

Nourish Ourselves Nourish Our Community February 26, 2009

Tonight let us celebrate, with profound gratitude, the joy of one another's company and the strength that comes from the interweaving of our relationships. Community is a richly textured fabric that holds us in its multifarious embrace. It softens the shock of inestimable loss, steadies us with the reminder of all that continues, engages our collective imagination, and compounds our mutual delights.

Our community is expansive beyond the sum of its individual parts, and yet cherishes each individual. The community meals are a wonderful and creative expression of our shared potential and vitalities. We thank each and every one of you for being here.

The beans used in tonight's chili were grown on Lopez Island by Christine Langley of Lopez Harvest. Christine's reason for growing these particular varieties is quite simple: she chooses the biggest beans for ease of harvest and because they go further in the winter pantry. Christine finds that beans grow well in our climate with the caveat that seeds should be planted as soon as weather and soil temperatures permit. Choosing varieties with a shorter growing season may also be beneficial to the first time bean grower. The four bean varieties look, cook, and taste differently and possess their own individual stories. Cannellini beans, small white kidney shaped beans, predate 1900 and are admired for their creamy consistency and mild flavor. Black Coco beans, an earthy flavored turtle shaped bean, grow well in our climate and can be eaten as green beans as well as dried. King of the Early, a large mottled red bean, make great baked beans and do well in a variety of climates. Tongue of Fire beans, originally from the southern tip of South America, may be eaten fresh, frozen, canned or dried. We kept the bean varieties separate for the first round of cooking in hopes that they will be distinguishable within the chili.

In addition to Christine's beans Ken and Kathryn from Horse Drawn Farm provided the potatoes, beets, carrots, shallots, and red onions. Nancy Rankin brought us some beautiful heads of garlic. Kim and Todd's freezer yielded the pureed garlic scapes and pesto came from Vortex's freezer stash. We would like to thank Randy Waugh for donating a case of his outstanding locally made Chicaoji Hot Sauce, Nikola Chopra for concocting the warming herbal chai, and Blossom Natural Grocery for providing miscellaneous items at wholesale prices.

We would like to acknowledge the unsung kitchen helpers who add so much to our meals. Foremost is Nancy Rankin who has put in hours of support for every meal. For this meal we had unexpected assistance from Caitlin Greeley, a graduate student in Urban Planning at U of Michigan who is studying sustainable farm systems and came to witness our infamous mobile processing unit. The talented kitchen staff at school continues to be welcoming and supportive—we couldn't produce the evening meals without them. We've also been blessed to share kitchen time with Joyce Brinar, Wendy Westervelt, Mary Jenison, Deborah Bonnville, and Nikola Chopra. We thank them all as well as the others who have offered their help.

We appreciate your contribution. Take time to celebrate one another and enjoy your meal.

Heirloom Bean Chili

Serves 8

2 cups assorted dried beans: black, red, cannellini
1-1 by 5 inch piece dried kombu seaweed
3 Tblsp olive oil
2 large onions, finely chopped
4 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
2 tsp dried thyme
2 tsp ground cumin
1 Tblsp ground dried chili powder (mild, hot, ancho)
1-28 oz can diced tomatoes (we used fire roasted)
1 cup frozen corn
2 red bell peppers, diced
salt to taste

The night before: in a soup pot cover beans with 3 inches of water and bring to a boil. Remove from heat, making sure that at least 2 inches of water covers beans and soak overnight. The next day, pour off soaking water, cover beans with fresh water,

add kombu and cook at a slow simmer until slightly undercooked, about 30 minutes to an hour. Set aside. Heat olive oil in heavy bottomed soup pot over medium heat. Add onions and stir frequently until onions are limp. Reduce heat to low, add garlic, red peppers, and spices and stir until fragrant- approx 2 minutes.

Add canned tomatoes, frozen corn, and partially cooked beans to pot along with enough bean cooking liquid for desired consistency. Simmer over medium-low heat for an hour, stirring often, until beans are fully cooked and flavors have melded. More liquid may be added if desired. Chili is always better if made a day ahead. Serve with optional condiments: grated cheese, sour cream, hot sauce, cilantro sprigs, and sliced green onions.

Roasted Winter Vegetables with Pesto and Garlic Scape Vinaigrette

Serves 6

2 lbs assorted winter vegetables: potatoes, beets, parsnips, carrots, celeriac, shallots, even kale
olive oil
salt and pepper
1 cup pesto
1 cup pureed garlic scapes
½ cup lemon juice
1+ cup olive oil

Preheat oven to 375°. Chop vegetables into pieces that are approximately the same size so roasted vegetables cook uniformly. Toss vegetables with a generous amount of olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper and roast until vegetables are golden brown and fork tender. Whisk last 4 ingredients together, adjusting amounts to taste. Toss vegetables with vinaigrette, taste for salt and pepper and enjoy.

Corneal Cookies with Lemon and Ginger

Makes 3 dozen 3-inch cookies

1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 cup sugar
½ tsp salt
1 tsp vanilla
1 egg
1 Tblsp lemon peel, grated
1½ cup cornmeal
1 cup spelt flour
1 cup oat flour
1/3 cup coarsely chopped crystallized ginger
Extra cornmeal and sugar for dipping

**This recipe begs for experimentation. Suggestions: pine nuts and orange zest, dried fruit, black pepper and lemon.*

Preheat oven to 325°. In the bowl of a mixer cream butter and sugar until mixture is light and fluffy. Add egg, vanilla, lemon zest, and chopped ginger and mix until well. Add dry ingredients and mix until well combined. Dough should be slightly sticky yet easy to roll in palm of hand. Form 1 to 2 inch balls of dough. Toss into a bowl of equal parts cornmeal and sugar and dough balls are well coated. Place balls on well-greased cookie sheet and flatten to ¼ to ½ inch thick with the bottom of a glass. Bake cookies until edges are golden brown. Cool slightly before removing from pan.

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Please check the website for more recipe information.