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# The Everyday Gourmet

## Cooking with Vegetables

Chef Bill Briwa

The Culinary Institute of America



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## **Bill Briwa, C.E.C., C.H.E.**

Professor of Culinary Arts  
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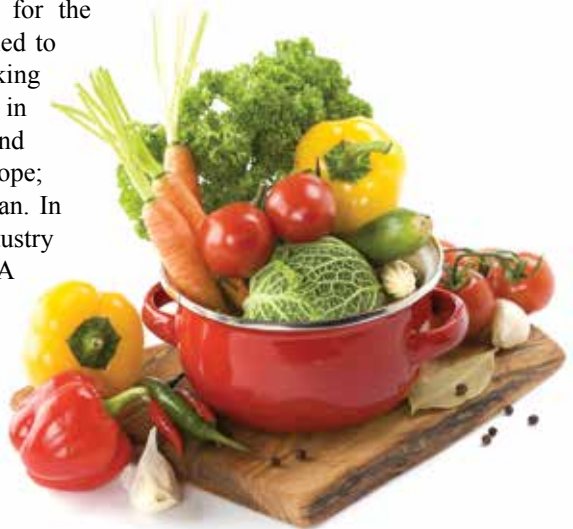
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**A** 1980 graduate of The Culinary Institute of America (CIA), Chef Bill Briwa has worked in the hospitality industry for more than 30 years and is a Certified Executive Chef and Certified Hospitality Educator. In California's Napa Valley, he was the resident chef for The Hess Collection winery, owned and operated his own bistro, and worked at

Thomas Keller's award-winning restaurant The French Laundry. He was also the executive chef for The Wine Spectator Restaurant at the CIA at Greystone and served as an officer on the board of the St. Helena Farmers' Market.

As culinary chair of the 2004 Napa Valley Wine Auction, Chef Briwa helped raise more than five million dollars for local charities. In addition to his work as a chef, he has been both a baker and pastry chef. His writing on food and wine, olive oil, and cooking has been featured locally and in *Fine Cooking*, *Mise en Place*, and *Sunset*, as well as in the trade publications *Flavor & the Menu* and *Practical Winery & Vineyard Journal*.

As a Professor of Culinary Arts at the CIA, Chef Briwa has developed curricula and has taught cooking, flavor dynamics, gastronomy, and food-and-wine pairing full time for the past 20 years. He has traveled to both teach and study cooking across the United States; in China, Mexico, South and Central America, and Europe; and around the Mediterranean. In addition, he is part of the Industry Services Group at the CIA and works closely with a broad range of corporate clients to help them identify and realize their culinary goals.



Chef Briwa has been a speaker at many professional conferences. He takes part in the Healthy Kitchens, Healthy Lives conference held each year at the CIA. The conference is copresented by the Harvard School of Public Health and the CIA. Chef Briwa has collaborated with Dr. Connie Guttersen, an instructor at the CIA and author of *The Sonoma Diet*, on numerous presentations on nutrition and cooking, including a course on the science of healthy cooking produced by The Great Courses.

In 2003, Chef Briwa was a judge for the American Cheese Society, and in 2005, he presented on gastronomy at the annual conference of the International Association of Culinary Professionals. In 2005, 2006, and 2007, he presented at the International Foodservice Manufacturers Association's Chain Operators Exchange conference, and in 2008 and 2009, he spoke at the National Restaurant Association Show in Chicago. Chef Briwa is an olive oil enthusiast; he presented at Beyond Extra Virgin IV, a conference on superpremium olive oil, in Verona, Italy.

Over the last 35 years of cooking and teaching, Chef Briwa has taken one short two-year break from the stove to become a puppeteer. He lives in Yountville, California, with his wife and a border collie—both of whom think highly of his cooking.

Chef Briwa is the instructor or co-instructor for six other offerings in The Great Courses' *Everyday Gourmet* series: *Rediscovering the Lost Art of Cooking*, *Making Healthy Food Taste Great*, *Making Great Meals in Less Time*, *Essential Secrets of Spices in Cooking*, *How to Master Outdoor Cooking*, and *The Joy of Mediterranean Cooking*. ■

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# Note to the Home Chef

The ingredient lists provided in this guidebook are for general reference only. Chef Briwa frequently substitutes or adds ingredients as he cooks and encourages you to do the same. The key to becoming a great chef is to learn about your ingredients and how they change in the process of cooking, to taste your food frequently as you develop a dish, and to be courageous enough to experiment in the kitchen.







# Colorful Carrots

## Lesson 1

The overarching goal of this course is to make you a better, more confident cook overall, but the focus is on vegetables—for several reasons. Vegetables are connected to the seasons and to certain regions, so they represent an authentic eating experience. Vegetables are also great for making your diet healthier. Furthermore, vegetables are sustainable and inexpensive. This lesson will focus on a single vegetable, carrots, which can be braised, simmered, grilled, and eaten raw.

### Braised Carrot Osso Buco

#### Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

- ¼ cup olive oil
  - 1 ½ lbs large carrots, topped and peeled, cut into 3-inch pieces
  - 1 medium onion, diced
  - 1 celery rib, diced
  - 1 clove garlic, peeled and smashed
  - 10 oz crushed tomatoes
  - 1 cup vegetable stock
  - 1 bouquet garni (made with 6 parsley sprigs, 3 thyme sprigs, and 1 bay leaf tied with kitchen twine)
  - ½ orange, cut in 2, including the peel
  - 4 slices dried porcini mushrooms, soaked in ½ cup hot water for 10 minutes
  - salt, to taste
  - ground pepper, to taste
- gremolata**
- 1 Tbs flat-leaf parsley, chopped
  - 1 clove garlic, minced
  - 1 Tbs carrot tops, chopped
  - 1 tsp lemon zest



Osso buco is a dish that is typically made with veal shanks, but in this dish, large carrots are treated like a tough piece of meat, such as veal.

Braise the carrots by simmering them for a long time until they are tender. Add oil to a pan on the stove. Then, add the carrots and cook over medium heat,

turning frequently, until they are golden brown or slightly darker (for about 12 to 15 minutes). Remove the carrots from the pan and place them on a plate.

To the same pan on the stove, add onion and celery and cook over moderate heat for about 4 minutes, until the onions are translucent. Add the garlic, and when it bursts into aroma, add the tomatoes, stock, bouquet garni, and orange slice. Then, add the mushrooms and their soaking liquid, leaving behind any dirt that may have dropped from the mushrooms.

Bring this sauce to a simmer and season with salt and pepper. Add the carrots to the braising liquid. Cover and cook over low heat, turning the carrots occasionally, until tender but still holding their shape (about an hour). Discard the bouquet garni, the mushrooms, and the orange. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

Because the carrots are cooked for so long, they might lose their vitality and freshness. But these qualities can be replaced with complexity, which can be built into the dish with gremolata. Gremolata, which includes parsley and garlic, is sprinkled over osso buco to give it a fresh, vital quality.

To make the gremolata, chop parsley and garlic, as well as some carrot tops. Add lemon zest. Add the gremolata to the hot braised carrots and stir. Serve the carrots hot in their sauce.

## Carrot Tartare



### Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 2–3 carrots, very fresh with tops, topped and peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1 egg yolk, pasteurized
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 4 anchovy fillets, finely chopped
- 1 shallot, finely diced
- 1 Tbs capers, finely chopped
- 1 Tbs cornichon, finely chopped
- 1 Tbs lemon juice
- ½ tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tsp olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1–2 avocados, coarsely diced
- microgreens
- carrot tops, fried
- parsley, freshly and finely chopped (optional garnish)



This dish treats carrots like they are ground meat, with all the classical garnishes for a tartare.

Start with very fresh carrots. Cut off the tops and bottoms and peel them. Then, cut the carrots into smaller pieces and put them in a food processor. Pulse the carrots until they are uniform and fairly small (think ground beef).

In a bowl, combine the classic garnishes for a steak tartare: egg yolk (pasteurized, because the egg will be consumed raw), Dijon mustard, anchovies, finely minced shallot, diced capers, and diced cornichon. Mix well. Add lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, and olive oil.

Add carrots to the dressing and stir everything together. Taste for flavor and add salt and pepper—and more olive oil, if necessary.

The first layer of the tartare is avocado. Dice the avocado, adding lemon juice to keep it from discoloring. Add salt and pepper to season it.

Spoon the avocado into the bottom of a ring mold and use a fork to press it down into a uniform layer. Then, add the carrot tartare in a layer on top. Again, press it down so that it's uniform. Lift the ring mold to reveal the circularly stacked avocado and carrot tartare.


Briefly fry the tops of the carrots in 350-degree oil until they're crispy (when the bubbling subsides). Drain the carrot tops on a paper towel.

On top of the tartare, add microgreens, such as arugula. Also add the fried carrot tops. You can also use parsley as an optional garnish. Drizzle olive oil around the plate.

## Simmered Baby Carrots

### Ingredients

Yield: 2 portions

- 
- 1 bunch baby carrots, peeled
  - 1 cup water
  - salt, to taste
  - 1 pinch sugar
  - 1 tsp turmeric
  - 1 star anise
  - 2 Tbs butter, sweet
  - 1–2 tsp lemon juice
  - ½ tsp parsley, chopped
  - pepper, to taste

Gently peel fresh baby carrots. Scrape the tops to make sure that there is no dirt. Halve any larger carrots lengthwise. Cut off the root ends.

Cook the carrots in a pan of water on the stove. Add salt to the water, as well as a pinch of sugar. Also add turmeric, which has a sweet, citrusy quality. Then, add star anise, an aromatic Asian herb. Finally, add butter to the water.

## The Four Cooking Techniques

There are four cooking techniques. While you might be familiar with these techniques with regard to cooking meat and fish, you can practice all of these cooking techniques with vegetables.

1. dry-heat cooking with fat (sautéing)
2. dry-heat cooking without fat (grilling, broiling, and roasting)
3. moist-heat cooking (simmering and boiling)
4. combination cooking (braising and stewing)

Put a lid on the pan so that the carrots can steam. The buttery liquid will become a sauce. Simmer for about eight minutes.

Once the carrots are tender, turn up the heat and remove the lid so that some of the liquid can boil away.



Once the liquid reduces to a creamy sauce, taste the sauce for flavor. Add salt and lemon juice. Stir.

Plate the baby carrots. Garnish with the star anise. Drizzle the sauce on top. Add parsley. Alternatively, you can use borage blossoms (which have the flavor of cucumber) and garlic chive blossoms. Sprinkle pepper on top.

## Burnt Carrots with Goat Cheese, Parsley, Arugula, and Crispy Garlic Chips

### Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

- 8 medium carrots (about 1 ¼ lbs), peeled
- 2 tsp thyme, chopped
- ½ cup parsley, leaves only
- 3 ½ cups arugula, trimmed, washed, and dried
- 4 oz fresh goat cheese, crumbled
- 2 Tbs garlic chips

### vinaigrette

- 2 Tbs red wine vinegar
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- salt, to taste
- ground black pepper, to taste



In this dish, carrots are grilled until they are very dark—they might even be considered burnt. The burnt bitterness balances the sweetness of the carrots and creates a fun salad.

Cut the carrots into carrot sticks that are about a quarter of an inch thick. Add olive oil, salt, pepper, and finely chopped fresh thyme. Add the carrots to the mixture, making sure that the carrots are coated with it. Then, lay the carrots on a hot grill until they have a dark coloration.

Next, make the vinaigrette for this burnt carrot salad, using olive oil and vinegar. Add salt and pepper.

Once the carrots have developed a lot of color and are even black in spots, pull them off the grill. They shouldn't taste burnt; they should taste caramelized, complex, and sweet.

Line up the carrots and cut them in half, into bite-sized pieces. Add them to the vinaigrette. Then, add parsley and toss well. Taste for flavor. Add arugula and crumbled goat cheese.

Top with garlic chips, which are made from garlic sliced very thin and then fried slowly, between around 225 and 250 degrees. Fry it just until it turns a pale golden. Frying it slowly drives out all of the moisture before it browns so that it becomes crispy, like a garlicky nut. Toss everything together and serve the salad.



# Summer Squashes

## Lesson 2

This lesson is all about summer squash. Often in the middle of the summer, there is a huge selection of squash available. They almost all taste identical, so choose your squash for reasons other than variety—for example, color or shape. Choose them to suit your purposes. Armed with a few good recipes for grilled, roasted, and pickled squash, you will be able to seize the season.

### Zucchini “Pasta” with Garlic, Almonds, Pepper Flakes, and Pecorino

#### Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 1 ½ lbs zucchini
- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ⅓ cup almonds, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, fresh, slivered
- ½–1 tsp red pepper flakes
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 16 cherry tomatoes
- 1 Tbs parsley, chopped
- 2 oz Pecorino, shaved



To make this dish, put your zucchini into what’s known as a spiralizer to create noodles made of zucchini. After being put through the spiralizer, the zucchini is cut into thin noodles that will cook quickly. Set the zucchini noodles aside.

Turn on a pan. Start with an assertive olive oil that has good flavor, and toast the slivered almonds—or, as an alternative, pine nuts—in the oil. You want to have enough oil in the pan so that it can eventually coat the zucchini well.

While the pan is coming up to temperature, slice the garlic very thin. When you’re slicing delicate things like garlic, you want to use the tip of the knife, but keep an eye out for your fingers. Because this is a rustic dish, it’s appropriate to have larger pieces of garlic in the dish.

Wait until the almonds are beginning to brown, and then turn down the heat a bit and add the garlic. Keep an eye on what’s happening in the pan. You



don't want the garlic to go beyond a pale golden color, because if it browns too much, it will become bitter.

Add the chili flakes, or red pepper flakes. Then, season with salt and pepper.

Turn off the heat on the pan. Place the cherry tomatoes in the hot oil, which will warm them. If the tomatoes are small enough, you can add them whole, but if they are on the larger side, simply cut them in half. Adding the tomatoes will cool the oil a little bit.

Chop the parsley. Because this is a rustic dish, the parsley can be coarsely chopped.

Add the zucchini noodles to the pan. Let the noodles warm up for about a minute. You're not really cooking the noodles, because if you cook them, the water will begin to bleed out from the zucchini, and the noodles will turn into a sodden mess in the pan.

Then, add the chopped parsley and the Pecorino cheese. Parmesan would be a great alternative.

When you're ready to serve the dish, make sure that each plate gets a nice selection of the vegetables, colorful tomatoes, crunchy and nutty almonds, flakes of garlic, and cheese.



## Grilled Summer Squash with Lemon, Mint, Garlic, and Olives

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 2 lbs summer squash, yellow and green
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 Tbs garlic, fresh, slivered
- ½ tsp fennel seed
- 1 lemon, zested
- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbs parsley, coarsely chopped
- 2 Tbs mint, coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup pitted green olives, cut into rounds
- lemon wedges



Start by cutting the summer squash—green squash and yellow squash—in half lengthwise. The benefit to grilling the squash in large pieces is that you don't have to handle a bunch of small pieces. Later, if you want more portions, you can cut the large pieces into smaller portions.

Score the flesh on the inside—first one way and then the other. This is not only decorative, but it also allows the squash to cook more readily.

Toss the squash in a marinade of salt, pepper, garlic, fennel seed (or another spice that you like), lemon zest, and olive oil.

Place the squash halves on the grill. While they are cooking, chop the parsley and mint. A rustic dish calls for a coarse chop.

Once the squash has developed some nice color, change the angle at which they are laying on the grill so that they develop crosshatch marks. Continue to cook them.

Cut the pitted olives into small rounds.

Season the squash with some more salt, and flip them over, letting them cook on their second side until

### Chopping Parsley and Mint

To chop parsley, gather it together into a little ball and then chop through it. This technique brings the parsley under control.

When you chop mint, it will turn black because the enzymes in the mint are being exposed to the air. Roll the leaves into a small cigar and then cut straight across it into very fine shreds to create a chiffonade. This way, you don't end up with a black watery mess.



they're tender. You can evaluate tenderness in many different ways, but just looking at them is not the best way. A good indication of tenderness is that when you pierce the squash with a knife, the knife should not only go in easy but also comes out easy.

Once the squash halves are done cooking on the grill, you can cut them into smaller pieces if you have several people to serve. Cut them on the bias for aesthetic value.

As you're putting the squash on the plate, pay attention to color. Make sure that you use both the yellow squash and the green squash. To finish the dish, add the lemon zest on top, along with the parsley and mint. Then, sprinkle the olives on the dish. You can make a simple, impromptu dressing with lemon juice and olive oil. Alternatively, you can put some wedges of lemon on the plate and let people take care of the dressing themselves.

# Roasted Squash Lasagna

## Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

- 1 lb each summer squash and zucchini
- ¼ cup olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 pint ricotta
- ¼ cup Parmesan
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- ½ cup pesto
- ¼ cup Niçoise olives or other black olives
- 2 Tbs pine nuts, toasted
- 1 ½ cups sundried tomatoes
- 16 basil leaves

### cheese crisps

- ⅔ cup Parmesan, grated



This dish, inspired by lasagna, involves roasting summer squash and zucchini. First, use a mandoline to slice the squash into planks that are about a quarter of an inch thick. Then, lay out the slices and brush them lightly with olive oil. Season them with salt and pepper. Roast the slices in a 450-degree oven until they have a little color on them. You can also run them under the broiler. They should become very tender once they're done cooking.

To make the filling for the lasagna, start with ricotta cheese. Season it with salt and pepper. Then, add the Parmesan cheese and lemon zest. Stir everything together. If your ricotta is dry, add a little bit of cream to it.

After your squash is done roasting but the oven is still on, you can make some simple cheese crisps. Thinly spread grated Parmesan on a silicon mat and bake at about 325 degrees. Keep an eye on them. You don't want them to brown too much; if they become dark brown, they will be bitter. They should be very crisp, almost like a cracker.

Once the squash is done roasting, spread some of the cheese mixture on the bottom of a plate, and then lay the roasted squash on top. Add a layer of pesto, more of the cheese mixture, olives, pine nuts, and sundried tomatoes.

Fold the squash over and repeat the pesto, cheese mixture, olives, pine nuts, and sundried tomatoes. Fold the squash over again and repeat the toppings again. Garnish with basil and drizzle extra-virgin olive oil around the whole dish. Place cheese crisps on top, if desired.



# Pickled Zucchini

## Ingredients

Yield: 4 pounds

- 4 ½ lbs zucchini
- 1 quart cider vinegar
- 2 cups sugar
- 5 Tbs salt
- 2 ½ tsp mustard, dry
- 2 ½ tsp turmeric
- 2 tsp mustard seeds, yellow
- 2 tsp mustard seeds, black



When you have excess zucchini and don't know what to do with it, try pickling it. To do so, use a mandoline to slice the zucchini into uniformly thin rounds. Choose zucchini that are small, so that there are not a lot of seeds, and that will be soft on the inside.

Let the zucchini slices sit in ice water with a little bit of salt for about an hour, after which point the ice will melt and the salt will draw out the moisture.

To make the pickling liquid, add cider vinegar to a hot pan. Then, add sugar and season it with salt, ground mustard, turmeric, and mustard seeds. Stir and bring to a boil. Taste it, aiming for a balance between acidity, sweetness, and saltiness.

Once the pickling liquid comes to a boil, pour it over the zucchini that have been soaked and drained. Let the zucchini sit in a container with the pickling liquid overnight; the following day, your pickles are done.

Store the zucchini in a nonreactive container, such as a plastic container or a Pyrex pie plate. Don't put them in an aluminum container because the acidity and the salt will eat away at the metal.



# Winter Squashes

## Lesson 3

This lesson focuses on winter squash. When the weather turns cold, the tenor of cooking changes. The flavors become deeper, and they displace the bright flavors of summer offerings. The pace of cooking seems to slow, the oven gets turned on more often, warming the kitchen and the house. With a grand variety of winter squash on hand, such as butternut squash and acorn squash, you have the ingredients you need to put delicious food on your table.

### Butternut Squash Carpaccio with Anchovy Aioli

#### Ingredients

Yield: 6 to 8 portions

- 1 butternut squash
  - 3 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil
  - salt, to taste
  - pepper, to taste
  - 2 cups arugula
  - 1 Tbs pine nuts, toasted
  - 1 oz Parmesan, shaved
  - 1 tsp lemon juice
  - edible blossoms (optional)
- anchovy aioli**
  - 1 oz sour cream (or Greek yogurt)
  - 1 oz cream
  - 2 cloves of garlic
  - 1 habanero pepper
  - 8 anchovies (or 1 Tbs miso)
  - salt, to taste
  - 3 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil
  - 1 Tbs lemon juice



Preheat your oven to about 450 degrees. Use a chef's knife to pare the hard rind on the outside of the butternut squash. Then, cut it in half lengthwise. Use a spoon to scrape out the seeds. Next, cut the squash into very thin slices, about a quarter of an inch thick.

Brush olive oil on a sheet pan and place the squash on the pan in a single layer. Drizzle olive oil on top of the squash. Add salt and pepper. Bake for about 12 to 15 minutes. You want the squash to brown a little.



To make the aioli, add sour cream or Greek yogurt to a bowl. Add cream to make it a little thinner. Crush a clove of garlic with your knife, using salt as an abrasive to create a uniform, smooth garlic paste. Stir it into the cream mixture.

Add a habanero pepper—but handle it carefully, because it is a very hot pepper. Wash your hands after you’re done with it so that you don’t touch your face or your eyes after handling it. Cut the pepper in half. Cut out the ribs and seeds to tame the heat of the pepper. Then, chop it very fine.

Add anchovies. You can buy anchovies in a can. Usually, they come packed in oil, but salt-packed anchovies are becoming more popular. If you find the salt-packed ones, first take them out of the salt and rinse the salt off. Then, pull the fillet away from the bones and discard the bones. Remove entrails and discard. Finally, chop the anchovies and make a paste out of them with your knife. Add the paste to the aioli. If you don’t like anchovies, you can use white miso as a substitute.

Stir the yogurt mixture well. Add salt. Check the consistency. If it’s still thick, add more cream. Then, add extra-virgin olive oil and lemon juice.

Once the squash is done cooking, lay it onto a plate. Add the sauce over the butternut squash. Scatter arugula on top. Add nasturtium and other edible blossoms for garnish. Finally, add toasted pine nuts and shaved Parmesan cheese.

Drizzle lemon juice and olive oil over the arugula. Season with salt and pepper.

# Spicy Butternut Squash and Coconut Milk Soup



## Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 8 oz butternut squash, diced
- 1 Tbs olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 shallot, thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, sliced
- 2 Tbs lemongrass
- 1 tsp sambal oelek (chili paste)
- ½–1 ½ tsp red pepper flakes
- 6 slices galangal
- 3 cups chicken (or vegetable) stock
- 2 cups coconut milk
- 3 Tbs fish sauce (umami)
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1 cup sweet corn
- ½ cup mushrooms, sliced
- ¾ cup cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 2 Kaffir lime leaves (wild lime leaves)
- 1 Tbs lime juice
- 6 cilantro sprigs

This dish is a take on *Tom Kha Gai*, which is a chicken and coconut milk soup, but instead of using chicken, this recipe calls for roasted squash.





Peel and dice a butternut squash. Put it on a sheet pan and dress it with olive oil, salt, and pepper. Roast it in the oven at about 375 degrees for about five to eight minutes, until it's tender. Taste a piece to determine doneness.

Start the soup in a pan on low heat on the stove. Add olive oil to the pan. Then, add sliced shallots and garlic. Remove the stem ends and green tops of lemongrass, a foundational ingredient in Southeast Asia. Finely chop up the rest and add it to the pan.

Next, add sambal oelek, which is a chili paste from Indonesia. If you like your food spicy, add red pepper flakes, too. Stir. Finally, add galangal, which is a rhizome, just like ginger. Cut the galangal into coins about the size of a quarter and add them to the pan.

Once the shallots are translucent, you can smell the garlic, and the lemongrass has had a chance to cook, add either chicken stock or vegetable stock to the pan. Also add coconut milk.

As the soup comes up to a boil, season it with fish sauce (umami). Also add sugar and lime juice. Taste for a balance between saltiness, sweetness, and acidity.

Once the soup comes up to a boil, add corn, mushrooms, cherry tomatoes, and the cooked squash. Cook for a few more minutes, until it comes up to a boil again. While you're waiting for that, add Kaffir lime leaves (or wild lime leaves) and a little more lime juice. Plate the soup, garnish with cilantro, and serve.

## All about Winter Squash

Winter squash are planted in the spring and harvested in the fall, but they get their name because they last really well all winter.

When selecting a winter squash, pick it up. It should feel very heavy for its size. If it doesn't, that might mean that it's already beginning to dry out or that it has a lot of seeds on the inside and not much meat.

As a squash ripens, its hard outside shell changes from being shiny and hard to looking a little dull. That's a good indication of a squash that has reached full maturity.

A squash should have a corky stem on it.


Select a squash with no field scars, bruises, or cuts on its outside. As soon as the hard shell is cut, the moisture from the interior can escape, and bacteria from the exterior can get in.



## Maple Custard with Hazelnuts and Spiced Whiskey

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 
- 1 acorn squash
  - 1 pint cream
  - 1 cup half-and-half
  - 1 cup maple sugar
  - 7 egg yolks
  - 1/8 tsp coffee extract
  - 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
  - 1 pinch salt
  - 1/2 cup hazelnuts, toasted and chopped
  - 1 pinch allspice
  - 1/4 tsp cinnamon
  - 2 tsp maple sugar
  - 1 pinch salt
  - 1 tsp bourbon

In a preheated 350-degree oven, roast an acorn squash for about an hour, until tender. While still hot, cut the top off artistically and set it aside. Scrape out the seeds. Pierce the cooked flesh with a fork and break it up slightly so that custard can flow into the nooks and chunks that you create. Keep the shell and structure of the squash intact.

Put the squash back in the oven for about 20 minutes, just to heat it while you make the custard.

To make the custard, combine cream and half-and-half in a pot on the stove. Add half of the maple sugar. In a separate bowl, add the remainder of the sugar to the egg yolks. Whip until the color lightens.

Bring the temperature of the eggs up slowly by stirring in a little bit of the cream mixture at a time. Little by little, you will temper the eggs so that you don't shock them and cook them. Once the eggs are warm, add the egg mixture to the cream mixture in the pot. Flavor the custard with coffee extract and vanilla extract. Add salt.

While the custard is hot, remove the squash from the oven and add the custard to the cavity until nearly full. Then, put the squash back in the oven at about 325 degrees and cook it for about 35 to 40 minutes, until the custard is set. Once it's cooked, the squash will be soft enough that you can bang it a few times on the table to flatten out the bottom so that it sits flat.

Once the squash is cooled to room temperature, plate it. Add toasted, chopped hazelnuts spiced with allspice, cinnamon, maple sugar, salt, and just enough bourbon so that the seasonings stick. Spoon the nuts on top of the custard. Put the squash lid back on for presentation before serving.



# Inflorescents: Cauliflower and Artichokes

## Lesson 4

While it may seem strange to imagine eating flowers, the vegetables that make their way onto our plates represent all parts of the plant, including the roots, stems, tubers, seeds, buds, and even beautiful and delicious flowers. This lesson is about inflorescents—flowers that are also eaten as vegetables. These include squash blossoms, where zucchini comes from; artichoke, which has purple filaments inside the blossom; broccoli, which is a flower that has yet to open; and cauliflower, which takes its name from flowers and comes in colors such as yellow, purple, and green.

### Cauliflower Shawarma

#### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 1 head cauliflower
- 1 Tbs olive oil
- 2 Tbs melted butter

#### spice mix

- 2 tsp salt, to taste
- 1 tsp turmeric
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ¾ tsp cumin
- 2 tsp Aleppo pepper (or chili flakes/powder)
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp coriander
- 1/3 tsp allspice
- 1 Tbs paprika

#### tahini-yogurt sauce

Yield: 1 ½ cups

- ½ cup tahini (sesame paste)
- 1 cup yogurt
- cayenne pepper, to taste
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- salt, to taste
- 1 lemon, juiced
- ¼ cup cilantro, chopped
- 1 Tbs honey (optional)

- pita bread
- tomatoes
- lettuce





Made in the eastern Mediterranean, shawarma normally consists of grilled meat, usually chicken or lamb. Instead, this dish features cauliflower.

Start with a head of cauliflower. Cut the core out of the cauliflower using a strong knife. Discard all the leaves on the outside. Cut through the stem only, and the break the cauliflower into florets with your hands so that they look natural.

Blanch the cauliflower by dropping it into salted, boiling water and letting it cook for about two minutes.

In a bowl, put a spice mix together that contains salt, turmeric, black pepper, cumin, Aleppo pepper (a pepper flake from the eastern Mediterranean), cinnamon, coriander, allspice, and paprika. Add olive oil and melted butter. Mix everything together.

After two minutes, check on the cauliflower. Make sure it's not cooked all the way. Remove it from the water and drain some of the excess moisture. Then, add it to the spice mixture. Make sure that all of the cauliflower is well coated with the marinade. Taste it and adjust spices as necessary. Let it sit in the marinade for as long as possible, perhaps for a few hours or even for a day in the refrigerator. The longer it marinates, the more flavor it will have.

Place the cauliflower on a hot grill for about 5 to 10 minutes. (Don't worry about oiling the grill because there's plenty of oil in the marinade.) You want the cauliflower to char just a little bit.

In the meantime, make a tahini-yogurt sauce. Stir tahini (sesame paste) into yogurt. Then, add cayenne pepper, garlic, and salt. Stir together. Add lemon juice to get the right consistency. Add cilantro. If the sauce tastes too sharp, add honey. If it's too thick, add water.

Check on the cauliflower. Once it's charred on one side, turn it so that it chars on the other side and baste it with excess marinade.

Typically, shawarma comes in a pita bread and is served with a number of different accompaniments, or salads, as they are called in the eastern Mediterranean. These include hummus (made with chickpeas, tahini, olive oil, and lemon juice), tzatziki (a cucumber salad with a yogurt dressing), and pickled vegetables (pickled onions and pickled zucchini).

Slice the tomatoes and plate them with the salads. Cut the pita bread into halves.

Once the cauliflower is charred, remove it from the grill. Turn off the grill and place the pita breads on the grill to warm them up.

Open the pita bread and spread on the tahini sauce. Add lettuce, slices of tomato, and pieces of cauliflower.

## Artichoke and Potato Stew with Dill and Lemon

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 8 artichokes
- ½ cup lemon juice
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 cup onion, diced
- ½ cup celery, diced
- 8 new potatoes
- 2 carrots
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 4 eggs, room temperature
- ½ cup yogurt
- 3 Tbs dill
- 1 tsp chives
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- sliced bread (optional)



Artichokes are actually weeds. They are thistles that grow by the road. When you work with artichokes, have available a mixture of water and lemon juice to keep the artichokes from browning.

First, remove and discard the first two courses of tough, small leaves from around the base of the artichoke. Typically, they'll be darker in color. Next, cut the top off with a sharp knife. Any time you make a cut, dip it into the water with lemon juice.

Cut the stem short. Then, with a sharp paring knife, cut around the artichoke down to the yellow part. Cut through the dark green and turn the artichoke heart, leaving behind only the light pale color of the artichoke heart. Put the heart in the water with lemon. Cut down from the stem and angle your knife so that you get rid of the rest of the hard, dark green parts. Dip the remaining yellow artichoke into the water with lemon juice.

Cut the artichoke into quarters and cut out the feathery center, known as the choke. Remove the purple-topped leaves and scrape the choke area clean.



To make a stew with the artichokes, add olive oil to a sauce pot. Then, add diced onions and celery.

While the onions and celery are cooking, prepare the rest of the vegetables. Because carrots are thin on one end and fat on the other, you can make them the same size, so that they cook evenly, by doing an oblique cut or a roll cut. Hold the knife at about a 45-degree angle and make an oblique cut. Then, roll the carrot a quarter of a turn and cut again at an angle.

Cut the new potatoes into bite-sized pieces (in half or in quarters, depending on the size of the potato) so that they are about the same size as the carrot pieces.

Once the onions are just beginning to become translucent, add the cleaned artichoke hearts to the pot, along with the carrots and potatoes. Also add a bay leaf and chicken stock.

Once the pot comes to a boil, reduce it to a simmer and cook it for about 10 to 20 minutes, until all the vegetables are tender. Pierce the artichokes, potatoes, and carrots to make sure that they're tender. Once they are, remove them from the pot.

Just before you're ready to serve the stew, whip eggs in a bowl until they are smooth. Add yogurt and whip until smooth. Add lemon juice, straining the seeds with your other hand. Chop the dill and chives and set aside.

Remove the broth from the heat. Gradually add small amounts of the broth to the eggs to temper them. You don't want the eggs to get hot quickly and boil; instead, you want to change the temperature of the eggs slowly. Once you've added enough broth so that the eggs have become warm, add the egg mixture to the remainder of the hot stock and move the pot back to the heat.

Watch the pot very carefully. If you have a thermometer, check the sauce to make sure the temperature stays below 165 degrees. As it warms up, it will become creamy as the egg yolks begin to thicken. Pay attention to the consistency; the sauce should coat the back of a spoon. Stir, scraping the bottom of the pot clean. The sauce should become velvety.

Turn the heat down and taste the sauce. Add salt and pepper, along with the chopped dill and chives, and maybe more lemon juice.

Once the sauce is done cooking, add the vegetables back to the sauce, just to make sure that they are warmed through. Serve the stew with sliced bread, if desired.



# Marvelous Mushrooms

## Lesson 5

This lesson is all about mushrooms, or fungi. Mushrooms have a savory quality that is associated with protein. The Japanese call this quality umami. If you're only cooking vegetables, you might discover that you miss the savory flavor associated with animal protein. You can take advantage of the umami flavor inherent in mushrooms by incorporating mushrooms into the recipes that you cook, such as mushroom pot pie and mushroom tamales.

### Vegetable Pot Pie with Mushrooms

#### Ingredients

Yield: 1 pot pie for 2 people


#### mushroom stock

Yield: 1 quart

- ½ cup shallots
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 1 1/4 lbs mushrooms
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ cup Marsala

#### velouté

- 1 quart mushroom stock
- 2 Tbs flour
- 5 tsp butter
- 1 cup cream
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

- 
- 4 tsp butter (or oil)
  - 1 shallot, diced
  - 3 oz mushrooms
  - 2 oz wine, sherry
  - 1 branch thyme
  - 1 oz potatoes, diced and roasted
  - 1 oz butternut squash, diced and roasted
  - 1oz turnips, diced and roasted
  - 1 tsp parsley
  - 4 oz puff pastry
  - ½ oz egg wash

Instead of chicken, this dish uses mushrooms to lend a meaty flavor to the traditional pot pie preparation.

First, create a mushroom stock by adding shallots, whole cloves of garlic, mushrooms, and a bay leaf to a pot. Add sweet Marsala wine and cover with



water. Put the pot on the stove and bring it to a boil. Then, reduce it to a simmer and cook for about an hour. When it's done, press through a strainer, and you end up with a beautiful stock for a velouté (“velvet”) sauce, which is a stock that is thickened with flour and butter.

Make a roux, which is a thickening agent for the sauce. Melt butter in a pan. Then, add flour and stir until well combined and a little browned.

The way to tell that your roux is properly cooked is to take a small amount of the roux when it's cooled and rub it between your thumb and forefinger. If it feels a little sandy, you've cooked it enough.

When you mix liquid into a roux, the liquid and roux should be at opposite temperature extremes. Add a little bit of cool stock into the hot roux. It will thicken almost immediately. Add more stock and break up any lumps that form with a whisk. Continue to add the rest of the stock until the mixture is smooth and almost liquid.

Turn this velouté into a cream sauce by adding cream to the pan. Taste and add salt and pepper. Bring it back up to a boil. Evaluate the consistency; the sauce should coat the back of a spoon.

Gather a variety of mushrooms. Melt the butter in a hot pan. While waiting for the pan to come up to temperature, dice the shallots. Once the butter stops sizzling, add the mushrooms to the butter in the pan. Also add a splash of wine. Brown the mushrooms on high heat. Add branches of thyme and the shallots to the pan.

Some of the mushroom juice will evaporate and leave a little bit of film on the bottom of the pan—what the French would call *fond* (“foundation”). Deglaze the *fond* with more wine. Add the rest of the wine and reduce until dry.

Add diced and roasted potatoes, butternut squash, and turnips (seasoned with salt and pepper and drizzled with oil) to the pan with the mushrooms and then turn off the heat. Remove the thyme.

Roll out and cut a round of puff pastry. Brush with egg wash (an egg that's been beaten with about a tablespoon of water). Then, make a decorative design

## The Largest Organism in the World

The largest organism in the world is a mushroom. In Oregon, there is a honey mushroom that covers 2,400 acres of land—covering the area of 1,600 football fields.



by dragging a fork across it one way and then the other. Place the rounds onto a greased pan and bake in the oven at about 400 degrees for about 10 to 12 minutes, until they puff up.

Add the sauce to the pan with the vegetables and heat until hot. Stir in parsley. Put the mixture in a serving bowl and set the cooked puff pastry on top.

## Spicy Mushroom Tamales

### Ingredients

Yield: 16

- 1 medium onion, diced
  - 2 Tbs olive oil
  - 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
  - ½ lb mushrooms, sliced
  - ¾ tsp thyme, fresh
  - 3 poblano chilies, roasted
  - 2 Tbs cilantro
  - 4 tsp truffle oil (optional)
  - 3 tomatoes, roasted
  - salt, to taste
  - pepper, to taste
- masa**
- 1 ¼ *masa harina* (Maseca)
  - 1 cup hot tap water
  - 5 oz lard (or vegetable shortening)
  - 1 tsp baking powder
  - ⅔ cup mushroom stock (or chicken or vegetable)
  - salt, to taste
  - 1 ear corn, roasted
  - 4 oz corn husks, dried
  - 1 cup salsa—your favorite!



To making a filling for the tamales, slice onions and sauté them in oil on the stove. Once the onions brown a little, add thinly sliced garlic to the pan. Then, add a variety of mushrooms, sliced about a quarter of an inch thick. Add thyme.

Cut blackened poblano chili in half. Remove the seeds and ribs. Then, cut it into inch-long strips and add them to the pan.

Cut the core out of roasted tomatoes and peel away the blackened skin. Add the liquid from the tomatoes to the pan. Chop the roasted tomatoes and add to the pan. Cook the filling just long enough so that the tomato liquid reduces. As it's coming down, add salt and pepper.

Next, make the dough, or *masa*. Mix water into Maseca, which is corn flour (*masa harina*) that can be bought in the store, to rehydrate it and make a dough. Add cold lard (or vegetable shortening) to a mixer and whip it. Introduce the

masa. Periodically stop the mixer and scrape the sides of the bowl. If the lard becomes warm, refrigerate it and resume whipping once it's cold. A small amount of baking powder will achieve the same effect, which is lightening the masa.

Once a good amount of air is whipped into the masa, add mushroom stock (or chicken stock or vegetable stock) to create a consistency that is similar to cake batter. Add salt and more stock and whip once more. To test if it's done, a small amount of the masa added to a bowl of water should float. Taste it to evaluate salt content.

Check on the filling. When it's still moist but there's not a lot of free liquid, pull some of the filling out to let it cool. Put it into the freezer for a few seconds.

Stir the roasted corn, taken off the cob, into the masa dough.

Cover dried corn husks with water and let them soften. Rip off a piece of the husk and tie a knot in the end. Split everything leading up to the knot to make a tie. Make four or five of these.

Take the filling out of the freezer. Start with a corn husk, concave side up. Add a spoonful of dough inside the corn husk, and add the filling on top. Use the corn husk to bring the dough up around the filling. Pinch the bottom and fold it up. Tie the folded end with one of the ties.

Place the tamales in a steamer for about an hour. The wrapper should come away from the dough very easily.

Plate the tamales. Open one tamale for people to see what's inside. Garnish with cilantro and salsa on the side.



# Salad Greens and Lettuces

## Lesson 6

Salads have gotten a bad reputation. The idea is that a salad is a small offering and that if you order it in a restaurant, you're trying to lose weight. But salads can be every bit as delicious as soups, entrees, and maybe even desserts. In this lesson, you will learn how to craft a unique dressing to complement salad greens that range from sweet and tender to bitter and coarse.

### Butter Lettuce Salad

#### Ingredients

Yield: 4 to 6 portions

- 2 heads butter lettuce

#### vinaigrette

Yield: ½ cup

- 1 Tbs shallots, finely diced
- 2 Tbs lemon juice (or vinegar)
- 1 Tbs tarragon
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, mild
- 1 tsp lemon zest



### Washing Lettuce

Lettuce is mostly water. As lettuce loses water, it begins to wilt. As the water escapes the lettuce, its leaves tend to lose their rigidity and become limp. You can set that right by washing the lettuce in abundant cold water.

Let it sit in ice water for about 5 to 10 minutes. Then, take it out and spin it dry. Refrigerate it for about an hour. You'll discover that it becomes vital, lively, crisp, and delicious again.

Cut the core out of the butter lettuce and separate the leaves. Put them in ice water for about 5 to 10 minutes. Then, take them out and put them into a salad spinner. Spin the lettuce so that the centrifugal force throws all the water off the leaves, leaving you with dry lettuce. Dressing won't stick to wet lettuce.

To make the vinaigrette, finely diced shallots and add to a bowl. Add lemon juice (or vinegar, such as white, cherry, champagne, or balsamic vinegar). Flavor the sweet lettuce with a sweet herb, such as tarragon,



cut into big pieces. Season with salt and pepper.

Choose a mild, light olive oil for this mild vinaigrette. Stir in three times as much oil as lemon juice, or vinegar. Add lemon zest.

With very tender lettuce, such as butter lettuce, use the whole leaves, because it's easy to cut with a fork. Gently toss the vinaigrette with the salad.

## Storing Lettuce

Lettuce is sensitive to ethylene gas, which is a plant hormone that is given off by produce as it begins to ripen or rot. Lettuce will brown and wilt when exposed to it.

Fruits that give off a lot of ethylene gas include apples, pears, bananas, and peaches. Don't store these with lettuce.

## Arugula Salad with Tomatoes and Mozzarella

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 2 cups arugula

#### pesto vinaigrette

- 2 Tbs pesto
- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 4 tsp red wine vinegar
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

- 1 lb tomatoes
- 8 oz mozzarella
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste





Arugula is an assertive green, so it needs an assertive vinaigrette, which can be achieved by choosing an oil that has an assertive flavor.

Start with pesto (which is made of basil, pine nuts, Parmesan cheese, and garlic) in a bowl. Add three parts oil and one part red wine vinegar.

Put the ingredients in a canning jar. There is already seasoning in the pesto, but you can still add salt and pepper. Shake the jar to coat the salad in the dressing. You can simply put the jar in the refrigerator for later.

If you're ready to eat the salad when you make it, drizzle the pesto vinaigrette over tomatoes and mozzarella. Top the tomatoes and cheese with pepper and salt. Add the arugula on top and let the colors of the cheese and tomatoes shine through the greens from below.



## Kale Salad with Pecorino

### Ingredients

Yield: 4 to 6 portions

- 1 bunch kale

#### tapenade

- 1 cup black olives
- 3 Tbs capers
- 1 Tbs anchovies
- 1 Tbs garlic

- 3 Tbs lemon juice
- 5 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil

- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 1 oz Pecorino
- 2 ½ Tbs vinegar, sharp
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste



Kale is peppery, earthy, and bitter, and you can tame those flavors with a full-flavored dressing, such as a tapenade, which is composed of black olives, capers, anchovies, garlic, and lemon juice. Add these ingredients to a food processor and grind them into a paste.

One of the secrets to a good kale salad is to rough up the kale leaves. Add salt to the leaves and massage them to break down their structure—in effect, you're bruising the kale. The kale becomes slightly moist and aromatic.



Add the tapenade to the kale leaves, along with lemon zest and Pecorino cheese, which is a full-flavored cheese. Add an assertive olive oil and a sharp vinegar, maybe making the ratio two parts oil to one part vinegar. Add salt and pepper. Taste for flavor.

Once it's made, a kale salad can hold up well for an hour or more, so it's great for entertaining.

## Grilled Potato and Endive with Tomato Concassé and Pulled Parsley Salad

### Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

- 4 heads Belgian endive
- 8 slices pancetta
- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 12 oz fingerling potatoes, cooked
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

#### tomato concassé

- 4 tomatoes
- 1 Tbs olive oil
- 1 Tbs shallots, minced
- 1 bay leaf



- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

#### pulled parsley salad

- ¼ bunch curly parsley
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 Tbs lemon juice
- 2 Tbs Parmesan
- 1 Tbs olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Belgian endive is a green that is available all year long. When you buy it, often it's wrapped in an opaque dark green paper to keep it white, or pale. The more color it has, the more bitterness it develops. You can make it even milder by cooking it.

Trim off the root end of the Belgian endive and then cut it into quarters so that it cooks quicker. Wrap a slice of pancetta (an Italian unsmoked bacon) around the endive.

Put a little oil on the grill to keep the bacon-wrapped endive from sticking to it. Place the endive on the grill.

Add cooked fingerling potatoes to the grill. Brush oil on the cut surface of the potatoes and season them with salt and pepper. Grill for about 10 minutes.

Make tomato *concassé*, which comes from the French cooking tradition. Use a knife to cut the core out of the tomato and score the skin. Then, dip it in boiling water for about 5 to 10 seconds (for a ripe tomato). Take it out and peel the tomato; the peel should come off easily now. Repeat for other tomatoes.

Cut the tomatoes in half and then squeeze out the seeds. Without the peel and seeds, you're left with pure tomato goodness.

Add olive oil to a hot pan. When the olive oil creeps around the pan a little bit, it's hot. Add minced shallots and cook them very slowly.

Dice the tomatoes coarsely and add them to the pan. Then, add a bay leaf and gently toss. Turn the heat down very low and let the ingredients warm and soften. Add salt and pepper.



Make a pulled parsley salad with curly parsley. Pull the small tufts of parsley off the stem and tear into quarter-inch pieces.

Treat the parsley like it's a salad green, instead of a garnish. Because it is a full-flavored green, create an assertive dressing. Make a paste of the garlic with the side of a knife. Mix garlic, lemon juice, Parmesan cheese, and olive oil. Use approximately equal parts oil and lemon juice for an assertive vinaigrette that make the salad pop. Add salt and pepper. Stir. This salad can be made ahead of time and keeps nicely for a half an hour or more.

Once the potatoes are golden brown and the pancetta has browned on the outside of the endive, take them off the grill. Remove the tomatoes from the heat once cooked.

On a platter, plate the endive and stack up the potatoes. Season with more salt and pepper. Add the tomato *concassé* on top of the endives and around the edge of the platter. Add the pulled parsley salad. Shave extra Parmesan on top, if desired.

## Warm Escarole Salad with Bacon and Egg and Croutons

### Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 1 head escarole or 2 heads of frisée
- 3 oz bacon, cut into lardons
- 4 eggs, poached



### dressing

- 2 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
- 3 anchovies, chopped
- 2 tsp white wine vinegar
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 4 croutons



This is a traditional bistro salad that is made in Paris and features bacon and eggs.

Cut the bacon into lardon (“little fingers”), or strips. Put the bacon strips into a pan on the heat and cook them for about five minutes, until they are golden. The bacon fat will be the basis of the salad.

Reheat a previously poached egg by putting it into warm water.

Crush the garlic cloves and then coarsely chop it. Add them to the pan with the bacon. Chop anchovies and add to the pan. Turn the heat up. Make sure not to burn the garlic. It should just reach a pale golden color; otherwise, it will become bitter.

To create the dressing, add white wine vinegar to the pan. When the poached egg opens on the salad, the yolk acts as the oil that would be in a vinaigrette, so you don't need to add oil. Be generous with the vinegar; otherwise, the salad will taste unbalanced. Season with salt and pepper.

Add escarole to the dressing in the warm pan. Turn the escarole in the dressing until the leaves begin to glisten.

Plate the dressed salad with the warm poached egg on top. Break croutons onto the salad or put on the side. When you're ready to eat the salad, break the egg, spilling the yolk over the salad.



# Field Greens and Cooking Greens

## Lesson 7

**S**alad greens are lettuces and some of the specialty greens that are tender enough to be eaten as they are. They don't need to be cooked. In contrast, field greens, or cooking greens, do need to be cooked. In this lesson, you will learn how to cook a variety of field greens, and you will learn how to make a few recipes that feature field greens.

### Types of Field Greens

**Spinach** walks the line between salad greens and field greens. It can be eaten raw, but it can also be cooked.

**Rainbow chard** comes in such colors as yellow, red, and green. This is a pretty tender green, but it does need to be cooked.

**Kale** has made an appearance in salads where it's not cooked, but it is often salted and rubbed and bruised until it begins to fall apart. It's not really eaten raw; it is manipulated a little bit. It has become popular because it is a nutritional powerhouse.

**Dandelion greens** are really bitter. The only time you can eat them raw is when they're very small, before the bitterness has started to take hold. These need to be cooked to tame the bitterness. Salt, acid, and assertive cheeses can also calm that bitterness.

**Mustard greens** grow wild in vineyards and are used as a cover crop during the winter.

**Collard greens** are pretty leathery. They're either too tough or too spiky to be enjoyed without cooking.

**Borage** has flowers that taste almost like cucumber. There are small spines all over the leaves, so if you want to use them, they need to be blanched first. Borage is one of the few vegetable sources of omega-3 oil, the heart-healthy oil found in wild salmon.

**Purslane** might grow in a garden as a weed. It is also a vegetable source of omega-3 oil. It tastes lemony. It eats almost like a succulent, or cactus, so it's very juicy.

## Horta

### Ingredients

Yield: 4 to 6 portions

- ¾ lb braising mix (mix of hearty, leafy greens)

#### dressing

- 2 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ lemon, juiced



- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- salt, to taste
- 2 Tbs feta cheese, crumbled
- 1 Tbs dill (or mint), chopped
- black pepper, to taste

*Horta* is a Greek dish that features greens. For this dish, you can use a mixture of different greens, such as purple kale, red chard, frisée, escarole, dandelion greens, and mustard greens. You can buy a braising mix at the supermarket to get this kind of variety without buying bunches of each type of green.

Blanch the greens until they're tender. Add them to boiling, salted water. Press them into the water, and they will wilt down. The braising mix is typically made up of baby greens, so it usually takes only about four or five minutes for the greens to become tender.

When you think the greens might be done cooking, pull out the toughest of the greens, such as the purple kale (which will turn green while cooking), to check how tender it is. Once the greens are tender, remove them from the pot and place them into a colander sitting in ice water so that the cooking stops and the green color is set.

Once the greens are cool, drain the water. Then, squeeze the excess moisture out of them. You don't want

### Big-Pot Blanching

When you're cooking green vegetables, acidity and long cooking are the enemies. There is acidity inherent in all of the vegetables that is locked up in the cell structure, and when you begin to cook the vegetables and those cells rupture, the acidity is released. The acidity will negatively impact the bright green chlorophyll, turning your vegetables an olive drab.

To avoid this, cook the vegetables as quickly as possible in a large amount of water. The acidity is watered down by all of the water, so it's not as much of a problem. When the vegetables are cooked, take them out of the pot and shock them in ice water to stop the cooking and preserve the integrity of the green color.





a watery finished dish. Because you didn't cut the greens before cooking them, most of the nutrition is intact.

Cut the greens, which have a variety of colors and textures, into bite-sized pieces. Then, put them in a salad bowl.

The dressing needs to be assertive for such strong-flavored greens. To make the dressing, start with a very vegetal olive oil. Add lemon juice, raw garlic, and salt. Toss the salad with the dressing, making sure that all of the greens are coated with the dressing. Taste and adjust the dressing as necessary. Add feta cheese for a salty, creamy, savory addition to the *horta*.

To bring some refinement to this dish, add dill or mint—something that's aromatic and introduces a high note.

Plate the salad and drizzle olive oil and lemon juice over it. Top the salad with fresh cracked black pepper.

## Braised Collard Greens with Ham Hock

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 2 bunches collard greens
- 1 ham hock, smoked
- 6 Yukon Gold potatoes, halved (optional)
- splash vinegar



- biscuits (optional)

In the South, collard greens are braised in a smoky stock with ham hock in it. The greens, which lend their bitterness to the smoky stock, are cooked for a long time, so they won't be bright green when they're done. You can add potatoes to the pot in the last hour of cooking and serve this dish with the potatoes.

The liquor that's left over, called pot liquor, is salty, smoky, and rich, and it is flavored with the fat from the ham hock. You can add some acid to it in the form of vinegar, stir it, and then spoon it over the cooked collard greens. For a great meal, serve the collard greens with biscuits.



## Wilted Mustard Greens and Prosciutto with Pulled Parsley Salad

### Ingredients

Yield: 4 to 6 portions

- 2 bunches mustard greens
- ¼ cup olive oil
- red pepper flakes, to taste
- salt, to taste
- red wine vinegar, to taste
- ¼ lb prosciutto, sliced thin

### pulled parsley salad

- 1 bunch curly parsley
- 1 lemon, juiced
- ¼ cup Parmesan, grated
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 2 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil



Mustard greens have an assertive peppery taste, along with some bitterness. Remove the stalk, which is the tough part of the greens, to allow the greens to cook faster. Gather the greens and cut them into ribbons that are about an inch thick. Then, cut them the other way, resulting in bite-sized pieces.

Add olive oil to a hot pan. Add red pepper flakes, salt, and vinegar. In effect, you're creating a vinaigrette. Add the greens to the pan, tossing them in the hot



oil and vinegar until they just begin to wilt a little bit. Then, turn off the heat, and let the heat in the pan wilt them the rest of the way.

Taste them to see how tender they've become as well as how they taste. Add a little more salt, vinegar, and olive oil.

Slice the prosciutto very thin. Place the dressed mustard greens on the prosciutto and roll it up. Transfer the prosciutto-wrapped mustard greens onto a plate. The warm greens bring out the flavor of the prosciutto.

Garnish this dish with a pulled parsley salad with lemon juice, Parmesan cheese, salt, pepper, and olive oil.

## Spinach and Ricotta Gnocchi

### Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 1 Tbs olive oil
- 2 Tbs pancetta, diced
- 1 Tbs onion, finely diced
- 1 lb fresh spinach, blanched and finely chopped
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup fresh ricotta cheese
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- nutmeg, to taste
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 cup Parmesan, finely grated
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup flour
- 2 Tbs butter, melted





This dish involves adding field greens to ricotta gnocchi. Once you know how to make this ricotta gnocchi, you can use the same recipe throughout the year and simply add different vegetable garniture as the season makes various vegetables available.

Heat olive oil in a pan. Add the diced pancetta to the pan. Let it brown a little bit. You want to get the fat out of the pancetta so that it can flavor the spinach. Finely dice an onion and add it to the pan. With everything cut up so small, this dish should cook fairly quickly.

When the onions are translucent, add the blanched, finely chopped spinach to the pan. Season it with salt and pepper. Before you make the gnocchi, this mixture needs to cool down, so take the pan off the heat.

The gnocchi starts with ricotta cheese. To that, add the cooled spinach and pancetta mixture. Season it with salt, pepper, and a pinch of nutmeg. Add egg yolks to bind everything together. Then, add the Parmesan cheese and flour. Add enough flour so that it comes together but not so much that it becomes heavy. Gently toss it together by turning the mixture over on itself. Don't manipulate the flour too much, or it will become tough.

The next step is to roll out this dough. Start with a small amount on a cutting board dusted with flour. Roll it over in the flour to create a cylinder and then cut it into one-inch pieces.

Once the gnocchi have been cut and shaped, you could put them in the refrigerator and cook them later. In fact, they might even become easier to handle as the moisture from the interior of the gnocchi soaks into the flour outside.

Before you cook all of the gnocchi, test one piece in boiling, salted water and make sure that it rises to the top of the water after dropping to the bottom. Taste it just to make sure that you're happy with the consistency and seasoning.

Cook the rest of the gnocchi in the boiling, salted water. As they are cooking, melt the butter in a pan. Once the gnocchi rise up, take them out of the boiling water and toss them with the melted butter until they are coated. Add salt and pepper. Transfer them onto a plate, pouring the melted butter on top, and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

# Root Vegetables: Celery Root and Parsnips

## Lesson 8

The focus of this lesson is on root vegetables, such as carrots, turnips, radishes, parsnips, and celery root. In this lesson, you will discover recipes that make use of these vegetables in raw, fried, and boiled preparations. As you will learn, the humble root vegetable is a treasure. It is readily available, inexpensive, tremendously versatile, and very tasty.

### Crudités with Black Olive, Caper, and Anchovy Tapenade

#### Ingredients

Yield: 12 portions

#### tapenade

- 1 clove garlic
- 4–6 anchovy fillets
- 1 Tbs capers
- 1 ¼ cups black olives
- ½ tsp orange zest
- ½ tsp lemon zest
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- pepper, to taste
- 2 Tbs Dijon mustard
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 Tbs basil, chopped
- 1 bunch baby carrots
- 1 bunch Hakurei turnips
- 1 bunch radishes
- 1 bulb fennel



Tapenade takes its name from capers. It typically contains black olives, capers, anchovies, and garlic. To make it, chop a clove of garlic, anchovies, capers, and black olives on a cutting board. You could also use a food processor or mortar and pestle, but the result is the same: You want to reduce these items to a coarse puree.

Add orange zest and lemon zest. Chop them into the tapenade mixture.



Transfer the tapenade to a bowl. Add olive oil and lemon juice to moisten it. Add pepper. You don't need to add salt because the olives, anchovies, and capers are salty. Add Dijon mustard and mayonnaise. Mix well.

Add chopped basil to the tapenade. Because basil is one of a few herbs that will turn black when you chop it, you can avoid this by rolling it into a chiffonade and then cut straight across it into a chiffonade.

Plate the tapenade with a selection of raw root vegetables, such as multicolored baby carrots, turnips, radishes, and fennel. Enjoy by dipping the vegetables into the savory, full-flavored dip.

### Selecting Root Vegetables

When you buy root vegetables, if the tops are attached, you can use them as an indication of the quality and condition of the vegetable. If the tops are fresh, you can assume that the vegetable itself is fresh. If the tops are softened and wrinkled, then they have taken some of the nutrition, moisture, and sugars from the root, which will not be in prime condition.

## Crispy Parsnip Chips

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 2–3 parsnips, sliced thin
- 1 quart olive oil
- salt, to taste
- 2 Tbs Parmesan cheese
- 1 Tbs parsley, chopped
- pepper, to taste
- 4 carrot tops, fried



These parsnip chips are a great bar food that would pair well with beer. To make it, thinly slice the parsnips and fry them like they are potatoes.

To slice the parsnips thin, start by peeling them and then cutting off the stem ends. Then, carefully run the parsnips down a mandoline to slice them. Make the slices as uniform as possible so that they cook evenly. Fry the slices in a pot of oil that is about 275 to 300 degrees. Make sure that the oil in the pot doesn't come more than halfway up the side of the pot; otherwise, when you add the food, you run the risk of the oil spilling over the top of the pot, which could be dangerous if the oil catches fire.

Once the bubbling subsides, after about 8 to 10 minutes, the parsnips should be golden brown and will be crisp when they cool. If some of the parsnip slices begin to brown earlier than others, simply pluck them out of the oil and set them aside. Once you've removed the slices from the pot, place them on paper





towels to drain the excess oil and turn off the heat under the pot of oil. While the parsnip slices are still wet with oil, season them generously with salt.

Plate the chips with carrot tops dropped into the hot oil and fried until they become dark and crispy. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, chopped parsley, and pepper.

## Fried Celery Root Cutlet (*Tonkatsu*)

### Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

- 1 large celery root
- 1 cup flour
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 ½ cups bread crumbs
- ½ cup olive oil



#### sauce

- ¼ cup ketchup
- ⅓ cup soy sauce
- 1 Tbs Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tbs mustard
- 1 pinch allspice
- ⅓ cup sugar

#### salad

- 4 cups Napa cabbage, shredded
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 2 Tbs red wine vinegar
  
- 4 cups rice

A Japanese dish called *tonkatsu* involves a pork cutlet that is breaded and fried. This dish replaces the pork with celery root.

To peel the celery root, start by cutting off the stem and discarding it. Use a knife to peel around the outside of the root to remove the tough rind.

Cut the celery root into cutlets that are about a quarter of an inch thick. Then, cook the cutlets in boiling, salted water until they are tender all the way through. To determine doneness, pierce a cutlet with a knife; the knife should go in easily and come out just as easily.



Next, bread the cooked cutlets. For this you need three shallow containers: one with flour (seasoned with salt and pepper), one with beaten egg, and one with bread crumbs. Cover each cutlet uniformly in the flour, then the beaten egg, and then the bread crumbs.

Place each cutlet into a pan of hot oil. When you put the cutlet into the oil, lay it in the pan away from you so that if the oil splashes, it doesn't splash on you and burn you.

While the cutlets are frying, make a quick sauce that includes ketchup, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, mustard, allspice, and sugar.

Check on the cutlets. Once they start to brown, turn down the heat to maintain the appropriate temperature.

Next, make a salad with shredded Napa cabbage and a simple dressing that is composed of salt, pepper, and red wine vinegar.

Once the celery root cutlets are browned, remove them from the oil. Plate them with rice and cabbage salad. Top with the sauce.

## **Carrot Cake with Parsnips and Parsnip Icing**

Sometimes the healthiest dessert option is carrot cake, but it's not really a healthy dessert. This recipe makes carrot cake a little bit healthier by including more vegetables and eliminating some of the saturated fat.

## Ingredients

Yield: 12 to 16 portions

- 6 oz parsnips, pureed
- 3 oz carrots
- 6 oz water (to cook parsnips)
- 4 eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup canola oil
- 2 cups white flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 tsp ginger
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- 1 pinch allspice
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 2 ½ cups sugar
- ¾ cup pineapple, crushed, drained

### icing

- 1 stick butter
- 12 oz cream cheese
- 2 ½ cups powdered sugar
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 Tbs lemon or lime juice
- ¼ cup sour cream

### toppings

- ½ cup walnuts, toasted and chopped
- dried apricots, to taste (optional)
- dried cherries, to taste (optional)
- golden raisins, to taste (optional)

### garnish

- carrot tops, to taste (optional)



Start by taking boiling parsnips and carrots in a small amount of water with a lid on. Cook them until they're tender. Make the parsnips into a puree.

In a bowl, whip eggs. Add vanilla extract, salt, and canola oil. Whisk for about two to three minutes. It should become progressively thicker.

Combine the dry ingredients: white flour and whole wheat flour, ginger, cinnamon, allspice, and baking powder. Stir with a whisk until it's homogeneous. Add sugar.

To the wet ingredients, stir in the carrots, parsnip puree, and crushed pineapple. Add the dry ingredients and fold everything together.

Place a sheet of parchment paper on the bottom of a half sheet pan. Oil it so that nothing sticks.

Bake in the oven at 375 degrees for about 20 minutes.

To make the frosting, beat butter and cream cheese in a mixer bowl for a few minutes, until it begins to get smooth and creamy. Scrape the sides of the bowl if necessary. Add powdered sugar and mix again. Add vanilla extract, lemon (or lime) juice, sour cream, and parsnip puree.

Once the cake has risen, is golden brown, and has separated from the pan all the way around the edge, turn the pan over onto another pan so that you can see the bottom side.

Trim off the edges of the cake and cut it into three pieces to create a three-layer cake with frosting between each layer and on top. Spread the icing close to the edges of the cake and press each layer into place.

On top of the cake, add toasted walnuts, dried apricots, dried cherries, and golden raisins. Use the carrot tops as a garnish for the edge of the cake.



# Alliums: Onions and Garlic

## Lesson 9

In this lesson, you will learn about the vegetables in the allium family, which include onions, garlic, leeks, scallions, and shallots. Alliums are a foundational flavor in almost every cuisine around the world. The flavor of the world's kitchens would be much less compelling if there were no alliums. Stir-fry dishes would fall flat. Mole sauces would be insipid without roasted garlic and roasted onions to lend complexity and grit.

### Onion Soup

#### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 3 large yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 1/3 cup white wine
- bay leaves
- 2 tsp thyme leaves
- 1 Tbs sugar
- 2 quarts chicken stock
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1/2 lemon, juiced
- 6 slices rye bread, toasted
- 1 1/2 cups Gruyère, grated



To make onion soup, start with sliced onions. Cook them for about 45 minutes in oil until they turn a mahogany color. In this amount of time, they develop a tremendous amount of flavor, and the harsh, sulfurous quality of the onion has been driven off. The onion is now sweet and caramelized.

### Dealing with Onions

If you find that onions make you cry, store them for a few hours in the refrigerator to get them cold. Wear swim goggles, or turn on the fan in your kitchen.

When cutting onions, start with a cutting board. Use a paring knife to cut off both the root end and the stem end and then to help you peel the onion.

Unfortunately, an onion is round and wants to roll all over the board. Take a chef's knife and cut it in half through the stem end and the root end so it sits flat. Then, cut it into slices by turning it 90 degrees to get pieces that are all the same size.

## Thyme for a Trick

For simplicity's sake, you can choose to put whole branches of fresh thyme in dishes you're cooking and take them out once they've lent their flavor to the dish, but there's a trick to get just the leaves off without picking off each one: Put the branches of thyme in the microwave oven for 20 or 30 seconds. They'll dry out just enough that you can rub the branch and all the leaves will fall off.



Remove the onions and deglaze the pan with white wine, which provides acidity. You want the raw flavor of the wine to pass off, so reduce it until it's almost dry (*au sec* in French). While the wine is reducing, add bay leaves and branches of thyme.

Once the wine has reduced, add sugar and chicken stock to the pot and let it simmer so that the onions can give up their flavor to the broth.

Once the pot comes up to a boil, reduce it to a simmer and wait about 20 or 30 minutes. As it comes up to a boil, you may discover some foam or scum floating on the top. Because you want a clear broth, skim the foam off with a ladle and discard it.

After 20 or 30 minutes, retrieve the bay leaf and the branches of thyme. Then, taste it. Because there is a lot of sweetness due to the sugar and the natural sweetness from the onions, make sure that you season the soup properly with salt and black pepper—about six times as much salt as pepper. To add acid, squeeze in a few drops of lemon.



Put the soup into a crock and top it with a thin slice of toasted bread, which will act as a raft for some cheese. Add Gruyère cheese, and place the crock of soup under the broiler for a few minutes, until the cheese is browned and melted.

## Potato, Leek, and Teleme Cheese Pizza with Truffle Oil

### Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 1 bunch leeks, sliced
- ½ cup clarified butter
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 4 Yukon Gold potatoes
- 2 Tbs butter

#### roasted garlic

- 1 head of garlic
- olive oil, as needed
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

#### pizza

- 1 lb pizza dough
- flour, as needed
- 8 oz Teleme cheese (or fresh mozzarella)
- 2 oz Dry Monterey Jack (or Parmesan, or Pecorino)
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- parsley, to taste
- 1 oz truffle oil



Cook the sliced leeks slowly in clarified butter for about 10 to 15 minutes. You want them to become very tender without browning. Regulate the heat so that it's not too aggressive. This is called sweating. Season with salt and pepper.

Slice the potatoes with a mandoline and cook them in butter for about 10 to 15 minutes, until they're tender. Again, you don't want to sauté them and brown them; instead, soften them without allowing them to take on a tremendous amount of color.

Remove the loose, papery husks on the outside of a head of garlic by simply wiping them away. Then, cut off the top of the stem end so that most of the garlic cloves are open and exposed. Drizzle the olive oil over the top and let it soak down into the garlic. Season it with salt and pepper and wrap it in aluminum foil. Put it in the oven at about 350 degrees for about 45 minutes, until the garlic is very soft. Squeeze it periodically to check its softness. You want the cloves of garlic to just begin turning golden.

Once the leeks, potatoes, and garlic cloves are done, turn your oven to its maximum temperature, perhaps around 500 or 550 degrees.

## Cleaning Leeks

The challenge with leeks is that the desirable part of the leek is the white portion on the bottom. The people who grow them try to maximize the amount of white by mounding dirt up and protecting the leek from the sun. The higher the mound of the dirt, the more likelihood the dirt will make its way inside the leek. You have to be very careful how you clean them.

First, cut off the root end and green tops and discard. Cut it in half and wash the halves very well. Then, cut them into thin slices. Put them in a bowl of cool water and rub them between your palms to dislodge the dirt. Lift the slices out of the water and leave the dirt in the bottom of the bowl. Wash them a second time if needed.

You can either buy pizza dough or make it yourself. Start with a round of pizza dough that is lightly floured. Make a little crown around the outside that will ultimately be the pizza crust. Then, flatten the center. Pick up the dough and stretch it little by little until it's thin.

Flour a pizza board and put the dough on it. Add the cooked leeks and potatoes. Next, add Teleme cheese, or another mild cheese, such as fresh mozzarella. For balance, add a stronger cheese, such as Dry Monterey Jack, Parmesan, or Pecorino. Season with salt and pepper.

Transfer the pizza to a pizza stone that has been heated in the oven. Bake the pizza for about 8 to 10 minutes. When the pizza is done, top it with parsley and a few drops of truffle oil to bring out the earthiness of the potatoes.







## Baby Leek Salad with Mustard Vinaigrette and Egg Mimosa

### Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

- 24 baby leeks

#### Dijon mustard vinaigrette

- 2 Tbs shallots, diced
- 3 Tbs red wine vinegar
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbs Dijon mustard



#### garnishes

- 2 Tbs parsley, chopped
- 3 large hard-boiled eggs, sieved

To make a salad with baby leeks, start by trimming off the root end and the dark green leaves. Wash them in water to remove dirt. Cook them in boiling, salted water until they are tender. To evaluate tenderness, pierce the leeks with a knife; if it goes in easily and comes out easily, they're done.

Make a mustardy vinaigrette dressing for the leeks. Leeks have a lot of flavor, so you need a vinaigrette that can stand up to that flavor. Start with the diced



shallots. To tame the aggressive sulfur quality of the shallots, add red wine vinegar. Let the shallots soak in the vinegar, along with salt and pepper, to take some of the bite out of them.

To create a vinaigrette, you need vinegar and oil, but those two things don't like to mix. Add the mustard to the vinegar and oil to act as an emulsifier, allowing the vinaigrette to stay creamy and hold together. Use about three times as much oil as vinegar. As you're stirring, if it starts looking greasy or oily, you are probably adding the oil too quickly, so slow down—add the oil drop by drop. Once the emulsion has been established, you can be a little more cavalier in how quickly you add the oil. If you decide that it's too thick, you can add a few drops of water to thin it out. Then, taste it and adjust the proportions as necessary.

While you're waiting for the leeks to finish cooking, coarsely chop parsley to sprinkle on top of the salad. Another garnish is called an egg mimosa. To make this, cut a hard-boiled egg in half and force it through a sieve. This makes the pieces of egg smaller than you would ever be able to chop it.

Once the leeks are tender, take them out of the pot and blot them to remove any extra moisture. On a plate, line up the leeks, alternating white ends to green ends to create a nice visual pattern. Next, spoon the vinaigrette over the leeks, leaving the ends uncovered for aesthetics. Top with parsley and the egg mimosa.

# Fruits Masquerading as Vegetables

## Lesson 10

In this lesson, you will learn about fruits that disguise themselves as vegetables, including tomatoes and cucumbers. By definition, fruits are the seeds of the plant that are protected in some sort of enclosure. You might find it surprising that many of the vegetables that we eat are technically fruits, including eggplant, chilies, and avocados. This lesson will offer a variety of recipes that feature fruits disguised as vegetables.

### Catalan Toasts

#### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 6 slices of baguette bread, grilled
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 tomatoes, very ripe
- 2 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 2 slices salami, prosciutto, or Serrano ham (optional)



One of the easiest things that you can do with a tomato is to make Catalan toast. Start by putting the bread on the grill. As soon as the bread comes off the grill, rub a clove of garlic and into the rough surface of the bread. Then, cut a very ripe, soft tomato in half. Imagine that the piece of bread is a grater and grate the tomato into the toast. The juice gets rubbed right into the garlic bread.

### To Refrigerate or Not to Refrigerate?

Tomatoes are harvested when they're fully mature on the plant, but they ripen off the plant. When you buy tomatoes, if they're a little firm, keep them on your counter for a while, and over the course of a few days, they'll become sweeter and more tender. Do not refrigerate tomatoes. Once the temperature goes down below 50 degrees, they will no longer ripen. The texture will become mealy, and they will lose their flavor.



Next, drizzle high-quality olive oil on top. Season with salt and pepper.

You could add salami or prosciutto. Because this is a Spanish food, you might use Serrano ham.

## Caprese Salad with Tomatoes, Burrata Cheese, and Basil

### Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

- 2 lbs tomatoes, large and small
- ½ lb burrata
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup basil leaves, purple and green
- 8 slices bread, toasted



Perhaps the most familiar tomato dish is the caprese salad from Capri. It features all different kinds of tomatoes and usually buffalo milk mozzarella. It can also be made with burrata, which is basically mozzarella cheese mixed with cream or mascarpone.

To make the salad, choose a larger tomato. Slice it and taste it for quality. Arrange the slices on a plate as a base. Cut smaller tomatoes into wedges.

Because it's too soft to slice, simply tear the burrata into pieces and add it to the salad. Then, season the cheese and tomatoes with salt and pepper. Next, add high-quality extra-virgin olive oil; let it pool on the plate around the tomatoes. Garnish with purple and green basil leaves torn into small pieces. Serve with toasted bread.



# Tomato Stuffed with Tuna Salad

## Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 2 large tomatoes, ripe
- 3 oz tuna
- 2 oz olives, two colors
- 1 red pepper, roasted
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 Tbs capers
- 1 Tbs parsley
- 2 Tbs mayonnaise



## vinaigrette

- 1 Tbs shallots, finely diced
- tomato insides, chopped (from 2 tomatoes above)
- 2 tsp parsley, coarsely chopped
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 3 Tbs olive oil
- 1 Tbs balsamic vinegar
  
- 8 slices bread (optional)



## How to Skin a Tomato

If you find the skin of a tomato objectionable, you can take the skin off pretty easily. First, cut out the core of the tomato with a knife and discard it. Then, turn the tomato over and make a shallow crosscut at the top. Place in boiling water. After about 10 seconds, the skin will split where you cut it. Remove it from the water. Grab the skin and simply peel it away.

To make this salad, start by stuffing a tomato. Skin the tomato, if you'd like. Cut the top off the tomato and use a spoon to scoop the insides out, leaving a tomato shell. Set aside the insides of the tomato.

To make the filling, combine tuna, two colors of olives, roasted red peppers, garlic, capers, and parsley. Next, add mayonnaise and mix well. On a plate, stuff the tomato with the tuna salad. Turn it upside down on the plate to hide the tuna salad.

Finally, make a vinaigrette to pour on top of the dish. Finely dice the shallots, and chop up the insides of the tomato. Add coarsely chopped parsley, salt, pepper, olive oil, and balsamic vinegar. Instead of whipping the olive oil and vinegar together, stir them; you want it to be a broken vinaigrette that collects in pools on the plate. Drizzle the vinaigrette on top of the tuna-stuffed tomato. Serve with bread on the side, if desired.



## Tabbouleh Salad with Cucumber, Mint, and Toasted Almonds

### Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

- ½ cup vegetable stock
- ½ cup bulgur wheat, fine
- 1 cup English (hothouse) cucumber
- 3 scallions, sliced
- 1 Tbs garlic
- 2 cups parsley (about 2 bunches)
- 6 Tbs mint

### dressing

- 4 Tbs olive oil
- 4 Tbs lemon juice
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- ⅓ cup almonds, toasted and sliced

Tabbouleh is a salad from the eastern Mediterranean that is made with bulgur wheat, or cracked wheat, and herbs. To make it, bring the vegetable stock up to a boil. Add bulgur wheat to it. Stir it once, and then let it simmer.

Bulgur wheat comes in three different textures: fine, medium, and coarse. Use fine bulgur wheat, which should absorb all the moisture and become tender within 10 minutes. The medium and coarse versions have to cook longer. Once it's rehydrated, the bulgur wheat should swell up to about two or three times its original size.



English cucumbers, or hothouse cucumbers, don't have a big seed cavity on the inside, making them great for salads because you don't have to remove the seeds. To get a variation of color and texture, remove strips of the cucumber's peel, leaving some strips of the peel on. Then, dice the cucumber and put it into a bowl.

Once the bulgur wheat is done cooking, add a portion of it to the bowl. Then, add sliced scallions, garlic, and lots of parsley. Stir everything together. Then, chop it all up so that it's smaller than it started out. Add mint, which is not typically in this dish but lends an aromatic quality and a freshness to the salad. Stack the mint leaves on top of each other and roll the stack into a small cigar and then cut it into a chiffonade and add it to the bowl.

Next, add a simple dressing that consists of three parts olive oil to one part lemon juice, lemon zest, salt, and pepper. Taste it and adjust the proportions as necessary. Sprinkle toasted, sliced almonds on top.

This salad keeps well in the refrigerator. Just let it warm up to room temperature before you eat it.

## **Fresh Cheese in Tomatillo Salsa**

Tomatillos look like green tomatoes. They come with a papery husk on them that gets peeled away. Usually, once they're peeled, the tomatillos are cooked—either broiled so that they blacken on the outside or boiled.



## Ingredients

Yield: 10 portions

- 8 oz tomatillos
- 1–2 jalapeño chilies
- 2 cloves garlic
- 3 Tbs onion, finely diced
- 3 Tbs cilantro, coarsely chopped
- salt, to taste
- 1 pinch sugar (optional)
- 8 oz *panela*
- 12 oz tortilla chips



For this dish, boil tomatillos in a pot for about 10 minutes, until they are tender. Their color should turn dark, to an olive drab.

While you're waiting for the tomatillos to cook and cool, char a jalapeño chili over an open flame, softening the meat of the chili and giving it a smoky flavor. Scrape off the burnt skin with a knife, and cut off the stem. Put the chili in a food processor. Add a few cloves of garlic, and mix until they are fine.

Once the tomatillos are cooked, add them to the food processor. Pulse the processor, leaving some texture. Then, add finely diced onion and coarsely chopped cilantro. Add salt and taste it for flavor. If the tomatillos started out very green, you might want to add a little bit of sugar.

Dice up a Mexican cheese called *panela* into quarter-inch pieces. One of the things that distinguishes this cheese is that if you heat it, it will soften, but it won't melt like mozzarella and turn stringy or liquidy. Add the cheese to the warm salsa and let the heat of the salsa soften it. Serve with tortilla chips.



# Bulb Vegetables: Fennel and Celery

## Lesson 11

This lesson features bulb vegetables: fennel and celery. Both of these vegetables have a similar texture, and their flavors are complementary. Both have their own charm and appeal and, in the kitchen, their own use. When selecting these vegetables, whether in a supermarket or at the farmer's market, note the condition of the tops, which gives you an indication of the condition of the bulb below.

### *Pinzimonio*

#### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 1 bulb of fennel
- 3 cups seasonal vegetables
- 3 oz grapes
- 2 oz olives, green and black
- 3 oz salami (or prosciutto)
- extra-virgin olive oil, to taste
- coarse salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste



*Pinzimonio* is a snack or appetizer made in Italy that consists of various vegetables shaved very thin. Olives, salami, and grapes are often added to the platter that this is served on.

Cut the top off of a bulb of fennel. Then, cut the bulb in quarters and remove some of the harsh, hard core from each piece. Then, shave it very thin. Shave a selection of seasonal vegetables and tuck them in among each other on a platter.

This appetizer is usually enjoyed with a little drizzle of an assertive olive oil over the top of the vegetables. Also sprinkle with coarse salt and pepper. You can use the fennel tops as a simple garnish so that nothing is wasted.

## Shaved Vegetable Salad

### Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

- 1 zucchini
- 1 celery stalk
- ½ head of fennel
- 4 radishes
- 1 green pepper
- 1 Tbs parsley, chopped
- 1 Tbs celery leaves

- **vinaigrette**
- 1 clove chopped garlic
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 3 Tbs olive oil
- 1 tsp champagne vinegar
- 1 ½ Tbs lemon juice



This is a recipe that can be made with various fruits and vegetables that you find at the farmer's market. Use a mandoline to shave a selection of vegetables—such as zucchini, celery, fennel, and radishes—very thin. You can adjust the thickness of the slice on the mandoline so that the vegetable is as thin as possible without breaking apart.

Add green peppers, chopped parsley, and celery leaves.

Make a simple dressing with chopped garlic, salt, pepper, olive oil, champagne vinegar, and lemon juice. Toss everything together very gently because the vegetables are shaved very thin and you don't want them breaking apart. Taste to adjust the balance of flavor. Garnish with fennel tops, if desired.



## Greek-Style Gigande Beans with Celery, Olive Oil, and Garlic

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- ½ lb gigande beans
- 4–5 celery stalk heads, finely diced
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
- ½–¾ tsp pepper flakes
- salt, to taste
- 2 Tbs parsley, fennel tops, or celery leaves

This dish is inspired by one that is often made in the Greek Islands. The dish is made with gigande beans, or giant beans, which are large, meaty beans. When they're cooked, they grow to almost twice their original size.

First, soak the gigande beans in water to rehydrate them. Cover them with three times as much water as beans, and put them in the refrigerator overnight.

The following day, put the beans in a pot of water on the stove and simmer gently for about an hour or an hour and a half. Also cook finely diced celery in a pan with lots of olive oil.

Then, mix the beans with the celery. Add bay leaves, coarsely chopped garlic, and pepper flakes. Bake the beans and celery in the oven at about 325 degrees for about an hour or an hour and a half, until the celery is tender and the beans absorb the flavor from the celery. Put the mixture into an ovenproof dish. Taste the mixture and season it with salt. Put a piece of foil on top to prevent the mixture from drying out.

Make sure that the beans stay covered with liquid; you may have to add water a few times. If the beans constantly demand more liquid, that's a good indication that they're not fully cooked.

To evaluate doneness for beans, put a sample bean on a cutting board and blow on it while it's still hot. If the skin on the outside of the bean cracks, then it's done. To go a step further, mash the bean a little bit and make sure that on the inside there's no chalky whiteness. Make sure not to undercook the beans.

Once the broth that the beans are in has been thickened by the starch of the beans, the dish is done. Garnish with parsley, fennel tops, or celery leaves.

Enjoy these beans right after they are made and are still a little warm, but they are also good at room temperature. You can keep leftovers in the refrigerator for about a week.

## Cooking with Hard Water?

Hard water can make beans take longer to become tender. You can add a pinch of baking soda to the water to fix this. Be careful, though: Too much baking soda will make your beans taste like soap, so don't overdo it.



# Linguine with Fennel, Dungeness Crab, and Meyer Lemon Cream

## Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 1 lb linguine, previously cooked

### sauce

- 1 cup white wine
- 1 Tbs fennel seeds
- 1 tsp white peppercorns
- 1 Tbs shallots, minced
- 1 cup leeks, julienne
- 2 fennel bulbs
- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 2 cups cream
- salt, to taste
- white pepper, to taste
- ¼ cup Meyer lemon zest, fine
- 4 Meyer lemons, peeled and segmented
- 1 lb Dungeness crabmeat
- 1 Tbs chives, sliced
- fennel tops, if desired



Many sauces begin with reductions. To create a reduction, add wine to a pan that is already hot. Then, add fennel seeds, white peppercorns, and chopped shallots. Let the mixture boil. As it boils, it will begin to evaporate and reduce. It will draw flavor from the spices. When it's almost dry, that will become the flavor for the sauce.

While the wine is reducing, sauté the leeks and fennel that will go into the sauce. Take the top off the fennel, but save some of it to use as a garnish later. Cut off the root end and the green tops from the leeks and discard.

## When Is Pasta Done?

A trick to determine whether your pasta is done is to break the pasta and look at the cross-section. If you see a core that is white, that means that the pasta is not quite there. If it's cooked all the way through, you won't find a white core.

Cut the leeks in half. Between the leaves, there will probably be quite a bit of dirt. Cut the halves into quarter-inch slices and put them in a bowl of cold water to rinse them. Rub them to make sure the dirt falls off, and then lift them out of the water so all the dirt stays behind.

Cut the fennel in half through the core, and then cut each half through the core into quarters. Remove the core. Then, julienne

the fennel so that a piece is a few inches long and about an eighth of an inch on the side.

Cook the fennel and the leeks in a pan with olive oil. You don't want to brown these vegetables, but you do want them to get tender. Sweat the vegetables over a gentle heat for about 10 minutes.

Once the reduction is almost dry, add cream. Then, strain it so that the whole fennel seeds and whole peppercorns are removed. Add the sauce to the cooked fennel and leeks and reduce further by bringing it to a boil. Taste the sauce for flavor and add salt and pepper as necessary. Add Meyer lemon zest and turn the heat down low.

Drop the previously cooked linguine into boiling water to reheat it.

Finish the sauce with lemon pieces and crabmeat. Try not to break up the crab so that it stays in big chunks.

When the pasta is reheated, add it to the sauce and toss everything together. Plate, garnish with chopped chives and fennel tops, and serve.



# Brassicas: Brussels Sprouts and Turnips

## Lesson 12

In this lesson, you will learn about a group of vegetables that fall collectively in a family known as brassicas, the largest family of vegetables. Brassicas include mustard greens, horseradish root, turnips, rutabaga, cauliflower, cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and Belgian endive. All parts of the plant are represented in the brassica family, from roots to tip to stalk to seeds. These vegetables represent a nutritional powerhouse that you can bring to your table.

### Crispy Thai Brussels Sprouts

#### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 1 lb Brussels sprouts
- ¼ cup olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

#### Thai sauce

- 3 Tbs light soy sauce
- 2 tsp molasses
- 4 tsp honey
- 1 tsp sriracha sauce
- 1 clove garlic, made into paste
- 1 lime, juiced
- 2 tsp cilantro
- 2 tsp mint



To make this dish, start by trimming the Brussels sprouts. Trim the loose leaves and discolored parts of the stem. Then, cut the sprouts in half. Put them in a bowl and dress them with olive oil. Add salt and pepper.

Roast the sprouts in an oven for about 35 to 40 minutes at about 425 degrees. They will become very dark—almost burnt. This will give them the deep caramel flavor that makes them special.





To make a Thai sauce to go with the roasted sprouts, add light soy sauce and molasses to a bowl. Stir the two together, making sure that the molasses is dissolved. Add honey, sriracha sauce (chili sauce), garlic paste, and lime juice. Stir and taste for a balance between salty, savory, acidic, and sweet flavors.

Add the roasted Brussels sprouts to the bowl and dress them with the sauce. Mix well. Serve immediately, to prevent the sprouts from getting soggy and soft. Top with cilantro and mint.

### Dark versus Light Soy Sauce

The difference between light soy sauce and dark soy sauce is that the dark soy sauce has a caramelized sugar added to the soy sauce to make it softer and rounder, and when you splash it on the sides of a container, it will coat it. It's thicker than light soy sauce. If you only have light soy sauce but a recipe calls for dark soy sauce, you can add molasses to the light soy sauce to create a dark soy sauce.

## Butter-Braised Turnips with Miso and Honey

### Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

- 2 lbs Hakurei turnips, greens
  - 1 cup water
  - 1 ½ Tbs butter
  - 1 tsp honey
- miso butter**
- 1 ½ Tbs butter
  - 2 Tbs white miso
  - 1/4 lemon, zested and juiced



Hakurei turnips are very mild. They taste milder than a radish; they don't have that peppery bite.

Remove the stems and roots of the turnips. Gather the greens and cut through them a few times so that they're in manageable pieces. Set the greens aside.

Cut the turnips into bite-sized pieces. You want the pieces to be uniform in size so that they cook evenly. Don't peel the turnips; just make sure that they have been scrubbed clean.

Add water to a hot pan. Add the turnips and bring the water up to a boil. In French, *cuisson* is the cooking liquid that is left over from a cooking preparation. The water contains flavor from the turnips and can be turned into a



sauce to serve the turnips in. Add butter and honey to the turnips, which should take about 8 to 10 minutes to cook.

While the turnips are cooking, add butter and white miso (fermented soybean paste from Japan) to a bowl. Mix well to make miso butter.

After the turnips have cooked about 8 to 10 minutes, add the turnip greens to the pan. If the turnips have not finished cooking and the pan is dry, add more water; if the turnips are tender and there is still a lot of water in the pan, turn up the heat and allow the water to boil away. Let the greens wilt in the small amount of water that remains in the pan.

Test the turnips to make sure they are tender. When you pierce them with a knife, the knife should go in and come out very easily. Once the greens turn a dark green, they should be tender. Taste them.

Turn the heat down and finish the dish with the miso butter. Toss the butter with the turnips and greens to coat them, letting the butter melt with the little bit of liquid that's left in the pan. If the sauce seems too thick, add a splash of water. Taste for flavor, adding more honey and water if needed.

Plate the turnips and greens with the sauce. Finely cut up lemon zest and add the lemon zest and lemon juice on top.

## Braised Belgian Endive

### Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

- 8 Belgian endive
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 4 oz butter

#### *matignon*

- 2 oz carrots, *brunoise*
- 2 oz celery, *brunoise*
- 2 shallots, diced
- 1 oz bacon, pancetta, ham, or prosciutto, finely cut

- 2 oz white wine
- 3 oz Madeira
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 4 sprigs thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 oz crème fraîche
- salt, to taste
- 1 Tbs parsley, finely chopped



Meat is often braised for use in pot roast or stews, but this dish involves braising a vegetable: Belgian endive. You can eat Belgian endive raw in salads and it tastes great, but it takes on a very different quality when you cook it long and slow in a flavorful liquid.

Start by removing the discolored leaves and stems of the endive. Then, cut the endive in half lengthwise. Brush the cut surfaces with lemon juice to prevent the endive from browning before it gets a chance to cook.

Add butter to a hot pan. As the butter melts, add the endive. Cook the endive cut-side down until browned.

In the braising pan, what is traditionally added is something the French call *matignon*, which is a very fine dice of ham or bacon and vegetables. Start by cutting a carrot lengthwise into slices that are about an eighth of an inch thick, then into strips that are about an eighth of an inch thick, and then into eighth-inch cubes. This cut in France is called *brunoise*, and it's a decorative cut because it takes so long to do. Take your time with it. Then, add the carrots to a second pan.

Use the same process to cut celery and add the pieces to the pan with the carrots.

Check on the endive. Once it is browned on the first side, turn it over so that it can develop some color on the other side.

To the pan with the carrots and celery, add diced shallots and finely cut bacon, pancetta, ham, or prosciutto. Sauté.

Transfer the browned endive to the pan with the vegetables.

Once you've browned the food that you're braising, you typically introduce a flavorful liquid and then turn the temperature down and cook it long and slow until the meat (or vegetable, in this case) becomes very tender. For this dish, the flavorful liquid is a mixture of white wine, Madeira (a sweet, nutty wine), and chicken stock. The liquid should come to about halfway up the endive in the pan.

Bring up to a boil and cover with a *cartouche*, which involves folded parchment paper with a hole in the center and foil to keep it in place. The *cartouche* will keep the moisture in tight. Put the pan into an oven at about 350 degrees for about 30 to 45 minutes, until the endive is very tender.

Take the dish out of the oven and remove the *cartouche*. Pierce the endive with a knife; it should be very tender.

After removing it from the pan, plate the endive and cover it with foil to keep it warm while you finish the dish.

Reduce the leftover liquid on the stove. While it is simmering, add thyme and a bay leaf. Cook until the flavor is concentrated.

Stir in crème fraîche (cultured sour cream). Add salt.

Pour the sauce and vegetables over the endive. Garnish with finely chopped parsley.

You can serve braised endive with roast beef, venison, or pork, if desired.





# Potatoes and Other Tubers

## Lesson 13

Americans eat more potatoes than any other vegetable. Potatoes fall into a family of vegetables known as tubers, which also includes sweet potatoes, marble potatoes, fingerling potatoes, and Yukon Gold potatoes. Chefs divide potatoes into two categories: those that are mealy (fluffy and flake apart) when cooked, such as russet potatoes, and those that hold their shape when cooked, such as new potatoes. Store potatoes in a dark, dry, cool place, and they will keep for a few weeks.

### Reupholstered Potatoes with Warm Potato Salad, Soft Scrambled Eggs, and Smoked Salmon

#### Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 4 baked potatoes
- ¼ cup olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 2 Tbs red wine vinegar
- 2 Tbs butter
- 2 scallions, diced
- 5 eggs
- 4 oz smoked salmon
- 1 Tbs dill
- 3 Tbs sour cream
- 3 radishes, thinly sliced



This dish involves reupholstering a freshly baked potato. First, cut the top off and set it aside. Then, with a paring knife, cut around the edge, creating a potato shell, and then loosen and cut the meat on the inside so that you can scoop it out.

Brush the potato shell with oil, season it with salt and pepper, and then put it back into the oven. When it comes out of the oven, it will be crispy and golden.

With the insides of the warm potato, create a potato salad by adding salt, pepper, olive oil, red wine vinegar, and butter. Add diced scallions and stir.

In a pan with butter, add beaten eggs, salt, pepper, and pieces of smoked salmon.



In the potato shell, start by adding sour cream on the bottom, and on top of that, add some of the warm potato salad. Press it down a little bit to make room for the eggs. Mix diced scallions and dill into the cooked eggs and spoon over the potato salad. Add sour cream and dill on top. Tuck thinly sliced radishes around and into the potato. This is a delicious brunch dish that is quick and easy to make.

## Chilaquiles with Mushrooms, Chard, Sweet Potatoes, and Aged Cheese

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 1 sweet potato

#### salsa

- 8 Roma tomatoes
- 1 onion
- 5 garlic cloves
- 4 chipotle peppers, canned in adobo sauce
- salt, to taste
- 4 cups Swiss chard leaves, cut into coarse ribbons
- 2 cups sautéed mushrooms



- 8 oz thick tortilla chips, unsalted
- 3 cups chicken stock or vegetable broth
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 2 Tbs cilantro, chopped
- ½ cup Cotija cheese or *añejo* cheese
- 3 Tbs onion, finely chopped and rinsed



Chilaquiles is a Mexican dish that is often characterized as Mexican soul food. It is a brothy salsa that gets mixed with vegetable garniture and tortilla chips that have been fried but not heavily salted. The salsa softens the chips and warms the vegetable garniture. Sometimes this is made with eggs and is a brunch dish; other times it is eaten as a light supper.

This version of chilaquiles features a sweet potato. Start with a sweet potato that has been peeled, diced, and then briefly boiled until tender.

To make the salsa, broil tomatoes in the oven until they are charred a little on the outside and soft. Peel away the skin and the worst of the blackened parts. Then, cut out the core. Add the tomatoes and their liquid to a blender.

Cut an onion in half with the peel on. Then, cut it in pieces that are about the size of a sixth of an onion and put them on the grill. Add unpeeled garlic cloves to the grill. Once they are blackened and soft, take them off the grill and remove the peels. Cut off the root ends and the worst of the blackened parts. Then, add the onion and garlic to the blender. Also add canned chipotle peppers, as well as some of the adobo sauce that they are packed in. Blend until smooth. Taste and add salt as necessary.

Add the salsa to a hot pan on the stove. Bring it up to a simmer. You want the salsa to be pretty brothy.

Add to the salsa Swiss chard leaves that have been shaved thin and mushrooms that have been previously sautéed with oil, garlic,

salt, and pepper. Also add the blanched, tender sweet potato. Put fried, unsalted tortilla chips on top. Stir to coat the chips with the sauce and let the vegetable garniture warm up. If the pan starts looking dry, add chicken stock or vegetable broth. Keep turning the chips and vegetables until they're completely coated with salsa and softened. When everything is coated, cover with a lid and turn the heat down very low. Cook for about four minutes.

In Mexico, they use a sour cream called *crema*, or *crema agria*, which tends to be a thinner than sour cream. To make something similar to Mexican crema for this dish, thin sour cream with vegetable broth in a bowl. Chop cilantro for garnish. Another garnish for this dish is Cotija cheese, which is heavily salted. You can also use *añejo* cheese (*queso añejo*), which is aged and older than Cotija, so it has a deeper flavor profile. Finely chop an onion to be used as an additional garnish.

### Dried versus Fresh Herbs

If you're using dried herbs instead of fresh herbs, use about a third as much of the dried herb as you would the fresh herb. This is because the moisture has been taken out of the dried herbs and they have shrunken, so you don't need as much of them.



Once the tortilla chips have softened and absorbed most of the sauce in the pan, plate the chilaquiles. Garnish with crumbled Cotija cheese, chopped cilantro, and shaved onions. Top with sour cream mixture, or Mexican crema.

## Pickled Potatoes with Chipotle Chilies

### Ingredients

Yield: 1 quart

- 1 lb small marble potatoes
- 1 carrot, sliced

#### pickling liquid

- 3 cups cider vinegar
- 1 small white onion, thinly sliced
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp whole peppercorns
- ½ tsp allspice
- ½ tsp cloves
- 1 thyme branch
- 1 Tbs Mexican oregano (or marjoram)
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- 3 chipotle peppers, canned in adobo sauce, finely chopped



Pickled potatoes are very popular in Oaxaca, in southern Mexico. To make pickled potatoes, start with a selection of small marble potatoes that are similarly sized so that they cook evenly. Cook them in boiling, salted water until they are tender. Halfway through cooking them, add slices of carrot. Once the potatoes are cooked, peel and scrape off the skin while they're hot. Having the skin off helps them absorb the pickling liquid more effectively.

Next, make the pickling liquid by adding cider vinegar to a pan on the heat. Add thinly sliced white onions. Also add sugar and salt. Taste for a blend of acidity, sweetness, and salt. Bring up to a boil. Add whole peppercorns, allspice, cloves, thyme, and Mexican oregano (or marjoram as a substitute), sliced garlic, and finely chopped chipotle peppers (buy them canned in adobo sauce). Taste.

Add the potatoes and carrots to the pickling liquid, warm the contents of the pan to a simmer, and then turn the heat off and let the contents sit until cooled to room temperature, at which point you can put a lid on the pan and put it in the refrigerator. Let the potatoes sit for about a day, so that they absorb the flavor of the pickle. Once they are pickled, they will last a long time. You can store the potatoes in a canning jar or plastic container—just protect them from absorbing odors.



# Stems and Stalks: Asparagus and Rhubarb

## Lesson 14

This lesson is on stems and stalk vegetables—primarily asparagus and rhubarb. These vegetables provide structure for a plant, and for that reason, they are fibrous and maybe a little tough. Your job as a chef is just to recognize that and learn how to cook them properly. When selecting rhubarb and asparagus for your meal, they should have a uniform color and should be a color that is appropriate to their variety.

### Grilled Asparagus with Pecorino, Black Olives, Tomatoes, and Lemon

#### Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 1 bunch asparagus, medium to large
- 3 Tbs olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 12 cherry tomatoes

#### dressing

- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 pinch pepper flakes
- 2 Tbs black Niçoise olives
- 2 Tbs Pecorino, shaved
- Maldon salt, to taste



Start with a few stalks of asparagus. Break off the bottoms, the toughest parts of the asparagus. Coat them with oil, and sprinkle them with salt and pepper. Place them on the grill. You can evaluate the heat of the grill just by the way the food sounds when it hits the grill. A sizzle is a good sign.

While the asparagus is grilling, put the cherry tomatoes on skewers and add them to the grill.

Check on the asparagus. Turn them over once the side touching the grill is browned so that the other side can develop some color. Tomatoes brown much quicker, likely because they have more sugar in them. Turn them over once they have color on their first side and get some color on the other side.

Once the asparagus and tomatoes are fully browned, remove them from the grill. When plating them, think in terms of color and shape. If you have tomatoes that are too small to grill, leave them raw and add them to the plate.

Create a simple dressing with lemon juice, pepper flakes, black Niçoise olives, shaved Pecorino cheese, and Maldon salt. Pour over asparagus and tomatoes.

## White Asparagus with Toasted Bread Crumbs, Lemon, and Parsley

### Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 1 bunch white asparagus
- salt, to taste
- 3 oz butter
- ½ cup fresh bread crumbs
- 2 Tbs parsley, chopped
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced



Popular in Europe, white asparagus is not very common in the United States, although it's starting to become more popular. White asparagus is grown in the dark so that the chlorophyll doesn't develop, keeping it white. It's more brittle than green asparagus, so be careful when handling it.

Break off the bottoms of the white asparagus and then lightly run a peeler down the asparagus to peel them. Cook them in boiling, salted water for about three or four minutes.



Brown the butter in a pan. Cut the crusts off the bread and then grind it up. Add the bread crumbs to the butter once it has browned a bit. Initially, the bread crumbs are going to absorb a lot of the butter, and then they'll begin to brown and become crunchy.

Add chopped parsley to the bread crumbs. Then, cut the lemon peel into very fine julienned shreds and add the pieces to the bread crumbs.

Take the asparagus out of the water. It should droop when you pull it from the water; that's a quick test to see if it is done.

Because white asparagus is more bitter than green asparagus, you have to season it more assertively to downplay the bitterness. After you plate the asparagus, spoon on the buttery bread crumbs and top with salt and lemon juice, as well as some of the julienned lemon peel.

## Korean Spinach Salad

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 2 bunches spinach, crowns and leaves

#### dressing

- 2 scallions, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic

- salt, to taste
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 Tbs soy sauce
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 tsp sesame seeds, toasted



Spinach grows on a stem, and you can use the tip of the stem, or crown, as a garnish. Cut off the crown and clean it up by cutting away any discolored parts.

Blanch the spinach in boiling, salted water. It will become darker in color. Once it's blanched, drain the spinach and put it into ice water, which will stop the cooking and secure the beautiful green color of the spinach. Once the spinach is cool, squeeze it to remove the excess moisture and cut it into bite-sized pieces.

To make a dressing for the salad, start by trimming the ends off the scallions and chop them very finely. Then, add them to a bowl. Make the garlic into a paste by putting salt on it and then mashing it using the sharp edge of a knife. Add it to the bowl. Then, add sugar and soy sauce and mix. Add aromatic



sesame oil; be careful not to add too much because it's very powerful. Mix and taste for flavor.

Put the spinach crowns into boiling water.

Dress the blanched spinach with the sesame dressing and add toasted sesame seeds.

For presentation, form a cylinder with the spinach and plate the spinach in two towers.

Once the crowns are done cooking, toss them in dressing and add them around the outside of the salad on the plate as a garnish. Drizzle more dressing on top, as well as more toasted sesame seeds.



## Italian Rhubarb Chutney (*Mostarda*)

### Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 2 stalks rhubarb
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar
- 2 shallots, minced
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup vinegar
- 2 apples
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup dried cherries
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup dried golden raisins
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dried apricots
- 1 bay leaf
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp pepper flakes
- 1 Tbs fennel seed (or anise)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup mustard, whole-grain or Dijon
- salt, to taste
- roasted pork loin



Rhubarb is a vegetable that is often used as a fruit. If your rhubarb comes with a leaf on it, trim it and discard it, because the leaves are poisonous.

*Mostarda* is a condiment that can be thought of as a chutney from the Italian tradition.

Put the sugar in a pan on the stove and caramelize it. Stir it until you see it first turn liquid and then begin to develop color.

Mince the shallots. Cut up the rhubarb into about half-inch pieces.

Check on the sugar in the pan. Recognize the different colors of browning. Initially, it will be a sort of pale golden color, almost yellow, and then it transforms into a deeper brown. Pull the pan off the heat when the color of the sugar turns a bit red. Don't let it become black.

Add the minced shallots to the pan, which will cool down the pan and cook the shallots. Cool the pan even further with a splash of water. Next, add the rhubarb, vinegar, apples, and a selection of dried fruit, including cherries, raisins, and apricots. Add a bay leaf, pepper flakes, and fennel seed (or anise). Cook for about 5 to 10 minutes, at which point the dried fruit will plump up, the raw fruit will get tender, and the rhubarb will soften and fall apart.

If you discover that it's getting a little dry, add a splash of water. Ultimately, you're looking for a jam-like or chutney-like consistency.

Once the rhubarb is softened, the apples are tender, and the fruit is plumped, add the condiment that gives this *mostarda* its name: mustard. You can use whole-grain or Dijon mustard. Taste for flavor and consistency. Season with salt.

Traditionally, *mostarda* is a condiment that's used on roasted pork. Put the pork loin in the oven and roast it very slowly, until it reaches an internal temperature of 145 degrees.



# Cabbages: Red, Green, and Savoy

## Lesson 15

This lesson is all about cabbage. Cabbages fall in a much larger family of vegetables called the brassicas, which includes everything from turnips and rutabagas to broccoli and cabbage. Cabbages are probably eaten more than any of the other brassicas and can therefore be considered the king of brassicas. Napa cabbage, Savoy cabbage, red cabbage, and green cabbage are all varieties. When buying cabbage, look for a cabbage that is heavy for its size.

### Java-Style Sambal (Asian Coleslaw)

#### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 6 cups cabbage (red or green), shredded
- ½ cup bean sprouts
- ¼ cup cashews (or peanuts, or almonds), chopped and toasted

#### dressing

- 1 Tbs coriander seeds
- 1 Thai bird chili (or jalapeño, or serrano), chopped
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 tsp shrimp paste (or fish sauce, miso, or anchovies)
- 2 Tbs sugar
- 1 lime, juiced
- ¼ cup *kecap manis* (or 2 Tbs soy sauce and 2 Tbs molasses)
- ¼ cup canola oil (or peanut oil)
- 1 Tbs galangal (or ginger)



This is a coleslaw that comes from Southeast Asia. To make it, cut a head of cabbage into quarters and remove the core. Then, chop the cabbage into bite-sized pieces and put them in a bowl. Add bean sprouts for a contrasting texture and different look. Chop the cashews (or peanuts, or almonds) and toast them.



To make the dressing, crush the coriander seeds in a mortar with a pestle to release some of the aroma. Chop and add Thai bird chilies, or any kind of chili you have on hand, such as jalapeños or serranos. Cut them up small so that you don't get a bite with a lot of heat. Crush the garlic in the mortar with a pestle and add it.

Traditional in this recipe and in Southeast Asia is shrimp paste, which is mostly shrimp, with a little sugar and salt. It provides a rich, savory flavor. The challenge is that sometimes it's difficult to find. If you can't find it, you can substitute the savory flavor of the shrimp paste with fish sauce, miso, or anchovies.

To finish the dressing, add sugar. Add lime juice, which is taking the place of vinegar in a regular vinaigrette. Traditionally, in Southeast Asia, this recipe would use a product that tastes like molasses called *kecap manis*. You can find it in the United States. But if you can't, use a combination of soy sauce and molasses. Finally, add canola oil or peanut oil.

Taste it to make sure you're happy with the flavor. Then, dress the salad and toss it before plating it.

Galangal, a close relative of ginger, is sometimes added to this dish. Galangal offers a deep woody flavor, whereas ginger a bright, fresh, lively aromatic quality. It's delicious with ginger or galangal.

## Minced Chicken Salad (*Larb Gai*)

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

#### dressing

- 1 Tbs canola oil (or peanut oil)
- 1 lb chicken
- 2 tsp lemongrass, finely chopped
- 1 Tbs ginger
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 large shallot
- 2 Thai bird chillies
- 2 scallions
- 3 Tbs fish sauce



- 2 limes, juiced
- 1 Tbs sugar
- 2 Tbs jasmine rice, toasted and ground
- ¼ cup mint
- 1 small head of cabbage
- 1 cup green beans
- ½ cup cucumbers
- 12 cherry tomatoes



In Southeast Asia, *larb* salad is a meat salad that has cabbage in it. To make it, add canola oil (or peanut oil) to a hot pan. Add the chicken and let it cook in the oil. Add finely chopped lemongrass; just use the fat section on the bottom. Chop and add ginger, garlic, shallots, Thai bird chillies, and scallions. Turn off the heat and let the residual heat finish cooking the chicken.

Basically, the meat becomes the dressing for the salad. Add fish sauce to the pan, as well as lime juice and sugar to tame the strong flavor of the fish sauce.



Toast aromatic jasmine rice in a pan. Once it is cool, grind it into a powder. It will lend a roasted nutty flavor to the finished dish, and it will thicken the dressing. Add the rice powder to the dressing. (The ground rice will keep in an airtight container in your pantry for months.)

Taste the dressing for balance between sugar, salt, and savory flavors. If it is aggressively fishy, you need more lime juice. If it tastes too aggressively acidic, you need more sugar.

Cut the core out of the head of cabbage. Discard the core and cut the head into two pieces. Plate with the cabbage as wedges to scoop up the meat. Add green beans, cucumbers, and cherry tomatoes.

Add torn mint leaves to the pan with the dressing at the end of the cooking process and stir. Pile the chicken dressing in the center of the plate.

## Savoy Cabbage with Prosciutto, Gorgonzola, and Pine Nuts

### Ingredients

Yield: 12 portions

- 1 head of Savoy cabbage
- 4 oz gorgonzola cheese
- 2 oz mascarpone (or sour cream)
- 10 slices prosciutto, thinly sliced
- 1 cup radicchio, thinly shredded
- pepper, to taste
- 3 Tbs pine nuts
- 1 Tbs parsley



This is an hors d'oeuvre that can be made during the winter, when cabbage looks great and tastes sweet and crunchy but other vegetables might not.

Start with a head of Savoy cabbage, which has wrinkly or textured leaves. Cut the core out of it with a large, strong knife so that the leaves fall apart. Put the cabbage into a pot of boiling water. The leaves will turn bright green and soften, and you should be able to peel them away from the outside of the cabbage. Take them out of the water one by one.

Trim away the thick part of the stem on the leaves and discard. Then, blot the leaves dry with paper towels. In effect, you're going to create sushi, with the cabbage leaves serving as a wrapper for the insides, instead of seaweed.



To make the filling, add gorgonzola cheese to a bowl. Smooth it out with mascarpone (or sour cream) to make it more spreadable.

Thinly slice the prosciutto, and thinly shred the radicchio.

Lay the cabbage on a sushi mat wrapped in plastic wrap. Use the cheese mixture to seal the leaves together. Thinly spread the cheese over the surface of the cabbage leaves. Wipe away most of the excess. Season with pepper.

Lay the prosciutto and radicchio on the cabbage leaves. Then, for some nuttiness and texture, add pine nuts. Use the mat to help you roll up the cabbage leaves, capturing the filling tightly as you go. At the end, glue the edge with the cheese spread.

Shape the roll and cut it into little coins before plating. Sprinkle parsley over the top.

## **Colcannon (Potatoes with Cabbage and Bacon)**

Colcannon is an Irish version of mashed potatoes. To make it, put potatoes that have been peeled and cooked in a pot of boiling, salted water. Coarsely

### **Storing Cabbage**

Cabbages store well. However, like lettuces, cabbages are susceptible to ethylene gas, so don't store cabbages with apples or pears, which produce ethylene when ripening.

## Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

- 2 lbs potatoes, peeled
- salt, to taste
- 1 head of cabbage
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 4 oz bacon, cooked
- ½ cup milk (or cream)
- 3 oz butter
- pepper, to taste
- 2 Tbs parsley, chopped



chop a head of cabbage and add it to the pot when the potatoes are almost done cooking. Stir and let the potatoes and cabbage cook together.

Add diced onions to cooked bacon in a pan and cook until the onions are translucent. Warm a pan of milk or cream, and take the butter out of the refrigerator so that it softens.

Check the potatoes. You want a knife to be able to go into the potato and come out just as easily. Once the potatoes and cabbage are tender, drain them using a colander in the sink. Put the pot back on the stove, on low heat, to remove any excess moisture, and then transfer the potatoes and cabbage back into the pot.

Add the bacon and onions to the potatoes and cabbage. Season with salt and pepper. Coarsely mash the potatoes. Add the butter. Let it melt and mix it in. Finally, add the hot milk or cream. Turn off the heat. Taste and adjust the seasoning of salt and pepper.

Plate the potato and cabbage. Garnish with chopped parsley, and maybe even a knob of butter on top.





# Beets and Beet Greens

## Lesson 16

**B**eets have an image problem. Many children and adults dislike beets. But the problem is not beets; the problem is that people don't know how to cook and season them properly. In this lesson, you will learn how to do this. Beets come in many different colors, such as red, golden, and white, and they can be cooked in many different ways, including juicing them raw, boiling them, and roasting them.

### Roast Beet in Salt Crust

#### Ingredients

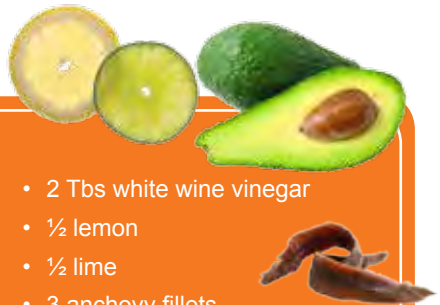
Yield: 4 portions

#### salt crust

- 2 lbs rock salt
- 1 lb kosher salt
- 1 orange, zested
- 1 lemon, zested
- 2 Tbs fennel seed
- 2 Tbs star anise, crushed
- 4 egg whites, lightly whipped
  
- 4 large beets, scrubbed

#### green goddess dressing

- 1 shallot
- 1 garlic clove



- 2 Tbs white wine vinegar
- ½ lemon
- ½ lime
- 3 anchovy fillets
- ½ avocado
- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup crème fraîche
- 3 Tbs Italian parsley, chopped
- 2 Tbs tarragon, chopped
- 2 Tbs cilantro, chopped
- 2 Tbs basil, chopped
- salt, to taste
- ground black pepper, to taste

To make a salt crust, which is like a dough that goes on the outside of the beet, start by mixing rock salt and kosher salt. To make the crust aromatic so that it perfumes the beet as it cooks, add orange zest, lemon zest, fennel seed, and star anise (broken up into points). Mix with your hands. To hold the crust together, add lightly whipped egg whites and stir well.

Nestle each beet in a bed of salt; then, mound the salt up and around the beet to form a crust.

Put the beets in the oven at about 425 degrees for 45 minutes, until they're tender. The crust should darken, and the spices should become aromatic.

Let the beets sit for a while after cooking. Then, using the back of a knife, knock off the salt crust from each beet. Cut off the stem end, but you don't have to peel the beet. Plate with green goddess dressing.

## Fatima's Tiered Beet Salad

### Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

#### *chermoula*

- 2 Tbs parsley
- 2 Tbs cilantro
- ½ tsp paprika
- ½ tsp cumin
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 Tbs lemon juice
- ½ cup olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste



- 2 beets, roasted
- ½ cup water
- 2 Tbs vinegar
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 small onion
- ½ cucumber
- 2 tomatoes
- 2 Yukon Gold potatoes, boiled
- 1 chili, Anaheim
- 2 eggs, hard-boiled



This dish comes from North Africa. It features a dressing called *chermoula* that is used in Tunisia and Morocco as a dressing for salads and as a marinade for grilled seafood and vegetables. To make the dressing, mix parsley, cilantro, paprika, cumin, garlic. Stir in lemon juice and olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.

Roast the beets. Add water to the bottom of a pan and add vinegar, which serves to brighten the color of the beets. Season with salt and pepper. Add unpeeled beets, with the root on and about an inch of the stem on, to the pan. Then, put them into the oven at about 375 degrees for about 45 minutes. The beets are done when a knife goes into them easily and comes out just as easily.

Wear gloves when handling beets because they will stain your hands. While the beets are still warm, use a towel to simply wipe away the skin of the beets.



Alternately, use a knife to scrape off the skin. Cut the root end and the stem end off.

To avoid staining, slice the roasted beets on a paper towel, or use a cutting board that is designated for beets.

On a platter, layer the vegetables on top of each other, dressing each layer with the vinaigrette before adding the next layer of vegetables. Start with the roasted beets on the bottom, and then pile on thin slices of onions, cucumbers, tomatoes, potatoes, chili, and hard-boiled egg. Dress the top layer, letting the dressing spill down the outside of the pile of vegetables and onto the plate.

## Beet Green and Goat Cheese Tortellini

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 to 8 portions

- 1 lb beet greens, chopped and blanched, squeezed dry
- 2 Tbs butter
- 2 cloves garlic, minced

### filling

- ½ cup ricotta cheese
- ½ cup goat cheese
- 2 Tbs Pecorino cheese
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 Tbs parsley
- salt, to taste



- pepper, to taste
- ¼ tsp lemon zest
- 1 pkg wonton wrappers (or *shumai* wrappers)
- 2 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 3 Tbs butter
- ¼ cup Pecorino cheese
- 1 Tbs parsley



When you buy beets, they sometimes come with greens attached. The greens can tell a story about the quality and condition of the vegetable itself. If the greens are fresh, then you can be assured that the beet has been recently harvested, and you can even cook and eat the greens.

Remove the harsh, rough stems from the greens and chop them into ribbons. Then, blanch them in boiling, salted water for about three to four minutes.

To make the filling for the tortellini, add ricotta cheese, goat cheese, and Pecorino cheese to a bowl. To bind the filling together, add an egg yolk and stir. Add parsley. Taste and add salt if needed. Add pepper and lemon zest.

Chop garlic and add it to a pan with butter.

When the beet greens are blanched, put them into ice water to cool them so that you can handle them without burning yourself. Squeeze the greens to get rid of all the excess moisture. Then, add them to the pan with the garlic. Stir to wilt.

When the garlic begins to take on some golden color (not brown), remove the garlic and greens from the heat and let them cool. Once the beet greens have cooled off, add them to the cheese filling and stir.

You don't have to make tortellini from scratch; you can simply buy wonton wrappers or *shumai* wrappers. To compose the tortellini for this dish, spread some of the filling on a leaf of dough. Then, moisten half of it with water. Fold the dough in half to make a turnover. Put your thumb underneath the dough and create a small hat for your thumb by pushing up from down below. Bring the edges together and stick them.

Use the water that the beet greens were cooked in to cook the pasta. Add the pasta to the water and cook for about two minutes. Don't let the pasta water come to a strong boil—just let it simmer. A strong boil can be too aggressive and the pasta will fall apart.

Reduce vegetable or chicken broth in a pan on the stove to concentrate the flavor. Season it with salt and pepper. Then, enrich it with butter. Stir and let the butter melt. Add Pecorino cheese.

The pasta is cooked when it has risen to the top of the water. Once the pasta is cooked, drain the excess water and add to the broth. Plate and top with parsley, Pecorino cheese, and black pepper.





# Eggplant: Italian, Chinese, and Japanese

## Lesson 17

This lesson is about eggplant, a vegetable that is universally loved. Eggplant got its start in India, and then spread throughout Asia, to the Mediterranean, and then finally to the Americas and Europe. Across the years and across its travels, it has evolved in size, color, and shape. In this lesson, you will travel to Italy, China, and Japan and discover how the eggplant is used in recipes in these countries.

### Grilled Eggplant Tart with Fontina, Tomato, and Basil

#### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 1 eggplant
- ¼ cup olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- cherry tomatoes
- ¾ cup Fontina cheese, grated
- 2 Tbs Parmesan cheese, grated
- ¼ cup pesto
- 2 tsp parsley, chopped



This is an Italian eggplant tart that uses slices of eggplant as the pastry. Start by cutting off the ends of an eggplant, and then cut the eggplant into slices that are about a half-inch thick. These slices will become the pastry crusts.

Brush each of the eggplant slices with oil. Eggplant is very spongy, and it will absorb almost as much oil as you give it, so don't give it too much. Season with salt and pepper.

Grill the eggplant slices on an oiled grill to keep them from sticking to it. Wait for distinct grill marks and then rotate each slice 90 degrees to get cross-hatching marks.

While the eggplant is grilling, cut cherry tomatoes in half. Grate the Fontina and Parmesan cheeses.

Once the eggplant has grilled on the first side, turn them over on the grill. Spread pesto (store-bought or homemade) on the eggplant and season with salt and pepper. Top the pesto with the cheeses, which will melt while the other side of the eggplant browns. Next, put cherry tomatoes on top of each eggplant. Turn off the grill and sprinkle chopped parsley on top.

Use a spatula to transfer the eggplant tarts to a plate. Top with Parmesan and a drizzle of olive oil.

## Szechuan Eggplant

### Ingredients

Yield: 2 to 4 portions

- 2 Chinese eggplants
- 2 Tbs canola oil
- 1 Tbs ginger, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 Thai bird chilies
- 2 green onions
- 1 Tbs spicy bean paste



### sauce

- 1 Tbs soy sauce
- 1 Tbs black vinegar (or balsamic)
- 1 Tbs sherry (or Chinese rice wine)
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp cornstarch (in 2 tsp of water)

### garnish

- 4 sprigs cilantro



Cut the tops off of the Chinese eggplants and then cut them in half lengthwise. Lay the flat pieces on the table and cut them on an angle into bite-sized pieces. Make sure to leave a little bit of skin on each piece because that will help hold the eggplant together as it cooks. Soak the eggplant pieces in salted ice water for about 15 to 20 minutes to make them firmer.

In a pan, heat canola oil and add the cut-up eggplant.

To create the flavor base, cut the ginger into little sticks and slice the garlic. Cut the Thai bird chilies into small rounds. Slice up the green onions, separating the white and the green parts. Coarsely cut the white parts, which will be added to the pan; finely cut the green parts and set them aside to use as a garnish later.

Check on the eggplant. Once you see some color on the eggplant, add all of the aromatics to the pan, turning the heat down a bit. Then, add the spicy bean paste, toss everything together, and let it cook.





The sauce is composed of equal parts of soy sauce, black vinegar (or balsamic), sherry (or Chinese rice wine), and sugar. Stir that together. Taste for a balance between all of the flavors. If the sauce needs to be thickened, add cornstarch loosened in water, called a slurry. Also add water to the sauce.

Add the sauce to the eggplant in the pan. Plate the Szechuan eggplant, topping it with cilantro and the green parts of the green onions.

## Fried Eggplant with Miso Sauce (*Dengaku*)

### Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 1 egg yolk
- 1/3 cup white miso
- 2 Tbs sugar
- 3 Tbs sake
- 2 Tbs vegetable stock
- 1 tsp ginger juice
- 1/2 tsp lemon zest
- 3 Japanese eggplants
- 1 pint olive oil
- 1 tsp sesame seeds, toasted
- 1 green onion, sliced



This is a Japanese dish called eggplant *dengaku*. *Dengaku* is a sweetened miso sauce. Miso is made from fermented soy beans, so it has a wonderful savory flavor.

To begin this dish, start by making the *dengaku* sauce. In a bowl, mix an egg yolk into white miso. Add sugar and mix. Add sake, or Japanese rice wine. Finally, add vegetable stock and whisk together.

Put it over boiling water (not in boiling water) to create as a bain-marie. The hot steam rising off the water will heat the sauce very gently. When the temperature rises to between 160 and 180 degrees, the sauce will thicken, and the consistency will become like that of mayonnaise.

### Selecting Eggplant

When you buy eggplant, look for skin that is supple and smooth. There shouldn't be any bruising or water spots. Water sometimes gets on the fruit, and it can cause discoloration and pitting because of decay.

Also pay attention to how large the eggplant is. It should be heavy for its size.

Pay attention to the eggplant's stem. The longer the eggplant is off the plant, the more the stem will wilt.

Remove the stem end of the eggplant and cut the eggplant in half lengthwise. With a paring knife, cut all around the edge (not through the skin), and then score the flesh (not the skin) into half-inch squares so that the eggplant cooks more evenly and quickly.

While the sauce is cooking, fry the eggplant in a pot of oil at around 325 degrees for about 4 to 5 minutes.

Whisk the sauce to make sure that all of the miso has been broken down and dissolved. Then, use a spatula to make sure that nothing is stuck to the bottom

of the bowl. Test the temperature of the sauce with a meat thermometer; make sure it doesn't get any hotter than 180 degrees.

Once the sauce reaches 180 degrees, take the bowl off the hot water so that it doesn't cook anymore, and stir it for the next minute or so to allow the heat to dissipate.

Check the eggplant. Once it has browned on the first side, flip it over in the oil and let it cook on its second side.

Once the eggplant has firmed up, remove it from the oil and drain it thoroughly. Turn the oil off.

Grate unpeeled ginger. Gather the grated pieces in your hand and squeeze the juice out of it. Add the ginger juice to the sauce, along with lemon zest. Once the sauce is cooled, taste it.

Plate the eggplant. Spoon the sauce generously over the eggplant. Top with toasted sesame seeds and sliced green onion.



# The Amazing Avocado

## Lesson 18

**L**ike tomatoes and cucumbers, avocados are a fruit that is often used as a vegetable. They are classified as fruits because they are seeds with a protective coating around them. One of the things that makes avocados unique is that they do not ripen on the tree. They mature and fall from the tree, but they ripen off the tree. In this lesson, you will learn how to incorporate avocado into a variety of dishes.

### Shrimp Ceviche Verde with Tomatillos

#### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 
- 
- 6 green tomatillos
  - 1 lb shrimp, peeled and deveined
  - 3 Tbs onion, diced and rinsed
  - 2 jalapeños, seeded and diced fine
  - 1 garlic clove
  - 2–3 limes, juiced
  - salt, to taste
  - 1 tsp sugar
  - 1 avocado
  - 3 Tbs cilantro, chopped
  - 2 cups shredded lettuce
  - 8 oz tortilla chips

Instead of using raw fish, as is customary for a ceviche, this recipe uses cooked shrimp. It is a ceviche *verde*, or green ceviche.

Peel away the papery husk of green tomatillos—which are also a fruit that is used as a vegetable. Put the tomatillos in a pot of boiling water and let them cook until they are softened, probably for about five minutes. The riper they are, the faster they will cook.

Remove the tails from peeled and deveined shrimp. Cut them in half lengthwise.

Peel and slice the onion, and then finely dice the slices. Next, cut the stem end off of the jalapeños and cut them in half, removing the ribs and seeds with a knife. If you want the dish to be spicy, leave the ribs and seeds in. Then, dice the jalapeños very small.



When the tomatillos are done cooking, remove them from the water. Blot them dry and let them cool. Then, use the same pot of water to poach the shrimp. Wait until the water temperature decreases from a boil (about 212 degrees) to about 160 degrees, which is ideal for poaching fish. Add the shrimp. After about three minutes, they will turn pink.

Once the shrimp are fully cooked, put them in a bowl of ice water to cool them down. Let them sit for about 45 minutes to an hour.

Chop the garlic and make it into a paste.

Put lime juice on the shrimp. Add salt and a pinch of sugar.

Chop up the tomatillos. Add the garlic and the tomatillos to the shrimp. Then, add the onion and jalapeños. Mix well. Add more lime juice.

Halve the avocado. Then, dice it and add to the ceviche. Mash the avocado a bit. Sprinkle in chopped cilantro. Stir.

Plate the ceviche in a fancy dish on shredded lettuce with crispy tortilla chips on the side.

## Jicama Tacos Stuffed with Vegetable Guacamole

### Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

#### guacamole

- ½ cup fresh English peas
  - ½ summer squash, diced
  - 1 onion, finely diced
  - 1 jalapeño, diced
  - 2 Hass avocados, ripe
  - 2 limes, juiced
  - salt, to taste
  - 1 Tbs olive oil
  - ¼ cup cilantro, coarsely chopped
  - 1 small tomato, diced
- 1 jicama, peeled and thinly sliced
  - salt, to taste
  - 2 Tbs pickled red onions
  - 2 cups lettuce



In Mexico, guacamole has all different kinds of add-ins. One of the most unique add-ins is fruit, such as diced peaches, grapes, or even pomegranate

seeds. You can make this guacamole with add-ins based on what is in your refrigerator, such as peas and summer squash.

Put the fresh English peas into a pot of boiling water and blanch them. Then, dice the summer squash. Once the peas are tender, add the summer squash to the pot with the peas and blanch them.

Finely dice an onion. Dice the jalapeño, along with the seeds and ribs, which makes the dish spicier than it would be without them.

Once they are blanched, take the peas and squash out of the pot of water and mash them in a bowl. Add the onions and jalapeños.

Remove the avocados from their shell and discard the seeds. Squeeze lime juice on the avocados, which will keep them from turning dark. The acidity of the lime juice neutralizes the enzymes in the avocados that react when exposed to oxygen and prevents browning.

Add the avocados to the bowl. With a fork, mash the avocados against the side of the bowl. If they're ripe, this should be an easy task. If they're not ripe, they might fight back a little. Don't mash the avocado so fine that it becomes a puree; keep it a little bit chunky.



Season with salt and an assertive olive oil. Add coarsely chopped cilantro. Also add diced tomato for color. Taste.

Next, make small tacos on thin slices of jicama, instead of tortillas. Jicama is a root vegetable that has the consistency and texture of water chestnuts. Peel and thinly slice the jicama and put the slices in warm water with a little salt. You want them to be able to fold in half as though they were tortillas.

After blotting the jicama dry, add some guacamole inside the jicama and fold it over into a taco.

Plate with pickled red onions and lettuce. Serve as an hors d'oeuvre.

## Spring Potato Salad with Green Goddess Dressing

### Ingredients

Yield: 4 to 6 portions

- 1 Tbs olive oil
- 8 fingerling potatoes, cooked, cut in half

#### green goddess dressing

- 1 shallot
- 1 garlic clove
- 2 Tbs white wine vinegar
- ½ lemon
- ½ lime
- 3 anchovy fillets
- ½ avocado
- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup crème fraîche
- 3 Tbs Italian parsley, chopped
- 2 Tbs tarragon, chopped
- 2 Tbs cilantro, chopped

- 2 Tbs basil, chopped
- salt, to taste
- ground black pepper, to taste

- 1 head Belgian endive
- 2 bunches watercress
- 1 head frisée
- ½ cup celery leaves
- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 4 purple potatoes, boiled and cut into rounds
- 1 bunch baby carrots, blanched
- 18 asparagus tips (about 1 bunch asparagus), blanched



This is a spring salad that is enhanced by green goddess dressing, which was developed in San Francisco around the turn of the previous century and features avocado and fresh herbs.





To a pan on the heat, add oil and cooked fingerling potatoes cut in half. Add the potatoes cut-side down. Let them warm and get golden brown and crispy on the cut side.

Next, make the green goddess dressing. To a bowl, add finely minced garlic and shallots. Then, add white wine vinegar. Also add finely chopped anchovies made into a paste with the edge of a knife.

Then, add mashed ripe avocado. To prevent it from browning, add lemon and lime juice. Season with salt and pepper.

Next, stir in crème fraîche, which is a cultured cream product that is not unlike sour cream or yogurt, which can be used as substitutes. Add olive oil drop by drop while you stir. Then, add finely chopped fresh herbs: parsley, tarragon, cilantro, and basil.

Check on the potatoes. Once they are brown, remove them from the heat.

## Speeding Up or Slowing Down the Ripening Process

Let's say that you have a party over the weekend and you want to serve avocado as guacamole. If you go to the store mid-week and the avocados are already ripe, buy them, take them home, and put them in the refrigerator to slow down the ripening process so that they are not overripe by the weekend.

Alternatively, if the store only has unripe avocados, buy them, take them home, and put them in a bag along with another fruit or vegetable that creates ethylene gas (the same plant hormone that causes leafy greens to wilt and turn brown), such as apples or bananas. Keep the bag at warm room temperature. Usually, within a day or two, the avocados will ripen and will be ready for your party over the weekend.

The greens that go in the salad—Belgian endive, watercress, frisée, and celery leaves—are pretty delicate, so you want to dress them lightly with oil and lemon juice. Put salt in a bowl and dissolve it with lemon juice. Add pepper, and then whisk in the oil. Add salt and toss very gently.

Plate the components of the salad. Start by adding the green goddess dressing to the plate. Put cooked purple potatoes cut into rounds on the plate and add the greens on top of the green goddess dressing. Then, add blanched baby carrots and asparagus tips. Next, add the browned fingerling potatoes and more greens. Add a few drops of the vinaigrette on top. Serve with extra green goddess dressing on the side.

# Corn: From Salads to Dessert

## Lesson 19

The sweet corn we know today evolved from a wild grass known as teosinte, a long stalk with a few grains at the end. The indigenous people of Central America crossbred the corn to give us the cobs that we know today, with row upon row of sweet kernels all packaged in a husk. Corn is a great success story. It has traveled around the globe, and it is estimated that a quarter of the calories humankind consumes can be traced back to corn, in such foods as corn sweeteners, corn flour, polenta, grits, and cornstarch.

### Corn Butter on Biscuits

#### Ingredients

Yield: 12 portions

#### corn butter

Yield: 1 ½ cups

- 2 corn cobs, pureed
- 1 stick butter
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 Tbs molasses

#### biscuits

- 1 lb all-purpose flour
- 2 ½ Tbs sugar
- 2 Tbs baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 7 oz butter, cold, diced
- 2 eggs
- 12 oz buttermilk
- egg wash (1 egg beaten with 1 Tbs water)



To make corn butter, start by cutting the kernels from the cobs straight into a bowl. Then, scrape the cobs with the back of a knife. Puree the corn in a food processor. Pour the puree into a pan on the stove and heat until it comes up to a boil and thickens, which should take about five minutes. Stir it periodically so that it doesn't burn on the bottom.

To make the biscuits, mix all-purpose flour, sugar, baking powder, salt. Stir together, making sure it's homogeneous. Then, add diced cold butter. Squeeze



the butter into the flour with your hands. You want there to be flakes of butter in the flour, almost like oatmeal. This will give you a flaky biscuit; the flakes of butter will melt and separate into leaves of dough as it rises.

Make a small well in the center of the dough and add the eggs. Whip the eggs before stirring them into the flour mixture. Add buttermilk and toss the mixture so that the dry ingredients are moistened with the eggs and buttermilk. Be careful not to overmix the dough; simply fold the batter over on itself and press it together.

### White versus Yellow Corn

While white corn is sweeter than yellow corn, yellow corn has a full corn flavor. Hybridized versions of corn have white and yellow mixed on one cob.

On a floured surface, form the dough into a uniformly thick mound. Sprinkle the top of the dough with flour and roll it out so that it is about half an inch high, which will make a baked biscuit that is about an inch high.

Use a floured cutter to cut the dough into biscuits. Then, place the biscuits on a baking tray and brush the top of each with egg wash, which is an egg beaten with about a tablespoon of water. Bake them in an oven at 425 degrees for about 15 minutes, until golden brown.

Pass the cooked corn puree through a sieve so that it's smooth.

To make the corn butter, put a stick of room-temperature butter into a bowl and break it up so that it's smooth. Then, add the corn puree and stir until it's homogeneous. If the puree is still hot, let it cool down before adding it to the

butter. Season with salt. Add molasses in small amounts and taste for flavor. Whisk smooth.

Serve cooked biscuits with corn butter.

## Esquites (Mexican Roasted Corn Salad)

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 4 corn cobs
- 3 green onions, chopped
- ¼ cup cilantro, chopped
- 1 tsp chili powder (or 1 serrano/jalapeño chili, chopped)
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 Tbs mayonnaise
- 2 oz *queso añejo*
- salt, to taste
- 1 lime, juice



On the streets of Mexico City, you'll find corn that's grilled until it's toasty and brown and then slathered with mayonnaise and topped with sharp cheese, lime juice, and chili powder. This dish turns this street food snack, called *esquites*, into a salad that you can enjoy at your table.

Cook the corn cobs in boiling, salted water for a few minutes. Then, roast them over an open flame. Turn them periodically, especially when you hear popping.

For the salad, combine chopped green onions and cilantro in a bowl. Add chili powder (to make it spicier, use chopped serrano chilies), raw garlic, mayonnaise, and *queso añejo* (aged cheese).



Check on the corn. Once it has developed a good amount of char, take it off the burner and cut the corn from the cob. Add it to the bowl with the rest of the salad ingredients. Season with salt. Add lime juice.

Plate the salad with extra chili powder and cilantro on top.

## Sweet Corn Ice Cream with Blackberry Swirl

### Ingredients

Yield: 1 ½ quarts

- 1 quart half-and-half
- 1 cup sugar
- 6 egg yolks
- 2 yellow corn cobs, pureed
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 1 pinch salt
- 2 pints blackberries
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 lime, juiced



Both corn and ice cream are staples of summer, and this corn ice cream combines them to make a delicious summer treat.

Add half-and-half (half milk and half cream) to a pan on the stove. As it comes up to a simmer, add sugar and stir.

Separate 6 eggs into whites and yolks. Ice creams typically have anywhere from 6 to 20 egg yolks per quart of half-and-half. The more egg yolks you add, the richer the ice cream will be. Use the minimum, 6 yolks, because the ice cream will be thick with corn, so you don't need as many eggs.

Beat the yolks with sugar until it lightens in color. The sugar will dissolve very quickly.

Temper the eggs by adding a little bit of the hot half-and-half into the eggs as you stir. This will gradually bring the temperature of the eggs up so that you don't end up with scrambled eggs floating around in milk. Once the eggs are warm, add the eggs to the remainder of the hot liquid, stirring continually.

Continue to cook the mixture until it thickens, which will happen when it reaches about 180 to 185 degrees. Stir it, making sure to bring your spatula across the bottom of the pan so that it doesn't burn. Watch for steam coming off the top of the pan at about 165 to 170 degrees. Next, notice a difference in texture; it should change from liquidy to velvety at 180 to 185 degrees.

Cut the corn from the cob and puree it in a food processor. Cook it in a pan on the heat.

Once the ice cream custard turns velvety and coats the spatula, add the corn puree and stir. Also add vanilla and salt. Taste for flavor.

Strain the custard to remove any bits of corn or egg that would prevent it from being smooth.

Put the custard into an ice cream machine and follow the instructions.

Mix the blackberries with sugar. Cook them until thickened. Think of this as a blackberry jam. Add lime juice to brighten the flavor.

When the ice cream is done, once it is slightly softened, swirl the blackberry jam through the ice cream and put it back in the freezer.

Serve the ice cream with your favorite cookies.







# Chili Peppers

## Lesson 20

Chilies are another example of a fruit that is masquerading as a vegetable. Chilies range in their heat content, from poblano chilies to jalapeños and habaneros. Chilies contain an oil called capsaicin, which is what makes them hot. About 60 percent of the heat of a chili is in the ribs, the white portion that supports the seeds. The remaining 40 percent is equally divided between the seeds and the flesh. Removing the ribs and seeds from chilies tones down their heat significantly.

### Pumpkinseed and Habanero Salsa

#### Ingredients

Yield: 1 ½ cups (enough for 8 people)

- ⅓ cup pumpkin seeds
- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 1–2 habaneros, roasted
- 2 tomatoes, roasted
- ½–¾ cup water
- 2 Tbs chives, chopped
- 2Tbs cilantro, chopped
- salt, to taste
- 1 lime, juiced
- 12 oz tortilla chips



To make this salsa, which is thickened with pumpkin seeds, start by toasting the pumpkin seeds in a hot, oiled pan. Stir them so they don't burn. Once you hear the pumpkin seeds beginning to pop, remove them from the heat and transfer them to a blender.

Hold the habaneros over an open flame to blacken the outside. Alternatively, you can put them in a pan under the broiler.

Roast the tomatoes in a pan under the broiler until the skin darkens—even turns black—and the flesh becomes very soft and collapses. Peel away the worst of the black on the tomatoes and discard. Remove the core and discard. Add the tomatoes to the blender, along with any liquid that collected in the pan.

Once the habaneros are roasted, cut them open and remove some of the seeds. Scrape off the black skin on the outside. Add them to the blender. Wash your hands after handling these chilies.

Puree the contents of the blender. Add water to thin out the salsa.

Chop the chives and cilantro and add to blender. Pulse it once just to mix. Taste. Stir in salt and lime juice.

Serve salsa with tortilla chips. Garnish with extra chives, if desired.

## Stuffed Pickled Jalapeños with Chicken, Plantains, and Green Olives

### Ingredients

Yield: 16 stuffed peppers (8 portions)

- 16 jalapeños
- 1 ½ cup vinegar
- 3 Tbs salt
- 3 quarts water

#### picadillo

- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 1 onion
- 3 cloves garlic
- 8 oz ground chicken
- 1 small plantain, diced
- 3 Tbs green olives, cut into rings
- 2 Tbs capers
- 3 Tbs black currants



- salt, to taste
- 2 tomatoes, diced

#### escabeche

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 small red onion, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- ½ tsp dried oregano (or 2 branches fresh)
- ¾ tsp dried thyme (or 4 branches fresh)
- 1 bay leaf
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

To make this dish, which can be found at bars in Mexico, start by performing open-heart surgery on the jalapeños. Cut across the shoulders about a third of the way through. Put your knife through that incision and make sure that you cut the core. Then, cut straight down, as if you're cutting through the breastbone. Cut through the ribs and open it up. Remove the insides.

Put the jalapeños in water with vinegar and salt to tame the heat. Let them soak overnight.



Then, cook the jalapeños in boiling water for about four to six minutes. Their color will change, and they will soften.

To make the filling, called picadillo, which is a pickled meat mixture, add onion and garlic to an oiled pan. Then, add raw ground chicken to the pan and stir. Add diced plantains, which are cooking bananas that are less sweet. Add green olives cut into rings and capers.

Toward the end of the cooking, add black currants that were soaked in hot water for 5 or 10 minutes to plump. Season with salt. Add diced tomatoes with the seeds squeezed out of them. Turn off the heat.

To make the escabeche, or pickling liquid, add olive oil to a pan. Sauté sliced red onion and garlic. Season with oregano, thyme, a bay leaf, salt, and pepper. Once it comes up to a simmer, turn off the heat and let it sit.

Once they're blanched, remove the jalapeños from the water. Cool them off in cold water and drain.

Open the jalapeños, which should be tender, and spoon the filling into them. Be generous; you want them to be overflowing.

Spoon the escabeche over the top of the stuffed jalapeños. Then, scatter the red onion and garlic over the top.

Let the jalapeños cool, and then put them in the refrigerator, where they will keep for about a week. Serve at room temperature.

## Chiles Rellenos in Green Tomatillo Sauce

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 6 poblano chilies, roasted and peeled
- 2 cups olive oil
- 1 cup flour

#### stuffing

- 1 ½ cups Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 tsp Mexican oregano, crumbled



#### batter

- 6 eggs, separated
- salt, to taste
- 2 ½ cups green salsa
- 4 cups Mexican rice
- 4 cups black beans

Chiles rellenos are chilies that have been stuffed, dipped into a batter, and then fried.

Start by roasting poblano chilies over an open flame. Keep turning them until the outside is blackened.

Once they're blackened, wipe them clean with a paper towel. The skin will wipe off easily.

For the stuffing, combine Monterey Jack cheese and crumbled Mexican oregano.

To stuff the poblano chilies, start by opening them down one side and remove the seeds and rib, keeping the rest of the chilies firm, without any new cuts or breaks.

Stuff the chilies with the seasoned cheese and close them with bamboo skewers.

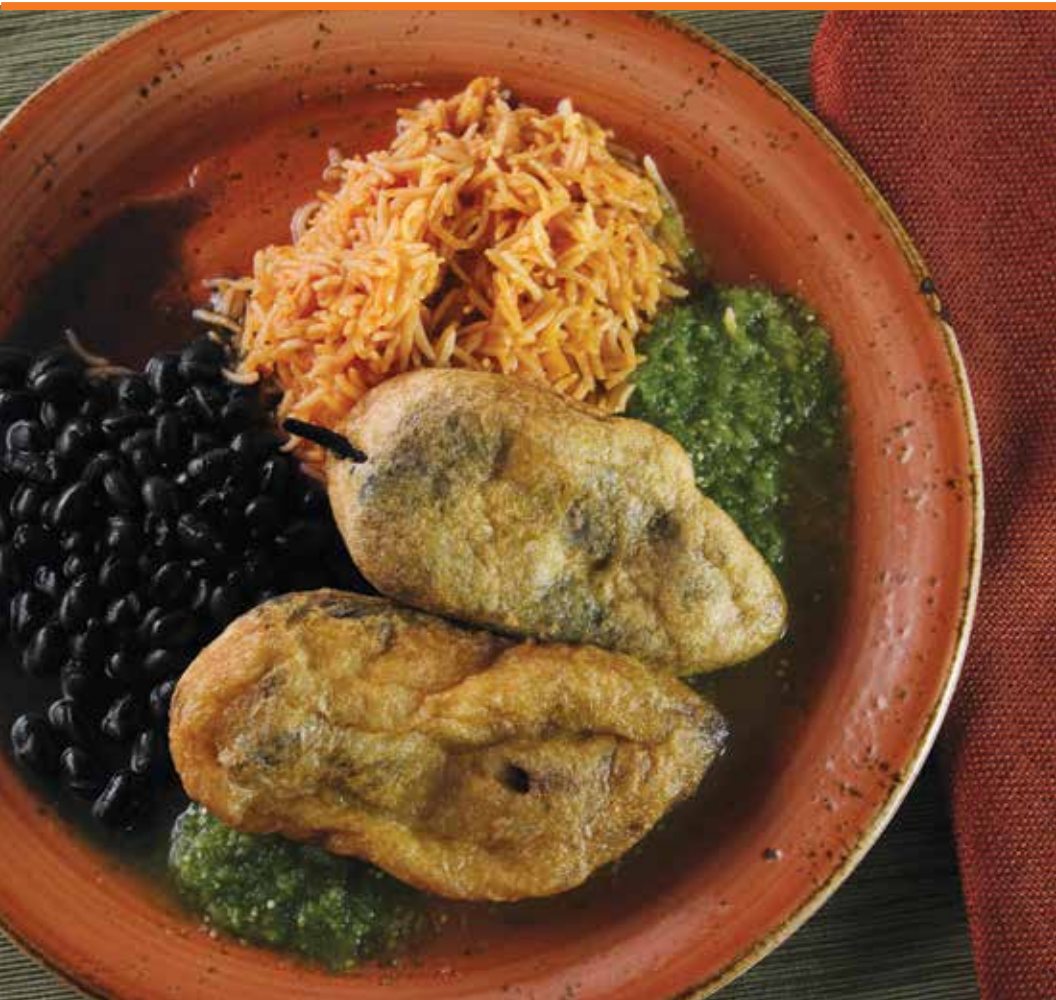
To make the batter, separate the eggs into whites and yolks. Whip the whites with salt in a very clean bowl until they increase in volume sevenfold and they hold a firm, slightly dry peak. Whip the egg yolks with salt. After they're whipped, fold the yolks into the whites.

Heat oil in a pan. Dip the chilies into flour, patting off any excess. Then, dip the chilies in the egg batter, making sure they're coated from top to bottom, and drop them into the hot oil.

As the chilies cook, the batter will brown. The chilies will heat up, and the cheese on the inside will become very soft. Once the chilies are puffy and brown on the first side, turn them over to let them brown on the other side.

Put the fried chilies on a pan covered with paper towels to drain any excess fat. Turn the oil off.

Add green salsa, Mexican rice, and black beans to a plate. Twist the skewers out of the chiles rellenos and add them to the plate.



# Peas and Pods

## Lesson 21

In this lesson, you will learn some different and easy ways to cook and flavor beans and peas, including green beans, Romano beans, sugar snap peas, and fava beans. Other types of beans and peas include snow peas, English peas, haricot vert, and okra. Each of these is an expression of seeds that are contained inside a protective membrane. While canned beans and peas are convenient, as you will learn, it is not difficult to cook the fresh versions when they're in season.

### Green Bean Finger Food

#### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 1 lb green beans
- salt, to taste
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbs olive oil
- ½ tsp pepper flakes
- 1 ½ Tbs rosemary, chopped
- 1 Tbs butter
- 1 lemon, zested
- 6 lemon wedges



This dish treats green beans as if they were French fries.

To make this dish, blanch the green beans in a pot of boiling, salted water. They will turn bright green. If you cook them for too long, the color becomes drab. The texture will also change. They will become tender. But if you overcook the beans, they will become mushy. If you bite into a green bean and it squeaks, it's not cooked yet.

Once the green beans are cooked, drain them and shock them in ice water to stop the cooking process.

Add minced garlic to a pan with olive oil. Heat the garlic, but be careful not to burn it. Add pepper flakes and chopped rosemary. Then, add the green beans. Heat for about 20 to 30 seconds. Add butter for flavor. Then, add lemon zest. Stir. Sprinkle with salt.



Plate the green beans and serve as an hors d'oeuvre, with lemon wedges on the side.

## Romano Beans with Garlic, Chili, Vinegar, Caraway, and Cilantro

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 1 lb Romano beans
- 3 Tbs olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- $\frac{2}{3}$  tsp caraway seeds
- 1 jalapeño
- 3 Tbs cilantro, chopped
- 2 Tbs sherry vinegar
- salt, to taste



To make this dish, start by blanching the Romano beans in a pot of boiling, salted water.

Add olive oil to a pan on the heat. Add minced garlic and caraway seeds.

Cut up jalapeño pepper. Discard the ribs and seeds and dice the rest of the jalapeño. Add to the pan.

Add the blanched Romano beans, turning them in the garlic, chilies, and caraway seeds until warm.

Add chopped cilantro and sherry vinegar to the pan. Season with salt and serve.



## Sugar Snap Peas

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 1 lb sugar snap peas
- $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp chives
- 1 tsp parsley
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp tarragon



- $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp chervil
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  Tbs butter
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

Sugar snap peas are already very tender, so they don't need much cooking, but they will turn a bright green color after only a short amount of time. Before cooking them, snap the ends and peel off the strings.

In the French tradition, herbs are divided into those that are resinous and tough, those that are sweet, and those that are fine and delicate (called fines herbes). Typically, the fines herbes are chives, parsley, tarragon, and chervil.

Add the snap peas to a hot pan, along with a splash of water. The water will immediately turn to boiling water and then into steam, which will blanch the snap peas very quickly. As soon as the color of the peas darkens, add butter and the fines herbes. Then, toss it together and let the last of the water evaporate. Season with salt and pepper.

Plate the snap peas and serve.





## French-Cut Green Beans Cooked like Pasta

### Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 1 lb green beans, cut on a long bias
- 2 oz pancetta
- 2–4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large pinch pepper flakes
- 1 cup shiitake mushrooms
- 1 ½ cups cream
- 1 Tbs lemon juice
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese

This dish looks like pasta, but instead of featuring pasta, it features green beans cut to look like pasta. To make this dish, start by cutting the green beans on a long bias, which is considered a French cut.

Cook the pancetta in a pan on the stove until it is crispy and some of the fat has been rendered out. Add minced garlic and pepper flakes. Remove the stems from shiitake mushrooms and add them to the pan.

Once the mushrooms are tender and the garlic is golden, add cream to the pan. Also add lemon juice, which thickens the cream. Season with salt and pepper. Taste for flavor. Turn down the heat to a low setting.



Blanch the green beans in boiling, salted water. Once they're blanched, drain them and add them to the sauce in the pan. Turn up the heat. Toss the beans in the sauce until the beans are fully coated with the sauce. Grate Parmesan cheese into the pan.

Plate the green beans with the sauce and grate more cheese on top.

## Fava Bean Crostini with Tomato and Toasted Almonds

### Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 1 lb fava beans, shelled, blanched, and peeled
- 4 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 Tbs mint, chopped
- 12 cherry tomatoes
- 4 crostini
- 1 Tbs almonds, toasted and slivered



Fava beans develop a hard shell that needs to be removed before they can be eaten. To remove the shell, cook the beans in boiling, salted water for about two minutes. Then, squeeze the shell to remove the fava beans. They should be a vibrant green color and tender.

Mash the fava beans in a bowl. Add an aromatic olive oil, along with salt and pepper. Also add chopped mint leaves and cherry tomatoes. Mash the tomatoes a little to release some of their moisture.

Spread the mashed fava beans on crostini, or small slices of bread, for a simple hors d'oeuvre. Top with toasted almonds.



# Leftovers or Planned-Overs?

## Lesson 22

**R**egardless of how careful you are in the kitchen, you're frequently going to make too much food. But storing the leftovers can become an issue. To avoid mountains of yogurt containers filled with indecipherable foods in your refrigerator, label the container with what type of food is in it, as well as when it was made. In this lesson, you will learn creative ways to use a variety of leftovers that might be sitting in your refrigerator, waiting to be revitalized.

### Smashed Potatoes

#### Ingredients

Yield: 4 to 6 portions

- 1 lb potatoes, cooked
- 2 cups olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

#### brava sauce

- 4 tomatoes, ripe
- 2 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ tsp *pimentón*, sweet



- 1 pinch cayenne
- salt, to taste

#### chipotle mayonnaise

- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 3 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp chipotle peppers in adobo, canned, pureed
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 Tbs lime juice
- 1 tsp salt

Spain is famous for a dish called *patatas bravas*, which involves fried potatoes topped with a spicy tomato sauce (*brava* sauce) and garlic mayonnaise. This recipe puts a Mexican spin on this Spanish dish by using a mayonnaise that contains chipotle peppers and vanilla.

Hit cooked potatoes with a pot to crack them open. Lower the smashed potatoes into a pot of hot oil and cook until crispy.



Alternatively, you can brush the smashed potatoes with olive oil, season them with salt and pepper, and roast them in the oven at about 425 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes, until they become crispy.

Once the potatoes are crispy and golden, take the potatoes out of the oil and drain them on a plate with paper towels. Turn the heat off. Season the potatoes with salt and pepper, and then transfer them to a serving dish. Add *brava* sauce and chipotle mayonnaise to the smashed potatoes and serve.

## Guidelines for Leftovers

Leftover food should be put in the refrigerator as quickly as you can after cooking it, within a few hours.

Don't put hot food in the refrigerator. Let it cool to room temperature until the majority of the heat is gone, and then store it in the refrigerator.

When you take leftovers out of the refrigerator, bring it up to a minimum temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit for 15 seconds to kill any bacteria.

# Tattooed Fingerling Potatoes

## Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 8 oz fingerling potatoes, cooked
- 1 bunch sage leaves
- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 12 tsp parsley



## Our Wasteful Food System

It's estimated that about 40 percent of the food that is produced in America is wasted. The waste begins on the farm, at harvest, and continues through distribution and retail. The waste also happens in our homes, when we throw out a wilted head of lettuce or moldy carrots. They fill up your garbage can, and it all adds up. Controlling your purchasing and making sure that you use leftovers—or planned-overs—can go a long way toward creating a more sustainable food system.

Cut cooked fingerling potatoes in half. Then, on the cut surface, press a leaf of sage or other herb. It should stick to the potatoes.

Sauté them, cut-side down, in a pan of hot oil. Once the potatoes are browned, take them out of the pan. They will be brown all around the sage leaf, leaving a tattooed design of the leaf.

Season the potatoes with salt while they're still warm and a little wet with oil. Sprinkle chopped parsley on top.



## Frittata or Omelet with Leftovers

### Ingredients

Yield: 1 generous portion

- 2 eggs
  - salt, to taste
  - pepper, to taste
  - 2 Tbs Parmesan cheese, grated
  - 1 Tbs olive oil
  - 2 tsp butter
  
  - 1 oz sautéed mushrooms
  - 1 oz roasted squash
  - 1 oz tomato confit
- salad**
- 1 cup mixed greens (arugula, radicchio, frisée)
  - 1 tsp olive oil
  - 1/3 tsp vinegar
  - salt, to taste
  - pepper, to taste
  - 1/2 tsp Parmesan cheese



In Italy, a flat omelet that is not folded is called a frittata. In Spain, it is called a tortilla. Whatever it's called, it's a great way to use leftovers.

Beat the eggs and season them with salt and pepper. Then, add Parmesan cheese. Next, add leftovers, such as sautéed mushrooms, roasted squash, and tomato confit (tomatoes cooked long and slow in olive oil with garlic and herbs). Stir to coat the leftovers with the egg. There should be more chunks of vegetables than egg, which serves to simply bind everything together.

Heat oil in a pan. When the pan is hot, add the eggs and vegetables, pressing them flat. Once the mixture moves freely in the pan, turn down the temperature and cook gently. Sprinkle on more Parmesan.

To turn this into a simple dinner, make a salad of mixed greens with whatever you have on hand. Dress with oil and vinegar. Season with salt and pepper. Toss. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

When the frittata is about halfway cooked, turn it over by flipping it onto a plate, or something that is flat and a little larger than the pan you're cooking the eggs in. Add butter to the pan and let it melt before sliding the frittata back into the pan.

While it's undercooked, fold the edges under with a spatula so that the frittata has a rounded border. On the second side, while it's still hot, sprinkle on more Parmesan.



When the eggs are firm, the frittata is done. Plate the frittata with the salad on top.

### **Red Flannel Hash Made from Vegetables**

When you have a selection of leftovers that's imposing—including roasted carrots and parsnips, boiled beets, and cooked kale—think of breakfast on a



## Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

- 1 onion
- 2 Tbs butter
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 branch fresh thyme
- 1 tsp *pimentón* (smoky paprika)
- 2 potatoes, cooked
- 2 carrots, roasted
- 2 parsnips, roasted
- 2 beets, boiled
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 Tbs olive oil
- ½ cup kale, cooked
- horseradish sauce
- 1 Tbs fresh horseradish, grated
- 1 tsp vinegar
- 1 cup mayonnaise (or sour cream)
- 1 Tbs Dijon mustard
- 1 dash Tabasco
- salt, to taste
- 2 Tbs chopped dill
- 2 Tbs lemon juice
- 1–2 eggs per portion
- 1 tsp butter per portion
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- ½ tsp parsley per portion



Sunday morning and red flannel hash. Red flannel hash is hash that has beets added to it, giving it a wonderful red coloration. This recipe is a vegetarian version of hash that does not include corned beef.

Cut the onion and cook in a heated pan with butter. Add garlic. Cook until the onions are translucent. Add a whole branch of fresh thyme. Also add a smoky kind of paprika that comes from Spain called *pimentón*.

Then, add the leftovers, starting with the cooked potatoes. Mash them into the pan. Add butter. Also add the boiled beets and roasted parsnips and carrots. Season with salt and pepper, as well as more *pimentón*.

Turn up the heat and mix everything together. Press the mixture down in the pan to bind it. Add oil so that it gets crusty on one side. Periodically, as it cooks, break up the crusty part on the bottom of the pan and press it together again so that it can form a new crust.

Add chopped leftover kale to the mix for nutrition and color.

To make the horseradish sauce, start by grating horseradish into a bowl. If you don't have fresh horseradish, you can use commercial horseradish. If you're using fresh horseradish, add vinegar; commercial horseradish typically already contains vinegar. Add mayonnaise or sour cream. Also add Dijon mustard, Tabasco, salt, and chopped dill. Taste and add lemon juice or more vinegar (especially pay attention to lemon juice content if using commercial horseradish). Let it sit for about 20 minutes to develop the flavors.

Turn the heat down on the pan and let the hash form itself into a cake. Once a crust develops on the bottom, add more butter and turn the hash over to brown on the other side.

To make sunny-side-up eggs to go along with the hash, add butter to a hot pan and break eggs into pan. Add salt and pepper. Turn the temperature down and cook the eggs gently.

To cook the tops of the eggs, add a splash of water to the pan and cover it with a plate. The steam will collect underneath the lid, and the steam will cook the tops of the eggs. This also warms your plate.

Put the horseradish sauce into a serving dish. Slide the hash onto the warmed plate; remember to remove the thyme branch. Slide the eggs on top. Garnish with parsley.



# Exotic Vegetables

## Lesson 23

Sometimes you go to the supermarket and bump into ingredients that you've never seen before—and probably never tasted before. This lesson introduces you to some of these unusual ingredients and brings them into your kitchen to keep your repertoire of recipes ever-expanding and fresh. In this lesson, you will learn how to create delicious dishes using spaghetti squash, fig leaves, purslane, cactus paddles (nopales), and yucca.

### Southeast Asian Spaghetti Squash Salad

#### Ingredients

Yield: 4 to 6 portions

- 1 (2-to-3-lb) spaghetti squash

#### dressing

- 2 Tbs fish sauce
- ¼ cup fresh lime juice
- 1 Tbs sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp Thai chili sauce
- 1 cup seedless red grapes, halved
- 1 cup seedless green grapes, halved
- 1 apple, peeled, cored, and diced
- ½ lb poached (or roasted) chicken breast, shredded
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced on a diagonal
- 3 Tbs peanuts, roasted and chopped
- 20 fresh mint leaves, chiffonade
- 12 fresh cilantro sprigs, coarsely chopped
- 20 fresh Thai basil leaves, chiffonade
- ¼ cup fried shallots/garlic chips (optional)



To make this Southeast Asian salad with chicken, fruit, and a spicy dressing, start by cutting a spaghetti squash in half and scrape out the seeds and fibers. Add the squash to a pot of boiling, salted water for about 4 to 6 minutes, until it gets tender. Alternatively, you can microwave it for three to five minutes, checking it at three minutes to see if it's tender.



To make the dressing, combine fish sauce, lime juice, and sugar in a bowl. This dish contains a lot of vegetable and fruit matter, so you need an assertive dressing. Add Thai chili sauce. Taste and add salt.

Cut red and green seedless grapes in half and add them to the dressing. Also add a peeled and diced apple. Stir. Add poached chicken breast; leftover roasted chicken would be fine. Cut the chicken into smaller pieces and then shred it. Add to the bowl with the dressing. Toss. Add sliced scallions, saving the green tops for garnish. Chop peanuts but wait to add them just before serving so they don't get soggy.

Check on the squash. Scratch at the fibers with a fork. It's ready when it falls apart into filaments. Turn the pot off and remove the squash from the hot water. Wrap it in a towel to prevent your hands from the heat (let it cool on the countertop) and scrape the filaments out of the shell with the fork.

Cool the spaghetti squash in a bowl of ice water to rinse off any of the starch that's on the outside. Once it's cool and rinsed, spin it in a salad spinner. Add the spaghetti squash to the salad. Toss everything together, making sure everything is coated well with the dressing. Taste for flavor. Add more lime juice if needed.

Coarsely chop fresh herbs soaked in ice water: mint, cilantro, and Thai basil. Toss them into the salad. Add peanuts and scallions. Plate the salad with grapes and mint leaves. Garnish with scallion tops and peanuts.

Sprinkle with crispy shallots and garlic, if desired.

## Fish in Fig Leaves with Purslane Salad

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 6 (4-to-5-oz) Halibut steaks
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 12 fig leaves
- 1 lemon

#### *fattoush* salad

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- salt, to taste

- pepper, to taste
- 1 tsp sumac, ground
- 1 cup purslane, torn
- 1/2 cucumber, diced
- 1 small yellow pepper, diced
- 4 scallions, shredded
- 1/3 cup parsley, chopped
- 1/4 cup mint, chopped
- 2 ripe tomatoes, cut and seeded
- 2 pitas, split and toasted
- 1 cup arugula, torn



This dish features fig leaves and purslane, two common Mediterranean ingredients. Pass the fig leaves over an open flame just to soften them. You want to be able to wrap them around the fish, keeping the fish from sticking to the grill and perfuming the fish with a coconut fragrance. Cut the hard stem from each of the fig leaves.

Put olive oil and salt and pepper on both sides of the fish. Put fish on fig leaf and squeeze lemon juice over it. Remove the coarse ribs of the leaf if needed. Wrap fish in leaf.

Brush oil on grill and then lay the fish on it.

To make a salad called *fattoush*, from the eastern Mediterranean, start with a simple dressing that contains olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, salt, and pepper. Add powdered sumac, which lends a sour flavor.



Purslane is one of the few vegetable sources of omega-3 oil, which is the heart-healthy oil that is found in wild seafood. Break leaves of purslane into the dressing. Add cucumbers, yellow peppers, and scallions. Also add chopped parsley and mint leaves. Stir well to coat everything with the flavorful dressing.

Check on the fish, turning it when it's halfway cooked.

Shortly before serving the salad, add cut tomatoes to it. Tear toasted pita bread into pieces and toss into salad, letting the juices from the tomatoes soften the bread.

Just before serving, add arugula and toss.

When it's done cooking, remove the fish from the grill. Cut into the wrapper to open it and display the fish that's inside. Set on plated salad. Drizzle with olive oil and garnish with lemon wedges.

## **Cactus Paddles (Nopales) Salad**

Cactus paddles, or nopales, are available in most Mexican groceries. The challenge with cactus paddles is that they're covered with spines. To clean them, glide a large knife over the surface of the paddles to cut the spines off on both sides. Trim all the way around the outside edge.

## Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 1 ½ lbs fresh cactus paddles (nopales), needles removed
- 1 small red onion, cut into 1/4-inch dice
- ⅓ cup red wine vinegar
- 1 lime, juiced
- ¾ cup olive oil
- salt, to taste
- black pepper, freshly cracked, to taste
- 2–3 chipotle chilies in adobo, finely chopped
- 1 cup black beans, cooked, rinsed
- 5 Roma tomatoes, cored, seeded and cut to 1/4-inch dice
- ¼ cup cilantro, chopped
- ⅓ cup finely grated Cotija or *añejo* cheese
- 1 avocado, peeled, seeded and sliced, for garnish
- 4–6 lettuce leaves

Nopales can be roasted, broiled, or grilled. To grill them, cut the paddles into half-inch strips but leave connected at one end so you can turn all at once on the grill. Oil the grill and put the paddles on the grill to cook.

The dressing starts with red onions soaked in vinegar for 10 minutes to enhance the color. Add lime juice and olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Flavor with chopped chipotle peppers and stir. Add rinsed canned black beans. Also add chopped tomatoes and cilantro. Toss and let sit.



Once the cactus paddles have lost their bright green color and have started to brown, flip them and cook them on the same way on the other side. Season with salt and pepper. Once they have browned on both sides and a lot of the slimy liquid has been driven off and evaporated, remove them from the grill.

On a cutting board, cut the paddles into half-inch pieces. Remove the hard stem end. Add to salad and toss together. Add grated Cotija or *añejo* cheese. Also add diced avocado and lime juice.

Plate the salad on red and romaine lettuce leaves. Top with more grated cheese.

## Yucca Chips

### Ingredients

Yield: 6 portions

- 1 yucca root
- 1 cup beet juice
- 1 quart canola oil
- 1 tsp kosher salt



Yucca is popular in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, but it doesn't travel well, so it doesn't often make its way to the United States. When you do find it, it's almost always coated in wax, which protects the root in transit. Trim the waxy outside with a strong chef's knife. Then, slice very thin with a mandoline.

### Is Organic Produce Worth the Money?

Organic produce is regulated. When produce has an organic label on it, it means that there were no synthetic chemicals, herbicides, or pesticides used on that product. That sounds great, but there are plenty of natural things that are bad for you, such as arsenic and lead, that could be used.

While there is not solid proof that organic produce tastes better or is more nutritious, studies have shown that it is better for the environment. So, if the environment is important to you, buy organic.

Spread yucca slices on a plate. Splash beet juice on them. They end up looking like rose petals after they're fried.

Drop the slices in hot oil. Fry until the bubbling subsides. Remove them with a skimmer and drain on paper towels.

Season the yucca chips with salt while they're still warm. This is a great snack to go along with a crisp white wine or sparkling wine.







# Herbs and Blossoms for an Elegant Dinner

## Lesson 24

In this lesson, you will learn how to make a fancy meal—from hors d'oeuvre to dessert—that features vegetables as well as herbs. When you go to the store with a recipe that contains a lot of herbs, your bill can add up quickly. You might be discouraged from buying them because you'll use them for that single recipe, and then the rest sit in your refrigerator and wilt. To avoid this, wrap herbs in a moistened paper towel to keep them fresh for about a week. And this lesson offers a variety of ways to use them.

### Grilled Pizza with Herb Salad, Burrata, Prosciutto, and Olive Soil

#### Ingredients

Yield: 1 12-ounce pizza

- olive soil
- 2 cups black oil-cured olives

#### herb salad

- 2 Tbs celery leaves
- 1 Tbs sage leaves, torn
- 1 Tbs parsley, plucked
- 2 Tbs frisée, lettuce
- 1 Tbs chives, cut into inch-long pieces
- 1 Tbs oregano leaves or marjoram
- 2 Tbs basil leaves torn or micro basil
- 1 Tbs thyme leaves

- 4 nasturtiums or other edible flowers
- 1 Tbs olive oil
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste

#### final preparation

- 5 oz pizza dough
- 4 oz burrata
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup herb salad
- 6 slices prosciutto di San Daniele
- 3 Tbs olive soil
- 1–2 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil



To make this grilled pizza, which is more like a flatbread that can be served as an hors d'oeuvre, roll out the pizza dough until it's about an eighth of an inch thick. Roll from the center to the outside; don't roll back and forth. Lay it on the grill (no need for oil). Cook it on one side until it's deeply colored, even charred a little, and then flip it over. As it cooks, if you see any bubbles forming, you can poke them so they burst.

When the dough is done, take it off the grill and top it with burrata cheese and thinly sliced prosciutto. Then, make an herb salad of frisée, celery leaves, parsley, torn sage leaves, oregano, basil torn into big pieces, chives cut into inch-long pieces, and thyme leaves. Dress with lemon juice and oil. Season with salt and pepper. Add the salad to the pizza.

## Herbs versus Spices

Herbs are tender portions of a plant that are used for seasoning. Spices are tougher, or more fibrous, parts of a plant—including tough leaves, stalks, bark, roots, and stems—that are used for seasoning.

Nasturtium blossoms are in the same family with watercress and have a peppery bite. Add yellow, orange, or red nasturtiums on top of the pizza for color and elegance.

You can also add blossoms from

scarlet runner beans, which are bright red and taste like beans, and bachelor's buttons, which can be blue, pink, or white.

Create olive soil with pitted black olives. Put them on a sheet pan and roast them slowly at about 250 degrees until they are dry (but not burnt). Chop the olives and sprinkle them on the pizza.

Top the pizza with salt, pepper, and extra-virgin olive oil. Serve with a Not-So-Bloody Mary cocktail.

## Not-So-Bloody Mary Cocktail

For this cocktail, make the tomato water the day before. To make the tomato water, in a blender puree jalapeño, chopped onion, chopped lemongrass (just the fleshy bottom five to six inches), diced tomatoes, and lemon slice. Then, put all of the contents into cheesecloth and let it drip for a day to strain out the pulp (which could be used later as a tomato sauce or pizza sauce), leaving the clear tomato water.

To the tomato water, squeeze lime, lemon, and orange juice. Make sure the seeds don't make their way in. Stir and taste it. Add salt and sugar to taste.

## Ingredients

Yield: 4 drinks

### tomato water

- 1 jalapeño, ribs and seeds removed
- 2 Tbs red onion, chopped
- 1 stalk lemongrass, chopped coarsely
- 2 lbs ripe, juicy tomatoes, cored and coarsely diced (not Roma/sauce tomatoes)
- ½ lemon, juiced
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1 orange, juiced
- salt, to taste
- sugar, to taste



### Not-So-Bloody Mary

- 12 oz tomato water
- 4 oz vodka
- edible blossoms or skewered cherry tomatoes (optional)
- pickled onions (optional)
- green cocktail olives (optional)

Add the tomato water to a cocktail shaker with ice. Add vodka (a citrus vodka works well). Shake well and pour into glass. Garnish with edible blossoms or skewered cherry tomatoes, pickled onions, and green cocktail olives, if desired.



## Baby Squash with Blossom-Steamed Salmon

### Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 4 baby squash, with blossom attached
- 6 oz salmon fillet
- ½ tsp tarragon, chopped
- 1 tsp parsley, chopped
- ½ tsp lemon zest
- 1 Tbs extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbs lemon juice
- salt, to taste
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste

### basic beurre blanc

Yield: 1 pint

- 6 oz white wine
- 2 oz cider vinegar
- 6 peppercorns, crushed
- 1 oz shallots, minced
- 6 thyme stems
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 oz heavy cream (optional)
- 12 oz whole butter, diced
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
  
- 3 Tbs tomato *concassé*
- 1 tsp chives, minced



To make this dish, start with zephyr zucchini with their blossoms still attached. Clean the blossom. Remove the stamen and any bugs. Lay the baby squash on the cutting board and cut it into eighth-inch slices, leaving the last half inch near the blossom intact. This will allow you to spread and fan the slices to facilitate even cooking and an attractive presentation.

To a bowl, add olive oil, salt, pepper, lemon zest, and lemon juice. Add chopped tarragon and parsley.

Cut the salmon into pieces that will fit into the blossoms. Marinate the salmon in the bowl and then insert it into the squash blossom, drizzling some marinade inside.

Lower the squash blossoms into a steamer with a piece of parchment paper underneath them. Put a lid on and steam for about 8 minutes. This is a delicate way of cooking these very tender vegetables.

In a second pan, make a basic beurre blanc sauce, or white butter sauce. It starts with a reduction of wine and vinegar. Then, add minced shallots, crushed



peppercorns, thyme, and a bay leaf. Bring it up to a boil. Season with salt and pepper. Reduce it until it's nearly dry.

Once the reduction is almost dry, remove the thyme and bay leaf and add heavy cream. Reduce again. Turn the temperature down and add cold butter in small pieces to the sauce. Stir until each piece melts. Taste.

Test the squash with a knife to make sure that it is tender. It should go in easily and come out just as easily.

To the sauce, add tomato *concassé*, which is made by peeling tomatoes, removing their seeds, and dicing the flesh. Also add minced chives.

Spoon the sauce onto a plate. Carefully lift the squash on the parchment out of the pan and place on top of sauce.

## Farro Risotto with Mushrooms

### Ingredients

Yield: 4 portions

- 4 ½ cups vegetable broth, mushroom stock, or chicken stock
- ¾ cup dry white wine (optional)
- 3 Tbs olive oil
- ½ cup onion, finely minced
- 1 cup farro
- 10 oz mushrooms, quartered and sautéed
- 2 tsp sage, chopped
- 1 tsp thyme, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 2 Tbs unsalted butter (or ½ cup lightly whipped cream)
- 1 tsp parsley or garlic chive blossoms, chopped



Instead of rice, this risotto is made with farro wheat, which is a precursor of modern-day wheat. The kernels are larger and cook much more readily, and unlike rice, they don't overcook easily.

In a pot on the stove, sauté onions and garlic in oil. Once the onions are translucent, add farro and vegetable broth (and white wine, if desired). Cook





for about 45 minutes, until it is tender. Once creaminess develops, move the pot off the heat.

Sauté mushrooms (maitake, morel, and cremini) in a hot pan with oil. Add chopped sage and thyme. Once the mushrooms have browned, add butter (or cream) to the pan. Then, add some of the farro to the same pan.

Add grated Parmesan cheese and more butter and stir. Plate the farro and garnish with Parmesan cheese and parsley or garlic chive blossoms, if available.

Instead of using mushrooms, you can make this farro risotto by adding wintertime vegetables, such as baby carrots and asparagus tips, or with a variety of vegetables from your summer garden.

## Honey-Sauterne Sabayon with Stone Fruits and Berries

### Ingredients

Yield: 8 portions

- 8 egg yolks
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 cup Sauterne
- 2 Tbs honey
- 1 cup cream, whipped
- seasonal fruit, to taste
- 1 sprig of mint





This is a dessert that you could use in any season when the fruit is ripe. In the winter, use tropical fruit, such as mangoes, pineapple, and bananas. In the summer, use stone fruit and berries, such as raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, apricots, and peaches.

To make the sabayon, combine egg yolks and sugar in a bowl and stir. Then, add Sauterne, which is a wine that tastes like honey.

Put the bowl over boiling water and cook it. Whip as much air as you can into the sabayon before the egg yolks thicken. A well-made sabayon will grow three to seven times its original volume.

Put the sabayon over ice to cool. Then, add honey and stir. Once cool, lighten the sabayon even further by folding the whipped cream in until it is uniformly mixed.

Serve the sabayon over fresh seasonal fruit. Top with a sprig of mint.

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