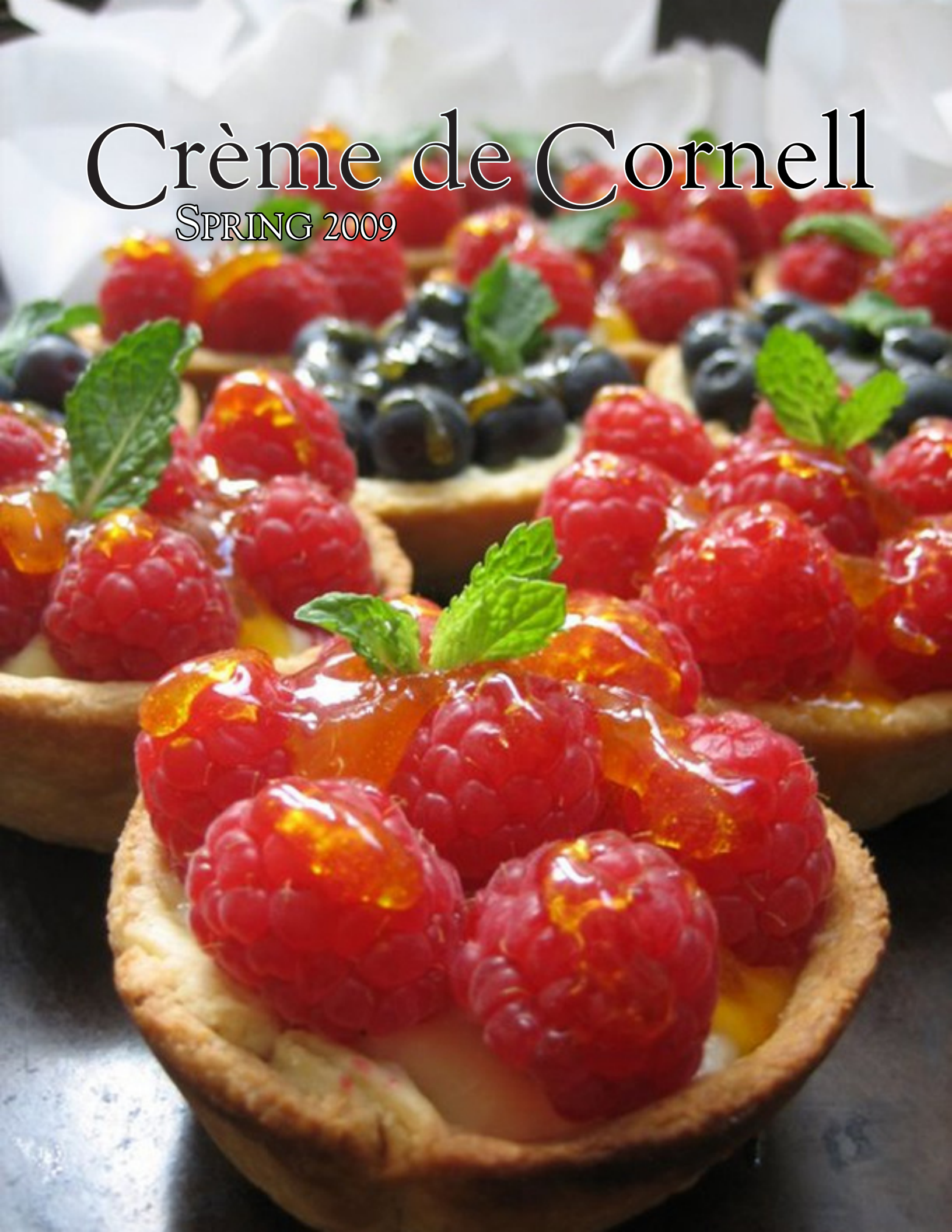


Crème de Cornell

SPRING 2009





Dear readers,

It gives us great pleasure to welcome you to the inaugural issue of Crème de Cornell, Cornell's first and only culinary magazine. Crème de Cornell discusses issues and trends in the culinary world with an approachable college sensibility. Our goal is to challenge the Cornell community to be thoughtful about what they eat.

Crème de Cornell was born out of our love for fabulous food. As avid foodies, we were frequently testing new recipes in the kitchen, perusing the Dining Section of The New York Times and hosting dinner parties for our friends. After one particularly scrumptious dinner party, we created a blog to share our excitement about food with everyone. With the success of our blog, we saw an opportunity to fill a niche at Cornell with a club which brings foodies together to cook, talk, and write about food. That night, the Cornell Gourmet Club was born, and the idea for Crème de Cornell followed naturally.

This semester's issue celebrates the arrival of spring with countless images of fresh spring dishes and articles spanning a wide range of culinary topics. Michelle Yu challenges Cornellians to cook with in-season produce in "The Return of Whole Foods." For those looking to fit more nutritious whole grains into their diet, check out Sreenath Vemuri's article about quinoa. With the increasing popularity of Thai cuisine in America, Ellie Proctor explores the complex flavors of Thai dishes. Marc Udoff and Helen Zhang put miracle fruit to the test in "Miracle Fruit: Nature's Natural Sweetener." In the Local section, Iona Machado reviews Stella's Restaurant and McAllister Jimbo gets the inside scoop on Collegetown's newest addition, Green Café. Our magazine would not be complete without some spring recipes, and we offer several in Crumbs.

Crème de Cornell would not have succeeded without the following people and organizations. First, we would like to thank our advertisers, specifically Josh Eckenrode of Café DeWitt, Holly Kintz of Green Café and Kathleen Pasetty of Mandibles, for their generosity. We are also eternally grateful to Professor Spies, our faculty advisor, for his guidance. We would like to thank the SAFC for their financial support. And finally, to the members of the Cornell Gourmet Club, we thank you for your hard work and enthusiasm throughout the semester.

We invite you to sit back, relax, and flip through the following pages for some delectable writing, delicious photographs, and most importantly, fabulous food.

Cheers,

Michelle Yu and McAllister Jimbo
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Quinoa: An Exotic Superfood

Story By: Sreenath Vemuri
Photo By: Leigh Whitman

Over 5,000 years ago tribes indigenous to the Andes Mountains in South America cultivated a mysterious crop called quinoa (pronounced KEEN-WAH). For marches lasting days, Incan soldiers relied on it for sustenance and stamina. Quinoa was so central to the Incan diet, they considered it sacred, calling it “the mother of all grains.” Since then, it has been a staple in South American diets and renowned for its astounding health properties. The seed is considered to be a complete protein because it contains all nine essential amino acids, making it superior to most common cereal grains. It also contains fiber, calcium and iron.

Recently popularized in the States by health magazines and nutritionists, quinoa is making its way from the elevated mountains of the Andes to your local grocery store. Supermarkets and gourmet stores typically stock it in the rice aisle. While different colors and varieties exist, the seeds usually are light brown and shaped like small pebbles.

The simplest way to prepare quinoa is to prepare it like rice. Rinse the seeds to remove the bitter saponin exterior and then cook them using two parts water for every one part quinoa. It should take about 15 minutes to cook, making it a quick and easy dish even busy Cornell students can cook at home. In this form, it can be eaten just like rice; that is, by itself, mixed in with other foods, or as a side.

Its earthy, nutty flavor and slightly crunchy texture works well in a variety of salads and soups too. For spring, food bloggers suggest mixing quinoa in salads with spring peas, asparagus, arugula, green beans, and/or olives. Quinoa can also serve as a nutty and nutritious base for nearly every kind soup—from chicken noodle to avocado and corn. Other recipes include quinoa rice pudding and even a type of beer made from fermented quinoa. The curious epicurean should feel free to experiment. Quinoa, like rice, is a versatile food that complements many dishes well. It even adds texture and flavor (and vital nutrients) to Ramen!

The Return of Whole Foods

Story By: Michelle Yu
Photos By: Leigh Whitman

Good, healthy food is the last thing on the mind of a college student. A quick pit stop for coffee and we are off, running to classes, libraries and meetings. It's a miracle when we actually get up early enough to eat breakfast. To fit our fast-paced student lifestyle, many opt for quick meal options like cereal bars, instant noodles and greasy Ivy Room fare. Our need for speed has allowed "real food" to disappear from our diets. In his book, *In Defense of Food*, Michael Pollan defines "real food" as food your grandmother would recognize. Real food - fresh dairy, ripe produce, lean meat and fish - are found only on the distant peripheries of the supermarket while packaged and processed food line the center aisles.

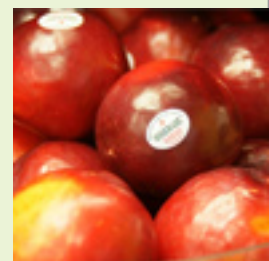
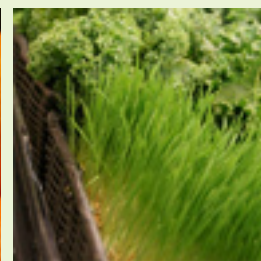
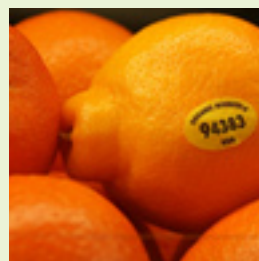
A major factor in the take over of processed food is our Western diet. In America, a nutrient-by nutrient diet, which Pollan calls "nutritionism," reigns supreme. We are so used to counting calories and nutrients on labels that we forget that daily requirements for vitamins and minerals can be fulfilled by eating a variety of fresh produce and meats. Our ancestors were perfectly healthy without the science of "nutritionism." They obtained their nutrients by choosing to eat ripe, nutrients by choosing to eat ripe, in-season food at the peak of its nutrient value. Nowadays, consumers feel more comfortable knowing exactly how many grams of each nutrient is in their food. This obsession with "nutritionism" has only hastened the rise of processed "foodlike substances" which label exactly what is in their food. As fresh whole foods continue to be replaced by Sara Lee "foodlike" products, Pollan asks Americans to take a moment to reconsider what we put in our mouths and stand in defense of real food.

Of course I don't expect anyone to instantly replace their packaged food with "real food." Truthfully, eating healthy "real food" is expensive, and as college students, health and diet are probably not our top priorities. In addition, our access to nutritious foods is limited, especially when we choose

quicker options such as Chinese takeout and CTP pizza. Nevertheless, I do challenge Cornellians to cook (with fresh produce and lean meats) at least once a week. If you can't make it down to the Farmer's Market, take a trip to Wegmans, staying on the peripheries and avoiding the frozen food aisle, of course. Pollan offers tips on how to eat "real food," but here, I give you my own advice

on how to cook "real food." Buy produce that is in season and grown locally. Experiment with new fruits and vegetables. Start with simple recipes and then put your own spin for some variety. Cook in bulk so you have leftovers for the week. And finally, bring out the inner foodie in you and have fun!

You'll not only find that you are more aware of your diet, but that cooking with real food will help you de-stress from a long day at the library and leave you feeling rejuvenated, refreshed and ready to take on all those finals.



Interview with Holly Kintz, Catering Manager for Green Café

Story By: McAllister Jimbo

Photo By: Leigh Whitman

Crème de Cornell gets the inside scoop on Collegetown's newest eatery, which is already gaining a big following among hungry Cornell students.

What is the concept behind Green Café? Also, why the name Green Café?

The concept behind the Green Café is this: high-quality food, affordable prices and convenient service. All of our food is available with "grab-n-go" convenience, which means we don't have table-side service; people can help themselves either at our 35-foot long buffet, featuring 22 hot entrees & sides, and 22 cold salads & fresh fruits. In addition, there are multiple stations including the Gourmet Deli & Breakfast Bar, Tossed Salad Bar, Hibachi/Teriyaki Station, Homemade Tofu Bar, Sushi Bar, Beverage, Coffee & Espresso, and our fabulous Juice Bar. All the food is prepared on-site with the freshest ingredients. And, we purchase locally as much as possible.

Green Café is a name that spans back to our Manhattan store which opened 19 years ago, before "green" became the buzz word it is today. While we are green-conscious, we are not exclusively all-organic or 100% green in our business practices... at least not yet. We have had a HUGE, exciting demand for compostable wares and tighter policies on recycling which we are diligently working on implementing as soon as possible. We are glad to be part of such an eco-friendly community!

Why did you choose Ithaca for your next location?

The research into Ithaca began several years ago. The owner, Charles Park, had friends in the area and was familiar with the Collegetown neighborhood. The availability of the building in this prime location was the key. Ithaca is a very forward-thinking community with sophisticated tastes which made it a perfect match with the metropolitan style & quality standard of the Green Café.

People were lined up outside the door on your opening day and students seem to be flocking to Green Café for their late night munchies. Are you surprised by the reception so far?

Surprised, no. Grateful, yes. It appears we are filling a need for students and individuals in Collegetown and beyond. Many young people in our community do not have the time or kitchen space to prepare their own food. We provide a healthy alternative to the usual student standards of pizza, burgers



& fast food. As our relationship with the community develops, we encourage all patrons, students and otherwise, to share feedback on their experience with us.

What sets Green Café apart from other Collegetown eateries?

Our vast food selection immediately separates us, but also when you walk in, the aesthetic is bright, modern and metropolitan, a distinct and refreshing change to the rustic charm of our neighbors.

Any truth to the rumors about a karaoke bar opening upstairs next year?

There is truth in the karaoke bar concept, but it is too early to say when. We'll let you know when we get there.

Green Café's menu is pretty eclectic. Where do you source all the ingredients from? Are dishes seasonal?

We purchase locally as much as possible. As we move into the spring season, we hope to use local vendors even more. The dishes on the buffet rotate often (even daily) based on the chef's whim and the freshness and quality of the ingredients we have on hand.

What is your favorite dish on the menu?

They're all good!

RESTAURANT REVIEW

STELLA'S



403 College Ave.
Ithaca, NY 14850
Phone: (607) 277-1490

Story By: Iona Machado
Photo By: Leigh Whitman



Finding a restaurant in Collegetown to accommodate a group of 15 people can be challenging, but luckily, Stella's saved the day. With its classy ambience and affordable prices, Stella's is the perfect destination for an intimate dinner date or for that big birthday dinner which your entire floor is invited to. When our group arrived, the staff was very helpful and did their best to accommodate us, seating us quite comfortably on the lower level of the restaurant away from the crowds upstairs. The bartender also concocted a drink especially for the birthday girl when she could not find anything to her liking on the drink menu.

The eclectic menu is filled with a host of appetizers, soups and salads, sandwiches both cold and hot and entrées. I chose the grilled brie sandwich with bacon and sliced apple on whole wheat bread (\$9). While the sandwich could have been slightly warmer and the brie more melted, it still offered a very complementary blend of flavors. Of course pairing cheese and fruit is a classic, but to put it between bread was a revolutionary idea to me.

Other dishes we sampled that night include the sausage fettuccine, smothered in a tomato based sauce chock full of spicy sausage and topped with diced mozzarella. This must-order dish was well worth its steep price (\$17). The Berkeley-Urger (\$12), a "selectatarian" option with roasted portabella mushrooms, mozzarella, sprouts and pesto, was nothing short of wonderful with its unique flavor combination. As an added bonus, burger fans can stop by Stella's everyday from 4-6pm for half-price burgers.

Our group ended the meal on a sweet note, ordering an array of desserts. The tiramisu, a dish I am exceptionally picky about, was by far the best tiramisu I have tasted in Ithaca. Full of rich espresso and luscious mascarpone cheese, I highly recommend both ordering and sharing this dessert. The apple cobbler, served warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream, was heavenly and generous in portion size. And for vegans and non-vegans alike, make sure to order the triple chocolate vegan cake.

In short, Stella's is a great place for any occasion, whether you want to spend a night out with the ladies, take a date out for dinner, or just wallow in chocolate cake to cheer yourself up after a bad prelim.

A Taste of Thai at Home

Story By: Ellie Proctor

Photo By: Leigh Whitman



With nearly 11,600 Thai restaurants operating worldwide,[i] the world can't seem to satisfy its massive appetite for Thai food. Our own Cornell community is no different, with hoards of students flocking to Ithaca's many Thai restaurants every weekend for steaming bowls of green curry and pad thai.

Though many regional variations exist, Thai cuisine generally utilizes two main cooking techniques: stir frying and stewing. Many food historians trace Thai cuisine's origins to China, where a Chinese ethnic minority group called the T'ai (pronounced "Dai") migrated from southwest China to Thailand and brought these cooking techniques with them.[ii] Once in Thailand, however, the incorporation of indigenous herbs and spices led to the development of the distinct culinary tradition we know and love today.

Thai cuisine revolves around layers of sour, salty, sweet and spicy flavors. When I taste my favorite Thai dish, tom kha kai, for example, I taste a symphony of these four flavors, all of which blend together and strike a perfect balance. Indigenous plants such as ginger and lemongrass provide these essential flavors in soups and all kinds of curry dishes. For heat, chilies are used, which were introduced to Thai cuisine by the Portuguese in the 1600s. To get that lip-smacking salty savoriness, fermented fish sauce is used as a basic seasoning agent and is also a staple ingredient in other Southeast Asian cuisines. These primary ingredients of ginger, lemongrass, chilies, and fish sauce, as well as coconut milk and ginger, form the basis of Thai cuisine.

To get that weekly fix of Thai food without dropping tons of cash, students can opt to make their favorite Thai dishes at home. I included a delicious and easy recipe for tom kha kai which even novice cooks can make. This soulful soup will warm you up during those April and May showers. Ingredients may be found in the Asian section of Wegmans or at the Asian Market on Route 13.

[i] Alexandra Greeley, "Finding Pad Thai." *Gastronomica*. Winter 2009, Vol.9, No. 1, Pages 78-82, DOI: 10.1525/gfc.2009.9.1.78 Posted online on February 5, 2009.

[ii] Greeley, p. 78-82.

Tom Kha Kai (Thai Chicken Soup with Coconut Milk and Galangal)

Adapted From: Field Guide to Herbs & Spices by Aliza Green, found on Chow.com

<http://www.chow.com/recipes/10531>

4 cups chicken stock
1/4 cup Thai fish sauce
Juice of 1 lime
2 crushed wild lime leaves (optional)
2-inch section lemongrass
1-inch section ginger
1/4 pound chicken breast, cut into bite-sized pieces
1 13.5-ounce can coconut milk
2 to 4 (to taste) small red chiles, slightly crushed
Cilantro leaves for garnish

1. Bring chicken stock, fish sauce, lime juice, wild lime leaves (if using), lemongrass, and ginger to a boil. Simmer 20 minutes. Strain if desired (though left unstrained in Thailand, the lemongrass, lime leaves, and ginger are not meant to be eaten).
 2. Add chicken breast, coconut milk, and red chiles, and return to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer until the chicken is cooked through, about 2 minutes. Taste for seasoning, adding sugar if necessary. Garnish with cilantro and serve.
- Serves 2-3

Note: Lime leaves are small, hourglass-shaped leaves that add a fragrant sour taste to the dish. They are used in all types of Southeast Asian dishes.

Miracle Fruit: Nature's Natural Sweetener

Story By: Marc Udoff and Helen Zhang

Photo By: Allyson Spier

Sick of Ithaca's long winters? Miss the sweet taste of summer? Skip the disappointing produce at Wegmans and give miracle fruit a try instead! Miracle fruit is sometimes called Miracle Berry, Magic Berry, Miraculous Berry, Flavour Berry, or scientifically, *Synsepalum dulcificum*. It is a real fruit which makes other foods taste sweeter. However, not all foods taste different because the active chemical in miracle fruit, miraculin, makes only acidic flavors sweet. The properties of this berry have been known to tribes in Africa for centuries, and discovered by Western culture in 1725. In the 1970's, on the verge of exploding popularity in the US, sugar companies pressured the FDA to stop its miracle fruit commercialization. Today, researchers are again trying to mass-produce this extraordinary berry in order to use it as a sweetener. It is currently popular in Asia as a dietary supplement and comes in tablets (\$14.99 for 10, www.thinkgeek.com) or its original fruit form (\$60 for 20, www.miraclefruitman.com). In the US, miracle fruit is making a comeback at extravagant "flavor tripping" parties where guests eat the berry and then taste a variety of items ranging from super tart citrus fruit to fiery hot tabasco sauce. Even the Cornell community picked up on the fad, with the Cornell Underground sponsoring a "Flavor Tripping" event this past Spring.

Intrigued by miracle fruit's psychedelic effects and new found popularity, we decided to put this fruit to the test and flavor trip for ourselves. We ordered a package of miracle fruit tablets online and took a trip to Wegmans to buy many of the suggested foods to taste with the fruit. First, we pre-tasted the ingredients we bought. Next, we each took a tablet, let it dissolve and coat our tongues, and off we went on our magical flavor trip. What we found was an interesting mix of extraordinary successes and ordinary failures.

The miracle fruit had the most powerful effect by far on the strawberries, giving new meaning to the phrase "strawberry fields forever." The second the strawberry hit our taste buds, we were instantly transported to strawberry heaven. If miracle fruit only had the ability to alter the taste of strawberries, it would be worth it. Other winners included the lemon and the lime. Typically unbearably sour, these citrus fruits tasted pleasantly sweet and tart, similar to Sour Patch Kids. We also tried oranges, mangoes, and grapefruit which tasted saccharinely sweet. Other surprising effects included raw tomatoes which tasted cooked, plain yogurt which tasted cloyingly sweet like Yoplait, and whiskey sours which tasted like syrup.

The effects of the berry wore off after twenty minutes, leaving our taste buds tired and our stomachs a bit unsettled. Nevertheless, this flavor extravaganza certainly pleased our palates and left us amazed at how a small berry the size of a raisin could have such dramatic effects.

Sources:

<http://www.miraclefruitman.com/p-15-buy-bulk-300-pieces.aspx>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/28/dining/28flavor.html>

<http://www.wired.com/science/discoveries/news/2006/12/72251>



WALNUT PESTO

Recipe By: Casey Feehan

Photo By: Casey Feehan

This simple yet versatile recipe is sure to impress even the most finicky eaters with its earthy, nutty flavor. The pesto can be tossed with pasta and grilled chicken for a quick dinner, or for a gourmet snack, served on rosemary focaccia with prosciutto and fresh mozzarella.

Serves 6

1 ½ cups walnuts
2 garlic cloves, peeled and trimmed
½ cup packed fresh basil
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
1/4 tsp of kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
½ cup Parmesan cheese, fresh grated

Preheat an oven to 325° F.

Spread the walnuts on a baking pan in an even layer; lightly toast in the oven, about 8-10 minutes. Set aside and cool completely; then roughly chop the nuts.

Pulse the garlic cloves, salt and pepper in a mixer until combined. Add the cooled chopped walnuts and basil, and blend until a coarse paste begins to form, with some walnut chunks still intact. Slowly add in the olive oil, until blended. Add the Parmesan cheese and stir to incorporate. Adjust seasoning as desired.



SPINACH & STRAWBERRY SALAD

Recipe By: Casey Feehan

Photo By: Casey Feehan

Take advantage of spring's abundant produce with this light and refreshing salad. We especially love its gorgeous array of colors and flavors, filled with ruby red strawberries, bright mandarin oranges and verdant green spinach.

Serves 2

5 oz fresh baby spinach leaves (about 3 cups)
4 oz strawberries
6 oz mandarin orange slices
6 oz mushrooms, white or Baby Bella variety
½ medium red onion
Kosher salt
Fresh ground black pepper
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, or to taste

Gently rinse the baby spinach in a colander under cold water. Set aside to dry. Trim the stems off the strawberries and slice them ¼" thick. Place in a large salad bowl, along with the orange slices. Slice the mushrooms ¼" thick; place these in the bowl. Medium dice the red onion; add to the bowl, along with the spinach as the top layer. Add salt and pepper to taste; toss the salad with the balsamic vinegar.

JAMAICAN GINGER CHICKEN with MANGO SALSA

Recipe By : Josh Eckenrode
Photo By: Leigh Whitman

Heat up your next summer potluck with this festive and flavorful dish from Café DeWitt, one of Ithaca's most popular eateries.

Serves 4

2 boneless chicken breasts, split
1 mango, peeled and cut into 1/8" dice
1 red pepper, cut into 1/8" dice
1 small red onion, cut into 1/8" dice
6 cloves of garlic, 2 minced, 4 whole
4" piece of ginger, peeled, half of it diced very small
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup dark rum
4 limes, juiced
2 Tbsp. mango puree (bottled or frozen)
2 lbs red potatoes
1 lb baby spinach
Cumin seeds
Coriander seeds
Ground cloves
Ground coriander
Ground ginger
Salt and pepper
Vegetable oil

Mango Salsa:

Place mango, red pepper and diced ginger into a non-reactive bowl. Heat oil in a fry pan until almost smoking; add cumin seeds and coriander seeds. Cook until slightly brown and fragrant.

Add red onion and garlic; immediately remove from heat. Add onion mixture to mango mixture. Add a pinch of salt, a few grinds of black pepper and the juice of 2 limes. If you can find it, add 2 tablespoons of mango puree. Toss mixture and allow to macerate for 1 hour.

Chicken Marinade:

In a food processor combine 4 cloves of garlic, a 2 inch piece of peeled ginger (pre chopped a bit), 1/2 cup brown sugar, 1/2 cup dark rum, juice of 2 limes, 1 tsp. ground cloves, 1 tsp. ground coriander, and 2 tsp. ground ginger. Process until combined. Pour over boneless chicken breasts and marinate in refrigerator for 1 hour or more.

Preheat oven to 450F. After the chicken has marinated completely, cut potatoes into desired shape for roasting. Depending on the size of the potatoes, either cubes or wedges work well, but if you really want crispy potatoes, cut them in half the long way and slice the halves like you would an onion, into 1/4" slices. Toss potatoes with just enough vegetable oil to coat and add a couple pinches of salt. Spread the potatoes in a single layer on a baking sheet.

Remove the chicken from the marinade (reserve the marinade), and place on an oiled baking sheet. Transfer the marinade to a sauce pan, bring to a simmer, and reduce until slightly syrupy, about 5 minutes.

Roast the potatoes until golden brown and crispy, about 20 minutes. Roast the chicken until the internal temp reaches 145F, about 12-16 minutes depending on the size of the pieces. Note: USDA and NYS health department regulations state that chicken should be cooked to 165F. Since this is for home use, I choose to cook it to a lower temperature, but you should be aware

of the risks involved in consuming under-cooked meat.

Allow the chicken to rest for 5 minutes before slicing. To plate, first place a mound of spinach in the center of a white dinner plate. Down one side of the spinach mound place the potatoes, and down the opposite side fan the chicken out from the top of the mound. Pour some sauce over the chicken and around the inner rim of the plate. Finish the plate with a tight mound of mango salsa over top and garnish with fresh cilantro.

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