

## Two Small Farms Newsletter

Issue Number 301 - Nov. 3rd, 2004

In your box this week: kale, lettuce, leeks, San Marzano tomatoes, golden turnips, orach, sweet peppers

### Veggie Notes from Julia:

Keep the kale, lettuce, leeks, turnips, orach, and peppers in bags in the fridge. Keep the tomatoes OUT of the fridge, these are sauce tomatoes. The orach (the red spinach stuff) can be eaten in a salad raw or cooked up, just like green spinach. I like my peppers roasted, but they are of course suitable for raw eating too....

### What I Would Do with the Box this week by Holly Peters

I cook simply but there are a few ingredients that add a lot of flavor and versatility to my repertoire: miso, tahini, dried tomatoes marinated in olive oil. and fermented tofu.

I always have on hand some reconstituted dry tomatoes marinating in olive oil with pressed or grated garlic. I use this for stir fries and light sautéing and as the oil base for a vinaigrette.

Wash leeks OR kale, slice on a diagonal and stir fry with a little of the oil, just a dash of Bragg's aminos and some chili sauce for a kick.

Steam to finish then stir in a half or whole square of cubed fermented tofu.

Serve over rice

There are many brands of fermented tofu, some with chili, plain or with red date. It comes in a jar and is sold at Asian markets. It costs approximately \$1.50-3 per bottle. Some varieties have a stronger or milder or nuttier flavor-a little goes a long way. The brand I have currently is called Hwang Ryh Shiang. Traditionally it's used as an addition to stir-fry. I've used a little mixed in with pasta then tossed with fresh, chopped tomatoes, scallions and sweet peppers for a summery but warm entrée.

### Sesame Vinegar Miso Dressing with Variations

This is a great topping for steamed or baked vegetables and on salads.

And would be excellent over steamed golden turnips

-or-

as a dressing for a salad of lettuces, orach, tomatoes and sweet peppers!

2 Tablespoons miso (I generally use mild, white but you can use any kind of miso)

2 Tablespoons tahini

Add 2 Tbsps. equal parts water and lemon and vinegar to taste. It thickens in the refrigerator. And can be used over rice, pasta too but I like it best over veggies.

Variations: can add mustard, scallions, chili sauce,

vary the proportions depending on taste and saltiness of the miso

Recipe from The Book of Miso, Shurtleff and Aoyagi

This book has all different kinds of miso cookery which really adds flavor and nutrition.

### Thelma, Julia, and Louise

by Andy

Life is returning to normal since Julia came home. I never knew how much the office of "farm wife" entailed until our farm's wife disappeared into the wilds of Italy for two and a half weeks. No sooner did Julia jet off than my computer crashed. Then my only licensed truck driver had a family emergency and left for Michoacan. Next the weather turned to rain and our tomato crop was ruined. It was as though Julia was the spirit weaving all the disparate functions of the farm together and when she left

we temporarily frayed. But Julia had been summoned to Italy by Slow Food and lawyers, guns and money weren't going to hold her back.

Slow Food is an international organization dedicated to safe guarding heirloom fruit, vegetable and livestock varieties for the future. In the face of the globalization of everything Slow Food has taken on the task of preserving local food traditions and artisanal producers of foods by promoting them to new generations of consumers whose tastes have been dumbed down by generic, mass market driven fast food. To take their mission to the next level Slow Food International invited five thousand farmers from around the world who share the organization's goals for a gigantic mixer in Turin. The meeting was called Terra Madre, or Mother Earth. Because many small farmers can't afford to drop everything and waltz off to Europe there were scholarships available for some folks. When everybody was gathered together there were vanilla farmers from Mexico comparing notes with Malian vegetable farmers and Cheddar Cheese producers from Cheddar, England talking to radicchio growers from Hollister, California.

Even though late October is hardly the most convenient time for my better half to be gone I didn't begrudge her the trip. First of all she deserved it. Julia never set out to be a farm wife, she just slipped into the post by marrying me. Julia had a career as a bilingual teacher before the farm absorbed her talents and I wanted to give her a vacation of sorts after all the work she's put in. Then there's the fact that big conferences are all about networking. On her worst day Julia can out-network me on my best. She was hardly in Italy a day before linking up with two other vegetable farmers, Annabelle Lenderink from Marin County and Lee James from Sonoma County. Annabelle and Lee picked Julia up in a rented car, aimed it at Chioggia in the Veneto, and the three of them roared across northern Italy like Thelma and the two Louises. Chioggia is the ancestral home of the red Chioggia beet with the white rings, the

blue warty hard squash called the Marina di Chioggia, and the round purple Chioggia radicchio. Annabelle, Lee and Julia visited farms, farmers markets and seed dealers along the way before arriving at the Terra Madre conference in Turin.

By all accounts the conference was a success. All politics are local, we are told. What could be more flavored by politics than the way a nation's tastes affect the well being of its citizenry and its environment? Our own politics are so embittered at present that it is refreshing to hear how thousands of people can still be brought together from around the world to share an enthusiasm about promoting their own local agricultural products and traditions. Farming is different than teaching in that farmers rarely congregate, especially farmers from different countries. Terra Madre gave Julia a chance to see how many peers she has and to learn about how they are making their farms work. Julia's language skills helped her to get the most out of the conference, too. She has big wads of business cards from Spain, Argentina, Cuba and Texas and invitations to visit more farms in more countries than we can ever afford to make it to.

Julia brought home some seeds of an interesting multi colored sweet pepper from Carmagnola that a farmer gave her. California is no Chioggia and we don't have a lot of heirloom crops of our own to preserve but we can keep other people's unique varieties alive. Plus, with so many of our local restaurants cooking in a Mediterranean style it seems only intelligent to broaden our farm's crop list to provide them with ingredients that they can't otherwise get. Next year we will grow out a crop of Carmagnola's pepper and save seeds. We will send samples of the crop out to restaurant customers in San Francisco like A-16, Incanto, and Quince and see what they say.

Julia has a world of work to catch up with now that she's back. For starts there must be 1000 e

mail letters to answer (well, five hundred if you discount messages from "Live Women" and mortgage brokers). Also I apparently blew off a parent/teacher conference. Julia suspects that I selectively display gross incompetence so as to render myself "unable" to perform certain key tasks. The truth is even farm wives need farm wives.

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julia s note: I m indeed catching up, more from me next week. Here s a couple of photos that go with Andy s article. I ll work on getting more up on the website this week:

**Dinner in Hollister** benefitting the Wild Farm Alliance, put on by our friends at Slow Food Monterey Bay and the Fosters: this Sunday afternoon at the Foster Ranch.

Recipes from Julia:

### **Crockpot Lentil-Kale Soup**

from: <http://www.recipesource.com/>

1 cup lentils  
7 cup water  
4 cup (about 1 lb) chopped kale (tear the leaves of the kale into 1/2" strips)  
1 large. onion, chopped  
1 celery stalk, chopped (I used celery salt here)  
3 tomatoes, chopped, optional  
1 med. carrot, chopped  
3 T chopped parsley  
1 bay leaf (remove before eating)  
1/4 t ground thyme  
1-2 T soy miso (soy and/or Worcestershire sauce is good, too)

pinch of pepper

Place the ingredients in a crockpot. Turn to low if leaving it for a long while. Cook 6-8 hours.

### **Risotto with Spinach and Leeks**

submitted by Dee Doyle, adapted from Cooking Light March 2001 6 servings

5 cups chicken or vegetable broth  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 bunch young leeks, cleaned and thinly sliced  
1 1/2 cups arborio rice  
1/4 cup white wine  
3 cups coarsely chopped orach leaves or spinach  
1/4 cup grated Parmesan  
1/8 teaspoon black pepper  
6 lemon wedges

Bring broth to a simmer in a medium saucepan (do not boil). Keep warm over low heat.

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add leek, saute 4 minutes or until tender. Add rice; cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Stir in wine cook 1 minute or until

the liquid is nearly absorbed stirring constantly. Reduce heat to low; stir in orach. Add broth 1/2 cup at a time, stirring constantly until each portion of the broth is

absorbed before adding the next portion (about 25 minutes). Stir in cheese and pepper. Serve with lemon wedges.

### **Leek Noodles**

Ten Minute Cuisine by Green & Moine

In a wok, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil. Add 2 shredded leeks and 1

teaspoon fresh thyme leaves. Add cooked noodles of any shape (about 1 pound when uncooked) and stir-fry until heated through. Season with salt and pepper.

10-15 minutes. Then add a few chopped capers, red pepper flakes, a couple of chopped anchovies (doesn't taste like anchovy at the end, really), and some chopped olives. Serve over noodles, and you've got a simple pasta putanesca!

### **Creamy White Bean Soup with Leeks**

three 19-ounce cans white beans, rinsed well in a sieve

1/4 teaspoon dried tarragon

2 cups chicken broth

2 cups thinly sliced washed white and pale green part

of leek

3 garlic cloves, minced or 3 stalks green garlic, chopped

1/4 teaspoon dried hot red pepper flakes, or to taste

3 tablespoons olive oil

3/4 cup half-and-half or milk

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

In a blender purée the beans in batches with the tarragon and the broth and strain the purée through a fine sieve into a bowl, pressing hard on the solids. In a large saucepan cook the leek, the garlic, and

the red pepper flakes in the oil over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until the leek is softened and begins to turn golden. Add the purée, the half-and-half, the lemon juice, and salt to taste and simmer the soup, stirring, for 5 minutes.

Adapted from Gourmet magazine 1991

### **Simple Tomato Sauce:**

wash and cut into quarters the tomatoes. Set aside. Cook up some chopped, cleaned leeks or onions in a medium pan with just a bit of oil. Add the tomatoes and cook down some, about

