

Hogtown HomeGrown

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Resolutions and Traditions

Granny and Granddaddy always say that on New Year's Day you have to eat some black-eye peas, some greens and some hog jowl—the peas are for jingling money and the greens are for folding money. And the hog jowl—well that just proves you have enough holiday money left to put meat on your table!

Those Southern traditions live on in my house, except for the hog jowl—Morningstar Farms has not created a hog jowl substitute. I have added one tradition from my childhood, M and M candies! My babysitter's family served a big bowl of them at their New Year's Eve party when I was five and I have done the same every year since.

How do you follow tradition and serve "greens" to a husband who would rather eat anything but turnips or collards? How do you get your kids to enjoy black-eye peas? Well folks, in my house spinach is green and black-eye peas do not have to be served hot, although we love Hoppin' John—black-eye peas, rice, sautéed onions and crumbled veggie bacon, layered and baked in a casserole.

"Greens and beans" are a great way to keep those New Year's resolutions and traditions—they are low in calories, high in vitamins and give you lots of food value after all the empty-calorie treats enjoyed from Thanksgiving until New Year's Eve (okay, the feasting really starts with the Halloween candy, but let's not go there!)

Keep both your resolutions and traditions this year—have a big green salad or cook up a batch of greens, but be sure to finish off those M&Ms before midnight!

Black-eye Pea Salad

INGREDIENTS

4 cups cooked black-eye peas (canned ok!)
1 bunch green onions, chopped
3 ribs celery, chopped
1 red pepper, chopped
1 cucumber, quartered and chopped
2 plum tomatoes, seeded and chopped
1 bunch Italian parsley, chopped
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup red wine vinegar

Gently mix all ingredients except oil and vinegar. (If you aren't gentle, you will end up with mashed black-eye pea salad!) Add oil, vinegar, salt and pepper to taste. Refrigerate until well-chilled. Taste before serving—if it needs a little zip, try Tabasco or a squeeze of lemon juice. Serve on a bed of spinach and you've got your jingling money and your folding money for the year. You're on your own for the hog jowl!

It's Local, It's Fresh, It's Green

Tricks and Tips

The reality is that no matter how well you wash your greens, every once in a while, after you've prepared them, you still feel some grit with your first bite. I promise it won't kill you! My best suggestion is to add some toasted nuts or crunchy croutons. After all, as Granny says, "you've got to eat a peck of dirt before you die."

Salad Baskets are my favorite reason to be in line before the Farmer's Market opens on Saturday mornings. The greens are just-picked fresh, young and tender with a wide variety of types of lettuces in each basket. One basket will provide several family-sized salads for the week, in addition to lettuce leaves for sandwiches.

This time of year, the Farmer's Market is green everywhere you look. Make friends with your favorite merchants and learn about the different greens, how they are grown and how the farmers like to prepare them. I grew up eating "greens, cornbread and pot likker" at Granny's table. As Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings emphatically states in *Cross Creek Cookery*—"This Is a Meal" Now I like to cook my greens fast in a cast iron skillet with a little olive oil and garlic. Here's my "non-recipe" recipe—

One bunch of greens, washed well. (Clean your greens a la Alice Waters—Fill a large bowl, stockpot or sink with cold water. Put unbundled leaves into water and rub your hands over each one, rinse and set aside. Take your time—all the dirt ends up in the bottom of the container.) Bundle greens and using large knife, slice into strips. Heat large cast-iron skillet, add olive oil and greens. Stir fry until wilted, then add chopped garlic to taste and sauté a minute or two more. Turn off heat, sprinkle with lemon juice, salt and pepper. Stir again and serve. We like to splash a little pepper sauce (Tabasco peppers in vinegar) on top for some added zip!

What's fresh right now at the Farmer's Market?

Salad Baskets with several kinds of lettuce
Broccoli, cauliflower and Brussel sprouts
Spinach
Oranges, tangerines, grapefruit, kumquats, lemons
Greens—mustard, turnips, rutabagas, collards, kale
Swiss chard and Chinese cabbage
Daikon Radish
Red and White Scallions
Tomatoes
Cucumbers
Lima Beans, Pole Beans and Green Beans
Radishes
Sweet Potatoes
Yellow and green squash
Herbs
Trees, plants, bedding plants and sprouting bulbs

Mashed Potatoes and Kale

1 pound kale, spinach, cabbage or chard
2 cloves garlic, smashed and chopped
1 sweet onion, chopped
2 Tablespoons olive oil
3 pounds potatoes, boiled
3/4 cup milk, soymilk or veggie broth
salt and pepper
1 Tablespoon butter or margarine (optional)

Tear or cut cleaned green veggie into bite-size pieces. Sauté onion in olive oil until soft and translucent, add garlic and greens, stirring well to coat with oil. Cook until tender, stirring occasionally. Stir milk or broth into greens and heat until it simmers (small bubbles on the edge), then add potatoes, mashing them into the veggies and liquid in the pan. Turn heat to low and mash potato mixture until it as smooth as you want, taste for seasoning and add salt and pepper to taste. Serve mounded in a bowl with a pat of butter on top, if you like. Serves 6-8 easily as a side dish, but it makes a great main course too!

Spinach Salad

INGREDIENTS

1 large bag spinach, washed well, stems removed
1/2 pound sliced mushrooms
8 slices vegetarian bacon, cooked and crumbled
4 boiled eggs, coarsely chopped
1 bunch green onions, sliced
1/3 cup olive oil
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 teaspoon prepared mustard
Garlic, salt, pepper and croutons (optional)

In a large bowl, mix olive oil, lemon juice, (pressed garlic, if you like), mustard and green onions. Add bacon, eggs and mushrooms and mix well. Toss in spinach and mix lightly. Now is the time to add salt, pepper and croutons, if you like, toss again and serve immediately. Serves 3-4.

Adapted from one of Linda McCartney's recipes. (Her cookbooks are a good read!)

Tricks and Tips

Spinach gets used a variety of ways in our house, in eggs, wraps, pitas and pasta sauce, but it also serves as a base for other foods. Try beans, rice, pasta or fresh fruit on a bed of raw spinach.

Celebration Salad

INGREDIENTS

1 bag organic spring mix salad
2 cans mandarin oranges, drained well
1/3 cup dried cranberries
1/4 cup golden raisins
1/3 cup sliced almonds, toasted
3 ounces crumbled chevre (goat cheese)
1/2 cup raspberries
Newman's Raspberry Walnut Vinaigrette

On a large flat platter, spread the spring mix in an even layer, covering the platter. Top with each ingredient, in order, except the dressing. Can be refrigerated up to 4 hours, covered with damp paper towels. Serve the dressing on the side. Also good with Ken's Vidalia Onion Dressing. I take this to potlucks, brunches and showers and it always gets rave reviews.

Caesar Salad

INGREDIENTS

2 heads romaine, washed
1/3 cup olive oil
2 lemons, juiced
2 cloves garlic, smashed and finely chopped
2 anchovy fillets (optional)
1 splash of Worcestershire Sauce
1/2 cup shredded good quality Parmesan
1 cup croutons (homemade are best)
Black pepper, freshly ground

In a very large bowl, mash garlic (and anchovy) into olive oil, add Worcestershire Sauce, and then stir well. Using only the more tender inner leaves, tear the lettuce into bite-sized pieces. Add to bowl and toss to coat with dressing. Add 1/4 cup parmesan, toss again. Add lots of pepper, toss again. (This is best done with an audience, so make a show of it with lots of elbows and bravado!) Add croutons, toss lightly and serve, topped with remaining cheese. Serves 2-4.

Make it into a main dish with the addition of cooked shrimp or chicken—try saving some the next time you grill!

Tricks and Tips

I learned how to make Caesar Salad tableside when I was a waitress at the Boca Raton Hotel and Club. It can be quite a show! Some recipes use an egg, raw or coddled, to make the dressing emulsify, but it truly is not necessary.

Hogtown HomeGrown

Local and Seasonal Recipes, Menus and More
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Stefanie Samara Hamblen

Layered Vegetable Pie

Okay, you could call this quiche, but so many people turn up their noses at pie pan quiche. I updated the basic quiche recipe, added more vegetables and voila—Layered Vegetable Pie!

12 ounces sliced mushrooms, sautéed (add basil or thyme, if you like)
8 cups raw spinach, sautéed (it will reduce to almost nothing, but that's okay)
2 carrots, sliced and sautéed
1 bunch green onions, sliced and sautéed
1 stalk broccoli, chopped into bite-size pieces and sautéed (with basil or thyme, if you like)
8 ounces cheese, grated (Cheddar or Swiss are great, but feta would be good too!)
6 eggs
3 cups milk
1/4 teaspoon each of salt, pepper, cayenne pepper and nutmeg
enough pie crust dough for 2 pies, pressed or rolled into a large casserole or springform pan

Prebake pie crust in a 400 degree oven for 10 minutes. Layer the ingredients in the following order—2 ounces cheese, mushrooms, spinach, carrots, green onions, broccoli, remaining cheese. Beat eggs, milk and spices together. Pour over veggies and cheese. Bake at 350 degrees on a cookie sheet, until center tests done. Cool 15 minutes before cutting. Serves 4-6 at least. (Yes, you can mix all the veggies together, but then you can't call it "Layered" Vegetable Pie!)