SPRING ASPARAGUS FRITTATA

Adapted from butfirstwebrunch.com

8 oz asparagus spears
4 large mushrooms
1 shallot
½ c English peas
2 c spinach leaves
2 stems fresh parsley
2 stems fresh dill
1 stem fresh rosemary
3 stems fresh thyme
½ tsp kosher salt
¼ tsp black pepper
6 large eggs
½ c heavy cream
3 oz soft cheese of your choice

1. Preheat oven to 375F. Spray a quarter sheet pan with nonstick spray.
2. Slice mushrooms into 1/4" slices. Slice shallots into 1/4" rounds. Saute mushrooms and shallots in olive oil until mushrooms are caramelized and shallots are soft and browning. Remove from pan.
3. Trim woody ends off asparagus. Cut off tips and set aside. Slice stems into 1/4" rounds and add to pan with the sprigs of rosemary and thyme. Saute 1-2 minutes. Add English peas, saute 1 minute. Add spinach, saute until wilted.
4. Add the asparagus tips and gently mix in to warm them. Remove rosemary and thyme and add back the mushrooms and shallots and mix through.
5. Chop fresh parsley and dill, setting some aside for garnish. Whisk together eggs, cream, salt, pepper, herbs, and cheese.
6. Arrange vegetables on the prepared sheet pan. Pour egg mixture over them.
7. Bake 15-20 minutes or until eggs are set.
8. Garnish with remaining herbs and serve warm.

BRAISED GREENS WITH ANDOUILLE

Adapted from leitesculinaria.com

2 Tbsp olive oil
½ lb andouille sausage, sliced
1 small onion, finely diced
3 lb sturdy greens (kale, collards, chard, etc.)
2 c water
2 Tbsp sugar
1 Tbsp kosher salt

1. Warm oil in 11 L pot over medium heat. Add andouille and onion and cook 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until fat is rendered and sausage is browned.
2. Pack greens into the pot (if they don't all fit, continue adding as they begin to cook down). Add water, sugar, and salt and bring to boil. Cover, reduce heat to low, and simmer about 30 minutes.
3. Serve greens in a bowl along with the braising liquid.

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Rhubarb: Technically a vegetable, not a fruit, rhubarb stalks may have green and/or pink coloration when ready to eat. Store stalks in a plastic bag and keep in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator up to one week. Try it pickled, made into jam, frozen, or used fresh.

Leafy Greens: Store leafy greens in the fridge in a perforated plastic bag. If you chop and wash ahead of time, spin the leaves dry before putting back in the bag with a dry paper towel to absorb moisture. Refresh as needed by plunging them in ice water 15-20 minutes.

Broccoli: Refrigerate immediately, wrapped loosely in a plastic bag in the vegetable bin. It's best used within a few days. To freeze, blanch broccoli 2-4 minutes, rinse under cold water, drain, let dry, and pack into freezer bags. Thawed broccoli is best used in soups and stews.

Radishes: Remove the radish from the greens. Store roots separate from greens in plastic bags in the fridge. Try roots sliced on salads or roasted. The greens can be used like other leafy cooking greens.

Asparagus: Best eaten as fresh as possible. To store, stand asparagus in jar with about 1 inch of water, making sure ends are in the water. Loosely cover with a plastic bag and refrigerate up to one week.

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Organic = Non-GMO

The technology behind genetically modified organisms (GMOs) is fascinating. It's truly an amazing achievement of science: scientists can place a gene of one species into the double helix chromosome of another, and that recipient organism can live and grow and be otherwise viable. They've developed miraculous biological beings to perform all manner of tasks for the medical industry—algae that can produce everything from oil-eating microbes to artificial grapefruit flavor. Virologists see great potential for human health. The vast majority of all livestock feed grown around the world employs gene transfer technologies to ward off insects, disease, or improve drought tolerance. More recently, this technology is creeping into the foods we consume directly. In the early days of GMO technology, the founders of the organic standards were unanimous in their repulsion at the thought of a trout gene in a tomato, ostensibly for cold tolerance. GMOs were deemed "excluded methods", and their exclusion from organic practice was written right into the definitions of the regulation.

Before we discovered how to create GMOs, the gene pool lived in the public domain. Land grant universities, and USDA farms and facilities maintained (and still do) germplasm banks for food crops. These banks meant researchers could use them for crossbreeding programs to improve yields in several climates, all in the name of supply chain stability. When companies used these banks to create their own designer commodity crops (like corn and soybeans), the genes of those crops became intellectual property. Now, these companies house and control the lion's share of the genetics in use. This has proven problematic.

Corn resides at the epicenter of the debate and a good case study for this discussion. Corn has a pollen problem, can't keep it's genes zipped up, as it were. The pollen from a corn plant can end up miles away from where it started, carried on the wind. A farm growing non-GMO corn must therefore be located away from any nearby GMO corn, which decreases the land available to grow the crop. Farmers may need to negotiate with neighbors to establish a pollination date/time buffer to further reduce the potential contamination of the organic corn from the genetically modified pollen.

If the organic corn does become pollinated by the mutant genes, it cannot be sold as organic, meaning it becomes significantly less profitable. Additionally, many organic farmers use open-pollinated varieties, meaning they can save the seed from this year's crop, plant it next year, and they can expect that crop to have the same characteristics as last year's. If GMO corn pollen drifts in to our non-GMO corn, and we keep the resulting kernels to plant, we can be sued for stealing the seed company's intellectual property. The courts have upheld this ruling many times; this is the way of things now. It is a total reversal of the way things have historically played out between farmers. If the neighbor's bull comes over and tramples our corn, of course a good neighbor pays for the damage.

Some folks have the notion that Mother Nature can somehow be outsmarted, but we know that all species adapt to their environment. Soon after the advent of synthesized chemical '-cides' promised to kill all of nature's undesirables, those products became less effective, as the molds, fungi, insects, and weeds mutated to be resistant to the chemicals. The industry finds itself in an arms race, improving the chemicals to kill the resistant pests who develop new resistances in turn. GMOs were borne out of this arms race. Somebody figured out how to manipulate the genetic code of the plant itself to carry the detrimental material to the field. No need to spray. Voila, problem solved. But it's not nice to fool Mother Nature.

The most widely used GMO technology today is Round-Up Ready corn or soybeans. Round-Up is a herbicide that kills anything that is green and growing, except the GMO corn or soybean plant that was designed to be immune to it. Buy the special spray and buy the special seed and you'll never see a weed again... Now, we see farming periodicals peppered with articles about superweeds that can't be killed by Round-Up, and what can be done about them. Mother Nature always seems to get the upper hand again, so why not work with her instead of against her?

So, I'm not sure if eating GMO foods is bad for me or not. Scientists don't know either, because consequences of a GMO diet may take decades to show themselves. I am sure I don't like the way the owners of the technology do business. I am concerned about the arrogant attitude toward the intrusion into Mother Nature's genes. I am concerned about chemical-resistant insects and weeds proliferating. I have grave concerns about the consolidation of the seed industry, and its control of the genetics we have access to. Because of these concerns, I'm not willing to support the use of genetic manipulation with my food dollars. No GMO technologies are allowed in organic foods, period. This is why we are organic farmers. We can farm with integrity and eat in peace. - Mac Stone

This is the

LAST WEEK

of the Winter/Spring season!

Don't forget to sign up for the summer season:

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