

Hogtown HomeGrown

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Inside this issue:

The raw facts about milk and cheese 1

Winnie's Favorite Frittata 1

Local and Fresh—Oregano 2

Chile Powder 2

Save the World—One Dinner at a Time 3

Eggplant Curry with Thai Green Curry Sauce 3

Eggplant Stew with Oregano 3

Fresh Figs with Soft Cheese and Ginger 3

Lemon Cheesecake and Blueberry Topping 4

The raw facts about milk and cheese

I don't know about you, but I have flirted with a raw food diet. That week was full of fresh fruit, salads, interesting soups and a lot of chewing. Lately, I've had an interest in another type of raw food—raw dairy products—basically milk from cows or goats that is never heated. Not heating means that the milk retains multitudes of good enzymes and bacteria that are good for your body and good for the taste of both the milk and cheese. Raw milk is used for fresh and aged cheese throughout the world. There is evidence that consuming raw milk products from grass fed herds can be extremely beneficial.

During the early 20th century, as the family farm gave way to factory farming, the milk from dozens of farms was collected into one tank and shipped to be processed. When the milk is combined, there is no way to trace back any possible contamination. So more than a century ago, for the safety of the nation's milk supply, the federal government instituted mandatory pasteurization. Pasteurization is the heating of milk to kill all bacteria, good and bad, along with all the enzymes, such as lactic acid.

What if a farm has excess milk or wants to use raw milk to make a fresh, un-aged cheese? According to Florida law, raw dairy products are not deemed suitable for human consumption, but a farm can get inspected and certified to produce pet food. And that's what farmers in Florida must do to sell raw dairy products—sell their raw milk and cheese in containers labeled "For Pet Consumption Only."

I get my dog's fresh cheese at the farmers markets these days. As a conscientious pet owner, would I feed it to my pets if I didn't think it was safe? Of course not! Raw dairy products are a wholesome, beneficial addition to the diet, produced in clean, inspected facilities. So, now that you know the raw facts, here's my recipe for my dog's favorite frittata—she has been known to share it with me from time to time!

Winnie's Favorite Frittata

INGREDIENTS

1 Tablespoon olive oil	2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 cup spinach, finely chopped	1 potato, cooked and chopped
4 eggs, beaten	2 Tablespoons fresh soft cheese

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Heat an oven-proof skillet, then add olive oil and stir in garlic. Sauté over medium heat until completely softened, but not browned. Add spinach and potato, cooking until spinach is wilted. Add beaten eggs, stirring lightly to distribute veggies. Dot fresh cheese evenly over the egg mixture. Place skillet in hot oven and cook until egg is completely set. Remove from oven and cool before dividing into 4 servings. Cut into bite-sized pieces and serve. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

NOTE: Due to their possible toxic reaction in pets, do not substitute mushrooms, onions or tomatoes. Before using any other veggie, check with your vet, since this list is not complete.



**Tioga
Monday Market**
Mondays 4-7pm
Tioga Town Center
West Newberry Road



**Union Street
Farmers Market**
Wednesdays 4-7pm
Community Plaza
Downtown Gainesville



**High Springs
Farmers Market**
Thursday 2-7pm
Downtown High Springs
Corner Main St and 1st Ave
farmersmarket.highsprings.com



**Haile Village
Farmers Market**
Saturdays 830-12pm
Haile Plantation
off Tower Road



**Alachua County
Farmers Market**
Saturdays 830-1pm
5920 NW 13th Street
www.441market.com

What's Fresh Right Now?

Cucumbers—mini seedless, slicers, kirby
Eggplant—purple/white italian, oriental
Figs—celeste, LSU gold/purple,
brown turkey
Garlic—chives
Grapes—muscadines
Herbs—italian/thai/lemon basil, spear-
mint, peppermint, chives,
oregano, rosemary, sage
Honey
Melons—watermelon, red and yellow
(seeded and seed-less), cantaloupe
Okra
Onions—sweet, red, yellow
Pears
Peas—white acre
Peppers—green/red/orange/yellow sweet
bell, cubanelle, datil, thai, hot and
heatless jalapeno and habanero
Pineapple
Potatoes—red, white
Squash—summer, zucchini, spaghetti,
acorn, golden acorn, butternut,
calabasa
Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes—beefsteak, grape, cluster,
heirloom, cherry, black cherry,
red/yellow plum, green

Farmers markets sell more than just produce these days. In addition to craft items, plants and services like massage or guitar lessons, there's lots to eat at your local markets. At some farmers markets, you can buy freshly-made breads and pastries, pierogies and biscotti. Local restaurants provide samples, in addition to selling meals and snacks. Grass-fed beef, a variety of seafood and wonderful aged cheeses are also for sale. In addition, dairy products and eggs are available for your pets, plus homemade pet treats and even pet-sitters.

Local and Fresh— Oregano

It seems so simple—just pick up some oregano and use it—but what kind do you have? Common oregano (also know as Greek Oregano) has a mild flavor, tiny leaves and grows wild in the hills of Greece and other Mediterranean countries. A member of the *Origanum* family, it is related to marjoram, and is sometimes known as wild marjoram. Spanish oregano is another member of the *Origanum* family—it has a slightly stronger taste than common oregano.

Then there's Mexican oregano, confusingly known as Mexican marjoram or wild sage. It is a pungent member of the *Lippia* family. If a recipe specifies Mexican oregano, there is no adequate substitute.

Oregano is a staple of recipes in many countries. Mix it with lemon and garlic for a Greek inspired flavor. Combine oregano with basil and thyme for a traditional Italian taste. Spanish cooking marries olive oil and tomatoes with oregano for a bright yet earthy flavor.

Oregano was not even readily available or popular in America until after World War II—apparently soldiers stationed in Italy fell in love with pizza and pasta sauce and brought their love for the taste of oregano home. Now it is not only found in pizza parlors throughout the country, oregano is also a common ingredient in chile powder—a prime ingredient in yummy bowls of chili from Cincinnati to Texas.

Chile Powder

In a 300 degree oven, lightly toast several types of dried chiles—pick some for flavor and some for heat. In a dry skillet, toast cumin seeds until fragrant, then crush. Combine chiles and cumin in a blender with dried oregano (preferably Mexican) and grind to a powder. Garlic powder is optional—I prefer fresh garlic in my chili.

Eggplant with Thai Green Curry Sauce

INGREDIENTS

2 Tablespoons olive oil	4 cups eggplant, chopped
1 clove elephant garlic, sliced	1 carrot, grated
1 1/2 cups garbanzo beans, cooked	1 can coconut milk
1 Tablespoon thai green curry paste	1/2 teaspoon sugar
1/4 teaspoon fish sauce	tamari or salt to taste
6-8 basil leaves, cut into chiffonade	1/4 cup roasted cashews (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Heat olive oil in lidded pan over medium-high heat. Add eggplant and stir to coat completely with oil. Sauté for 3-5 minutes, stirring frequently to avoid sticking. Stir in garlic, carrot and garbanzo beans, lower heat to medium, cover and cook for about 10 minutes, until the eggplant is tender and garlic is soft. Mix together the coconut milk, curry paste, sugar and fish sauce. Pour over veggies, stir well and let simmer on low heat uncovered for at least 10 minutes. Stir well and taste for salt. Top with basil and serve with optional cashews. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

Eggplant Stew with Oregano

INGREDIENTS

2 Tablespoons olive oil	4 cups eggplant, chopped
1/2 onion, chopped	2 cloves garlic, chopped
3 cups very small plum tomatoes	1/4 cup fresh oregano, divided
1 teaspoon dried thyme	1 teaspoon dried basil

DIRECTIONS

Heat olive oil in a lidded pan over medium-high heat. Add eggplant and stir to coat completely with oil. Add onion and stir to mix well. Cover and cook veggies for 5 minutes, until eggplant begins to soften and onion become translucent. Uncover and stir in garlic, tomatoes and 2 Tablespoons of oregano. Cover again and cook over medium heat until tomatoes have burst and stew is juicy. Add dried herbs and taste for salt and pepper. Turn heat to low, cover and simmer for additional 10 minutes. Stir in remaining fresh oregano and serve. Can be served hot or at room temperature. It is great with a crusty chunk of bread to absorb the juices or try it over rice or pasta for a more substantial meal.

Fresh Figs with Soft Cheese and Ginger

INGREDIENTS

2 figs per person	2 Tablespoons soft cheese per person
1 piece crystallized ginger, cut in slivers	4 walnut halves (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Cut figs in half. Top with equal portions of cheese, ginger slivers and walnuts (optional). Serve with a cup of hot tea or a dessert wine for a perfect light dessert.

Tricks and Tips

This eggplant dish can be served over rice or pasta, but try it with gnocchi. Italian dumplings with coconut milk curry? It works! Cook the gnocchi, drain well, stir in after coconut milk and simmer as directed.

Tricks or Tips

This recipe calls for both fresh and dried herbs, but substitutions are easy. Fresh herb flavor is not as concentrated as dried, so when using dry instead of fresh, use half the amount. If the recipe call for dry herbs and you only have fresh, use twice the amount.

Tricks and Tips

Chevre, fresh soft goat cheese, is perfect with figs, but you can substitute ricotta, cream cheese or marscapone.

Hogtown HomeGrown

Local and Seasonal Recipes, Menus and More
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Blueberry Topping

In a saucepan, over medium heat, crush two cups blueberries—try using a potato masher. Cook about 15 minutes, until berries are juicy.

Add zest of one lemon and 1 Tablespoon lemon juice. Simmer until thickened. Add two more cups blueberries, bring to a boil and let simmer one minute. Transfer to a heat-proof dish, cover and refrigerate until chilled.

Lemon Cheesecake

INGREDIENTS

1 cup crushed butter cookies (Pepperidge Farm Chess Cookies are my choice)

1 lemon, zested

2 Tablespoon butter, melted

2 Tablespoons granulated sugar

1 teaspoon butter, softened

32 ounces cream cheese, softened (4 - 8 ounce packages, light works fine)

1/2 cup granulated sugar

1/4 cup honey

1 lemon, zested

4 eggs, room temperature

1/4 teaspoon each lemon and vanilla extracts

1 Tablespoon cornstarch, sifted

1/8 teaspoon salt

1/4 cup cream or milk

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Prepare crust by combining the first 4 ingredients and pressing mixture into bottom of 10" springform pan. Use softened butter to coat sides of pan, then set aside. Beat cream cheese with sugar, honey and zest. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Mix in remaining ingredients until combined. Pour into prepared pan. Place on cookie sheet and bake for 15 minutes. Without opening oven, turn oven temperature down to 325 degrees and bake 45 minutes. Cool in pan at room temperature. Cover and chill at least 4 hours before serving. Serve with Blueberry Topping. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.