July 21, 2012

**Featured Herb:**

*Fennel*

**Featured Vegetables:**

Kohlrabi and Broccoli, leaves, stems & flowers

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### Caramelized Fennel and Goat Cheese Bruschetta

- 1 large fennel bulb
- 2 Tbsp Extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 tsp fennel seed (optional)
- 5 oz goat cheese
- 2 Tbsp butter
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- Alder smoked sea salt
- Sourdough baguette

1. Chop off the leafy fronds of the fennel, save some of them for garnish. Slice off the root bottom, and then slice the whole bulb in half lengthwise and then in 1/8 inch slices sideways. You should be able to see the layers of the bulb if correctly done. Melt butter and oil together in large frying or sauté pan over high heat. When the butter begins to foam, add a layer of fennel until one side is golden brown. Do not overcrowd pan or stir fennel around either. When one side is done, turn it over and sauté again. This process should only take a couple of minutes each time. Remove and continue with next batch of fennel.

2. Once all the fennel is sauté and golden brown, add sugar, fennel seeds and smoked sea salt to the pan. Heat for about 30 seconds and add all the fennel to the pan, to caramelize them. Turn them gently. This should take about 1-2 minutes. Remove to a plate and let cool down.


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**Fennel**

It is a highly aromatic and flavorful herb with culinary and medicinal uses. It is one of the primary ingredients of absinthe. *Florence fennel* or *finocchio* has a swollen, bulb-like stem base that is used as a vegetable. The fronds of the finocchio are used as an herb. Although the fronds are similar to Dill, Fennel has a much stronger licorise taste. Fennel seeds have a similar taste to Anise, but are quite different looking. Fennel bulbs and fronds are frequently used in Mediterranean cooking. Fennel seeds are used in Indian cuisine as well as other spice mixtures.
Kohlrabi has never been a vegetable that I was familiar with as a child. I discovered it when I was becoming a chef and explored its possibilities. The “Kohl”-slaw is a pretty standard recipe, I paired it with the fennel, to kind of bring in a new flavor. It has always struck me as an “alien” vegetable, sorry.. but there it is. Kohlrabi is sometimes known as the “German turnip”, it belongs in the cabbage or “Brassica” family and is easily grown. Larger kohlrabi, can be woody, so choose smaller ones to try it out. They taste similar to Broccoli, but are sweeter and milder

**Fruity Fennel “Kohl-slaw”**

3 medium kohlrabi bulbs, peeled and grated  
1 cup finely shredded cabbage  
1 red delicious apple, cored and diced  
1/2 cup olive oil  
1 large Fennel bulb, fronds removed  
1/2 small sweet red onion, diced  
1/2 cup raisins  
1/4 c apple cider or juice

Combine ingredients in bowl except for olive oil and apple cider. Lightly drizzle in oil and cider. Toss gently and refrigerate a few hours to allow flavors to mellow. Toss before serving. Serves 6.  
Per serving: 47 calories, 1 gram protein, 12 mg sodium, 12 gram carb, 0 gram fat, 0 gram chol.

**Mixed Grill with Fennel Oil**

3/4 cup fennel fronds  
2 garlic cloves  
Salt and black pepper  
1/3 c olive oil  
1 1/2 Tbsp lemon juice

To make the Fennel oil, put garlic and fennel fronds (green part only) in food processor until finely ground. Add rest of ingredients and set aside.

For the “grill”

1 kohlrabi, peeled, cut in half and sliced  
1 brocoli head, sliced lengthwise in 1/2 inch slabs  
1 zucchini, angle-sliced  
3-4 Tbsp olive oil

Keep all ingredients separate in bowls, and toss each with olive oil. Place a cast iron skillet over high heat, and heat oven to 375 degrees. Char-grill vegetables in batches, until tender. This will take between 1-4 minutes. Use tongs or spatula to turn them. When done, remove them and spread on a platter. Drizzle with fennel oil, season with salt and pepper.
Because this has been a tough growing year, we have to think “Wholistically” about our vegetables. This week’s focus is on Broccoli, the whole broccoli; leaves, stems and if we are lucky enough… flowerets. Normally we just eat the flowerets, and if we are making a soup, we may add the stems. This is my advice, when making cream of broccoli soup, add the stems… always… if you are pureeing the soup it adds heft to the base of the soup, flavor and fiber too. You can chop up the stems into salads, but I recommend you use a vegetable peeler and peel the first layer off. (You don’t have to, but it can be a little tough and bitter), you could even Blanch them (boil water, douse the stems in for a few seconds, drain and run under ice cold water), this helps to make the broccoli less bitter. You could even add them to a pizza this way, with a few flowerets, just so you know what you are eating. ;)

Now if we are lucky enough to have stems and flowerets, try roasting them in olive oil at 450 degrees, you may want to vertically slice the broccoli into 1/2 inch slabs beforehand. You can even roast the leaves, just add them the last 5 minutes. Toss with a bit of sesame oil and ginger juice. Done!

Use Broccoli leaves for steaming, stir-fry, sliced thinly and added to pasta dishes, they are so versatile. Young broccoli leaves can also be added to salads, you can stuff them and then steam them. Recently I made a brown rice, kalamata olive and goat cheese stuffing for the leaves, almost made them like stuffed grape leaves, added a lemon yogurt sauce… delicious… So, just don’t look at the parts of the vegetables we know and love… Look “Wholistically” at the plant … you may get more than you bargained for! Enjoy

Broccoli is also part of the Brassica family. Brassica vegetables are highly regarded for their nutritional value. They provide high amounts of vitamin C and soluble fiber and contain multiple nutrients with potent anticancer properties. Boiling reduces the level of anticancer compounds, but steaming, and stir frying do not result in significant loss. Brassica vegetables are rich in indole-3-carbinol, a chemical which boosts DNA repair in cells and appears to block the growth of cancer cell. They are also a good source of carotenoids, with broccoli having especially high levels.

**Honey Miso glazed Black Cod with Broccoli and Bok Choy Stir Fry.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 lbs Black Cod tips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2 cup mirin (rice wine)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 tablespoons red miso</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 large scallions, or garlic scapes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Broccoli leaves, flowerets and stems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Soy sauce</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lime</td>
<td>1/2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miso</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honey</td>
<td>1/2 teaspoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginger</td>
<td>3 small bok choy</td>
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Mix together the soy sauce, mirin, lime, miso, ginger and honey. Place black cod tips in a plastic bag or container and pour miso mix over. Let marinate for 1-2 hours. Chop broccoli stems and flowerets into bite size pieces. Roll up the broccoli leaves and cut chiffonade shreds across the leaf. Cut the bok choy on the diagonal, discarding the stemmed area. 

Heat wok with 2 Tbsp olive oil, add cut up scallions or garlic scapes and quickly stir fry. Then add the black cod tips and stir fry for about 3-5 minutes depending on size. Add broccoli stems and flowerets. Stir fry about 1-2 minutes, finally add broccoli leaves, and bok choy. Finish stir frying for another minute or so. Serves about 4 people.

Herbal Vinegars, and Refrigerator pickles
Now that our gardens are growing a little bit better, and some edible flowers are blooming, berries are ripening and herbs are thriving. It’s a great time to make flavored vinegars. Herbal, flower or berry vinegars are simple to make, and it will bring a taste of summer to your salads this winter. Use 1 cup of loosely packed fresh herb leaves to 2 cups vinegar. You can always add sprigs later if bottling and giving as gifts. You can use any vinegar, I prefer white wine, rice vinegar, then distilled and cider. But also experiment with red, champagne (expensive), balsamic or malt vinegars. Place herbs in clean, sterilized jar and bruise them as you put them in. Pour in vinegar, cover and let steep in the dark for a week or more. If the flavor isn’t strong enough, store a bit more. When done, stir into clean, sterilized bottles, add fresh herbs and seal. You can make a rosemary and garlic scapes, Mint and Basil, Nasturtium, rosemary and oregano, Fennel and mint to name a few… Come up with your own ideas, don’t forget edible flowers (rose vinegar would be great, just make sure there are no pesticides connected to your herbs, flower or fruit.)

A fruit vinegar can be made with 3/4 cup vinegar, 3/4 cup sugar, 3/4 cup water, and about 1 1/2 cup berries. Bring ingredients to a boil in saucepan, reduce heat and simmer five minutes or until berries burst. Cool. Strain through cheesecloth lined sieve. Cover tight and store in cool place.

For a quick pickling vegetables or how about caper buds… Use 1 cup white vinegar, 1/8 cup sugar, 2 1/2 cup water, and about 2-3 cups veggies. You can use pickling spices or come up with your own combinations. (This recipe multiplies up well) This year I did a small batch of asparagus with fresh fennel and oranges… yummy!

**Eat and Support LocalFoods!**

1. Host a harvest party at your home or in your community that features locally available and in-season foods. Host a 100 mile pot luck.
2. Produce a local food directory that lists all the local food sources in your area, including CSA’s, farmer’s markets, food co-ops, restaurants emphasizing seasonal cuisine and local produce, and farmers willing to sell directly to consumers year round.
3. Buy extra quantities of your favorite fruit or veggie when it is in season and experiment with drying, canning, jamming or otherwise preserving for a later date, extend that to the fishing season.

The demonstrations are sponsored by a State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources Grant “Chef at the Market 2012”