

Hogtown HomeGrown

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Just a little bag of sour oranges!

“Let’s make some marmalade!”, Val said. “I’ve got access to some sour oranges for free. I’ll bring over a little bag. We can use jars of marmalade as gifts to thank all the people that help Blue Oven Kitchens.” This seemed like a great idea, since for the past year, we have been raiding my jam pantry, as well as others, to provide thank you gifts.

But like every great idea, there can be a dark side. I have never seen a bag of oranges that big before—it was well over three feet tall and weighed between 35 and 40 pounds. And I had never made marmalade before, although I do like to eat it and had enjoyed our daughter-in-law Anna’s various types of marmalade.

So I do what I always do in such a situation—research. I checked through my cookbooks and favorite online sites. I read the history of oranges in America and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings’ experience with sour orange trees on her property in Cross Creek. And then I dove in—peeling, chopping, boiling—and made the first batch! Strong, tart and bitter, but definitely marmalade! I called it Cracker I and moved on.

Before the week was out, there was also Cracker II, British (have you ever boiled a pot of whole oranges—rind and all?), Marjorie’s, Marjorie’s Adult, Refined and Adult Refined. Marjorie’s was of course based upon her recipe in Cross Creek Cookery and the Refined version was the best of the bunch—sweet yet tart, with just the necessary hint of bitterness. And, yes, adult marmalade has alcoholic content—Gran Gala, triple orange brandy liqueur from Italy. Not content with just marmalade, I also made Candied Orange Peels—not quite like Granny’s but still yummy, especially with a piece of chocolate.

But on the seventh day, there were still oranges. I finished off the week with a batch of Sweet and Sour, combining two types of oranges into a soft, pourable spread. So we now have over 70 jars filled—no oranges or sugar left and we are very low on jars.

Three days after the last jar was sealed and the last pot washed, someone gave me a bag of sour oranges. I used two for this pie—you don’t need any sour oranges, do you?

Old Florida Sweet Potato Pie Filling

INGREDIENTS

2 large sweet potatoes, baked, peeled and mashed
1/2 cup sour orange juice (there is no substitute for this)
1/2 cup pure cane syrup
3 eggs
1/2 cup milk

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix together all ingredients until completely combined. Bake in your favorite pie crust for 30 minutes or until set. Cool before serving. Refrigerate leftovers.



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What's Fresh Right Now?

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Broccoli—green, romanesco
Brussel Sprouts
Cabbage—green, red, chinese
Carrots—small red, yellow/orange
Cauliflower
Citrus—juices, oranges, grapefruit,
tangelos, tangerines
Cucumbers—mini seedless
Garlic—garleeks
Greens—collards, mustards, kale, chard,
escarole, frisee, sorrel, cress,
summerfest, mizuna, turnip
Herbs—rosemary, chives, mint, thyme,
cilantro, parsley, oregano, dill,
lime leaf
Honey
Kale—russian, tuscan, curly
Kohlrabi
Lettuce—leafy green/red, spring mix,
romaine
Microgreens—red cabbage, arugula,
radish, cress
Mushrooms—shitake, oyster
Onions—red/green scallions, dry yellow
Peppers—green/red sweet bell
Potatoes—white, red, sweet
Pumpkins—calabasa, seminole
Radish—microgreens, red globe,
white (daikon), black
Rutabaga
Shoots—pea, corn, sunflower
Spinach—green, red stem
Sprouts—alfalfa, clover, quinoa, wheat,
adzuki, garbanzo, mung bean,
french lentil, green lentil, radish
Starfruit
Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes—red beefsteak, grape, cherry
Turnips

Local and Fresh—

Sour Oranges

When the Spanish landed in St. Augustine over 500 years ago, they brought horses and oranges. The root stock of the Seville or sour orange survived and thrived—modern citrus trees are grafted onto that hardy survivor.

Sour oranges, found throughout Florida, are characterized by thick skins, numerous seeds and juice that tastes like a cross between lemon and grapefruit. It is an intense citrus taste that can be used in place of lemons for drinks, cakes, pies, marinades and, of course, marmalade.

Take some time to freeze sour orange zest and juice now, so you can enjoy a summer barbecue featuring that true Florida taste.

Hot and Sour Orange Zucchini Soup

INGREDIENTS

2 zucchini, chopped
1/4 cup red onion, chopped
2 carrots, chopped
1/2 cup sour orange juice
1 navel orange, peeled, seeded and chopped
4 cups no-chicken or veggie broth
1 Tablespoon tamari or soy sauce
1/8 - 1/4 teaspoon hot pepper flakes
1 Tablespoon sesame oil

DIRECTIONS

Combine zucchini, onion, carrots, juice, chopped orange and broth in a large lid-ded saucepan. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer until veggies are completely tender.

Remove from heat and allow to cool 30 minutes. When cooled, puree soup in a blender or food processor until smooth.

Return soup to saucepan and add tamari and pepper flakes. Return to boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer 30 minutes.

Taste for seasoning. Stir in sesame oil and serve immediately.

Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

Stuffed Cabbage Bundles

INGREDIENTS

3 cups cooked barley
1 cup cooked mushrooms, finely chopped
1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped
1 Tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
1 Tablespoon olive oil
12 large cabbage leaves, trimmed and steamed until the stem is tender
3 cups of your favorite plain tomato sauce
2 teaspoons dried oregano
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1/4 cup raisins, dark or golden

DIRECTIONS

Lightly oil an 8 or 9 inch square baking dish.

In a large bowl, combine barley with mushrooms, parsley, thyme, salt, pepper and olive oil. Stir to combine completely.

Place 1/4 cup of barley mixture onto each cabbage leaf. Fold the stem end over the barley, fold in the sides, then roll into a compact bundle. Place bundles tightly together in a oiled square baking dish.

Mix oregano, coriander and raisins into tomato sauce. Pour sauce over stuffed cabbage bundles, covering completely. Cover baking dish with foil. Bake one hour. Serve hot or warm. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

VARIATION: Local grape leaves may be prepared and stuffed just like Stuffed Cabbage Bundles, although rice is a more traditional filling. Be sure leaves are from organic vines.

Roasted Tomato Sauce

INGREDIENTS

8-10 overripe tomatoes, quartered
1 head garlic, wrapped in foil
olive oil
1 onion, quartered
1 carrot, quartered lengthwise
2-3 cups tomato puree

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line two cookie sheets with foil or parchment.

Place tomatoes on one baking sheet. Place garlic in foil on remaining baking sheet. Place onion and carrot on sheet with garlic and drizzle with oil. Bake one hour, turning once.

Mash roasted veggies in a saucepan. Squeeze in all the roasted garlic. Add tomato puree and simmer covered for one hour. Season as desired. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.



Tricks and Tips

Cabbage rolls are only as good as the cabbage, so choose leaves from the interior of the head. Wash well. Trim the stem flush with the leaf. Place leaves in a steamer basket and steam over boiling water. Check the stem for doneness with a fork. When tender, rinse leaves in cool water and pat dry. Leaves may be prepped one day before stuffing. Store leaves on paper towels in an airtight container in the refrigerator until ready to complete recipe.

Tricks and Tips

Add extra ingredients to plain tomato sauce for new flavors. The sauce for the stuffed cabbage included spices and raisins, but here are a few other ideas—

- Fresh garlic, basil and oregano
- Chopped olives and capers
- Hot peppers, roasted corn
- Oregano, thyme and lemon peel

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Candied Sour Orange Peel

Boil, rinse and drain
orange peel three
times. Make a syrup
of equal parts of sugar
and water in a deep
saucepan—3 cups of
each will be enough to
cook the peel from 12
oranges. Cook peel
about 45 minutes,
until tender. Use a
fork to remove peel
from syrup, place on
parchment or waxed
paper, allow to dry.
Store in airtight jars.

Sour Orange Marmalade

INGREDIENTS

18 Seville or sour oranges

6-10 cups sugar

DIRECTIONS

Wash oranges and use a vegetable peeler to remove rind from 6 oranges. If you are making Candied Sour Orange Peel, then peel all the oranges.

Cut oranges into quarters and place in a very large stockpot, cover with water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for at least one hour, or until oranges are tender.

In a smaller pot place all orange rind and cover with water. Bring to a boil and boil for 10 minutes. Drain, rinse and repeat for a total of three "boil, rinse and drain" cycles. Set aside any rind to be candied. Finely slice the remaining rind for the marmalade. Set aside.

When oranges are tender, cool slightly before pouring into a sieve placed in a clean pot. Push juice through sieve before discarding pulp.

Measure juice and return to pot. Stir in 6 cups of sugar for every four cups of juice. Add cooked, sliced orange rind. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to simmer and cook without a cover until thickened and darker.

Turn off heat and let mixture cool for 10 minutes before continuing, so that the peel will be evenly distributed in jars.

Stir marmalade well and pour into hot prepared jars. Process for 10 minutes in a boiling water bath. Allow to cool completely and check seals before storing in a cool, dark place.