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11 Av 5770

Parashat Vaetchanan
Deuteronomy 3:23 - 7:11
Haftara, Isaiah 40:1 - 40:26
Sunset 7.23.2010 - 8:38PM

The Science & Lore of the Kitchen

by Harold McGee

..Here is a short compilation of facts
• about those plant-derived foods that
are commonly found in our kitchens. Placing these foods historically, botanically, and when this is of interest, bio-chemically. There remains a great deal of uncertainty about the origins and precise classification of even the most familiar food plants.

The carrot is native to Afghanistan, and was known to the Greeks and Romans, although it was not widely used in Europe until the Middle Ages. Early varieties were red, purple, or black with anthocyanin pigments. A pale, yellow anthocyanin-less strain arose in the 16th century and became very popular, perhaps because it would not color sauces and soups. It was in 17th century Holland that the familiar orange type, rich in carotene (the precursor of vitamin A), was developed. The carrot was brought by the colonists to the New World, where it escaped from cultivation to become the wildflower Queen Anne's lace. It has always been less popular here than in Europe, and has been commonly used in this country only since World War I. Anatomically, the carrot is the swollen base of the taproot.

The parsnip is native to Eurasia and was known to the Greeks and Romans; the variety known to us today was developed in the Middle Ages. It too is a taproot, and like the turnip was a very important staple food before the introduction of the potato.



Parsley Gremolata

Gremolata is a condiment made from finely minced parsley, garlic and lemon zest. Traditionally served with veal, it is also an excellent accompaniment for fish and seafood dishes.

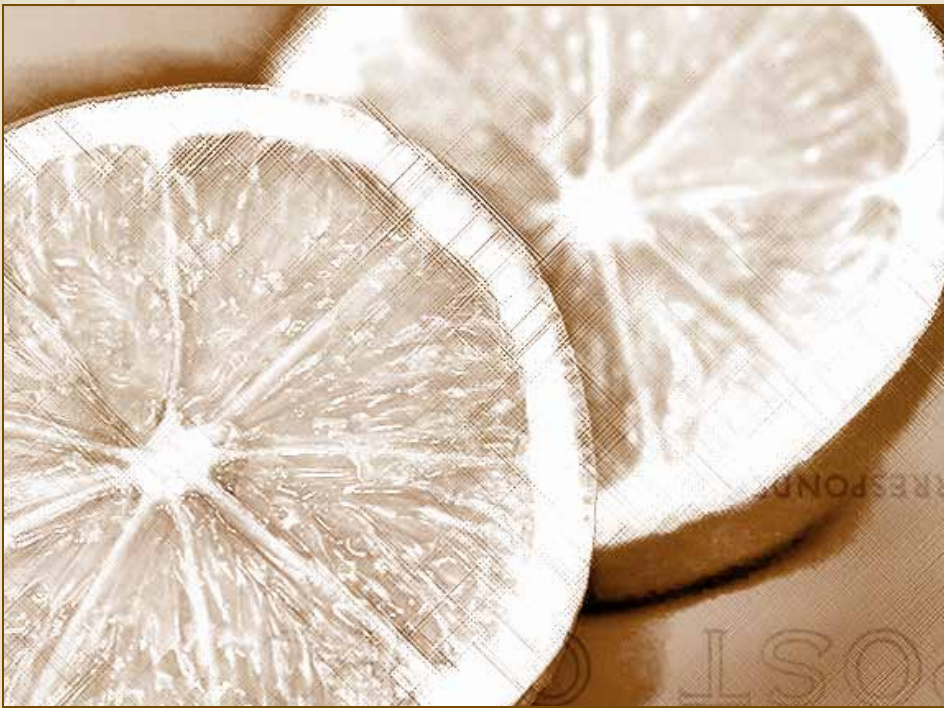
- 1 bunch Italian (flat-leaf) parsley
- 1 clove garlic, peeled
- 1 lemon
- Kosher salt & fresh ground pepper

1. Wash and thoroughly dry the parsley.
2. Remove the leaves and finely mince until you have about 2 tablespoons worth.
3. Finely mince the garlic.
4. Use a lemon zester to remove about 1 teaspoon of lemon zest.
5. Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and season to taste with Kosher salt and black pepper. You can pound the ingredients together with a mortar and pestle or just use the back of a spoon or the bottom of a glass.

This week's Harvest:

- 1 bunch Oxbow Carrots
- 1lb Fava Beans
- 2 heads mature Garlic
- 1 bunch spring Onions
- 1 bunch Italian Parsley
- 1 bunch Beets
- 4 stalks Rhubarb
- 1 head Cauliflower
- 1 bunch Rainbow Chard
- 1 bunch Collards
- 1 head Jericho Romaine
- 1 head Red Leaf Lettuce

EAT well.
DO good.



FINDING YOUR ROOTS: THE LONG AND STORIED HISTORIES OF EVERYDAY KITCHEN VEGETABLES

Beets have been eaten by man since prehistory, and are native to a wide swath of Eurasia from Britain to India. In the 18th century, a white variety of beet began to be cultivated for sugar production. Up to 8% of its weight is sugar, an exceptional figure for a vegetable. The beet consists mostly of a swollen hypocotyl, or lower stem, although it is partly a root. The ability to metabolize the bright red pigment, betacyanin, is controlled by a single genetic locus, those people who have inherited two recessive genes pass the pigment in their urine.

The daisy family, or the Compositae, (lettuce, endive, dandelion, artichoke) is the second largest family of flowering plants, and yet contributes only a few food plants. Today's several varieties of lettuce derive from an ancestor strain native to Asia and the Mediterranean; it has been under cultivation for close to 5000 years. Lettuce seems to be represented in some Egyptian art, and was certainly enjoyed by the Greeks and Romans. According to Pliny (Book 19), the Emperor Augustus was cured

of a serious illness with lettuce, and raised a monument to the prescribing physician. The first syllable of its Latin name, *Lactuca*, means milk, and refers to the white latex that often oozes from the leaf base, a characteristic it shares with its relative, the dandelion.

One variety of lettuce, *Lactuca virosa*, is grown for "lettuce opium": the latex contains triterpenoid alcohols that act as soporifics. Many herbalists claimed that even ordinary lettuce calmed the nerves and induced sleep. Endive and its relative chicory are native to India but were known to the Egyptians and the Greeks and Romans. The broad-leafed variety of endive is known as escarole. These plants are more bitter than most kinds of lettuce. The dandelion seems to be found naturally on all continents, although most varieties are native to Eurasia. It has occasionally been cultivated on a small scale, and has been used as a novelty and in emergencies as a green vegetable, probably since prehistory. The leaves can be eaten raw in salads or cooked, like spinach; the inflorescence is used to color and flavor dandelion wine.

SESAME SNOW PEAS

Devra Gartenstein - the owner of Patty Pan Grill, Seattle's oldest farmers' market concession - also catered our '08 Purim Celebration. This recipe is from her book, "Local Bounty: Seasonal Vegan Recipes" is a quick, tasty recipe that won't overheat your kitchen because it only takes a couple of minutes of steaming. You can substitute snap peas for the snow peas.

- 1 lb snow peas, trimmed
 - 2 tablespoons soy sauce
 - 1 tablespoons rice vinegar
 - 1 teaspoons toasted sesame oil
 - 1/2 teaspoons chili oil (or more, to taste)
 - 3 green onions, finely chopped
 - 2 tablespoons black sesame seeds
1. Steam the snow peas for 2 minutes
 2. Mix the soy sauce, rice vinegar, toasted sesame oil, and chili oil in a small bowl.
 3. Mix the steamed snow peas together with the green onions and black sesame seeds.
 4. Toss the sauce together with this mixture and serve.

COLD CUCUMBER SOUP

This soup is so easy that you'll be making it a lot on warm afternoons or when you feel you want to eat something less than a complete meal. Make this soup ahead of time and chill it, covered, in the refrigerator until ready to use.

- 3 leeks, washed and sliced in rounds
 - 2 cups vegetable stock
 - 2 cups milk
 - 6 cucumbers, peeled, sliced, and seeded
 - 3 tablespoons minced fresh dill
 - 1 tablespoon fresh squeezed lemon juice
 - 2 tablespoons chopped green onion
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 - Plain low-fat yogurt or sour cream
 - 2 tablespoons capers
1. Cook the leeks in the stock for 10 minutes. Add the milk and cucumbers.
 2. Pour small batches at a time into a blender and purée until smooth. Add the dill, lemon juice, green onions or chives, salt, and pepper.
 3. Chill covered in the refrigerator for 3 hours.
 4. Garnish with yogurt and sprinkle a few capers on top.