

# Hogtown HomeGrown

Volume 3 Issue 2

February 2008

**Inside this issue:**

<b>Tabouleh— Cracked Wheat Salad</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Poisonous Cousins au Gratin</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Save the World—One Dinner at a Time</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Mjadarah - Lentils, Rice and Browned Onions</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Fattoush - Chopped Salad with Pita Bread</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Ginger Garlic Dumplings with Sauce</b>	<b>4</b>

## The other half of my roots

Most of the food memories I've shared with you reflect only my mom's Southern heritage and cooking style, but there is another side of my family with a food legacy that is equally as rich and even more flavorful. I am a second-generation American on my dad's side, full of recipes and taste sensations from Eastern Mediterranean cultures.

When my grandparents emigrated from Syria and Lebanon at the turn of the 20th century, they did not leave their language or food behind. Sitto's (Arabic for grandmother) kitchen was filled with sights, smells and sounds from another world as she made meals from fresh, seasonal ingredients, some grown in her own garden. She created from scratch items we take for granted will be available at our stores—foods such as pita bread, phyllo dough and stuffed grape leaves. I still marvel at her incredible patience in stretching the paper-thin phyllo dough by hand until the pattern of her kitchen table's oilcloth showed through or the perseverance required to make dozens of stuffed, rolled grape leaves for a family gathering.

I still make some of my favorite dishes and even successfully baked a batch of homemade pita bread a few years ago. While America may be a melting pot, it is the preservation of each family's unique roots that give us a foundation to build upon—my roots are definitely in the kitchen.

## Tabouleh—Cracked Wheat Salad

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup cracked (bulghur) wheat
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped (about 1 cup)
- 3 tomatoes, seeded (cut in half horizontally and squeeze to remove seeds) and chopped
- 1 large bunch flat-leaf parsley, chopped (about 2 cups)
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon dried mint
- 1/4 teaspoon salt (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

Soak cracked wheat in 3 cups of warm water for one hour, then drain thoroughly until as dry as possible. Mix in green onions, stirring and crushing onions into the damp grains. Add tomatoes and parsley, mixing well. Pour in oil and juice and stir until grains are completely coated. Crush dried mint between your palms over salad until it is finely powdered and stir to combine. Let sit 15 minutes or more to develop flavors. Taste and add salt if needed. Serve immediately or refrigerate covered for up to 3 days.

## Tricks and Tips

Keep your parsley fresh by washing and trimming it as soon as you get it home. Wrap each bunch in dry paper towels and store in a plastic bag in your refrigerator. The paper towels are essential to keep the parsley firm and crisp.

## It's Citrus Time

There is so much citrus available right now—I had to give it a special column. The vendors usually have samples, so try some new varieties!

regular and red navel oranges  
hamlin oranges  
ambersweet oranges  
blood oranges  
pineapple oranges  
sour oranges

tangelos

sunburst and honey tangerines

white, red and pink grapefruit

regular and Meyer lemons

kumquats (sweet)  
calomondins (sour)

# Local and Fresh—Parsley

When I was growing up, a trip to almost any restaurant guaranteed there would be something fresh on your plate—the parsley garnish! Always the curly-leaf variety, this bit of greenery was meant to be an accent of color, assuring the customer that the food was created with a regard to artistry as well as taste. Not that the parsley itself had much taste, but if it was fresh, I would follow my mom's lead and eat it after my meal—a breath freshener of sorts!

Today I prefer the flat-leaf Italian parsley over the curly-leaf variety for one reason only—the superior taste. It's fresh, vibrant and lends a finishing touch of color and flavor to many dishes. It is an absolute requirement in pasta salads, tabouleh and clam sauce. Try just a little sprinkled over your favorite dish—it sure beats that clump of green on the side of your plate!

## What's Fresh Right Now?

Beans—green  
Beets—roots and greens  
Broccoli  
Cabbage—green, red, bok choy, savoy  
Carrot—bunches, nantes coreless  
Cucumbers—hydroponic English  
Fennel  
Garlic—chives, elephant  
Greens—tuscan kale, white Russian kale, collards, mustard, turnip, dandelion, escarole, rutabaga, rappini, sorrel, spinach, Chinese mustard  
Herbs—basil, sage, rosemary, cilantro, parsley, dill, lime leaf  
Kohlrabi  
Lettuce—red leaf, green leaf, salad mix, Arugula, spicy mix, hydroponic Romaine and Bibb, Boston leaf  
Onions—yellow, green and red scallions  
Pecans  
Peppers—green, red sweet Bell, hot  
Potatoes—sweet potatoes  
Radishes—globe, daikon  
Rutabaga—roots and greens  
Strawberries—Festival, Camarosa  
Tomatoes—cluster, cherry, beefsteak, green  
Turnips—roots and greens

## Poisonous Cousins\* au Gratin

### INGREDIENTS

1 potato per person, boiled and sliced thinly  
1 tomato per person, sliced thinly  
1 egg per person, hard-boiled, chopped finely  
1 clove garlic per person, smashed and chopped  
1-2 teaspoons butter or olive oil per person  
1/4 cup flat-leaf parsley per person, chopped  
1/4 cup parmesan per person, grated

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease a shallow oven-proof baking dish and cover the bottom with sliced potatoes. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Top with tomatoes, making sure to cover all the potatoes. In a bowl, mash together the egg, garlic, butter or oil and parsley until thoroughly blended. Sprinkle on top of tomatoes, spreading to the edges. Top with parmesan cheese. Bake for 20-30 minutes—until everything is sizzling and cheese is starting to brown. Let sit for a few minutes before serving. This is a complete meal!

\*Both potatoes and tomatoes are members of the nightshade family, which, due to some of their truly poisonous cousins, caused people to avoid tomatoes until the myths were proven false in 1820 by a brave taster in New Jersey.

## Mjudara—Lentils, Rice and Browned Onions

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup dried lentils	3 cups water
1 teaspoon ground cumin	1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
1 cup long grain brown rice	2 cups water
3 large onions, chopped	1/4 cup olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste	

### DIRECTIONS

Rinse lentils, picking out damaged peas and stones. Place in lidded saucepan with 3 cups water, cumin and cayenne and bring to a boil. Lower heat to simmer, cover and cook for 45 minutes, until lentils are cooked through, but not mushy. Remove from heat and let sit until ready to use.

In another lidded saucepan, heat rice in pan, add 2 cups water and bring to boil. Lower heat, cover and cook 40-45 minutes, until all water is absorbed. Fluff with fork and let sit until ready to use.

Heat a large, heavy skillet, add oil and then stir in onions until they are coated. Turn the heat down to low, so the onions are still sizzling lightly. Stir occasionally while cooking at least 45 minutes, until onions are soft, browned and sweet.

In a large serving dish combine lentils, rice and half the onions, stirring well. Taste for seasonings and add salt and pepper as desired. Top with the rest of the onions and any residual olive oil.

Can be served immediately, but tastes best at room temperature. Great for potlucks and picnics.

### **Tricks and Tips**

There are many variations of this staple recipe throughout the Mediterranean.

Some call for cooking the rice and lentils together, some add more spices and some blacken the onions until crispy. Once you've mastered the basic recipe, create a version for your family!

## Fattoush—Chopped Salad with Pita Bits

### INGREDIENTS

2 stale pita breads, broken into small pieces  
4 juicy tomatoes, chopped  
1 large cucumber, peeled (if necessary) and chopped  
4-6 green onions, chopped  
1 head romaine lettuce, chopped into bite-sized pieces  
1 bunch flat-leaf parsley  
1/4 cup olive oil  
1/2 cup lemon juice  
salt and pepper to taste

### DIRECTIONS

Mix together all the veggies in a large bowl. Add all of the pita pieces. Toss veggies with olive oil and lemon juice, stirring well to coat everything, especially the pita. Taste for seasoning and add salt and pepper if desired. Allow the flavors to develop for about 30 minutes before serving. Toss again before serving.

If you like garlic, add one or two grated cloves to the veggie mixture, making sure the salad is stirred well to distribute the garlic evenly.

### **Tricks and Tips**

Make this or any salad a complete meal by adding 1 can of drained garbanzo beans. Other add-ins can bring out lots of flavor, but keep an eye on salt and fat content if you decide to add either 1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese or 1/2 cup chopped Kalamata olives.

# Hogtown HomeGrown

Local and Seasonal Recipes, Menus and More  
Copyright © 2007 Stefanie Samara Hamblen

HogtownHomeGrown.com

352 374-8561

hogtownhomegrown@gmail.com

Please support our distributors and advertisers!

Northwest Seafood—Marketplace & Tioga Town Center,  
Bageland, Gainesville Health and Fitness Women's Center,  
Maude's, 2nd Street Bakery, The Bagel Bakery, Goerings,  
Sweet Dreams Homemade Ice Cream, Wild Iris Bookstore,  
BodyTech, Books, Inc., Downtown and Millhopper Libraries,  
Leonardo's—Millhopper, The Perfect Gift,  
The Jones—Eastside, Mother Earth Markets,  
Sunflower Health Foods, The Flour Pot Bakery,  
441 Farmers' Market, Ward's Supermarket

## SWEETWATER ORGANIC COFFEE ROASTERS

Gourmet Heirloom  
Organic Specialty Coffee  
Artisan Roasted  
Fairly Traded  
USDA Organic

(352) 372-8342

www.sweetwaterorganiccoffee.com

## Mosswood Farm Store

Earth-Friendly Essentials for  
Country Living and Urban Survival  
Open Daily except Monday  
Sunday Farmers' Market 1-5pm  
703 Cholokka Boulevard  
Just off 441 in Micanopy  
352-466-5002

Now Serving Organic Coffee & Pastries

## Simply Gorgeous

Stationery and Gifts

Vera Bradley

Mon-Sat 10-7 Sunday 12-5

Union Street Station

across from the Hippodrome

(352) 376-3266

www.simplygorgeousgifts.com



\$10.00 per pound  
352 374 8561



## Tioga Monday Market

Mondays 4-7pm  
Tioga Town Center  
West Newberry Road



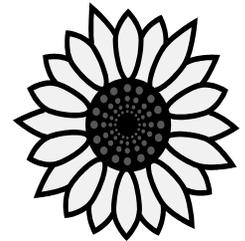
## Union Street Farmers' Market

Wednesdays 4-7pm  
Community Plaza  
Downtown Gainesville



## High Springs Farmers Market

Thursdays 2-6pm  
James Paul Park  
Downtown High Springs



## Haile Plantation Farmers' Market

Saturdays 830am-12noon  
Haile Village Center  
off Tower Road

## Tricks and Tips

Depending upon where you live, the Chinese New Year is February 6 or 7—The Year of the Rat!

Kids love holiday celebrations, so why not make these dumplings with them? Grab your camera and make some memories! Gung Hay Fat Choy! Happy New Year!

# Ginger Garlic Dumplings with Sauce

## INGREDIENTS

2 cups total of cabbage, carrots and green onions, chopped or shredded finely  
1 Tablespoon each grated fresh ginger and garlic  
1 teaspoon tamari or soy sauce  
1 teaspoon sesame oil  
1 package won-ton wrappers (45 wrappers)

## DIRECTIONS

Combine cabbage, carrots, green onion, ginger, garlic, tamari and sesame oil, stir well and set aside. Fill each wonton wrapper with just a teaspoon of filling. Fold in half and seal edges with water—a simple triangle works best. Place uncooked dumplings on a towel-lined cookie sheet and make sure to cover well with a double layer of towels to keep them from drying out. Now you have 3 choices: 1) Steam dumplings over simmering water for 10-15 minutes. 2) Fry in a small amount of oil in a frying pan until brown and crispy. 3) Boil in a generous amount of water for 15 minutes until translucent. Serve dipping sauce on the side or drizzle right onto dumplings. We prefer the boiled dumplings with lots of sauce under and on top!

SAUCE—1 part tamari, 1 part honey, 1/2 part grated ginger, 2 parts water—Mix well.