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Box #9  
**Odd Week**  
24 August 2016

## Contents

Fennel  
Broccoli  
Carrots  
Cucumbers  
Kale: Green or Red Curly  
Potatoes: Mixed Types  
Tomatoes: Slicers, Grape  
Zucchini: Green, some Zephyr

**New Stuff:** fennel, kale

Everyone is getting one bulb of fennel as a sort of “starter” amount. Fennel is not well known in this country, altho it is widely used and highly prized in Europe. Some of the bulbs have started to telescope upwards, meaning they’re starting to go to seed. If you get one of these, use it in the fish recipe for its flavor, but remove the central stalk before eating: it’ll be too fibrous to eat. Your knife will tell you how tough it is, but it’ll still have great flavor. The leaves can be used as an herb. If you get a bulb that has not started to go to seed, try the fennel tapenade, or chop the bulb into your next cole slaw.

Fennel has been used for hundreds of years as an aid to digestion. It’s high in vitamin A, calcium, potassium and iron. The bulb and leaves have a mild, black-licorice flavor that is very good in salads, especially coleslaw, vegetable dishes and with fish. The frugal cook likes it because all of fennel is edible: bulb, stalks and leaves. To use, cut off the top of the root from the bulb, which is tough, and chop off the leafy stalks for use later. Wash the bulb under cold, running water to get out any dirt that may have sifted down between the layers. Place the bulb flat on your cutting board and slice it in half. Set the cut side down on your board and slice lengthwise. Decide how small you want your pieces to be before slicing across the bulb.

Use the feathery leaves as a fresh herb. They lose some flavor each day, so go thru them as quick as you can. Or, add them to your next batch of pesto, or potato salad. You can dry fennel leaves on paper towels in your microwave. Store the dried, chopped leaves with your other herbs. If you make stock, the

fibrous stalks are an excellent flavoring. One of our site managers cuts the stalks into 4” lengths and stores them in a jar of water in her fridge: it’s one of her children’s favorite snacks. Like sugar cane, they chew on the stalks to get all the tasty, tender bits, then spit out the fibrous part.

Making an infusion (think tea) is a way to use a small amount of something, and get good flavor out of it. Here’s how you can do that with your fennel.

## Fennel with Fish

Clean the fennel as described above, reserving some fronds to add later. In a 10” sauté pan, over medium heat, add:

2 Tbsp. butter

2 Tbsp. olive oil

1-2 fennel bulbs, cleaned and sliced thinly

- sauté just until the fennel begins to brown.

Add: ½ cup water, stock or dry white wine

-add the stalks, cut into 4” lengths (so you can remove them later), cover the pan, turn the heat to low, and cook the fennel until it is completely soft, about 15 minutes. While the fennel cooks slowly and flavors the liquid, snip off the rest of the leaves and chop them up. When the fennel is done, push the pieces toward the sides. You should have a thin layer of fennel-infused liquid on the bottom of the pan. If you don’t, add more water, stock or wine. Scrape the bottom of the pan to loosen any stuck-on bits (this is called “de-glazing”). Add enough fish to fill up the area inside the cooked ring of fennel, season with salt, freshly ground pepper, and half of the chopped fennel leaves if you intend to turn the fish over. If you’re using thin fillets, like Tilapia, you won’t need to turn them over, so sprinkle all of the chopped fennel over the top. Cover the pan again, and simmer slowly, just until the fish is no longer transparent in the middle, but is still moist. The length of time will depend on the thickness of the fish. The best rule I’ve found is the simplest: Measure the fish at its thickest point, and cook it 10 minutes per inch, regardless of the cooking method. The fennel bulb is tender and delicious, but the stalk will be too fibrous for eating, so remove the stalks before serving.

## Fennel Tapenade

Puree in blender:

1/2 cup pitted kalamata olives

1 small fennel bulb

1 small clove garlic, chopped—or a scape

1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar

2 Tbsp. red onion, chopped

1-2 Tbsp. olive oil (or flaxseed oil)

Spread tapenade on bread, toast or crackers as an hors d’oeuvres, or on sandwiches like mayonnaise.

Kale is highly nutritious, loaded with vitamins A, B, C, calcium and many minerals, and has the highest

protein content of any cultivated vegetable. It keeps for a long time in the fridge, but you'll get the most nutrition from it if you use it soon, and eat it raw.

Check online for a "green drink" or smoothie incorporating kale.

Kale will stay hydrated best inside a plastic bag with just a little water on it. To prepare kale, cut out most of the center rib (rather fibrous), then chop up as your recipe indicates. Depending on the size of the pieces, kale will cook in 10-20 minutes. You want it soft, just a little chewy but still green in color.

This year, we're growing 3 kinds of kale: green curly (the most common), red curly and lacinato/dinosaur.

Most of you have seen green curly kale: it's the kind used to decorate salad bars since it's attractive and stays looking good for a long time. Red curly kale is the same shape as green, but has purple stems and a reddish cast to the leaves, especially the frilly ends. After the first frost, red curly kale turns a dark red overall. Lacinato, or dinosaur kale has a long, dark green leaf with a rounded end and bumpy surface. The curly kale tends to be a bit on the bitter side (good for the heart), with lacinato a bit milder. If a little bitterness is not to your taste, moderate that flavor by blanching the leaves in boiling water for 2 minutes, then proceed with whatever recipe you wish. Frost tends to sweeten the taste of kale, or, in the case of the curly ones, make it less bitter. In some years, one type of kale will be considerably milder than another, for no discernible reason. Young kale leaves are much sweeter and milder than older ones.

### **Kale Chips**

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Cut out the stems & center veins of a large bunch of kale. Chop the kale roughly into 1"-1½" pieces, wash and spin them as dry as you can. (You may have to do that step in batches.)

In a large bowl, stir together:

2 Tbsp. olive oil

Kosher salt or sea salt

freshly ground pepper

Toss the kale pieces in the mixture until all are coated.

Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil or parchment paper. Spread the kale out on the baking sheet as evenly as possible. Bake for 10-15 minutes, or until the leaves are very crispy. They will shrink some. Remove from oven, cool for 10 minutes, and enjoy.

### **Kale & Lentils with Tahini Sauce**

In a small saucepan, put:

2 cups water

1 cup lentils, picked over and rinsed

¼ tsp. turmeric

¼ tsp. ground coriander

-Cover, bring to a simmer, and cook until the lentils are soft but still retain their shape.

While the lentils are cooking, whisk together in a large

bowl: 2 Tbsp. tahini

2 Tbsp. lemon juice or wine vinegar

2 Tbsp. olive oil

¾ tsp. kosher salt

¼ tsp. pepper

When the lentils are done, whisk 2-3 Tbsp. of the remaining water in the pan into the sauce. Drain the lentils and add to the bowl. Toss with sauce.

Into a skillet, put:

¼ cup water

1 bunch kale, washed, center rib removed and sliced into thin strips

-Simmer, covered, for 6-8 minutes, until kale is tenderer but still green—water will probably cook away about the time the kale is done. Add kale to bowl and toss with lentils. Serve.

As you'll notice, the carrots in your bunches are bigger, now they've had some more time to grow. We've tried to spray them off, but some of the soil was difficult to get off. You'll have to give these an extra-hard scrubbing. No need to peel them: the skins are thin and sweet, and contain much of the nutrients. You may find a mixture of white and red potatoes in your bags, all with the dirt still on. Potatoes keep better with a little dirt. Store these in a dry, paper bag out of direct sunlight, but in a place they can get a little airflow.

### **Field Notes**

Friday and Saturday's rain gave us about 2 inches, enough so we can still see the rain-darkened soil in parts of our fields.

This spring, Chuck went to an auction at the farm of a local vegetable grower. This man grew a lot of potatoes, and had an old, one-row potato digger, something we've wanted for a long time. This one came with an attached elevator that allows you ride along, picking potatoes off the wire track, rather than having to pick them up off the ground. Today, we attached it to one of our tractors and set to work—wow! This is way better than walking behind the tractor with a bucket, grubbing for potatoes in the dirt.

Have a great week!

Terry & Chuck