

July 30, 2008

27 Tammuz 5768

Quote of the Week

And when harvest comes . . . [it] shall be yours as seed for the fields and as food for you and those in your households, and as nourishment for your children.

— *B'reishit*
(Genesis), 47:24



Tuv Ha'Aretz means both "good for the land" and "best of the land."



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Cooking out of the box: A fine meal made using (mostly) ingredients at hand

By LYNN PREIS

"Mom, you're a good cook, but Annette is the best cook ever."

Stab! My daughter the food writer doesn't hold back. But she's right, and I knew I would have my work cut out for me when Annette called me with her latest food challenge: While our husbands would be volunteering to distribute Farmer Vicki's boxes of fresh produce to Tuv Ha-aretz subscribers, she and I would plan a menu around that week's offerings and prepare dinner for our hard-working spouses.

Annette is in fact wonderful cook, and I accepted the challenge.

On the appointed afternoon, Annette and I examined the contents of our boxes: corn, peaches, green beans, bell peppers, kale, cucumbers, zucchini, a white onion, and a bunch of savory. Immediately we set aside the peaches, which were a bit hard, and the kale, which required research.

Then off we went to Whole Foods to pick up the few missing elements for our meal.

Back at my house, Annette prepared a marinade for our "local" (Wisconsin) trout. She liberally doused the four filets with olive oil, lemon juice, some leftover

white wine and savory. While she shucked the corn, I got down our big pot for boiling it.

I trimmed the zucchini and made a salad of onion, tomatoes, green beans, cucumbers, and a few black olives. I prepared a lemony vinaigrette for the salad to complement the fish. Annette trimmed and cut the bell peppers. Together we cut up fruit for a yogurt, blueberry, champagne grapes, and banana dessert. (Oooops! Now, how "local" were the grapes and that banana?)

My husband, Chris, had set up the grill on our balcony overlooking Wrigley Field. I plugged in the fire-starter, and Annette and I poured glasses of wine and chatted happily on the balcony where the zucchini and peppers were acquiring a nice char.

Chris and Eddie arrived at the end of their tour of duty, and we all shared wine, snap peas, and hummus. The moment Chris threw the trout on the grill, I eased the corn into the boiling water. Our meal was simple, very satisfying, and required no recipes.

The challenge had been met. It had been great fun. Annette really is a good cook, and I'm not bad.

Lynn Preis and Annette Salomon, both Tuv shareholders, have cooked together many times over the . . . well, decades.



We are not alone . . . Report from West Orange

Tuv Ha'aretz West Orange (N.J.) has partnered with the JCC's Jewish Health and Healing Center to organize a "Cooking Night" for all Tuv Ha'aretz members to promote healthy eating. In addition, we have set up a Yahoo Group for our members to exchange recipes and discuss their Tuv Ha'aretz experiences. They feel it's more than just picking up produce every week; many are getting to know each other better, bringing the different cultures of our community together.

One of our members has invited our participants to attend Shabbat services at a local synagogue, where a speaker will be discussing KOL — kosher, organic and locally produced foods. We are excited to offer this to our members and feel it is an excellent complement to an organic CSA.

The appearance and fragrance of our fruit and produce (especially basil) draw many inquiring minds to the tables asking about our Tuv Ha'aretz program, how it works and whether they can sign up or buy now. The children enjoy learning about new produce and love to help bag their family's share each week!

Any leftover produce has been thoroughly enjoyed by our hard-working Maintenance Department, as we are thankful for their weekly assistance with the wonderful setup for our program . . . and of course the cleanup at end of the evening.

— *Rabbi Robin Nafshi*

Visitors welcome at farm, but be prepared to roll up your sleeves

Farmer Vicki Westerhoff, the source of our weekly bounty, welcomes visitors to Genesis Growers, her farm in St. Anne, near Kankakee — especially if you're ready to get your fingers dirty!

Volunteer farmers usually put in two or three hours, but anyone who wants to do more will not be denied the opportunity.

Farmer Vicki says Mondays and Thursdays are the days she welcomes visitors/volunteers. She requests that people call her at (815) 953-1512 before coming.

Meanwhile, visit <http://www.genesis-growers.com>, which features a map and a crop chart that covers all the produce through each month this year.

Recipe of the Week: Cucumbers with lemon-sesame dressing

Ingredients:

¼ cup rice vinegar
1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
2 Tbs. sesame seed oil
2 tsp. granulated sugar
1 Tbs. sesame seeds
3 medium cucumbers
1 Tbs. salt

Preparation: Peel cucumbers, halve lengthwise and scoop out seeds. Stack halves flat side down and slice diagonally into pieces ¼ inch thick. Toss with salt in strainer or colander set over a bowl; weight with water-filled, one-gallon-sized zipper-lock freezer bag, sealed tight. Drain for at least an hour and up to 3 hours, then transfer to medium bowl.

In the meantime, toast sesame seeds in a pan over medium heat until golden, 4-5 min.

When cukes have drained, whisk vinegar, lemon juice, oil, sugar and seeds in medium bowl. Add cucumbers and toss to coat. Serve chilled (serves four as a side dish).

Hint: For a little zing, add ⅛ tsp. red pepper flakes (or a bit more if you'd like) to the tossed ingredients.

Adapted from Cook's Illustrated, July 1, 1997.

Reminder: Cooking demo/lesson

Remember to save Wednesday, Aug. 13, from 7 to 9 p.m., for the cooking demo/lesson to be presented by Laura Frankel, executive chef of Spertus Café by Wolfgang Puck.

Chef Laura will highlight that week's produce, and she'll also look forward to what Farmer Vicki Westerhoff anticipates growing for us in the autumn.

The event will be held at the home of Sasha and Eric Kerlow, 1213 W. Henderson. The cost is \$20, which includes the demo and tastings of all dishes prepared.

For reservations, contact Avi Finegold at avi@avtherav.com.