

Hogtown HomeGrown

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Back in the kitchen, jamming again

When Florida passed the Cottage Food Law back in July 2011, I had a bit of a jam problem. While working as a nanny, since I was home anyway, I used nap time to create jams and jellies. With flavors ranging from simple strawberry to grapefruit brûlée, I had over 160 jars from my little jam hobby. Friends and family couldn't eat any more, so with the help of the Florida Legislature and my husband, a truly devoted jam eater, I began selling my sweet treats at markets and gift fairs.

The Illegal Jam Company, with the quirky name that started many a conversation, was born. Remarkable for their concentrated flavors and low sugar content, the jams and jellies were primarily made from local fruit (sorry locavores, but we don't grow apples, cranberries or apricots here in North Central Florida). We would save a few to give as gifts or eat at home, but my little jam business took off. It was so successful that my gallon-sized batches of 14 jars turned into dozens of jars processed at one time in an enamel-ware pot that was too heavy for me to lift.

Then three things happened. First, other jam makers started their own cottage businesses and they liked selling at markets—not my favorite way to spend a morning or afternoon and I admire those who can do it! Second, adult-onset Type II diabetes came back into my life after being under control with diet and exercise. Third, I got “jam” shoulder from the repetitive motions of cleaning fruit, stirring pots, pouring hot jams and lifting jars in and out of boiling water baths.

So I quietly backed away from the jam business. I continued to get treatments for my shoulder and struggled to improve my blood sugar numbers while I watched other jam makers come and go. But old habits are hard to break, so I never quit making apple butter. And how could I say no to special requests for just a few jars of my devoted jam eater's favorites? Apparently I never quit selling jam either, with a couple of customers continuing to check in from time to time to see what I have cooked up.

This spring I have gone back to small batch jams—from 6 -14 jars at a time—not too much for my shoulder and not enough for market sales. I am using honey and maple syrup when possible, so that I can eat the fruits of my labor from time to time, without sending my blood sugar numbers skyrocketing. Before Christmas, with North Carolina apples from the Buchholz band fundraiser, I even made apple butter with no sweeteners at all. It takes a bit of time to cook four gallons of apples down to one gallon of apple butter, but it is worth it.

Strawberry Jam with maple syrup and sweet Marsala wine, Strawberry Margarita Jam with tequila and Gran Gala, Grapefruit Cranberry Jelly Jam and Meyer Lemon Honey Jelly (made from our own lemons and Cross Creek Orange Blossom Honey) have all come out of the jampot in the past month. Yes, jam-making is fun again, but you still won't find me at any markets! Need a jar? Give me a call and I just might have something sweet for you.

What's Fresh Right Now?

Beets—red, gold, striped

Broccoli

Cabbage—green, savoy, red, cone, flat head, napa

Carrots—orange, yellow, white, red

Cauliflower—white, purple, romanesco

Citrus—calamondin, kumquat, satsuma, tangerine, temple, meyer lemon, sour orange, white/red/pink grapefruit, amber-sweet, chinese honey, navel, red navel, parson brown, honey bell, pomelo, pineapple, orlando tangelo

Fennel

Greens—collards, curly/tuscan/red russian kale, mizuna, mustards, stir-fry mix, arugula, bok choy, spinach, radicchio, chard, sorrel

Herbs—garlic chives, turmeric, parsley, cilantro, dill

Kohlrabi—green, purple

Lettuce—bibb, green/red leaf and romaine, butterhead, mixes

Moringa

Mushrooms—shiitakes, dried shiitakes

Onions—red/green scallions

Papaya—green

Peas—sugar snap, snow

Peppers—red/yellow/orange/green sweet bell, green jalapeño, poblano

Radishes—french breakfast, daikon, pink beauty, watermelon, red globe

Roselle—dried

Rutabagas

Shoots and Sprouts

Starfruit

Strawberries

Sweet Potatoes

Tomatoes—cluster, heirloom cherry/beefsteak, grape

Turnips—tokyo, white, purple top

Local and Fresh— Savoy Cabbage

Savoy cabbage is round and green, with distinctively crinkled leaves. It can be used interchangeably with traditional green cabbage.

Look for heads that are heavy for their size, with bright green leaves. Cabbage should have a fresh scent, with no sulphur undertones.

Store refrigerated. If using only part of a head in a recipe, place the remainder in a container or plastic bag after cutting.

Vegan Colcannon

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds russet potatoes, peeled if desired
1 Tablespoon olive oil
1 large onion or leek, diced
4-6 green onions, finely sliced, divided
1/2 savoy cabbage, diced
1 cup unsweetened non-dairy milk
Salt and pepper to taste
2 Tablespoons non-dairy butter, melted

DIRECTIONS

In a large lidded pot, boil potatoes until a fork easily pierces the thickest portion. Remove from pot, cover to keep warm and set aside.

Dry out pot. Heat oil in same pot over medium heat, stir in onion or leek to coat with oil and sauté about five minutes. Stir in white parts of green onions and cabbage. Cover and cook until soft.

Pour milk over cabbage-onion mixture and bring to a simmer. Add potatoes and mash to desired consistency.

Taste and add salt and pepper as desired.

Stir in green onions before mounding into heated serving bowl. Make a well in the center for melted non-dairy butter.

Cover and refrigerate leftovers.



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on your March calendars****

We look forward to seeing you!

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Alachua County Farmers Market

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830am—1pm

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Sabzi *

INGREDIENTS

2 Tablespoons olive oil
1 sweet onion, chopped
1 bulb fennel, chopped
2 cups cauliflower florets
1/4 teaspoon saffron, divided
3 teaspoons garam masala, divided
1 orange, zested and juiced
1 pound extra firm tofu, cubed
2-3 cups no-chicken broth
1/4 cup red lentils, rinsed (do not substitute green or brown lentils)
1/2 cup pearl couscous
1 large tomato, finely diced
1/4 cup raisins

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

In a large oven-proof skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Sauté onion until translucent. Stir in fennel and cauliflower with half the saffron and garam masala. Sauté, stirring occasionally as it cooks.

Once cauliflower is just tender, stir in zest and juice.

Add tofu and enough broth to cover all the vegetables and tofu. Bring to a boil. Stir in lentils and couscous and return to boil.

Stir in tomato, raisins and remaining saffron and garam masala.

Place pan in oven and bake for 20 minutes.

Shake pan, reduce heat to 350 degrees and cook additional 30-40 minutes, until broth is absorbed.

Remove from oven and allow sabzi to rest 5 minutes before serving.

May be served hot or warm.

OPTIONAL TOPPINGS

Chopped nuts (cashews and walnuts maintain a good crunch)

Raisins or currants

Shredded coconut, unsweetened

Grated carrot and/or apple

* This one pan dish is similar to the method and ingredients of an Indian Sabzi, but it is a Hogtown creation and not an attempt at authentic Indian cuisine. While the Indian version is full of vegetables, sabzi is also served in the Middle East, and depending on the country, can be either a platter of fresh herbs served with meals or a cooked herb stew.

Cabbage with Leeks, Cheese and Peppers

INGREDIENTS

2 T olive oil
2 c finely sliced leek,
white and light green
2 T unsalted butter
8 c finely sliced strips
savoy/green cabbage
1/4 c water or broth
4 ounces romano,
finely grated, divided
1 t freshly ground
coarse black pepper
1/2 t finely ground
white pepper
1/2 t red pepper
flakes (optional)

DIRECTIONS

In a large lidded pot,
heat olive oil over
medium heat. Stir in
leeks, cover and
cook until limp.
Add butter and once
it melts, stir in cab-
bage. Cover and
cook over low heat,
stirring occasionally,
until cabbage is very
tender and as limp as
a cooked noodle.

Add water and half
the grated Romano.
Stir vigorously with a
wooden spoon until
creamy. Stir in re-
maining cheese and
peppers and stir
again. Serve hot.



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Tricks and Tips

Ever walk away from flats of strawberries at the farmers markets? Even the six pints in a half flat can seem like too many to deal with all at once. Try these tricks to make it easier.

**WASH BERRIES
ONLY WHEN
READY TO COOK
OR EAT.**

Carefully go through berries and set aside bruised or damaged ones. Trim and cook as soon as possible.

Place two pints in a zipper bag or airtight container and refrigerate for up to 5 days.

Remove leaves, wash, dry and freeze one or two pints of berries whole to use in smoothies.

Strawberry Parfaits

INGREDIENTS

4 cups strawberries, divided
2-4 Tablespoons sugar
1 Tablespoon lemon juice, optional
1 cup whipping cream
1/2 cup toasted nuts or granola, optional

DIRECTIONS

Wash and dry all strawberries. Pick out the 6-8 of the smallest, prettiest berries to decorate parfaits and set aside. Pick out 2 cups of the least ripe to cook. Set aside.

Slice or quarter remaining strawberries. Taste and sprinkle with up to 2 Tablespoons of sugar as desired. Cover and set aside at room temperature.

Remove leaves and white tops from cooking strawberries. Place in saucepan over medium heat. Mash berries as they heat and cook about 15 minutes, until soft and juicy. Add 2 Tablespoons of sugar and 1 Tablespoon of lemon juice and return to boil stirring constantly. Reduce heat and simmer 15 minutes until sauce is thickened. Pour into metal bowl and place in refrigerator to cool.

Whip cream to stiff peaks with whisk or electric mixer.

Layer fresh berries, strawberry sauce and whipped cream in individual serving size clear glass bowls or wine glasses. Repeat layers to fill bowls, topping each with a reserved berry.

Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

NOTE: Parfaits may be made a few hours in advance and refrigerated before serving. For a little crunch, sprinkle some toasted nuts or granola on the top or between the layers.