

Cooking with Plants



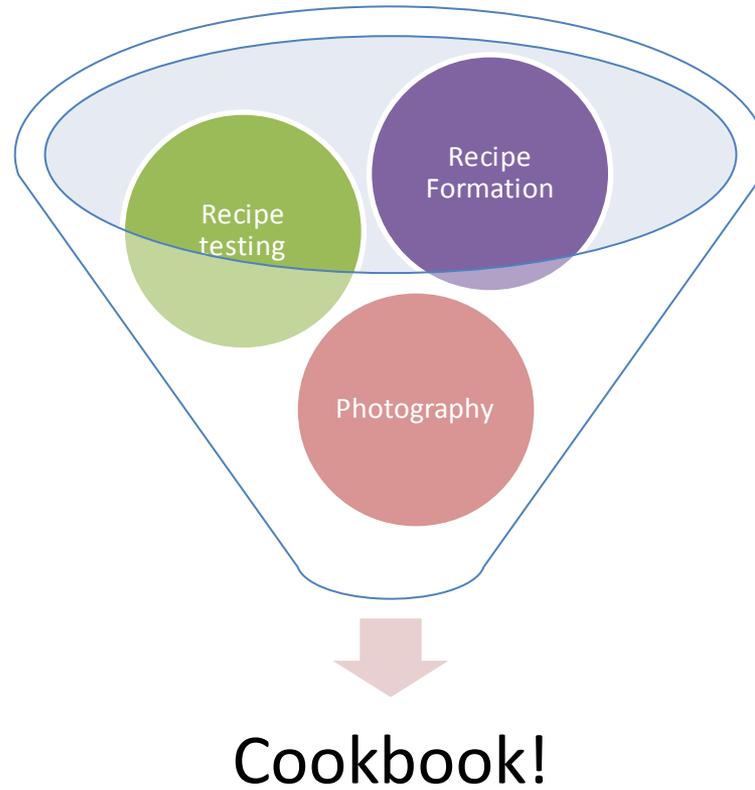
The original idea...

- Develop a series of recipes using herbs in traditional and uncommon combinations
- 10 recipes
- Make a cookbook out of them!

The modified idea...

- Develop a series of recipes incorporating *plant-based* ingredients (including herbs, spices, fruits, vegetables, etc..) in traditional and uncommon combinations
- Investigate the sources and history of these plant-based ingredients.
- 10 recipes
- Make a cookbook out of them!

The simplified process...



Photography...

- Photography turned out to be one of the biggest challenges of this assignment, but also one of the best parts!
- Lots of thought went into each photo. Through this creative project process, I learned how much work goes into taking a good photo. Everything from the technical aspects (such as the lighting, exposure, focus, etc.) to the stylistic presentation has to combine to get a good photo. For each photo you see of the final recipes, there are 50+ more photos of that same recipe which weren't quite what I wanted.
- Most photos were taken using a set up of 2 sturdy white poster boards for the grounding and background. I tried to take the photos when plenty of natural light was available (though the Ithaca weather thwarted me a few times, which resulted in varying background colours for the photos).
- Little editing was used, except to crop and adjust the lighting on some photos.
- Camera used: Nikon d90 fitted with a 18-55 mm lens
- ***Note:** For this presentation, the photography for my recipe creations are my own. Some of the other images (i.e. the spices and herbs) are not and all external images have been hyperlinked them to their original sources.



Technical aspects...

Recipe Formation

- Basic recipe inspiration found from online sources (i.e. Pinterest, blogs, etc).
- Recipes modified in terms of ingredients and measurements to include nuts, herbs, spices, and other plant-based ingredients.

Recipe Testing

- Most recipes turned out great on the first try!
- However challenges came when a recipe didn't look or taste quite right. For instance, my scone recipe turned out bricks the first time round.
- When this happened, I would go back over the recipe and adjust the measurements, and then make it again (luckily, the second round of scone-making turned out much better).

History and Use

- As I cooked and baked, I couldn't help but wonder where my ingredients originated.
- A quick web search found a wealth of information
- Though I didn't look up every ingredient, the ones I found information on are included on subsequent slides (each is hyperlinked to the original source of information).

Meet the squash...



Pumpkin

A favorite during the fall season, pumpkins have been eaten for centuries. Interestingly, The first pumpkin pie originated in the 1600s when colonists scooped out pumpkin seeds and baked the pumpkin with milk, spices, and honey. Now a whole industry runs around pumpkins, with Illinois producing around 500 million pounds per year!

Butternut Squash

Unlike pumpkin, butternut squash is a relatively recent addition to our meals, having been developed in Massachusetts in 1944. Reports credit Charles Leggett as the creator. According to his wife, Leggett developed the squash when looking to create a squash variety easier to transport and prepare. Now it's one of the most popular winter squash in the US!



Meet (some) of the spices...

Ceylon Cinnamon

The spice we use so often comes from a tree originally found in Sri Lanka and India. The tree grows for two years before being cut back, which causes the tree to grow outwards instead of upwards. These outward shoots are then harvested, their bark is peeled, and they curl into cinnamon quills as they dry.



Cayenne pepper

This spice has origins closer to home as a native of Mexico, though it quickly spread to Asia. A normal cayenne pepper ranges from 30,000 - 50,000 Scoville units, a heat measure. In contrast, a jalapeno only gets up to 8,000)! (needless to say, I only used a very small proportion of cayenne in my recipe).

Meet (some) of the herbs...



Rosemary

Greek scholars used to carry rosemary around when studying and taking examinations, believing it enhanced their memory. While modern research has found some evidence that rosemary may aid memory, unfortunately it's not the case that bringing a bunch of rosemary to your next exam will guarantee a superb grade.

Basil

This herb has a fairly interesting history. In medieval times, it was thought that smelling basil would cause scorpions to grow in the brain. Luckily that's not the case, and basil enjoys widespread use today.



Meet (some) of the other plants...

Walnuts

Commonly cited as the oldest known tree food, walnut trees are one of the few which naturally grow in both hemispheres. Interestingly, this is used as evidence that trees existed before the continents split apart. Early superstitions warn against planting walnut trees because they contained poison. Though this isn't exactly true, the walnut tree's roots can exude the chemical juglone into the soil, which is toxic to nearby plants.



Medjool Dates

These are harvested from date palm trees, mostly grown in North Africa and the Middle East. A mature date tree (see left photo) can produce up to 300 lbs of dates in one growing season!



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Butternut Squash and Parmesan Hand Pies

Ingredients

- 1 pie dough (see slide 14)
- 1 egg
- 2 cups chopped butternut squash
- 1 clove garlic
- ½ stick butter
- 4 ounce parmesan
- fresh sage (about 1 TB chopped)
- poppy seeds
- caraway seeds
- salt + pepper

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375 F and line baking sheets with parchment. Leave pie dough to chill in fridge until ready to use.
2. Place butter in a large sauce pan over medium heat. Add garlic and sauté until fragrant.
3. Add the chopped squash, sage, salt, and pepper. Saute over medium-high, until tender. Remove from heat and mash with a fork. Discard any large pieces of sage.
4. Roll out pie dough on a lightly floured surface. Cut out dough into circles with about 5" in diameter. You should end up with about 20 circles (makes 10 handpies). Place 10 circles to the side (these will be your top crusts).
5. Place about 3 tablespoons of mashed squash in the center of 10 remaining dough circles. Evenly distribute parmesan on top of squash.
6. Using a bit of water, make a ring around the edge of each pie. Take the 10 circles you set aside and use them to top the pie, pinching together with the bottom circle.
7. Whisk together egg and a dash of water. Brush tops of pies with egg wash.
8. Use a fork to pierce the tops of each pie. Sprinkle with poppy and caraway seeds. Bake for 20-25 minutes.





Spiced Apple Pie

Ingredients

Pie dough (recipe on slide 14)

- 8 Granny Smith apples –
peeled, cored and sliced
- ¼ cup cinnamon
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- ½ tsp cloves
- ½ cup unsalted butter
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup water
- ½ cup white sugar
- ½ cup packed brown sugar

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 425 F.
2. Divide pie dough in half and roll each into 2 circles. Layer one into a pie pan and prick with a fork. Bake for 10 minutes then turn oven temperature down to 350 F.
3. While your bottom crust is baking, peel and slice apples. Mix cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves together then mix into sliced apples. Set these aside for now.
4. Melt butter in a saucepan. Stir in flour to form a paste. Add water, white sugar and brown sugar, and bring to a boil. Reduce temperature and let simmer for 5 minutes.
5. In the meantime, layer the spiced apple slices into the pie pan, on top of the baked bottom crust.
6. Take the simmering mixture off the stove and slowly pour most of it over the mounded apples.
7. Now, take the second pie dough circle and cover the apples. Using pastry brush, lightly brush the remaining mixture over the top crust layer.
8. Bake for 35-45 minutes.



Pastry Pie Crust

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups flour
- 1½ tsp salt
- 3 TB sugar
- 1 Cup shortening
- 2 Egg
- 3 tsp distilled white vinegar
- 5 TB water

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine flour, salt, and sugar. Mix well, then use a fork to cut in shortening until mixture resembles coarse meal.
2. Combine egg, vinegar, and 4 TB water in a small bowl or cup. Whisk together. Gradually add to the flour mixture, stirring with a fork. Mix until dough comes together. Add an extra TB water if mixture is too crumbly and dry. Put dough in fridge for at least 10 minutes before using.

*Note: makes enough for both top and bottom pie crust



Cinnamon Walnut Fudge

Ingredients

- 8 TB coconut oil, melted
- 4 TB almond butter
- 8 TB rice malt syrup
- 8 TB cacao powder
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¾ cup walnuts, chopped
- A pinch of salt

*This recipe is really versatile in terms of what spices you add in. I like to use only cinnamon, but you could use cayenne, paprika, or whatever else you like!

Instructions:

1. In a food processor blend together the coconut oil, almond butter, and rice malt syrup until smooth
2. Remove mixture to a bowl. Add the c
3. Add the cacao powder, vanilla , cinnamon, and salt, and mix thoroughly
4. Stir in the walnuts
5. Pour into a 15cmx10cm container (or similar size) and sprinkle some walnuts on top
6. Freeze for 1-2 hours until solid then chop up into squares and serve
7. It should easily last up to a month in the freezer, but try not to thaw and refreeze more than once or twice or it'll decrease in quality!



Lemon and Basil Blueberry Slices

INGREDIENTS

Crust

- ¾ cup almonds
- ¾ walnuts
- 4 medjool dates
- ¼ tsp vanilla extract

Filling

- 1½ cup cashews (soaked overnight and then rinsed)
- 1 lemon (juice/zest)
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ cup rice malt syrup
- 2 TB melted coconut oil
- 125 grams blueberries
- 1 TB fresh basil, chopped

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Line a container with cling wrap (make sure some overhangs so it is easier to remove later)
2. For the crust, blend almonds and walnuts together, then add other crust ingredients and blend until it comes together. Press evenly down into tin and put into freezer while you make the filling.
3. Place all filling ingredients **except blueberries and basil** into blender and blend until smooth. Layer half this filling over your base.
4. Press a few blueberries into this base and then put tin back into freezer while you make the next layer.
5. Add blueberries and basil. Blend until smooth.
6. Take tin out of the freezer and spread blueberry-basil mixture on top.
7. Place in freezer for an hour to firm up. After, it can be stored in the fridge or freezer.



Rosemary Pumpkin Gnocchi

Ingredients

- 2 cups of pureed butternut/
pumpkin squash
- 1 TB dried rosemary
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese
- 1 Tsp salt
- 2 eggs
- 2.5 cups flour
- Dash of pepper

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Cut Pumpkin in half, remove seeds, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with pepper.
2. Line a baking pan with parchment paper, place pumpkin cut side down. Put in oven for 25-30 minutes, or until pumpkin is soft.
3. Scoop out the pumpkin pieces and place it in a food processor. Blend until smooth.
4. Place pureed pumpkin in a large bowl. Add in parmesan, salt, pepper, and eggs and stir until mixture is consistent.
5. Stir in flour 1/2 a cup at a time. Once all flour is added, softly knead the dough until smooth (you may need to add more flour). The dough will be sticky. Once smooth, generously flour work surface
6. Divide dough into 6 pieces and then roll each piece into a log, 10 inches long. Cut the strip into 1/2 inch pieces.
7. Using a fork, make ridges on the top of the gnocchi pieces. Place pieces on floured parchment paper and repeat with the rest of the dough.
8. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and boil until all the gnocchi floats (around 5-6 minutes).





Mint Chocolate Chip Cookies

Ingredients

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup mint leaves
- 2¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 butter
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 TB vanilla
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups chocolate chips

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Blend mint and granulated sugar in a food processor until evenly mixed.
3. In a bowl, mix the butter, mint sugar, and brown sugar with a fork (or use standup mixer). Add in vanilla and eggs.
4. In the bowl of a standup mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter, mint sugar, brown sugar and vanilla extract until creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
5. In a small bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda and salt. Mix this into the egg mixture.
6. Stir in chocolate pieces.
7. Drop by two to three tablespoon-sized balls onto ungreased baking sheets.
8. Bake for nine to 11 minutes or until golden brown.





Honey Lavender Scones

Ingredients

- 1 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 TB lavender honey*
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 cup heavy cream



Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 400F.
2. Stir together the flour, baking powder and salt in a large bowl.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together the heavy cream and the honey.
4. Add the cream-honey mixture to the dry ingredients bowl and stir just until the dough comes together.
5. Drop dough by the large spoonful onto a parchment-lined baking sheet.
6. Bake for 15-20 minutes, or until golden. Serve warm.

*I got this from my local farmer's market in NC, but there are plenty of tutorials for how to infuse your own honey online.



Pumpkin Thyme Soup

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pumpkin
- 2 sweet potatoes
- 1¼ cup water
- 1 TB olive oil
- ¼ onion
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 2 tsp freshly ground ginger
- 2 TB fresh thyme



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Line a baking pan with parchment paper.
2. Cut the pumpkin in half, scoop out seeds, then place each half face down on the baking pan. Wash, peel, and halve the sweet potatoes. Place them in baking pan around squash
3. Bake pan for 30-45 minutes or until soft.
4. In the meantime, heat oil in a small sauce pan. Chop up part of an onion (about ¼) and place into oil. Cook until translucent then add in garlic, ginger, and thyme. Let cook for a few more minutes then turn off heat and set aside.
5. When your pumpkin and potatoes are cooked, scoop out squash (discarding the skin) and place in a bowl with potato halves. Place onion/garlic/ginger mixture in bowl as well. Use an immersion blender to puree.
6. Place puree in a large stockpot. Add in water and stir together. Place on stove over medium high heat until mixture boils. Then, turn heat down and simmer for 20 minutes.



Chocolate Caramel Raspberry slice

INGREDIENTS

Crust

2½ oats
1/3 cup honey
3 TB cacao powder

Caramel Layer

¾ cup medjool dates
½ cup water
½ tsp vanilla
¼ tsp salt

Chocolate Raspberry Layer

¾ cup medjool dates
½ cup water
3 TB cacao powder
½ tsp vanilla
2 TB crushed frozen raspberries

Directions

1. Line a 5x5 inch tin with plastic wrap. Let some over hang the edges to make it easier to take out later.
2. Blend the oats in a food processor. Add the rest of the crust ingredients and blend until uniform. Press down into tin.
3. Blend all ingredients for the caramel layer until smooth. Spread on top of crust and pop into freezer while you prep the chocolate layer.
4. Blend all ingredients for the chocolate layer until smooth. Spread on top of the caramel layer.
5. Refrigerate or freeze (for a firmer consistency) for around 4 hours before slicing (I usually let it sit in the freezer overnight).



Pumpkin Pancakes

Ingredients

- 1 cup pureed pumpkin
- 1¼ cup milk
- 3 TB melted butter
- 1 egg
- 3 TB dark brown sugar
- 1¼ cup flour
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp ginger
- 1/8 tsp nutmeg

DIRECTIONS

1. Whisk together pumpkin, milk, butter, egg, and sugar until smooth.
2. In a separate bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder, and spices.
3. Whisk dry ingredients into wet ingredients until just combined.
4. Place a frying pan on the stove over medium heat (or use a griddle if you have one). Grease lightly (unless using non-stick).
5. Use a ladle to drop batter onto pan. Leave until bubbles start forming on the surface, then flip to the other side. Cook until golden brown.





THANK YOU!

