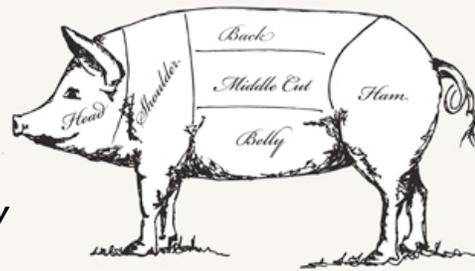


Seasonal Staples:

Adapting simple recipes to embrace the seasons' bounty



Chilled Fava Bean Soup

2 lbs fava beans
1 medium onion
2 cloves garlic
¼ cup olive oil
1 quart light chicken stock
salt and pepper

Shell and peel the beans. Peel and dice the onion. Thinly slice the garlic. In a dutch oven or heavy stock pot, sauté the onion in the olive oil until quite soft, 10 – 15 minutes. Add garlic and cook for two more minutes. Season with salt. Add the fava beans and cook for two more minutes. Add just enough stock to cover the beans. Chill the remaining stock. Cook the beans until tender. Puree in a blender until smooth, adding the leftover chilled stock until the desired consistency is reached. Check for seasoning. Chill and serve with a dollop of crème fraiche.

For fall and winter soups, add all of the stock to the vegetables and bring to a simmer. Cook until the vegetables are tender and then puree in batches or use an immersion blender. Serve hot.

Spring: Fava beans, asparagus or spring peas
Summer: Tomatoes or corn
Fall: Butternut squash, acorn squash or pumpkin
Winter: Leek and potato, cauliflower or carrot

A few flavor affinities to liven up the soups: Asparagus and lemon, peas and mint, corn and lime, tomatoes and basil or peppers, squash and ginger, cauliflower and crème fraiche, carrot and curry.

Pasta with Ricotta, Asparagus and Lemon

1 lb asparagus
1/2 c mixed herbs, chopped (Parsley, chives and thyme would go nicely. Change your herbs to pair with your vegetable).
1 T olive oil
zest of one lemon
1 T lemon juice
salt, pepper, chili flakes to taste
12 oz dry pasta
1/2 – 3/4 c ricotta cheese
1/2 c finely grated Parmesan cheese

Boil a pot of salted water. Slice asparagus on the bias into 2 inch long pieces. Blanch the asparagus for 2 minutes, strain and rinse with cold water to stop the cooking. Toss them with the chopped herbs, olive oil, lemon zest and juice, salt and pepper. Set aside.

Cook the pasta according to the package directions. Reserve 1/2 cup of the pasta water. Drain. Return pasta to the pot, add ricotta, parmesan, and pasta water. Season the pasta with salt and pepper. Top with the asparagus and herb mixture to serve.

Spring: Asparagus, fava beans, peas or mushrooms (Note: sauté the mushrooms in a little olive oil and butter instead of blanching)
Summer: Tomatoes, summer squash, zucchini or green beans (Note: Serve the tomatoes raw, grill the squash instead of blanching)
Fall: Peppers, mushrooms or fall squash (Note: Serve the peppers raw or grilled, sauté the mushrooms, grill or bake the squash with a little olive instead of blanching)

Winter: Leeks, mushrooms, winter greens, radishes or turnips (Note: Sauté or grill the leeks, sauté the mushrooms, serve the radishes raw, bake the turnips instead of blanching)

Pickled Spring Onions

4 red spring onions, about 2 ½ lbs
1 ½ cups of red wine vinegar
¾ cup granulated sugar

Cut the tops and bottoms off the onions. Slice into 1/8th inch thick slices. Put the onions into a one quart canning jar. Reserve any slices that don't fit. Combine vinegar and sugar in a small saucepan. Dissolve the sugar in the vinegar over low heat. Pour the hot vinegar mixture over the onions. Once they begin to wilt, add the remaining onions, gently pushing them down into the liquid to submerge them. Let cool to room temperature then cover and refrigerate for at least 24 hours, up to one month.

Note: This is not a pantry-safe canning technique. Vegetables preserved in this method must be refrigerated.

Spring: Carrots, onions, radishes or fennel
Summer: Cucumbers or peppers
Fall: Artichokes (2nd harvest) or cauliflower (late fall)
Winter: Beets, leeks or parsnips

Feel free to add herbs, spices or garlic into the brine for additional flavor. Pickled vegetables add a great acidic kick to any dish, heavy or light. For example, a salad of pickled spring onions with prosciutto and asparagus.

Strawberry Sorbet

4 cups of fresh strawberries, stems removed
2 – 3 lemons, juiced (adjust depending on the tartness of your berries)
¼ - ½ cup of simple syrup (adjust depending on the sweetness of your berries)

To make the simple syrup, combine 2 parts sugar and one part water in a saucepan. For ½ cup of syrup, combine 1 cup sugar and ½ cup water. Heat over low heat until the sugar has dissolved. Cool.

Puree the strawberries and lemon juice in a food processor or blender until smooth. Add the simple syrup and combine. Strain the puree through a mesh sieve to remove the seeds. Chill the mixture until you are ready to churn. Pour the puree into an ice cream maker and churn until it is frozen. It will lighten in color and increase in volume. Serve straight from the ice cream maker or chill for 1 – 2 hours. Sorbets have a tendency to freeze really hard if left in the freezer overnight or for a few days so they are best consumed the day they are made.

For a wonderful cocktail, add a scoop of sorbet to a glass of sparkling wine.

Spring: Strawberry, lemon or cherry
Summer: Peach, nectarine, blueberry, blackberry or melon
Fall: Pear or pomegranate
Winter: Orange, lemon or grapefruit

Note: If you don't have an ice cream maker, you can make a granita. Simply, pour the fruit mixture into a shallow dish and place in the freezer. Every 20 minutes, scrape the top layer with a fork. It will form long crystals. Repeat with freezing and scraping until the rest of the liquid has frozen.