconds before using again (or let it sit out on the counter briefly).

Note: Adjust proportions to taste—some may find the amount of vinegar in this recipe to be too much. You can also spice up this dressing by adding a few of your favorite seasonings!

## Greek Salad - serves 6

### Ingredients

- 2 tomatoes, diced
- 1 large cucumber, diced
- 1 bell pepper, diced
- ½ cup olives, split in half
- ½ red onion, diced
- Basic vinaigrette dressing (above)
- Splash of lemon juice
- Handful of fresh parsley, chopped (optional)
- 6-8 cups lettuce, chopped or torn into pieces
- ¼ cup crumbled feta cheese

### Instructions

1. Put tomatoes, cucumber, pepper, olives, and onion in a large bowl and toss lightly with a splash of the vinaigrette.
2. Sprinkle with lemon juice and add parsley if desired.
3. If not serving immediately, refrigerate for up to two hours, otherwise:
4. Put lettuce in a large salad bowl. Toss with a splash of dressing, then top with veggie mixture. Sprinkle with feta cheese and serve promptly.

## Pasta with Peas, Butterhead Lettuce, and Bacon - serves 6

(adapted from Molly Stevens: *Bon Appétit*, April 2009, and epicurious.com)



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, minced
- ½ cup white wine (optional) or splash of vinegar
- 1 cup chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 pound shell-shaped pasta
- 2 cups peas, shelled
- 1 head butterhead lettuce, chopped
- 1 cup grated Parmesan or cheddar cheese
- ½ cup chopped parsley (optional)
- ½ cup bacon, cooked and chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions

1. Melt butter with oil in large, heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and sauté until just tender.
2. Add wine or vinegar (taking care not to burn yourself if the liquid splatters) and cook until liquid is almost gone, about 4 minutes.
3. Add broth and simmer mixture briefly, then turn off heat.
4. Cook pasta according to instructions on package, taking care not to overcook.
5. Reheat onion mixture until it barely reaches a simmer. Add peas, then add lettuce and stir until just wilted. Remove mixture from heat. Stir in cheese.
6. Pour mixture over the hot, drained pasta. Toss to coat. Add parsley if desired, season with salt and pepper to taste, and sprinkle with bacon. Serve warm.

Note: the original version of this recipe called for prosciutto, which can be substituted for the bacon, as can cooked, cubed ham. For a vegetarian version, simply omit the meat altogether!



# Melons



Photos courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

## Background

Melons usually fall into two distinct categories: the ever-popular watermelons, and the Cucumis melons (commonly called “musk melons”), which include everything else. Cantaloupe and honeydew melons, for example, are pretty closely related, but watermelons are a more distant relative. The Cucumis melons probably originated in the region around present-day Afghanistan, whereas watermelons are native to Africa. If you’ve ever seen melons growing before, you may not be surprised to learn that the vine-like plants belong to the same family as cucumbers. Melons have been grown since ancient times, but it is believed that they were not bred for today’s high levels of sweetness until a few centuries ago.

## Growing Tips

Melons of all varieties need plenty of warmth and a long growing season. Start seeds indoors and transplant seedlings once the weather warms. Start seeds in early April in pots with some compost mixed into the potting soil. Seeds need warmth to germinate, so be sure to start them in one of the warmer rooms of your house! Plant melons in rich, well-drained soil that is enriched with compost. To give them a boost, grow your melons on black plastic, which will increase the temperature around them by a few degrees as well as keep down weeds. Space plants several feet apart, as they will spread. Rodents and cucumber beetles like to feed on tender young melon plants, so you may wish to protect them at first with floating row cover (removing it when plants bloom). Melons cannot tolerate frost, so be sure to both plant and harvest in the frost-free summer window.

## Storage

Watermelons will not continue to ripen after they have been picked and should be immediately refrigerated and eaten as soon as possible, though you may store it this way for a few days. Most other melons can sit out at room temperature for a few days until they ripen, but once ripe they should also be refrigerated and eaten within a few days.

## Preparation

Melons are delicious with minimal preparation, but it can be difficult to tell when they are ripe. Watermelons should have a creamy, pronounced spot where they rested on the ground and have slightly waxy skin. Other melons may “slip” from the vine when ripe, will smell faintly sweet, and should be barely tender on the ends.

## Nutritional Benefits

Melons are comprised mostly of water, so they are fairly low in calories despite their sweet taste. Though the nutritional value of melons varies among varieties, they tend to be high in Vitamin C and beta carotene.

# Recipes

## **Fruit Salad** - serves 8

### *Ingredients*

- 1-2 apples, cored and chopped
- Splash of lemon juice
- 3 heaping cups of melon of any variety, chopped, seeds removed
- 1 orange, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup grapes, halved
- 1 pear, cored and chopped
- 2 kiwis, peeled and chopped
- 1 banana
- Other fruits as desired

### *Instructions*

1. Put chopped apples in a large salad bowl and toss with the lemon juice (this prevents unattractive browning of the apples).
2. Add all other chopped fruits and toss. Chill in the refrigerator for up to several hours before serving.
3. Peel, chop, and add banana just before serving to keep it from turning brown and mushy.

## **Watermelon Popsicles** - serves 4

### *Ingredients*

- 4 heaping cups watermelon cubes
- ½ cup frozen lemonade concentrate
- 1 tablespoon sugar, honey, or maple syrup

### *Instructions*

1. Make sure all seeds are removed from watermelon cubes.
2. Put all ingredients in a blender and process until smooth.
3. Pour the fruity puree into popsicle molds and freeze until solid. If you do not have popsicle molds, try freezing in paper cups. Insert a popsicle stick into the middle of each cup when semi-frozen (this way the stick won't just flop over to the side). You can also cover the lids with aluminum foil and cut a slit for the sticks—the foil will hold the stick upright. When pops are solid, peel off the paper cup to eat.

Note: to add variety to these popsicles, try making with the addition of different fruits, such as blueberries.

## **Cantaloupe Salsa with Crostini** - serves 6

(adapted from *Gourmet*, July 2003, and epicurious.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 2 cups cantaloupe, finely diced
- ¼ cup sweet onion, finely chopped
- 1 handful fresh basil leaves, finely chopped
- 1 relatively hot chile, minced (or a small bell pepper for a mild version)
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ baguette
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

### *Instructions*

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Toss cantaloupe, onion, basil, chile, lime, and salt in a bowl. Let stand to allow flavors to mix.
3. Meanwhile, slice baguette into ¼ inch-thick slices, brush each with olive oil, and place in a single layer on a cookie sheet. Sprinkle lightly with salt if desired.
4. Toast baguette slices until golden, about 10 minutes. Allow to cool slightly, then serve with the salsa.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds



## Background

It is believed that onions have been used by humans for many thousands of years, since well before the start of recorded history. One of the first cultivated crops, onions are probably native to Central Asia, but they have been so widespread for so long that experts are unsure where precisely the pungent bulbs originated. Evidence suggests that as long as 4,000 years ago, onions were a common, cultivated source of food from Egypt to China. Today, onions can be found in the cuisine of almost every culture across the world. Onions are popular for good reason: they are easy to grow, cheap to buy, can store well into the winter, and add a wealth of flavor to almost any dish. Modern onions can be found in over 300 varieties and are available in many different colors, shapes, and sizes.

## Growing Tips

Onions can be started either from seeds or from “sets,” pre-started little onions that you can purchase at many nurseries or hardware stores. Onions grown from sets will mature sooner but tend not to store as well. Quite cold-hardy, onions (either seedlings or sets) can be planted as soon as the soil can be worked, but be sure to plant in full sun—shade will result in very small bulbs and slow growth. If starting from seed, begin indoors in April and plant outside in mid- to late-May. When seedlings reach 5 inches in height, trim the greens down to 1-2 inches. This will ultimately result in larger bulbs. If planting sets, be sure to plant root-end down. Onions need rich, well-drained soil and to be weeded often. Harvest when tops have dried down (or sooner for “green onions,” but these will not store well) and before fall frosts set in. Onion greens can be used as herbs, too.

## Storage

Choose onions that are dry and firm, without soft spots or any evidence of sprouting. Onions should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place. Take care to store them away from other foods, as their smell can be invasive. Once an onion is peeled and cut, refrigerate and use soon as it will spoil within a week. Green onions should be refrigerated, too.

## Preparation

Onions are incredibly versatile and can be sautéed, baked, roasted, grilled, steamed, or eaten raw. Onions are integral to many soups and sauces. Unless a recipe says otherwise, onions are always peeled before use: use a sharp chef’s knife and cut off the neck and root ends before pulling off the tough outer skin.

## Nutritional Benefits

Onions contain chromium, a trace mineral that helps the body maintain normal insulin and blood sugar levels. Red and yellow onions also have quercetin, a flavonoid that inhibits the formation of cancer cells. On top of that, onions contain about 150 different phytochemicals!

# Recipes

## Caramelized Onions - serves 6

### Ingredients

- 2 large onions, preferably not a "sweet" variety
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar (optional)

### Instructions

1. Peel onions and carefully chop them into ¼ inch-thick rings.
2. Pour enough of the olive oil into a heavy skillet to cover the bottom of it. Turn heat to medium.
3. Place onions in pan and toss to coat in the oil. Allow to cook undisturbed for about 5 minutes, then toss them. Allow to cook for another 5 minutes without stirring, then add salt and toss again. Continue to toss every 5-10 minutes as the onions soften and brown.
4. When onions are beginning to color, remove from heat temporarily, stand back, hold your face away, and add vinegar (careful—it will be steamy and might splatter).
5. Toss to coat onions, return to heat, and allow to cook down to desired consistency.

Note: if you wish to add minced garlic, do so only in the last 5 minutes, as it will cook very quickly. Caramelized onions are a great addition to sandwiches, pizzas, sauces, and salads.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

## French Onion Soup - serves 6

(adapted from *Gourmet*, January 1991, and epicurious.com)

### Ingredients

- 1 stick butter
- 5 large onions, thinly sliced
- 2 teaspoons garlic
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 6 cups beef broth
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ½ loaf French bread, cut into ½ inch-thick slices
- 1 cup grated Gruyère (or other cheese of your choice)

### Instructions

1. Melt butter in a large pot over low-medium heat.
2. Add onions, cover, and cook, stirring frequently, until golden and tender, about 30-40 minutes.
3. Add garlic and sprinkle mixture with flour. Cook another 3 minutes, stirring constantly.
4. Add the broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for up to an hour or until onions are meltingly soft. Add salt and pepper to taste.
5. While soup is simmering, lightly toast the bread slices on a cookie sheet in oven at 350°F. Watch carefully as they will brown quickly. After removing bread, turn oven up to 450°F.
6. Pour soup into several oven-proof bowls and place the bowls on a rimmed baking sheet.
7. Top each bowl of soup with 1 or 2 slices of the crisped bread, then sprinkle cheese atop each. Transfer baking sheet with bowls to oven and bake about 4 minutes, until cheese is bubbly. Serve hot.

## Grilled Onions and Potatoes -

serves 6

### Ingredients

- 4 waxy potatoes, chopped
- 2 onions, peeled and chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper

### Instructions

1. Turn on grill to medium.
2. Put onions and potatoes together in a large bowl. Drizzle with olive oil and toss to coat.
3. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and toss again.
4. Measure out enough aluminum foil to wrap the vegetables in 2 or 3 packets (1 large packet is often too unwieldy).
5. Wrap vegetables in foil, sealing the edges, and place on the grill over indirect heat. Cook for about 30 minutes, shaking occasionally and flipping once during cooking. Serve hot off the grill.

# Parsnips



## Background

Parsnips are a root vegetable closely related to carrots, which is not surprising given their striking resemblance. Parsnips, which look like a white, leggy carrot, have been a food source for thousands of years. Once one of Europe's winter food staples, parsnips fell out of popularity with the introduction of the potato in the Middle Ages. Starchy, nutty, and slightly sweet, parsnips were even grown as a sweetener until the 19th century when they were again replaced by another vegetable, the sugar beet. Parsnips, which are now considered more of a specialty vegetable than a staple in many places, have a unique flavor that verges on slightly spicy. Parsnips grow significantly better in cooler climates and develop the best flavor after several frosts. CAUTION: in rare instances, parsnip leaves can cause burn-like rashes.

## Growing Tips

Parsnips like to be grown in deep, rich, loose soil that is free of rocks and weeds. Like carrots, parsnips should be directly seeded and not transplanted. Parsnip seeds do not store well, so it is important to make sure you don't use old seeds. Sow seeds thickly about ½ inch deep in the soil in mid-spring. Parsnip seeds can take three weeks or more to germinate, so do not be discouraged if you don't see seedlings right away! Once seedlings have sprouted and are growing steadily, thin out the plants so that each seedling has several inches of room to grow. Weed frequently and water occasionally in dry weather. Harvest only after a hard frost has occurred for the best flavor. Parsnips are difficult to pull up and will probably need to be dug out with a shovel or spading fork. They can usually be left in the ground well into October.

## Storage

Parsnips will keep in a plastic bag in the refrigerator for several weeks after harvesting. They can also be stored in a root cellar or another cool place, especially if they are packed in damp sand. To freeze parsnips, remove the tops and scrub roots well. Peel and slice as desired. Steam or blanch parsnips for three minutes, cool, and drain. Pack in freezer bags or containers and freeze.

## Preparation

Choose medium-sized, smooth-skinned roots without any obvious soft spots. Larger roots can have tough, woody cores. Before preparing parsnips, scrub them thoroughly, cut off the tops, and peel them if you wish. Young, tender parsnips can be eaten raw in salads, but parsnips are most often cooked. Their flavor can be very intense, so experiment with small quantities.

## Nutritional Benefits

Parsnips have high concentrations of Vitamin C, fiber, folic acid, potassium and carbohydrates. Parsnips are a diuretic. They may help with bladder problems, kidney stones, and detoxifying the body.

## Recipes

**Carrot and Parsnip Mash** - serves 4  
(adapted from John Harrison: allotment.org)

### Ingredients

- 4 medium carrots
- 4 medium parsnips
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 tablespoons milk or cream
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions

1. Trim any remaining greens off the carrots and parsnips. Scrub them thoroughly and, if the skins are old or tough, peel them if desired.
2. Chop the carrots into ½ inch-thick pieces. Do the same with the parsnips.
3. Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Add the carrots and parsnips and boil until soft. If you prefer, you may steam them instead.
4. Drain the vegetables. Add the butter and milk or cream, then mash as you would potatoes.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste and serve piping hot with additional butter.

Note: Because carrots and parsnips are so sweet, this is a great vegetable dish to try on children! Experiment with different seasonings and herbs for more complex flavors.

**Glazed Parsnips** - serves 4-6  
(adapted from Rombauer et al: *The Joy of Cooking*)

### Ingredients

- 5 medium parsnips
- 1 cup water
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- Handful chopped parsley (optional)

### Instructions

1. Using a vegetable peeler, strip the skins from the parsnips. Trim both the root and stem ends. Cut in half crosswise, then cut all of the large halves lengthwise down the middle. If any of the parsnips have a dark yellow, woody-looking core, pry it out with the tip of a knife (this should not be necessary unless the parsnips are overly mature).
2. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, combine the remaining ingredients and stir together. Add parsnips. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce heat, cover, and simmer until tender, 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Uncover the skillet, increase the heat to high, and boil, stirring often, until the liquid has been reduced to a syrupy glaze that clings to the roots. Watch constantly and be careful not to scorch the veggies.
4. Sprinkle with chopped parsley if desired and serve immediately.

**Parsnip and Cauliflower Soup** - serves 4-6 (adapted from thursdaynightsmackdown.com)

### Ingredients

- 1 small head cauliflower, chopped
- 3 medium parsnips, peeled and chopped
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 4 cups chicken broth or stock
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 475°. Toss chopped cauliflower and parsnips with 1 tablespoon olive oil, spread in a rimmed baking pan, and roast until veggies are tender, about 30 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, sauté onion in 2 tablespoons olive oil in a heavy soup pot over medium heat, cooking until soft. Sprinkle with flour and cook another few minutes, until flour is golden.
3. Place roasted veggies in a blender with the broth and process until smooth. Transfer to soup pot with onions and flour and whisk altogether. Reheat mixture and simmer 10 minutes. Add salt and pepper.
4. For a smooth soup, process (carefully) in blender again before serving.





### **Background**

Peas, like beans, are legumes, meaning they have pods that split open to reveal a row of seeds attached to one side. The seeds of legumes are the part that we eat, sometimes once they are mature (as in the case of dried beans) and sometimes when they are immature, which is the case for peas. Fresh peas can generally be divided into three categories: shell peas, snap peas, and snow peas. Snow peas (flat) are eaten whole, pod and all, before the inner peas are very developed. Snap peas are also eaten whole, but the pods are rounder with larger peas inside. Shell peas are stripped from the shell once the inner peas are round and plump—these are the peas that are familiar to almost everybody as the round green peas that can be found frozen or canned in any supermarket. Peas are an ancient crop that date back to 7000 BCE (Before the Common Era). They were eaten by both the Greeks and the Romans and have been a traditional springtime treat throughout written history.

### **Growing Tips**

Peas love cool, wet, springtime weather and are often the first crop a gardener plants outside. They should be direct seeded as soon as the soil can be worked. Peas are frost tolerant, but will germinate best when the soil has warmed slightly. Depending on the type of pea, it is likely that you will need to provide them with some fencing or trellising to climb up. Plant seeds about 1 inch deep and 1 inch apart from each other. Keep well-watered. Harvest shell and snap peas once the pods have filled out but before the taste is starchy and bitter (sample a few peas if you aren't sure). Snow peas should be harvested when the pods are still flattish and are several inches in length. Some varieties will continue to yield with regular harvesting. Peas fix nitrogen into the soil, making them a good crop to rotate around your garden.

### **Storage**

Peas do not store especially well and are best eaten as soon as possible after harvesting. The sugars in peas turn to starch rapidly after picking, especially at warm temperatures. If not being eaten right away, peas should be stored in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator, tightly wrapped in plastic.

### **Nutritional Benefits**

Peas are high in protein, fiber, and carbohydrates as well as various vitamins and minerals, including iron and Vitamin C. Peas contain several phytochemicals that act as antioxidants.

### **Preparation**

Rinse pea pods in cold water. Snap off the stem end with your fingers and pull off the stringy fiber on the back side. For snap and snow peas, that is sufficient. For shell peas, squeeze open the pod, then push out the peas with your thumb. Peas are delicious both raw and cooked.



# Recipes

## **Pasta with Lemon-Mint Butter and Fresh Peas** - serves 6

(adapted from ecurry.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 stick butter, softened
- 1 large handful fresh mint leaves, minced
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 pound pasta
- 1 small sweet onion, diced
- 1 cup peas, shelled

### *Instructions*

1. In a small bowl, combine the butter, mint, lemon juice, and salt. Beat together until well blended, then refrigerate.
2. Cook the pasta according to the directions on the package. Drain, reserving 3 tablespoons of the cooking liquid.
3. Melt a large spoonful of the mint butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion and cook several minutes, until slightly tender.
4. Add the reserved pasta liquid and the peas. Turn heat to medium high and cook about 3 minutes. Add the pasta to the onion and peas and cook just a few minutes longer, tossing frequently—peas should remain bright green.
5. Serve immediately with the extra mint butter.

Note: this recipe is meant for shell peas, but is superb with snow peas as well!

## **Green Pea Soup** - serves 6

(adapted from *Gourmet*, March 2001, and epicurious.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 potato (boiling variety), peeled and cubed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 ½ cups water or broth
- 1 pound peas, shelled
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons sour cream

### *Instructions*

1. Heat oil in saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and cook until tender.
2. Add potato and salt and cook 2 minutes longer, stirring often.
3. Add water or broth and simmer, covered, until potato is tender, 10-15 minutes.
4. Add peas and simmer uncovered and additional 2 minutes.
5. Transfer to a blender (or use an immersion blender) and process until smooth. Use caution with the hot liquid!
6. Transfer to a fine sieve set over the saucepan and force through with a wooden spoon.
7. Reheat soup over low heat and add salt and pepper to taste.
8. Serve hot with a small dollop of sour cream in each bowl.

## **Sautéed Peas** - serves 8

(adapted from Anita Lo: *SELF*, July 2008, and epicurious.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 tablespoon olive or canola oil
- 6 cloves of garlic, chopped
- ½ cup water or broth
- ½ cup oyster sauce
- 3 cups snow peas (flat, edible pods)
- 3 cups snap peas (chubby, edible pods)
- Several large handfuls pea shoots (optional)

### *Instructions*

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add garlic and cook less than a minute, stirring constantly. Add oyster sauce and water or broth (mixing the two together first will make it easier).
2. Add peas and cook until vibrantly green and just barely tender, about 2 minutes.
3. Garnish with pea shoots. Try serving alone or atop rice.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

# Peppers



## Background

Bell peppers and chili peppers are closely related, though they are not at all related to the spice we call “black pepper.” Peppers are native to the Americas and Christopher Columbus was the first European to encounter them. He named the unfamiliar fruits “peppers” after the spice—as some of them did share similar hot, spicy qualities unlike almost any other foods. After Columbus brought peppers back to Europe, the plants slowly gained popularity and eventually spread around the globe. Bell peppers, which are sweet and not at all spicy, don’t contain any capsaicin, the compound that gives chili peppers their heat. Chilies vary in spice from relatively mild to intolerably hot. Handle all chilies with caution: when you touch their skin, you rub off some of the heat-producing compound, which can then be easily transferred via your hands to your eyes or other sensitive areas. Always wash your hands after handling chilies and before touching anything else!

## Growing Tips

Perhaps not surprising given their southern origins, peppers need plenty of heat and sunlight to grow well. Because they require a long growing season, start seeds indoors in April and transplant seedlings outdoors once all danger of frost has passed and the ground has warmed. Use caution handling hot pepper seeds. Fertilize soil well and leave at least a full foot of space between plants. For warmer soil and weed control, some find it beneficial to grow peppers in reusable black plastic mulch. Harvest peppers regularly to encourage production. Almost all peppers will redden if left on the plant to ripen.

## Storage

Peppers are very cold sensitive, so store them loosely wrapped in plastic on the top shelf of your refrigerator. They will last up to a week, but are best when used as soon as possible. Hot peppers can be left on the plant, uprooted, and allowed to mature over many weeks. Hot peppers can be dried, but bell peppers need to be frozen for longer storage.

## Preparation

Peppers can be eaten raw or cooked; hot peppers are most commonly cooked. Rinse peppers in cold water before preparing and, if you wish, peel them (most easily done by roasting for 10 minutes, stuffing into a paper bag to steam, then peeling). You will most likely want to remove the seeds as well.

## Nutritional Benefits

Peppers are high in Vitamin C, Vitamin B, and beta carotene and have a significant amounts of potassium, magnesium, and iron. The Vitamin C in peppers aids in the body’s uptake of vegetable-based iron (non-heme iron), such as that in beans. Red peppers tend to be the most nutritious. Chili peppers contains capsaicin valuable for long term health and disease prevention.

# Recipes

**Stuffed Peppers** - serves 5  
(adapted from allrecipes.com)

## Ingredients

- ½ cup rice, uncooked
- 1 pound ground beef
- 5 bell peppers
- 2 cans (8-ounces each) tomato sauce
- 1 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Cook rice according to instructions.
3. In a saucepan over medium heat, cook the beef until browned, about 8 minutes. Drain off some of the fat.
4. Remove the tops, seeds, and whitish membranes from the peppers. Set them in a baking dish with the opening facing upward. Use foil to get them to stand upright if necessary.
5. In a large bowl, mix together the rice, beef, 1 can tomato sauce, Worcestershire sauce, garlic powder, onion powder, and salt. Mix together the remaining tomato sauce and Italian seasoning in a separate bowl.
6. Spoon an equal amount of the beef mixture into each pepper. Pour the remaining tomato sauce over the peppers.
7. Cover with foil and bake until peppers are tender, about 1 hour. Remove the foil halfway through cooking.

**Fajitas** - serves 6

## Ingredients

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into strips
- 1 ½ tablespoons fajita seasoning
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, cut into strips
- 2 bell peppers, cut into strips
- 6-8 large tortillas
- 2 cups rice, cooked
- Sour cream (optional)

## Instructions

1. In a large bowl, toss chicken with about half of the fajita seasoning.
2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat.
3. Add chicken and onion and cook 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Add pepper and cook until vegetables are desired tenderness and chicken is no longer pink in the middle.
4. Remove from heat and toss with remaining seasoning (adding a splash of water if necessary).
5. Warm tortillas in oven or microwave, then top with chicken mixture, rice, sour cream, and any other toppings you wish (such as beans, salsa, or cheese).

To make your own fajita seasoning, mix together:

- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons paprika

**Roasted Red Peppers** - one pepper makes 1-2 servings

## Ingredients

Red bell peppers, any quantity

## Instructions

1. Oven method: preheat your oven to 450°F. Roast peppers, whole, on a foil-covered baking sheet for 30 minutes (turning at least once during cooking). Grill method: turn the grill to medium-high, then place the whole peppers directly on the grill. Close the lid and allow to cook until skins are charred and peppers feel soft when prodded with tongs.
2. Remove the peppers from heat and place in a paper bag or covered bowl. Allow to steam about 10 minutes. When peppers have cooled, peel off the blackened skin and discard. Pull off the top of the pepper and squeeze out the seeds, scraping out any remaining seeds with a paring knife. Do not rinse, as this diminishes flavor. Cover any unused peppers in olive oil and store in the refrigerator up to 2 weeks.



Photo courtesy  
High Mowing Organic Seeds



### **Background**

Potatoes were first cultivated many thousands of years ago in Chile and Peru and were taken back to Europe by Spanish explorers in the 15th century. Our name for potatoes probably comes from the word “batatas,” the native Caribbean word for sweet potatoes. Potatoes belong to the nightshade family, meaning that almost every part of the plant except their tubers (which we eat) is poisonous. Until explorers realized that potatoes had a high vitamin C content and therefore helped prevent scurvy, the somewhat bland root was mostly used by Europeans as a feed for livestock. President Thomas Jefferson is credited with introducing the now mainstream “French fry” to America when he first served them at a White House dinner. Once potatoes began to spread across the globe, they also became a very important crop. Because they are easily grown in a variety of climates and store well into the winter months, potatoes became a food staple in many places. Ireland came to depend heavily on the potato and, when potato blight struck in the 1840s and wiped out the crop, the ensuing famine took the lives of approximately a million people. Many countries still depend heavily on the potato for food. In America, we eat an average of well over a hundred pounds of potatoes (in various forms) per person per year.

### **Growing Tips**

Potatoes are grown by planting “seed potatoes,” older potatoes that will sprout new plants. You can purchase certified seed potatoes or plant leftover potatoes that you may have around. Large potatoes can be cut, but each piece needs to have at least 1-2 “eyes” (a dormant bud). Potatoes that have begun to sprout in storage are fine for planting. If you choose to cut them, do so a day early so the flesh can dry. Plant potatoes in late spring a foot apart in a trench about 6 inches deep. Leave at least 3 feet between trenches! Potatoes may rot in very heavy, damp soil. Once plants are several inches tall, hill soil up around them, then do so again about 3 weeks later. Dig up potatoes once tops have begun to die back.

### **Storage**

Freshly dug potatoes should be “cured” in a dry, dark place for about a week, then should be stored in a cool, slightly moist area (away from onions). Root cellars are ideal for storing potatoes.

### **Preparation**

Cut any blemishes or green spots out of potatoes before using. They may be left unpeeled or peeled depending on the recipe and toughness of the skin. Potatoes are great baked, boiled, sautéed, mashed, and roasted.

### **Nutritional Benefits**

Potatoes are high in Vitamins C and B6 and have significant amounts of niacin, iodine, folic acid, copper, and magnesium. Much of a potato’s nutritional value is in its skin, so avoid peeling when possible or at least try to cook in the skin (like a baked potato).

# Recipes

## Scalloped Potatoes - serves 6

(adapted from Ian Knauer: *Gourmet*, February 2008, and epicurious.com)

### Ingredients

- ¾ teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 teaspoons salt
- ¾ teaspoon black pepper
- 6 large potatoes of a boiling variety
- 3 tablespoons butter, cut into small cubes
- 1 ½ cups cream
- ¾ cup milk

### Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F . Place a rack in the upper third of the oven.
2. Grease a shallow baking dish, preferably not glass.
3. Stir together the nutmeg, salt, and pepper in a small bowl.
4. Thinly slice the potatoes (peeling them first if you so choose). Layer them in the baking pan so that they slightly overlap. Sprinkle each layer with some of the spice mixture and some of the cubed butter.
5. Pour the cream and milk over the potatoes, pressing down on them gently to make sure they are covered.
6. Cover dish with foil and bake until potatoes are tender, about an hour. Then remove foil, turn on the broiler, and broil until the potatoes are slightly browned on top, about 5 minutes. Serve warm.

## Potato Salad - serves 8

(adapted from Irma Rombauer et al: *The Joy of Cooking*)

### Ingredients

- 2 pounds fresh potatoes of a boiling variety
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup celery, minced
- ½ cup sweet onion, minced
- ½ cup mayonnaise (or plain yogurt)
- 2 teaspoons mustard
- ½ cup chopped pickles with juice
- Salt, pepper, cayenne, paprika, and fresh parsley to taste

### Instructions

1. Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Hard boil the eggs (first making sure that the shells are very clean).
2. Meanwhile, scrub the skins of the potatoes and cut them into roughly 1 inch cubes. Once you remove the eggs from the water, boil the potatoes in the same pot until just tender.
3. When the eggs are cool, chop them into small pieces.
4. Drain potatoes and run briefly under cold water to chill them. Transfer to a large bowl.
5. Add eggs and all remaining ingredients except paprika. Stir to combine, then sprinkle paprika over the top.
6. Chill at least 2 hours before serving. Uneaten potato salad will store well in the refrigerator for several days.

## Mashed Potatoes - serves 6

### Ingredients

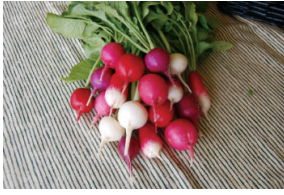
- 7 cups potatoes of a boiling variety, cubed
- 6 cloves of garlic (optional)
- ½ cup milk
- 2 tablespoons butter
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add potatoes and garlic. Boil 5 minutes.
2. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover pot, and cook about 20 minutes, or until potatoes are soft.
3. Drain off water. Return pot to heat and shake potatoes in the pot until they begin to dry slightly.
4. Turn off heat, add milk and butter, and mash potatoes (with a potato masher or a mixer) to desired smoothness. Add more milk if necessary.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste and serve piping hot with extra butter.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds



# Radishes



Photos courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

## Background

Radishes, which belong to the same family as cabbages and broccoli, are grown in a wide variety of colors and sizes. First cultivated in Europe, radishes can now be found across most of the globe but are most popular in Europe, Japan, and North America. The name for radishes may stem from the Greek "Raphanus," which means "quickly appearing," a tribute to the speed with which some radish varieties grow. Other sources claim the name "radish" comes from "radix," which is the Latin term for "root." Radishes are often one of the earliest spring crops as they only take a few weeks to grow from seed to maturity. Radishes have a distinct peppery flavor that comes from an enzyme in the plant's skin. After all, radishes are related to mustards, so it is not altogether surprising that the two vegetables share flavor qualities. Although radishes range from purplish-black to multi-colored, most people are familiar with the small, round, red and white variety. Daikon radish is another popular variety most commonly associated with Asian cuisine.

## Growing Tips

Like most members of the cabbage family, radishes are quite cold tolerant and grow well in cool conditions. Direct seed as soon as soil can be worked in the spring--transplanting is not recommended. Seeds should be planted no deeper than ½ inch. For a steady supply of radishes, sow seeds approximately every two weeks. You may want to avoid growing radishes mid-summer, as heat will cause them to become tough. Thin seedlings to allow room for roots to grow. Radishes appreciate well-drained, stone-free soil and frequent weeding. Keep plants well watered. To avoid flea beetle damage, protect young radishes with floating row cover. Harvest promptly when roots are about the size of a golf ball.

## Storage

Upon harvest or purchase, radishes should be trimmed of their tops (which are also edible), wrapped loosely in plastic, and stored in the crisper drawer. Radishes will store better if not sopping wet, so avoid washing them until you are ready to use them. Radishes will keep well for more than a week in the refrigerator, but they are best when eaten as soon as possible.

## Preparation

Always choose radishes that feel firm and look unblemished. If the tops are still attached when you purchase them, the leaves should be bright green and un-wilted. Most radishes are ready to eat after washing. You may want to peel larger, tougher radishes, such as winter storage varieties, before eating. Much of a radish's flavor and nutritional value is in the peel, however, so eating the whole root is recommended.

## Nutritional Benefits

Radishes are very small and composed primarily of water, so it can be difficult to take in significant quantities of nutrients from radishes alone. Nonetheless, radishes are low in calories but high in Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, folic acid, calcium, and potassium. They also contain the minerals magnesium and copper.

## Recipes

### **Braised Radishes** - serves 4

(adapted from Rachael Ray: foodnetwork.com)

#### *Ingredients*

- 2 bunches radishes of relatively uniform size
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 ½ cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 2 large shallots or 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon red wine or apple cider vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste

#### *Instructions*

1. Trim and rinse radishes. If they are large, you may wish to cut them in half.
2. Melt butter in a skillet over medium-low heat. Add all remaining ingredients, cover, and bring to a boil.
3. Uncover, reduce heat to a steady simmer, and cook until stock cooks down and radishes are tender, about 12-15 minutes.
4. Serve warm. This dish goes well with potatoes.

Note: for a variation on the recipe, try adding baby carrots (or larger carrots cut into smaller pieces).

### **Zesty Radish Salad** - serves 4

(adapted from Tyler Florence: foodnetwork.com)

#### *Ingredients*

- 5 radishes
- 4 carrots
- 1 handful fresh mint leaves, chopped
- 1 handful fresh cilantro leaves, chopped
- 2 oranges
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon orange extract

#### *Instructions*

1. Trim and scrub radishes and carrots. Slice as thinly as you can and put in a large bowl.
2. Add mint and cilantro.
3. Peel the oranges then slice off the pith. Work over a deep plate to catch the juices. Remove the orange segments and add them to the carrots and radishes.
4. In a small bowl, mix together the excess orange juice, cinnamon, lemon juice, sugar, salt, and extract.
5. Pour over the radish mixture. Toss to coat.
6. For best flavor, allow the salad to sit for up to 2 hours before serving.

### **Stir-fried Chicken, Radishes, and Lime** - serves 6

(adapted from *Bon Appetit*, April 2001, and epicurious.com)

#### *Ingredients*

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into ½ -inch pieces
- 4 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 teaspoon hot pepper flakes or crushed chipotles (optional)
- 6 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- ½ cup chicken broth
- 2 bunches radishes, trimmed and chopped (reserve leaves)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- 12 corn tortillas

#### *Instructions*

1. Combine chicken, half the lime juice, and pepper flakes in a bowl. Season with salt and pepper, then allow to stand 10 minutes.
2. Heat half oil in large skillet. Add chicken and onion sauté 5 minutes. Add broth and cook another 5 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Transfer to a bowl and stir in remaining lime juice.
3. Heat remaining oil in same skillet. Add radishes and sauté 2 minutes. Transfer to bowl and add cilantro.
4. Serve mixture atop warmed corn tortillas. Garnish with reserved radish leaves if desired.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds



# Rhubarb

## Background

Although rhubarb has been used for millennia as a medicinal herb, only in the past few centuries has it come into common culinary usage. It is believed that the Chinese, who used rhubarb roots to treat illness, were the first to truly appreciate the plant. Rhubarb was exported from eastern Asia via the Silk Road to Europe, where it eventually became immensely popular. Until rhubarb started being cultivated in Europe and the Middle East, it was an extremely precious imported crop. In the Middle Ages, rhubarb was many times more expensive than other spices and even opium. The leaves of the rhubarb plant are quite poisonous--only the long stalks are suitable for culinary use. The toxicity of the leaves may explain why it took so long for rhubarb production to catch on in Europe, as early rhubarb experiments sometimes went fatally wrong for those who were not familiar with the plant's potency. Rhubarb stems, or petioles, are very sour, so the availability of sugar may also have been related to rhubarb's rise to popularity.

## Growing Tips

The easiest way to start a rhubarb patch is to find a neighbor or friend who is overrun with rhubarb and ask to dig up a few roots early in the spring. Rhubarb leaves and stalks die back completely in the winter months, so don't be discouraged if the roots look sad and unpromising. Dig a hole in an area with some room for the rhubarb to spread (not in the middle of your vegetable garden), add plenty of compost, and plant root clumps about 6 inches deep. Cover with more compost, water well, and wait. Rhubarb is a perennial, meaning it will come up year after year, but try to avoid the temptation to harvest stalks the first year. The plant will be stronger if allowed to grow undisturbed for one season. The second year, harvest stalks in the spring when they are about a foot tall and at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick. Stalks will vary in color from crimson to green, sometimes with speckles, but are best when picked in spring regardless.

## Storage

Rhubarb dries out quickly and is therefore best when used as soon as possible after picking. Always discard leaves before storing. Wrap stalks in plastic wrap and store in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator. For long-term storage, rhubarb can be frozen or made into jam.

## Preparation

Although rhubarb is almost always cooked, raw stalks are sometimes added as a garnish and flavoring agent to drinks such as lemonade. Fresh rhubarb stalks do not need to be peeled--simply rinsing them is all the preparation that is necessary--but larger, more fibrous stalks may be more palatable if the peel is removed. Rhubarb can be prepared in a number of ways but is most often stewed or baked into desserts.

## Nutritional Benefits

Rhubarb is composed primarily of water, but it also offers some carbohydrates and dietary fiber. The stalks are rich in Vitamin K and contain significant amounts of Vitamin C and potassium as well. ***Remember that leaves and roots are poisonous!***



## Recipes

### **Rhubarb Bites** - serves 12

(adapted from [www.lesleycooks.com](http://www.lesleycooks.com))

#### *Ingredients*

2 cups rhubarb, diced (no leaves)  
¾ cup sugar  
½ cup butter  
1 cup brown sugar  
1 egg  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
2 cups flour  
½ teaspoon vanilla  
Confectioner's sugar (optional)

#### *Instructions*

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a medium bowl, toss rhubarb and ½ cup sugar. Set aside.
3. Cream remaining sugar with butter and brown sugar.
4. Beat in egg, then add baking soda, salt, cinnamon, vanilla and flour. Stir to mix.
5. Stir in rhubarb mixture.
6. Grease and flour a 13 inch x 9 inch baking pan. Scrape mixture into pan.
7. Bake for 40-45 minutes.
8. Allow to cool briefly, then sprinkle with confectioner's sugar if desired. To serve, cut into small bars.

### **Apple Rhubarb Brown Betty** - serves 4

(adapted from [www.marthastewart.com](http://www.marthastewart.com))

#### *Ingredients*

3 stalks of rhubarb, trimmed of leaves  
1 apple  
¾ cup brown sugar  
¼ teaspoon cinnamon  
1 pinch nutmeg  
2 tablespoons lemon juice, plus zest if possible  
1 small loaf of soft bread  
½ cup plus 1 tablespoons butter

#### *Instructions*

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Chop rhubarb into ¼ -inch-thick chunks. Peel and core apple, then cut into ¼ -inch slices.
3. In a bowl, stir together rhubarb, apple, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, lemon juice, and zest. Set aside.
4. Melt ½ cup butter. Cut crust off bread, then cut into ½ -inch chunks. In a large bowl, stir together melted butter and bread.
5. Grease a baking dish, then covered the bottom with the butter bread. Spread half of the rhubarb mixture atop the bread, then alternate layers, finishing a thin bread layer.
6. Dot with remaining butter, then spoon 5 tablespoons of warm water over the top.
7. Cover with foil and bake 30 minutes. Uncover, then bake until top is crusty and rhubarb is bubbling, about 10-15 minutes longer. Serve warm.

### **Baked Rhubarb** - serves 6

(adapted from [www.justhungry.com](http://www.justhungry.com))

#### *Ingredients*

6 cups rhubarb, diced (5-6 stalks—no leaves!)  
1 ½ cups sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

#### *Instructions*

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Toss the rhubarb with the sugar. Drizzle with vanilla, then toss again.
3. Line a baking dish with aluminum foil, leaving enough excess to double back over the top.
4. Scrape the rhubarb mixture into the foil, then wrap it up in the foil to make a pouch.
5. Bake until rhubarb is tender, about 30 minutes.
6. Allow to cool slightly before serving. Baked rhubarb is delicious atop ice cream, stirred into yogurt, smeared onto toast, or just plain!

# RUTABAGA



## Background

Also called "Swede" or "Swedish turnip," the rutabaga originated as a cross between a turnip and a cabbage in the 17th century. The name "rutabaga" comes from the old-fashioned Swedish term for the vegetable, which translates quite literally to "root bag." Though it is most commonly eaten as a root vegetable, the leaves are edible as well. Rutabagas are not an especially popular vegetable, though they are common in certain countries, including the Scandinavian nations and Scotland. In the United States, rutabagas are probably grown more commonly as animal fodder than for human consumption, which belies their many good qualities. Rutabagas tend to be sweeter than turnips and are actually very pretty vegetables, with a baseball-sized globe that has a creamy white base and pinkish top, much like an oversized radish. Another advantage of rutabagas over turnips is that they can be stored for much longer without a noticeable deterioration in quality.

## Growing Tips

Rutabagas grow very well in fall weather and, as such, are most commonly sown in the summer for a late-fall harvest. Like the other members of the Brassica family (which includes cabbage and radishes, among many others), rutabagas are best suited to cooler conditions. Uncharacteristically for a Brassica, however, rutabaga seeds won't have trouble germinating in very warm soil. Sow seeds directly into the ground (about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch deep) in midsummer, thinning seedlings to about 6 inches apart once they are growing vigorously. Harvest the roots after at least one hard frost for optimal flavor.

## Storage

Like many root vegetables, rutabagas store best when the tops are trimmed off but the root is left unwashed. If wrapped loosely in plastic and stored in the refrigerator, a rutabaga will last for up to a month—too much longer and they may become rubbery. If packed in sand and stored in a root cellar, however, they have been known to last for as long as a year.

## Preparation

You should always wash a rutabaga before preparing it and will most likely want to peel it as well. Raw rutabagas can be cut into thin sticks and served with dip or diced and tossed into a salad. More commonly, rutabagas are steamed or roasted and served alongside meat. They are also frequently added to stews and casseroles.

## Nutritional Benefits

Rutabagas are low in calories and sodium but high in fiber, calcium, Vitamin C, potassium, and fiber. Potassium, which is crucial to the functioning of your heart, muscles, and kidneys, is also believed to help lower high blood pressure and decrease the risk of stroke.

# Recipes

**Mashed Peppered Rutabaga** - serves 2 (from the Canadian Living Test Kitchen at [www.canadianliving.com](http://www.canadianliving.com))

## *Ingredients*

- 1 large rutabaga
- ½ cup sour cream
- ½ tsp each salt and pepper
- 1 cup shredded cheese, such as cheddar

## *Instructions*

1. Peel and cube rutabaga.
2. Bring a small pot of salted water to a boil and cook rutabaga, covered, until tender, about 25-30 minutes. Drain, then return to saucepan over low heat until slightly dry, about 30 seconds.
3. Mash thoroughly; mix in sour cream, salt, and pepper.
4. Top with cheese and serve hot.

**Golden Rutabaga Mash** - serves 6 (adapted slightly from the Canadian Living Test Kitchen: [www.canadianliving.com](http://www.canadianliving.com))

## *Ingredients*

- 1 orange
- 3 cups water
- 6 carrots, peeled (if necessary) and chopped
- 5 cups rutabaga, peeled and cubed
- ½ cup dried apricots
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup, honey, or sugar
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 pinch each of salt and pepper
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 pinch each of cinnamon and nutmeg

## *Instructions*

1. Peel orange. Discard half of the peel and mince the remaining half. Remove as much white pith as possible from the fruit and chop.
2. In a heavy-bottomed pot, combine water, orange, orange peel, carrots, rutabaga, apricots, syrup, butter, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer uncovered until water has almost entirely evaporated and vegetables are tender, 30-40 minutes.
3. Carefully process the steaming vegetables in a food processor (in batches if necessary), adding the sour cream, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Transfer to a warmed bowl and serve with extra sour cream if desired.

**Roasted Rutabagas**

## *Ingredients*

- 1 rutabaga, peeled and diced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 pinch each salt, pepper, and any herbs desired

## *Instructions*

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Toss rutabaga with oil, sugar, and spices. Spread in single layer on a baking sheet.
2. Bake until tender, about 45 minutes. Serve warm, adding more salt if necessary.



### **Background**

Spinach, which probably originated in present-day Iran, has been eaten for thousands of years. The leafy green is eaten in vast quantities in its native Middle East and is popular around the globe. It first traveled eastward toward China and eventually spread north into Europe, but it wasn't popular there until the Middle Ages. Catherine de Medici, a native Italian who became queen of France in the 16th century, was a great spinach lover and contributed to the vegetable's popularity. To this day, French dishes containing a lot of spinach have the moniker "à la Florentine," a tribute to the former queen's hometown as well as her affinity for the green. Spinach was popularized in the 19th century by the comic strip (and later the cartoon) "Popeye the Sailor Man," which featured a character who thrived on the green, becoming immediately stronger after eating it. Readily available both fresh and frozen in most supermarkets, spinach is a well-known and popular green.

### **Growing Tips**

Spinach is a very hardy green, making it a popular greenhouse crop in New England in colder months. As with most non-heading greens, spinach is not recommended for transplanting. Direct seed into fertile soil as soon as it can be worked in the spring and sow a crop every 2 weeks until early summer for a steady supply. Seeds germinate best in cooler temperatures, so crops sown in the height of summer may fail to produce well. Another crop (or maybe two) can be planted in late summer (once the temperatures are cooling again) for a fall crop. Keep plants well-watered. Harvest when leaves are large but still tender and before the plant begins to bolt (for baby spinach, harvest when leaves are smaller). Most varieties of spinach will continue to produce for several weeks if leaves are harvested individually and not clear-cut.

### **Storage**

Fresh spinach is quite delicate and does not store very well. Leaves will last the longest if they are relatively dry when stored, so either postpone washing until just before use or spin dry. Wrap loosely in plastic and store in the refrigerator for up to several days, using as soon as possible for best quality. For long-term storage, spinach can be blanched very briefly, drained, packed into bags, and frozen.

### **Preparation**

Most spinach leaves need nothing more than a good wash. If any larger leaves have tough stems, simply chop them off and discard. Spinach is extremely versatile and can be eaten raw or cooked in a wide variety of ways. Be careful not to overcook spinach, however, as it will result in loss of both flavor and texture as well as diminishing nutritional value.

### **Nutritional Benefits**

Spinach is rich in many vitamins and minerals, including iron, calcium, vitamins A, E, C, and K, manganese, and folate. Many of the nutrients found in spinach are more readily absorbed by the body if the leaves are lightly cooked. Spinach also delivers fiber and even some protein.

## Recipes

**Turkey and Spinach Wraps** - serves 2  
(adapted from www.tasteofhome.com)

### Ingredients

- ¼ cup spreadable cream cheese
- 2 8-inch white or wheat flour tortillas
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 pinch each salt and pepper
- 2 cups loosely packed baby spinach
- 6 ounces sliced deli turkey
- ½ cup shredded cheese
- 1 red bell pepper, washed, cored, and thinly sliced
- Other veggies or herbs as desired

### Instructions

1. Spread cream cheese over each tortilla.
2. Sprinkle with garlic powder, salt, pepper, and any other herbs or spices desired.
3. Layer with spinach, turkey, cheese, and bell pepper.
4. Roll tightly and, if not serving immediately, wrap in plastic and refrigerate.

Note: tasty additions include cucumbers, sprouts, tomatoes, and onion. Try substituting hummus for cream cheese.

**Spinach Artichoke Dip** - serves 6  
(adapted from www.spinachrecipes.org)

### Ingredients

- 1 14-ounce jar of artichoke hearts
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 4 cups chopped spinach
- 1 splash olive oil
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese
- ½ cup mayonnaise, sour cream, or plain yogurt
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ½ cup grated jack cheese

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a casserole dish with nonstick cooking spray, oil or butter.
2. Heat olive oil in saucepan over medium-low heat. Add spinach and garlic powder and sauté until tender.
3. Drain and chop artichoke hearts.
4. Combine artichoke hearts, spinach, Parmesan, mayo (or yogurt or sour cream), salt, and pepper in a bowl. Mix together.
5. Scrape mixture into casserole dish. Top with cheese and bake 30 minutes or until cheese is bubbling and slightly browned.
6. Serve warm with bread, bagel chips, or hearty crackers.

**Garlicky Spinach** - serves 2

### Ingredients

- ½ tablespoon butter
- 1 spoonful crushed, powdered, or minced garlic
- 4 large handfuls spinach
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions

1. Heat butter in heavy skillet over low-medium heat.
2. Add garlic and sauté briefly, until fragrant.
3. Add spinach and sauté, stirring frequently, until just tender, about 3 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Note: try serving atop fried eggs, in breakfast sandwiches, alongside rice and beans, or as an accompaniment to almost any meal!



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds



### **Background**

Humans have been eating sprouts for thousands of years. Sprouts are just the baby form of familiar plants such as broccoli, radishes, beans, and more. The seeds of these plants are saturated with water and allowed to germinate. After growing for a few days, however, they are eaten as little sprouts instead of maturing into full-sized plants. Although the history of sprouting is fuzzy, it is likely that the ancient Chinese were the first people to regularly include sprouts in their diet. Even today, sprouts (primarily bean sprouts) play a major role in Asian cuisine. It is rumored that, in the Age of Exploration, sailors ate sprouts to fend off scurvy while spending months at sea. Vitamin C-rich sprouts can be grown within a few days using no soil, a tremendous advantage aboard a ship. Sprouts have become popular in modern American cuisine only within the past few decades, in part due to food safety concerns associated with industrially-grown sprouts.

### **Growing Tips**

Sprouts are exceptionally easy to grow, given that they require neither soil nor steady sunlight, can be grown any time of year, and will be ready to eat within days. “Sprouters” can be purchased from seed suppliers but a homemade setup will work just as well. Place a handful of sprouting-specific seed (as seeds are often treated when not for sprouting) into a mason jar and cover with water. Take a piece of old screen or mesh and affix to the lid of the jar with a rubber band. After seeds have soaked for several hours, drain excess water. Rinse and drain sprouts at least once a day until sprouts are ready. Different types of sprouts have slightly different requirements, so be sure to read any directional information accompanying your seeds.

### **Storage**

It is best to eat sprouts as soon as they are ready, but you can store them in the refrigerator for several days. Dry sprouts thoroughly (a salad spinner works well) and seal them in a plastic bag before refrigerating. Sprouts that are stored wet have a tendency to rot.

**Preparation**  
Sprouts are surprisingly versatile. They can be eaten raw in sandwiches or salads, added to stir-fries or sautés, or incorporated into sauces or spreads. To preserve to nutritional value of sprouts, do not overcook. Even the hardiest-looking sprouts generally need only about a minute of cooking. Bean sprouts are often blanched briefly and added to dishes at the last minute. Give sprouts a final rinse before cooking or eating.

### **Nutritional Benefits**

Like many other fruits and vegetables, sprouts have periodically flirted with fame for being a “wonder food.” Although simply eating sprouts will not ensure good health, one can take in a variety of vitamins and minerals by munching on the little plants. Sprouts pack a surprising punch for their size and are loaded with Vitamin C, Vitamin A, and in the case of some varieties, protein and iron as well.

# Recipes

## **Quinoa and Sprout Salad** - serves 4

(adapted from Martha Rose Shulman: nytimes.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 1 cup sprouted lentils or sunflower seeds (hulls removed)
- 4 cups arugula or spinach
- ½ red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts or almonds (optional)
- ¼ cup crumbled feta or goat cheese
- 1 handful chopped parsley or herbs of your choice

### *Instructions*

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl.
2. Toss with a dressing of your choice (a balsamic vinaigrette goes well with this salad) and serve immediately.

*To make your own dressing, check out the recipes accompanying the “lettuce” section of this book.*

## **Sprout Hummus** - serves 8

(adapted from sproutpeople.org)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 cup sprouted garbanzo beans
- 1 tablespoon sesame tahini
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper

### *Instructions*

1. Load all ingredients into a food processor.
2. Process until mixture reaches a smooth, creamy consistency.
3. If desired, chill for up to several hours. Serve with vegetables, crackers, bread, or pita wedges.

## **Stir-fried Veggies and Bean Sprouts** - serves 4

(adapted from www.cookingandme.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 ½ tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 small head of broccoli, chopped (peel the stem and chop that, too)
- 1 cup mushrooms, thickly sliced
- 1 small green bell pepper, sliced
- 4 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons garlic, minced
- ¾ cup bean sprouts, either fresh or canned (rinsed and drained)
- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon powdered ginger
- 1 splash of lemon juice



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

### *Instructions*

1. Heat the oil in a skillet or wok over medium heat. Add onions and sauté until slightly translucent, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the broccoli, mushrooms, bell pepper, and soy sauce. Stir-fry until vegetables are just tender, then add garlic and bean sprouts.
3. Cook another minute or two longer, until garlic is golden and fragrant.
4. Stir in chili powder, ginger, and lemon juice and remove from heat.
5. Serve warm, over rice if desired. For variations on this recipe, try adding chicken, beef, or additional vegetables of your choosing!



# Strawberries

## Background

Strawberries are red, berry-like fruits that are well-known for their sweet flavor and enticing aroma. They are unusual for their seeds, which grow on the exterior of the fruit rather than on the inside. The strawberries most commonly eaten today are descendants of the wild strawberry, which is believed to be native to North America. The first garden strawberries were bred in Europe in the 18th century, but strawberries were not cultivated in the United States until the 1800s. Wild strawberries still grow widely across North America, and although the tiny berries are very labor intensive to harvest, they are singularly sweet and flavorful. Because strawberries are quite susceptible to pests and diseases, commercially grown strawberries are some of the most heavily sprayed crops. Furthermore, many commercial strawberry varieties have been bred for size rather than flavor, making home-grown strawberries an especially desirable treat.

## Growing Tips

The first step toward growing great strawberries is to pick a sunny site with well-drained soil. The fewer weeds there are, the better! Strawberries need quite a bit of fertilizer, so be sure to have plenty of compost on hand. You'll need to pick a variety of strawberry that is well-suited to New England growing conditions--your best bet is to visit a local nursery and ask for a reliable cultivar. Decide whether you want "June-bearers" or "everbearers." As you may have guessed, the former produces fruit only early in the summer, while the latter continues to produce throughout the summer (though not as vigorously). Plant the dormant roots as soon as soil can be worked in the spring with the woody stem-like part (the "crown") up toward the surface. Keep young plants well-watered. For June-bearers, pluck off blossoms the first year so plants can get established--your patience will be rewarded the second year. Mulch well with straw. Plants generally produce good yields for about 3 years.

## Storage

Strawberries are very fragile and do not store well, so eat as soon as possible. If you must store strawberries, be sure to remove any damaged berries from the container and store (unwashed, with the stems still attached) in the refrigerator for up to a few days. Cut out the leafy, stem-like portion just before serving. For long-term storage, consider freezing berries or making jam.

## Nutritional Benefits

Strawberries are very high in Vitamin C, potassium, and folic acid. They also have a compound called "ellagic acid," which is believed to help combat the formation of certain cancer cells. Strawberries can cause hives in certain individuals or exacerbate existing food allergies, so proceed with caution if you have never eaten them before.

## Preparation

Always wash berries just before eating. Fresh strawberries are delicious eaten raw, but they are often prepared in other ways as well. They can be cooked down into jam, added to home-made ice-cream, paired with rhubarb and made into pies, or tossed with sugar and served with shortcakes and cream.



# Recipes

## **Strawberry Shortcake** - serves 6

(adapted from Rombauer et al: *The Joy of Cooking*)

### *Ingredients—Shortcakes:*

- 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 5 tablespoons butter, chilled
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup milk or half-and-half

### *Ingredients—Topping:*

- 3 pints fresh strawberries, washed, hulled, and sliced
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar
- 1 cup heavy cream

### *Instructions*

1. Preheat the oven to 450°.
2. Mix together the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar in a large bowl.
3. Using a pastry blender or your fingers, cut in the butter to make a coarse meal.
4. Add the milk or half-and-half all at once and stir just until the dough begins to come away from the side of the bowl.
5. Scrape onto a floured surface. Knead gently a few times to bring the dough together, then roll out to about  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick.
6. Cut or shape into biscuits and place on an ungreased baking sheet.
7. Bake until lightly browned, about 12 minutes. Remove and allow to cool briefly.
8. Mix together strawberries and sugar in a medium bowl and allow to sit 5 minutes.
9. Beat heavy cream until whipped to desired thickness.
10. Split shortcakes, top with berries and cream, and serve.

Note: for a simpler alternative to this recipe, ready-made biscuit dough and whipped cream can be purchased. Frozen strawberries can also be used, but beware—they will be very soft and juicy!

## **Quick Strawberry Jam** - serves 4

(adapted from marthastewart.com and *Everyday Food*, June 2009)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 quart strawberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice

### *Instructions*

1. Hull strawberries and throw in a food processor.
2. Pulse a few times until coarsely chopped. Do not puree the berries! You can chop by hand instead if desired.
3. Transfer to a heavy-bottomed saucepan and turn heat to medium-high. Add sugar and lemon juice.
4. Cook, stirring frequently, about 10 minutes or until mixture thickens and bubbles.
5. Carefully transfer mixture to a glass jar, allow to cool, and refrigerate. Note: when prepared this way, jam is not shelf-stable, meaning it should be stored in the refrigerator and consumed within about 10 days. It can also be frozen. For information on canning for long-term storage, take a look at *The Joy of Cooking* (see Rombauer in bibliography).

## **Strawberry Smoothie** - serves 2

### *Ingredients*

- 1 banana, peeled
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup yogurt
- 1— $1\frac{1}{2}$  cup frozen strawberries
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of milk, apple juice, or orange juice (adjust to desired consistency)

### *Instructions*

1. Put all ingredients in a blender and process until smooth.
2. Pour into glass and serve. Refrigerate any uneaten portion.



# Swiss Chard & Beet Greens



Photos courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

## Background

Although its name suggests otherwise, Swiss chard is native to the Mediterranean region. It is an extremely close relative of the beet, as you might have guessed if you have ever looked at the two side-by-side. Chard is actually a type of beet that has been extensively bred for leaf production. Although the leafy portions of both plants have much in common, Swiss chard does not have a bulbous, nutritious root like the beet. Different varieties of chard produce different colored stems; while white-stemmed chard is probably still the most common, vibrant red and gold varieties are gaining popularity as well. Both the stems and the leaves of chard are edible. Swiss chard and beet greens can be interchanged in many recipes. A very hardy plant, chard can thrive under adverse conditions and will usually keep growing even if neglected, making it a great choice for a beginning (or very busy) vegetable gardener.

## Growing Tips

For growing information on beet greens, see "Beets." Chard needs growing conditions much like that of the beet, preferring well-drained soils and cooler temperatures. Chard is best in the spring and fall, though it will continue growing through the summer months as well. Seeds can be directly sown into the garden in mid-spring or started indoors about a month before the last frost date and then planting outdoors. Transplants will result in a slightly earlier harvest. If transplanting, leave about 8 inches between plants, and if direct seeding, be sure to thin out seedlings for a similar spacing. Plants can be cut whole for baby leaf chard. For full-sized leaves, pluck off individually (starting with the bottom leaves) close to the central stem. This way, plants will continue to grow for many months. For tender greens, avoid letting leaves get too large. Chard is frost tolerant but should be harvested before successive freezing days.

## Storage

Both Swiss chard and beet greens will store in the refrigerator for several days if loosely wrapped in plastic. Like almost all vegetables, however, they are best when eaten as soon as possible after harvest. Store unwashed as excess moisture can cause premature rotting. If you wish, cut off the stems and store separately to optimize space.

## Preparation

Be sure to wash chard and beet greens thoroughly before using; their wrinkles capture dirt easily. Both leafy greens are edible raw as well as cooked. Raw, they are often sliced thinly and tossed into salads. Cooked, they work their way into quiches, casseroles, soups, sautés, and stir-fries. Avoid overcooking chard and beet greens to preserve their nutritional integrity. Stems take slightly longer to cook than the leaves and their ribs.

## Nutritional Benefits

These wrinkly greens are very healthy, containing lots of folate, magnesium, potassium, iron, and Vitamins A, K, and C. Packed with fiber and low in calories, chard and beet greens can contribute to a healthy digestive system. Chard and beet greens also have more protein than many other greens.

# Recipes

## **Sautéed Swiss Chard and Onions** - serves 6

(adapted from Gina Marie Miraglia Eriquez: *Gourmet*, November 2007, and epicurious.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 2 large bunches Swiss chard
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 large onion (or 2 small)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 cloves garlic (or 2 teaspoons minced/crushed)

### *Instructions*

1. Rip or cut the leafy portion of the chard from the center ribs. Chop the ribs into pieces about an inch thick. Slice the leaves.
2. Heat the olive oil and butter in a heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add onions, salt, and pepper. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are translucent and beginning to soften, no more than 10 minutes.
3. Add chopped stems and continue to cook, covered (stirring occasionally), until stems are barely tender, about 8 minutes.
4. Add leaves and stir until wilted. You may have to add leaves in batches to accommodate their size before they are cooked down.
5. Add additional salt and pepper to taste.

## **Beet Greens and Cheesy Pasta**

(adapted from Aida Mollenkamp: chow.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 pound pasta
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ medium onion, chopped
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic
- 10 cups beet greens, ribs removed, chopped
- ¾ cup feta (or cheese of your choosing)
- Salt and pepper to taste

### *Instructions*

1. Cook pasta according to instructions.
2. Heat olive oil in large pan over medium heat. Add onion and cook 5 minutes, then add garlic and cook 3 minutes longer. Add beet greens and cook until wilted, about 3 minutes longer.
3. Drain pasta, return to pot, then add beet green mixture. Sprinkle with cheese, add salt and pepper, mix thoroughly, and serve while still warm.

## **Bean and Hearty Green Stew** - serves 6

(adapted from Deb Perelman: smittenkitchen.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 large bunch Swiss chard or beet greens
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 2 stalks of celery, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 2 15-ounce cans white beans
- 2 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 15-ounce can tomato puree
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper

### *Instructions*

1. Pour a few inches of water into a large saucepan and bring to a boil.
  2. Separate the ribs of the chard from the leafy portion; chop into 1-inch chunks. Cook chunks in boiling water for 3 minutes, then add leaves and cook one minute longer.
  3. Drain off water, squeeze out excess moisture, and roughly chop the whole mess. Set aside.
  4. Return saucepan to the stove, wipe it out, and add the oil. Heat over medium, then add carrot, celery, and onion. Sauté for about 12 minutes.
  5. Turn down heat, add garlic and sauté a few minutes longer, until garlic is golden brown.
  6. Stand back and add the vinegar—careful, it will steam and may splatter. Cook 5 minutes longer.
  7. Add the beans, broth, tomato puree, salt, and pepper. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes.
  8. Add the chard and cook 5 minutes longer. Remove from heat and add salt and pepper to taste.
  9. Serve hot. Try garnishing with homemade croutons, chopped herbs, grated cheese, or sour cream.
- Note: for a tasty variation, try cooking some sweet Italian sausage, chopping it, and adding it to the mix!



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

# Tomatillos

## Background

Round and shiny, tomatillos somewhat resemble small tomatoes. Unlike tomatoes, however, they are surrounded by a papery husk and are usually (though not always) green in color. The more common green and yellow cultivars have a distinctly tart flavor, while the varieties that ripen to red and purple tend to be sweeter. Originally from Central and South America, tomatillos remain an integral part of Latin American cuisine today. If you have ever eaten a green salsa, it probably contained a healthy dose of tomatillos. It is believed that the Aztecs started growing tomatillos nearly 3000 years ago. The bushy, tomato-like plants are now grown all across the Western Hemisphere.

## Growing Tips

Tomatillos have essentially all the same growing requirements as tomatoes with one major exception: because tomatillos can be poor self-pollinators, it is a good idea to plant at least two of them alongside each other to ensure that they set fruit. Start tomatillo seeds indoors early in the spring as you would with tomatoes, about 6-8 weeks before the last frost. Harden off by reducing water and transplant outdoors when the soil has warmed and all danger of frost has passed. Tomatillos like it hot, so plant them in a very sunny spot with well-drained, fertile soil. The plants will get very bushy, so be sure to leave at least 3 feet between them. Depending on the variety you choose, your plants may need staking. Water at regular intervals and check often for disease. Like tomatoes, tomatillos are susceptible to late blight. Fruits are ready to harvest when the husk turns light brown and begins to dry back slightly.

## Storage

For optimal storage, remove the husks from your tomatillos, seal them in plastic bags, and refrigerate. Stored this way, they will often last for more than two weeks. Avoid washing before storing; excess moisture can cause the fruit to rot prematurely. For long-term storage, tomatillos can be frozen whole or sliced. Additionally, they can be made into sauce or salsa and canned.

## Preparation

Before preparing tomatillos, remove the husks and wash the fruits thoroughly to remove any stickiness. Tomatillos are very acidic and are almost always cooked before eating. For general use, try steaming them in a covered pan for 5-10 minutes to soften them slightly. Tomatillos can also be fried, roasted, or added to a salsa mixture and simmered away. Chiles and tomatoes pair very well with tomatillos.

## Nutritional Benefits

Tomatillos are a good source of Vitamins A and C. They also contain significant quantities of potassium, which helps to regulate blood pressure and aids in proper muscle contraction. Small amounts of calcium and folic acid can be found in tomatillos as well.

# Recipes

**Quick Tomatillo Salsa** - serves 6  
(adapted from petesgreen.blogspot.com)

## Ingredients

- 1 pound tomatillos, husks removed, washed
- 1 medium onion, very coarsely chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper (or less for a milder salsa), chopped
- ½ cup water
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 handful cilantro, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon lime juice

## Instructions

1. Place tomatillos, pepper, onion, water, cumin, and half of the salt in a food processor or blender. Pulse a few times until the mixture is coarsely chopped—do not totally puree it.
2. Transfer mixture to a heavy-bottomed pot and simmer over medium heat until slightly thickened, 15-20 minutes.
3. Transfer cooked mixture to a bowl and chill for 30 minutes. Stir in cilantro, lime juice, and remaining salt.
4. Serve with tortilla chips, quesadillas, burritos, or anything else you generally eat with salsa.

Note: for a slightly sweeter salsa, add a few teaspoons of sugar prior to the cooking phase.

**Tomatillo and Chicken Stew** - serves 6  
(adapted from the Mexican Hass Avocados Importers Association: allrecipes.com)

## Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 sweet potato, peeled and diced
- 1 cup celery, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 5 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups chopped, cooked chicken
- 2 cups tomatillos, diced
- 1 handful cilantro, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Sour cream and sliced avocado (optional)

## Instructions

1. In a large, heavy-bottomed pot, heat oil. Add sweet potatoes, celery, and onion. Cook 5 minutes, then add garlic and cumin and cook another 3 minutes.
2. Stir in broth, chicken, and diced tomatillos. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat, cover, and simmer until tomatillos are soft, 15—20 minutes.
3. Add cilantro and salt and pepper to taste. Before serving, garnish with sour cream and avocado if desired.

**Tomato and Tomatillo Gazpacho** - serves 6  
(adapted from Andrea Albin: *Gourmet*, September 2009, and epicurious.com)

## Ingredients

- ½ pound tomatillos, husks removed, washed
- ½ jalapeno or chile of your choice, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons cider or red wine vinegar
- 1 ½ pounds tomatoes, chopped
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 handful cilantro, chopped

## Instructions

1. Place the tomatillos, chile, garlic, salt, and vinegar in a blender. Add half of the tomatoes and half of the onion, then puree until smooth. If you prefer a smooth soup, force the mixture through a sieve.
2. Stir in the rest of the tomatoes and onion, then the olive oil and cilantro. Add a splash of water if desired for a thinner consistency.
3. Chill until cold, at least one hour before serving. For a variation, try adding some chopped cucumber.



### **Background**

The tomato is native to South America, hence its inseparable connection to Mexican and Latin American cuisine. The first cultivated tomatoes were probably smaller than the common tomato of today and may not even have been red. Spanish and Portuguese explorers took tomatoes back to Europe with them in the 15th and 16th centuries. It didn't take long for the tomato to gain popularity and spread as a food source. Despite the tomato's major role in present-day Italian cuisine, the Italians were some of the last Europeans to fully embrace the fruit in their cooking, using it decoratively for many years instead. The widespread popularity of the tomato has led to extensive breeding and, in the United States, tomatoes are one of the biggest vegetable crops. We also import tons of tomatoes to meet year-round demand. Unfortunately, tomatoes have also become one of the most industrialized crops. Locally grown, in-season, ripe, heirloom tomatoes can seem an entirely different fruit than what is commonly found on the supermarket shelves.

### **Growing Tips**

Tomatoes require a long growing season, making it necessary to start seeds indoors in mid-April. Don't start seeds earlier than that, however, as the plants will become root-bound and leggy if grown inside in small containers for too long. Keep seedlings warm and, if they seem to be out-growing the cells in which they're planted, transplant them to larger pots. Before planting outside, harden off seedlings by gradually reducing temperature and water. After all danger of frost, plant into rich soil with plenty of room to grow—check your seed packets to see how big each variety will become. Most varieties will need to be staked to keep from tipping over. Harvest when fruit is fragrant and richly colored (red for most varieties). You may wish to choose blight-resistant varieties. Be vigilant for signs of disease, such as mold.

### **Storage**

Unlike most produce, tomatoes should never be stored in the refrigerator. Cold temperatures damage their flavor. Only refrigerate a tomato if it has already been cut open. Whole tomatoes should be left out until fully ripe (they will continue to ripen off the vine) and then consumed or preserved through canning or freezing.

### **Preparation**

For use raw, tomatoes simply need to be washed and cut into whatever shape you like. Using a serrated knife to slice tomatoes will prevent squashing them. To peel tomatoes for sauce, cut an X and the blossom end and blanch in boiling water until the skin starts to peel away. Chill slightly and peel.

### **Nutritional Benefits**

Tomatoes are well-known for lycopene, an antioxidant compound that may help battle cancer and heart disease. Tomatoes also contain Vitamin C, A, and Vitamin E.

# Recipes

## Homemade Tomato Soup - serves 6

(adapted from Kristina Johnson: [www.formerchef.com](http://www.formerchef.com))

### Ingredients

- 2 medium carrots
- 2 stalks celery
- 2 medium onions
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 cloves of garlic, minced
- 5-6 large fresh tomatoes, chopped
- 2 cups vegetable broth or chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon sugar, maple syrup, or honey

### Instructions

1. Roughly chop the carrots, celery, and onions into pieces of about the same size.
2. In a large, heavy-bottomed pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the carrots, celery, and onion, and cook until slightly soft. Add the garlic and cook another 5 minutes.
3. Add tomatoes and broth, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are very soft and the tomatoes have cooked down, about an hour.
4. Turn off heat. Use an immersion blender to puree the mixture. If you don't have an immersion blender, you may do it in batches in a conventional blender, taking care not to overfill it with the hot mixture.
5. Set a sieve over another soup pot and push the pureed mixture through it with a wooden spoon. The finer the sieve, the more liquid the mixture will end up—the goal is to separate just the tomato seeds and skins, not all of the solids.
6. Set the pot over medium-low heat, add the salt, pepper, and sugar, and reheat. Serve warm, garnished with a basil leaf or dollop of sour cream if desired.

Note: if fresh tomatoes are not available, this soup can be made with canned tomatoes—simply substitute 2 28-ounce cans of diced tomatoes. If you do use canned, diced tomatoes, you can skip the straining step as the seeds and skins will already be removed. For a creamy tomato soup, stir in a few splashes of milk or cream during the final step.

## Summer Tomato-Basil Pizza - serves 8

(adapted from Giada De Laurentiis: [www.foodnetwork.com](http://www.foodnetwork.com))

### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon cornmeal
- 2 8-ounce blobs of pizza dough, either homemade or store-bought
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups grated mozzarella
- 2 tomatoes, cut into ¼ inch-thick slices
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1 handful basil leaves, roughly chopped
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoons coarse salt

### Ingredients

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. Stretch the dough according to instructions and set atop baking sheets dusted with cornmeal. Thinner crusts are better for this recipe! Make sure dough slides easily atop the cornmeal; if it does not, add more.
2. Drizzle each crust with ½ tablespoon olive oil, then sprinkle with mozzarella, leaving at least a ½ -inch border. Arrange the tomato slices atop the mozzarella without overlapping slices.
3. Scatter the basil and garlic atop the tomatoes, sprinkle with Parmesan, and then drizzle with remaining olive oil.
4. Sprinkle with salt and bake pizzas until crusts are crisp and cheese is melted. Cut and serve while hot.

## Amy's Fresh Salsa - serves 4

### Ingredients

- 3 ripe tomatoes, chopped
- ½ small onion, chopped
- 1 pepper, chopped (optional)
- 1 handful cilantro, chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ tablespoon salt



Photo courtesy  
High Mowing Organic Seeds

### Instructions

1. Mix all ingredients together in a medium bowl.
2. Let stand for at least 20 minutes or up to several hours (in the fridge if desired) before serving. Serve alongside tortilla chips.



### **Background**

The turnip is an ancient root vegetable whose cultivation most likely predates Greek civilization. Because turnips are very hardy, are easy to grow, and provide a substantial amount of food, they were a reliable staple crop throughout Europe long before the potato. While smaller, more tender turnip varieties are cultivated for human consumption, larger types of turnips are grown as animal fodder. A member of the Brassica family, turnips are related to mustards, kale, broccoli, and cabbage, among other vegetables. Though turnips are best known for their roots, their greens are also edible and are highly nutritious.

### **Growing Tips**

Turnips are fairly cold-tolerant and can be directly seeded in early spring. Sow seeds about  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch deep in loose, fertile soil and thin seedlings to have about 2 - 4 inches of space. Keep an eye on seedlings for signs of flea beetles and cover with row cover if necessary. Baby turnips will be ready in around 30 days, they will take almost twice as long to reach full size. You can sow seeds every few weeks for a continuous supply, but beware, turnips will be best in the spring and fall when temperatures are a little cooler. In fact, they are sweetest after a fall frost. The plants should be watered plentifully and often. Most varieties are ready for harvest when the roots reach about 3-4 inches in size. All turnips should be pulled before consistently freezing days set in. Greens can be harvested throughout the growing period, but be sure to leave a few leaves on each plant.

### **Storage**

Remove green to retain nutrient value. Turnips will store in your crisper drawer for several weeks, with roots loosely in plastic. If you have a root cellar, trying storing them there as you would with carrots. Like many roots, turnips like it cool and dark without excessive humidity. If greens are young and tender you can eat these as well, either raw or braised; store in plastic similar to other greens.

### **Nutritional Benefits**

Turnips roots are a good source of both fiber and Vitamin C. The greens are surprisingly nutritious as well, containing Vitamins A and K in addition to C. They also deliver the minerals calcium and lutein. Calcium helps to build strong bones and lutein is believed to support eye and skin health.

### **Preparation**

Always give your turnips a good scrub before using them. Smaller turnips tend to be fairly tender and are tasty eaten raw, while large turnips have a more woody texture and lend themselves more to cooking. Turnips can be baked, boiled, mashed, sautéed, or steamed. Because they can be slightly bitter, turnips are often served with other vegetables or spices. Most other root vegetables complement turnips well.



# Recipes

## Turnip Hash - serves 4

(adapted from  
www.petesgreens.blogspot.com)

### Ingredients

4 tablespoons olive oil  
1 medium onion, diced  
1 pound turnips, diced  
2 cups chicken or vegetable stock  
2 tablespoons butter  
½ cup grated gruyere or parmesan cheese  
salt and pepper to taste  
1 handful of parsley, coarsely chopped (optional)

### Instructions

1. Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until translucent, about 5-10 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, heat the stock in a separate pot over medium heat.
3. Add the turnips to the onions and cook another 3 minutes. Pour in the hot stock and cook until almost completely absorbed.
4. Remove mixture from heat and add butter and cheese. Add salt and pepper to taste, garnish with parsley, and serve warm.

## Turnip Frittata - serves 6

(adapted from Martha Rose Shulman: nytimes.com)

### Ingredients

1 pound small-medium turnips  
2 teaspoons salt  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 teaspoons chopped thyme (optional)  
6 eggs  
1 tablespoon milk  
½ teaspoon pepper  
1 teaspoon minced garlic  
½ cup pitted, halved black olives (optional)  
½ cup mushrooms, chopped (optional)

### Instructions

1. Peel the turnips and roughly grate them. In a colander, toss with some of the salt, and allow to sit for 30 minutes. Then, squeeze out excess water.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium heat in a skillet. Add turnips and thyme and sauté a few minutes. Turn heat to low, add a splash of water, cover, and cook about 15 minutes, stirring frequently. Remove from heat.
3. Preheat your oven on the broiler setting.
4. Beat the eggs and milk together in a bowl. Add pepper and remaining salt, then stir in olives, mushrooms, and cooked turnips.
5. In a heavy, oven-safe, non-stick skillet, heat the rest of the olive oil over medium-high heat. Dump in the egg mixture and swirl around gently to distribute.
6. Turn heat very low, cover, and let cook for a few minutes. Then, uncover and transfer the skillet to the oven.
7. Allow to cook until completely set, 3-5 minutes longer. Remove from oven, cut into slices as you would a pie, and serve while hot.



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## Smashed Turnips with Horseradish - serves 2

(adapted from petesgreens.blogspot.com)

### Ingredients

2 large turnips, peeled and quartered  
½ red onion, minced  
1 tablespoon horseradish  
½ cup sour cream  
2 teaspoons salt

### Instructions

1. Bring a small pot of water to a boil, add turnips, and simmer until tender, about 25 minutes. Drain.
2. Place turnips in a bowl along with remaining ingredients. Use a potato masher, sturdy whisk, or fork to mash the ingredients. Be sure to leave the mixture slightly chunky.
3. Serve warm with additional horseradish and butter, if desired.



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# Winter Squash & Pumpkins

## Background

"Winter squash" is a broad term that encompasses many different types of squash. Well-known varieties include butternut, delicata, hubbard, acorn, and spaghetti squash. Pumpkins are also a type of winter squash, though only certain varieties of pumpkin are suitable for eating. Most large pumpkins are tough and bitter, but some smaller varieties are quite tasty. Many other varieties of winter squash are commonly used in recipes that call for pumpkin (though pumpkin is not always a good substitute in a recipe calling for squash). Part of the cucurbit family, winter squash is related to gourds, cucumbers, and melons. Some types of winter squash are actually quite close relatives of summer squash, a major difference being that winter squash is allowed to mature and form a hard shell while summer squash is harvested sooner. Winter squash, along with corn and beans, was one of the "three sisters" vital to the diet of Native Americans. It is one of the first crops to ever have been cultivated in the Americas; archaeologists have uncovered seed remnants that are believed to date back thousands of years.

## Growing Tips

Winter squash has a long growing season, typically requiring from 90—120 days to reach maturity, so it is best to start seeds indoors as long as a month before the final frost date. Start seeds in relatively sizable pots with plenty of compost to nourish the seedlings as they grow. Plant outdoors once all danger of frost has passed, direct seed or plant seedlings into hilled-up mounds of soil. Squash plants like plenty of organic matter and warmth. Some growers choose to grow squash in black plastic mulch to increase temperatures and keep weeds from overtaking the sprawling vines. Use floating row cover to ward off cucumber beetles early in the season but remove it once plants flower. Fruits should be harvested with 1-2 inches of stem, when rich in color with a sturdy rind, prior to the first frost.

## Storage

After harvest, most types of winter squash should be "cured" in a warm, dry spot for several days (outside if the weather is nice). Squash should then be moved to a cool (around 55°), relatively dry place. Undamaged squash stored this way can last months. Squash can also be cooked, then pureed or diced, and frozen.

## Preparation

Except delicata, most squash is peeled. Some with smooth skins, like butternut, can be tackled with a vegetable peeler before cooking. For most types, however, you'll want to slice the squash in half vertically with a sharp knife (careful!), scoop out the seeds, and then roast or steam the pieces until the flesh softens. At that point, you can scoop it out of the skin and put it to use.

## Nutritional Benefits

Winter squash provides complex carbohydrates, dietary fiber, vitamins A and C, several types of vitamin B, potassium, manganese, folate, and omega 3 fatty acids. It really packs a punch!

# Recipes

## **Butternut Squash Soup** - serves 8

(adapted from *Bon Appetit*, October 1998, and epicurious.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 large butternut squash
- 2 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons fresh ginger, minced (or powdered)
- 2 teaspoons garlic, minced
- 5 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 can coconut milk (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- Salt and pepper to taste

### *Instructions*

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Carefully cut squash in half lengthwise and scoop out the seeds. Use a splash of the oil to grease a rimmed baking pan. Place the squash halves cut side down on the baking sheet, add a splash of water, and cook until completely soft, about 45 minutes. When squash is cool enough to handle, scoop flesh from skin and set aside.
2. Meanwhile, heat the remaining oil in a large, heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add the onions and carrots and cover, stirring frequently, and cook until soft. Add a splash of water if vegetables begin to stick.
3. Stir in brown sugar, ginger, and garlic. Cook 2 minutes longer, then add squash flesh and broth.
4. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer 10 minutes.
5. Remove from heat, stir in coconut milk and nutmeg, then puree mixture using an immersion blender. If you have only a conventional blender, work in batches.
6. Return soup to pot and add salt and pepper to taste. Reheat slightly if necessary and serve hot.

## **Winter Squash Biscuits** - serves 8

(adapted from New England Home Cooking and simplylifeblog.com)

### *Ingredients*

- 1 winter squash
- 4 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- 4 tablespoons cold butter, cut into chunks
- 5 tablespoons milk

### *Instructions*

1. Follow step 1 in the “Butternut Squash Soup” recipe to prepare the squash. Reserve 1 cup of the squash for making this recipe, then refrigerate or freeze the rest for later use. Leave the oven at 400°F.
2. Mash the reserved cup of squash with a potato masher or fork. Set aside.
3. In a separate bowl, stir together the flour, brown sugar, baking powder, salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Incorporate the butter with your fingers, a fork, or a pastry blender to make a coarse meal. Set aside.
4. Stir the squash mixture into the dry ingredients with a fork, forming a soft dough.
5. Pat the dough out on a lightly floured surface until it is about ¼ inches thick.
6. Cut into round biscuits with a biscuit cutter or glass, lumping together scraps and patting out the dough again until you have used it all up.
7. Place biscuits on a greased baking sheet and bake until golden brown, about 15–20 minutes. Serve warm, with butter.

## **Simplest Squash** - serves 4–8

### *Ingredients*

- 2 large winter squash
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup

### *Instructions*

1. Preheat oven to 425°. Cut squash in half, scoop out seeds, and chop into pieces.
2. Toss pieces with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and roast for 15 minutes.
3. Remove from oven, drizzle with maple syrup, then return to oven and cook until totally tender. Serve hot with additional salt and pepper.



### **Background**

Zucchini and summer squash are both types of squash that are harvested when immature, unlike their relatives in the winter squash category, which are allowed to ripen fully. Zucchini (which is actually a type of summer squash) is usually dark green and shaped like a small bat, whereas what we call “summer squash” is more commonly yellow with a slight crook in its neck. Both can vary slightly in color as well as shape. Patty-pan squash, for example, is a type of summer squash that resembles a flying saucer. Although summer squash and zucchini have their roots in the Americans, the Italians are credited with breeding zucchini into the plant we know today. The French word for zucchini is “courgette,” a name that is also used in several other European countries. Squash and zucchini blossoms are edible, too!

### **Growing Tips**

One of the most common mistakes made by gardeners worldwide is to plant too much summer squash and zucchini. Two or three plants usually produce more squash and zucchini than a single family can handle, so only plant more if you plan on freezing a good amount or distributing produce to your neighbors. Start seeds indoors about a month before the last frost date (they are very cold-sensitive plants). Plant a few more seeds than you think you’ll need so you can choose the strongest plants. Plant one seed each in 3-inch pots with plenty of compost. Harden off before planting outside by gradually reducing water and temperature. Direct seeding is also an option after the danger of frost has passed. Allow at least 2 full feet of space between plants and plant into mounds of soil with plenty of compost. You can protect young seedlings from cucumber beetles with floating row cover but be sure to remove it once the plants begin to bloom. Harvest the fruits when they are 6-10 inches in length by cutting the stem about an inch above the top. Remove overgrown fruits to encourage more production.

### **Storage**

Both zucchini and summer squash are best when eaten as soon as possible, but they can be stored in the fridge for about a week without deteriorating much. Wrap loosely in a paper towel and then in a perforated plastic bag to balance moisture levels. For long term storage, shred (or chop) and freeze.

### **Preparation**

Although summer squash and zucchini are most commonly cooked, you’ll sometimes see tender, raw zucchini sticks served with dip. Squash and zucchini are ready once washed and trimmed of the ends. They can be steamed, sautéed, grilled, stir-fried, and added to soups, sauces, or casseroles.

### **Nutritional Benefits**

Summer squash and zucchini are low in calories while being high in potassium, folate, manganese, vitamins C and A, and fiber. Like many fruits and vegetables, squash and zucchini are most nutritious when eaten with the skin on.

# Recipes

**Zucchini Parmesan** - serves 8  
(adapted from www.handletheheat.com)

### Ingredients

- 2 medium-large zucchini, sliced into ¼ inch rounds
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup bread crumbs
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup marinara sauce
- ½ cup mozzarella cheese, grated

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. Generously grease a large, rimmed baking sheet.
2. In a large bowl, drizzle zucchini with olive oil and toss to coat.
3. In a smaller bowl, mix together the bread crumbs, salt, pepper, and half the Parmesan.
4. Dip the coated zucchini rounds into breading mix, then place in single layer on the baking sheet and bake until browned, about 25 minutes. Remove from oven and reduce heat to 400°F.
5. Grease a small casserole dish and cover the bottom with marinara. Cover with a layer of baked zucchini, then with some of the mozzarella, then Parmesan.
6. Keep layering sauce, zucchini, and cheese, finishing with a cheese layer on top.
7. Bake until cheese is melted and bubbling, about 15 minutes. Serve warm.

**Mary Catherine's Chocolate Zucchini Cake** - serves 10

### Ingredients

- ¾ cup shortening or butter
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 ½ cups flour
- ½ cup cocoa
- 2 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
- 1 ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ cup milk
- 3 cups grated zucchini

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Grease two 8x4 loaf pans.
3. In a large bowl, cream shortening and sugar, then add eggs, vanilla, and milk.
4. In a separate bowl, mix together sugar, flour, cocoa, baking powder, salt, baking soda, and cinnamon.
5. Quickly mix together wet and dry and ingredients. Stir in zucchini.
6. Scrape mixture into prepared pans and bake 50-60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool almost completely before serving.

## Amy's Squash

### Ingredients

- 2 medium summer squash or zucchini
- 3 ripe tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon butter
- ½ cup grated cheddar cheese
- ¼ cup grated parmesan cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions

1. Dice squash and tomatoes.
2. Heat ¼ inch of water in a skillet over high heat. Add squash and cook, covered, about 3 minutes.
3. Uncover, add butter and tomatoes, and cook another 5-10 minutes, until squash is tender and most liquid has evaporated.
4. Sprinkle with cheeses, salt, and pepper. Remove from heat and serve immediately.



Photo courtesy High Mowing Organic Seeds

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