





Gardening meets gastronomy

After a growing season with your students, there is no better way to enjoy the harvest than to prepare a meal or snack together with your fresh garden vegetables. Many students have already heard the saying 'you are what you eat', and it's pretty true! Fueling up on healthy nutritious snacks gives us the energy, strength and drive to complete challenging tasks and learning.

Cooking with students is a fantastic way to help them build kitchen confidence and positive relationships with healthy foods.

This book is full of garden-inspired dishes that you can prepare in the classroom with your students, tried and tested by our Little Green Thumbs teachers across Canada. What are you waiting for? Let's get cooking!



Gluten-free



Dairy-free



Nut-free



Vegan





This recipe will make enough batter for at least 5-6 dozen fritters

Ingredients

60-100 dandelion blossoms

Dry ingredients:

¼ c. Arrowroot powder

½ c. Sweet rice powder

½ tsp. Baking powder

¼ tsp. Guar gum

¼ tsp. Sea salt

Wet ingredients:

1 beaten egg

½ c. Milk or alternative

½ c. Water

More liquid if needed

For deep frying:

Pastured lard or coconut oil

Preparation

Head outside on a beautiful day in May or early June when there are dandelions as far as the eye can see. Pick at least a medium-sized bowl full of just the yellow blossoms. Be sure to only pick from a safe place that hasn't been sprayed. Don't include the stem or leaves as they can be quite bitter.

Combine dry ingredients in one large bowl. Combine wet ingredients in another. When mixed thoroughly, combine both.

Meanwhile, heat approx. 1 inch of oil in a pot on the stove.

Coat each blossom individually in the batter, then drop a few pieces at a time in the hot oil.

Turn over once the bottoms start to brown and crisp.

Cook on both sides, then remove with tongs or a metal mesh strainer, and drain on a paper towel.

Take it a step further!

If you have left-over batter, try coating other things (squash blossoms, nasturtiums, or simply other veggies: mushrooms, broccoli, yams, onions, zucchini are all tasty).

For savoury: sprinkle hot fritters with sea salt and garlic powder, then dip in a tamari soy sauce and/or plum sauce or sweet chili sauce.

For a sweet treat: sprinkle the fritters with cinnamon and unrefined sugar, or just add some sweetener to the batter before frying (maple syrup/ stevia/ honey/etc...) Then they taste more like donuts.



Dandelion Fritters

"Eat 'em to beat 'em." Though it's best to leave the first dandelions of the season for the bees as their first spring food, by late May or early June there is always more than enough to go around.

This recipe is not only a wonderful way to use up those weeds before they take over the garden, but also a delicious and nutritious way to help kids become more adventurous eaters.

**Thanks to Anna Rose,
Prairie Sky School,
Regina, SK**





Ingredients

1/2 lime
1 medium onion
4 cups Tiny Tim tomatoes
OR 3 large tomatoes
1/4 cup cilantro or parsley (optional)
Tabasco sauce (optional)
Pinch of salt

Preparation

Using a pull hand chopper, chop onions and tomatoes to desired size. You can also dice by hand, or use scissors to cut tomatoes and onions for scissor salsa!

Mix onions and tomatoes in a bowl and squeeze the juice of 1/2 a lime on top. Add tabasco to make it as hot as you like. Mix again. *It's best that teachers handle the tabasco*

Optional: chop 1/2 cup of parsley or cilantro - try using the scissors to chop! Mix with other ingredients.

Enjoy! Salsa will store a few days in the refrigerator.

Did you know? 

'Salsa' is the Italian and Spanish word for sauce. English speaking countries often refer to the sauces typical of Mexican cuisine as salsas. The Aztecs were the first to combine chilis and tomatoes into what we would call salsa today!

There are over 10,000 different varieties of tomatoes in the world! Try combining different types of tomatoes in your salsa recipe. You can even use yellow, purple or orange tomatoes to give your salsa a rainbow appearance!

Garden Salsa

Enjoy this fresh and easy-to-make chunky salsa recipe with corn tortillas or quesadillas. Making salsa is a great way for kids to practice their chopping skills, or try scissor salsa! Have your students chop the salsa ingredients using scissors.

Fun, fast and delicious!

**Thanks to Leila Brodner,
Cupar, Saskatchewan**





Ingredients

1 box of pasta will need:

1 cup fresh basil leaves
1 cup of chopped kale
1 clove garlic, minced or chopped
½ cup grated parmesan cheese
1 tsp lemon juice
½ tsp lemon zest
¼ cup olive oil
salt & pepper to taste

Preparation

1. Cook pasta as per box directions.
2. Place garlic, basil, kale, lemon juice and zest and parmesan in food processor and pulse until it resembles crumbs or paste (you can also add broccoli, canned chickpeas (1 cup), and avocado).
3. While running the processor, drizzle the olive oil in a thin, steady stream.
4. Add salt and pepper to taste, pour over hot or cold cooked pasta and toss until lightly coated.

Take it a step further! 

Pesto can be frozen for future use.

Any kind of pasta can be used, gluten free if you want. If you would like to do this in the classroom, cook pasta at home, refrigerate and it is ready to go to school when you need it.

Basil & Kale Pesto Pasta

Fresh and yummy, this recipe can be used as a dip, pizza sauce, a glaze or marinade for shrimp/fish, chicken, and meat, garlic bread, add to stir-frys, soups, meatballs, burgers, spaghetti sauce and scrambled eggs/omelets.

**Thanks to Maureen,
LGT Newfoundland**





Ingredients

1 stem and leaves of mint
1 mug of Boiling water
Honey to taste as desired

Preparation

Take 1 stem with leaves attached. Use dried or fresh.

If you are using fresh mint, try bruising the leaves to break their cell walls and release their oils. Bruising is an easy thing to do, just simply bend or press the leaves so they show a wet crease, denoting the broken cells inside.

Place your tea in a bowl or mug. Pour boiling water over your leaves and let steep for at least two minutes. You can let your tea steep longer for a stronger taste.

Add honey to taste as desired.

Enjoy!

Did you know? 

Mint has long been a part of the human diet. Mint has been found in Egyptian tombs from as far back as 1000 BC!

Mint is used in traditional medicine mainly for the treatment of painful stomach and chest pain. It can also relieve respiratory difficulties and skin burns because it produces cooling effect.

Âmiskowêhkask Tea (mint tea)

A wonderful tasting tea that First Nation people's traditionally used to help with coughs, chest infections, upset stomach, headaches and fever.

**Thanks to Kari Anderson,
McDermid Community School,
Regina, Saskatchewan**





Ingredients

1 cup water
1/2 cup vinegar
6 tbsp sugar
2 1/4 tsp salt

Preparation

First, heat water and vinegar over medium low heat.

Add sugar and salt and whisk until dissolved.

Pour over your chopped fruits and vegetables of choice. You can use while still warm or cooled.

Pickles can be eaten after one hour in brine, but are best consumed after two days or up to one week.

You can try experimenting with different types of vinegar (apple cider, rice or wine vinegar), and try adding spices or aromatics.

Which veggies are best?

Pickling is best done with super-fresh vegetables. Save your older or bruised veggies for soups and sauces. Almost any vegetable can be pickled, and the shape you choose to pickle in is entirely up to you. You can even combine vegetables for your own recipe. Here are a few suggestions for preparing vegetables:

- **Thinly slice:** cucumbers, summer squash, ginger, red onion
- **Cut into spears:** carrots, cucumbers
- **Peel:** carrots
- **Blanch:** green beans (optional, but helps preserve their color)

Spice it up! Try your own combination of spices, herbs and garlic. Here are some of our favourites:

- **Fresh herbs:** dill, thyme, oregano, and rosemary hold up well
- **Dried herbs:** thyme, dill, rosemary, oregano, or majoram
- **Garlic cloves:** smashed for mild garlic flavor, or sliced for stronger garlic flavor
- **Fresh ginger:** peeled and thinly sliced
- **Whole spices:** mustard seed, coriander, peppercorns, red pepper flakes
- **Ground spices:** turmeric or smoked paprika are great for both color and flavour



Pickling Liquid

Pickling is the ancient culinary craft of preserving foods in salt brine or vinegar. Over millennia, cultures across the globe have tinkered with pickling recipes.

This is a quick and easy recipe for brine to use for quick pickling. Quick pickling doesn't require any canning. Flavour your brine with herbs and spices, or try picking up a pre-made 'pickling spice' at the grocery or farmers' market.

**Thanks to Chef Norm Pastorin,
Manitoba**



Ingredients

2 cups lettuce or chard
2 cups spinach or other greens or sprouts
2 eggs
1/4 cup milk
1/2 cup vanilla greek yogurt
2 tbsp. honey
2 tbsp. oil
1 tbsp. vanilla
1 cup flour
1/4 cup ground flax
2 tsp baking powder Sunflower sprouts
Blueberries
Maple syrup

Preparation

Blend first 8 ingredients in blender. In a separate bowl, mix flour and ground flax.

Pour into bowl with blended dry ingredients. Pour into bowl with flour and ground flax. Stir until just moistened.

Spoon mixture onto hot oiled griddle. Flip when bubbles begin to form.

Serve with fresh blueberries and sunflower sprouts with maple syrup drizzled lightly over top.

Did you know? 

The earliest known pancakes were made about 12,000 years ago from ground grains and nuts, mixed with water or milk and cook on hot stones.

The record for the highest pancake toss is 9.47m (31ft 1in) made in New York in 2010. Wow!

Green Smoothie Pancakes

Think of all of the nutrition that you can pack into a smoothie... but in pancake form! These smoothies are both nutritious and delicious, and have become a breakfast favourite in many households. Kids love the taste and the fun colour! You can even prep ahead of time, refrigerate and reheat for meal time.

**Thanks to Chef Kevin Waddell
and the Centre for Learning,
Stony Plain, AB**





Ingredients

1 pound carrots
(about 10-12 medium carrots)
1 1/2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp sea salt
1/2 tsp black pepper
1/2 tsp garlic powder
1/2 tsp thyme

Preparation

Preheat oven to 400°. Start by washing the carrots and peeling them (peeling is optional, but wash well). Cut the carrots into even sticks that are roughly 4 inches long and about 1/2 inch thick.

Put the cut carrots into a bowl and drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle the sea salt, garlic powder, herbs and spices on top. Stir the carrots to evenly coat with the oil and spices.

Place the carrots on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Make sure the carrots are evenly spread and not stacked on top of each other.

Put the carrots in the oven and bake for about 25-35 minutes, checking halfway through to move the carrots around or flip them on the sheet to get even cooking.

Once you can pierce the carrots easily with a fork and there is a slight browning/ crisping on the edges, they are done. Remove them from the oven and allow to cool for a few minutes.

Did you know?



Some veggies are sweet! We don't always notice how sweet vegetables are when we are used to eating sugary foods or sweetened beverages that desensitize our tastebuds. As we choose less sugary foods, we realize that many plants have their own unique sweetness. Most root vegetables, like carrots, have natural sugars and starches that are a great option for helping kids adopt a liking for vegetables.



Baked Carrot Fries

Made with carrots and baked instead of fried, this crunchy snack is a much healthier alternative to traditional potato chips. This recipe is super-simple, fast and great to include kids, as they work on their chopping skills!

**Thanks to Leila Brodner,
Cupar, Saskatchewan**





Ingredients

1 cup packed kale
1 banana
1 avocado
Lemon juice, to taste
Ice, as needed
Water, as needed
Yogurt (optional)
Honey (optional)

Preparation

Place all ingredients into your blender and process until smooth.

You might adjust the ingredients to taste. For example, you might add more banana for sweetness, or add honey or water as needed for desired thickness.

Enjoy! Smoothies are best enjoyed as soon as possible, but can be stored for a day in the fridge if needed.

Take it a step further! 

Try making your own smoothie recipe or do a quick internet search for LOTS of smoothie recipes using garden produce. You might even try your own Rainbow Smoothie. Can you think of one ingredient to add for every colour of the rainbow?

Kale Banana Smoothie

Smoothies are a great way to get fussy eaters to consume fresh fruits and vegetables. When kids are first getting used to smoothies, use more fruits than greens. Gradually add more greens as they get used to the taste. You can add kale, collards, spinach and more!

**Thanks to Maureen,
LGT Newfoundland**





Makes 24 small slices, serves 6-10 as an appetizer

Ingredients

Handful of cherry tomatoes
1 cucumber
2 cloves raw garlic
1 teaspoon of roasted garlic
1 tablespoon of olive oil
1 teaspoon of balsamic vinegar
6-9 basil leaves
Sea salt
Black pepper
1/4 olive oil
1 baguette
Aged cheddar

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Dice tomatoes, cucumber and garlic. In bowl mix salt, pepper and olive oil. Add tomato and cucumbers to the bowl and mix well.

Slice your baguette into small pieces. Top with your tomato mixture and cover in shredded aged cheddar.

Bake for 10 minutes at 350 degrees.

Remove from oven and drizzle with balsamic vinegar and top with chopped basil.

Fresh Bruschetta

A simple and healthy finger food that kids can enjoy and help prepare! Once you have your bread base, you can be creative with your toppings. After your first batch of bruschetta, try creating your own bruschetta recipe!

**Thanks to Maureen,
LGT Newfoundland**





Ingredients

1 cup dry quinoa
1/2 - 1 cup of chives
2 cups tomatoes
2 cups cucumber
At least 1 cup of mint
1-2 cups of parsley
2 lemons
1/4 cup of olive oil
Sea Salt & Pepper to taste
1 can of sliced black olives (optional)
Raw honey to taste (optional)

Preparation

Cook the quinoa before hand, so it is cool and ready to eat.

Harvest your mint, parsley, tomatoes, cukes and chives from the garden. We love to make this in the first week or two back after summer holidays.

Rinse and chop your vegetables. You can dice cucumbers and tomatoes, and snip the chives and herbs with scissors.

Cut the lemons in half and squeeze the juice out of them into a glass measuring cup. Add olive oil and honey to lemon juice if using.

Combine all ingredients in a big bowl. Drain olives and add to bowl.

.Season with Sea Salt and Black Pepper to taste.

Did you know?



This scrumptious salad is loaded with protein, vitamins and minerals.

Take it on a picnic and enjoy it outside!



Garden Tabbouleh

This prairie adaptation of the classic mediterranean salad is a wonderful way to enjoy the fresh herbs that grow in our garden boxes in the outdoor classroom. If you're lucky you might even be able to use all garden ingredients except for the dressing, olives and quinoa. You can probably find Canadian grown quinoa from the prairies!

**Thanks to Anna Rose,
Prairie Sky School,
Regina, Saskatchewan**



