

THE CAMBRIDGE FOOD CO-OP

Wholesome, affordable foods in a spirit of respect for each other and our world

JANUARY 2014 NEWSLETTER

Message From the Board

All of us on the Board wish you a happy and healthy 2014! The new year is a time for taking stock at the Co-op. We will review the store's financial performance over the past year, take inventory of our stock, and finalize the budget proposal for 2014. The reconstituted Board will present the budget proposal to the general membership at the February Annual Meeting (date to be announced soon).

There are three areas of endeavor the Board wishes to explore in depth this year. These ideas were developed from suggestions made in the discussion groups at the November Semi-Annual Meeting.

1. Through the Finance Committee, and with Cory's help, we would like to examine as thoroughly as possible the financial structure of the Co-op operations. Although we do not possess the sophisticated data management systems that many businesses have, we think that, with our bookkeeper's help, we can develop ways to evaluate how we operate. As we develop a deeper understanding of our Co-op in terms of sales, membership work contributions, personnel contributions and costs, other overhead costs, etc., we would like to share this information with the membership through a series of finance workshops. We hope this will help us all develop a deeper understanding of where we are, how we work, and if we should change anything.
2. We would like to undertake a product survey. What the Co-op store carries, and in what form, seems to be the most popular topic at any gathering of "Co-operators". Cory works hard to respond to requests and keep track of what people want. We would like to expand that knowledge through a simple survey about what all shoppers (members and nonmembers) think is most valuable.
3. As we approach the expiration of our current lease (8/15/14), a task force will be evaluating our current location. Membership ideas and input will be sought as part of this evaluation process. Please stay tuned.

These efforts are in the formative stages now. There are committee signup sheets posted on the Board News Bulletin Board in the back hallway of the store. If you wish to contribute to any of these efforts, please sign up for a committee or contact me at: asusansullivan@gmail.com

*Happy New Year and Best Wishes,
Susan Sullivan, Board Chair*

Manager's News

WHY THE NEW CONTAINERS?

The new "Safe-T-Seal" containers for pre-packaging fruits, nuts, and other bulk items have several advantages over the old plastic bags and twist ties. They are recyclable and tamper-evident (easy to tell if they have been opened after they were packaged), and they keep food fresh longer.

NEW SPICE VENDOR

We are now doing business with Atlantic Spice, a company that uses cellophane to pack spices. Their biodegradable packaging locks in the essence of each spice to keep it fresh longer and makes for easier filling of spice jars.

THANKS

I would like to send a word of thanks to all Co-op members for a great holiday season in the store. Being that it was my first season here, the expectation was that all hell was going to break loose. But it was a good time, and I'm very appreciative of all the help the members offer to the store. Thanks.

Cory McMillan, Co-op Manager



From The Rind: Cheese at Your Co-op

This month we provide some interesting facts about cheese, some of which may be a surprise to our readers! We are indebted to the source *Mastering Cheese*, by Max McCalman and David Gibbons (Clarkson Potter, NY, 2009). The cheese-making process concentrates all the nutrients in mother-cows' milk, and these valuable nutrients are "pre-digested" during the cheese-making and aging process. Thus, some of the work that our digestive systems would have to undertake has already been begun before we consume the cheese.

While there are certainly fats in cheese, cheese contains "good fats" as well as bad ones. Cheese from grass-fed animals is particularly beneficial because it contains more conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which is considered to be a good nutrient and an antioxidant.

Cheese is part of the healthy Mediterranean diet, which also includes lots of fruits, vegetables, and grains.

While you may think that a "triple-crème" cheese is higher in fat than a hard cheese such as Parmesan, this is NOT the case! Cheeses are labeled by percentage of fat in their solid materials, rather than in their total weight. Soft cheeses have relatively large amounts of water still in them, while harder cheeses have less. As our source explains: "A dense cheese with, say, 50 percent butterfat, could actually deliver more fat per serving than a soft, runny one with 70 percent butterfat". Read labels and look for butterfat content.



Recipes From The Co-op: It's Cold Out There!!!

Chickpea, Orzo, and Greens—A Stew or a Soup

A great one-pot meal, this is an easy, comforting dish that will warm you throughout the winter. You can make it vegetarian with vegetable broth instead of the chicken broth and use any number of healthy greens. I adapted it from a recent New York Times recipe that called for mustard greens, but I have found that kale or cabbage work just as well. Use whatever veggies you have on hand without having to venture out in the cold weather. Two cups of broth and water will make a stew. Add more, at the start or to the leftovers, to turn it into soup. Either way, it is a hearty meal that keeps well in your refrigerator and reheats without losing flavor.

- 2 tablespoons, olive oil, a bit more for drizzling after serving
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 large or 2 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 celery stalks or one small fennel bulb, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Pinch crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary (optional)
- 2 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- ½ cup orzo
- 1 (15-ounce) can of chickpeas, rinsed and drained (or cook your own using our dried bulk chick peas)
- ½ can diced tomatoes (Muir Glen fire-roasted are great!)
- 2-3 cups loosely packed, sliced greens of your choice, or cabbage
- Salt and freshly cracked black pepper
- Chopped scallions for garnish, (optional)
- ¼ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, Romano, or Pecorino cheese



In a large pot, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the onion, carrots, celery or fennel, and sauté until tender, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, red pepper flakes and rosemary, if using, and cook another 2 minutes. Pour in broth, plus an additional 2 cups water, and bring to a boil.

Stir in the orzo and tomatoes. Reduce to a simmer, cover and simmer until the orzo is tender, about 5 minutes. Uncover and stir in chick peas and greens, letting the greens simmer until soft, about 2 minutes or more, depending upon type of greens.

Add more broth or water if you want it to be more soup-like. Season with salt and pepper and serve with chopped scallions, grated cheese, and a drizzle of olive oil.

Contributed by Co-op member Marcia Reiss

Italian-Style Chicken Stew with Artichokes and Beans

The TV cooking star Giado DiLaurentis calls this "spezzatino", which is an Italian word for "stew". My version may not be authentically Italian, but it is still full of flavor-and requires just one pot. The stew can be made ahead and reheated. For later servings, you can add cooked pasta, sliced greens, frozen peas, or whatever you like to extend the dish.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 oz. dried salami or chorizo or 2 strips of regular bacon
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 carrots, peeled and cut into ½ inch pieces
- 2 celery stalks, sliced (or sliced broccoli stems, peeled-a good way to use these up)
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste or half a can of diced tomatoes
- ½ cup dry white wine or vermouth
- 1½ cup low-sodium chicken broth (If you don't use wine, use 2 cups broth)
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves (not ground)
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 skinless split chicken breasts on the bone, (or boneless) or 4 thighs
- 1 can or jar of artichoke hearts, drained (not marinated)
- 1- 15 oz. can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt and 1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper, or to taste, more for seasoning chicken before sautéing
- ¼ cup fresh chopped basil or parsley



In a heavy, large saucepan or stew pot, heat the oil over medium heat and fry the salami, chorizo, or bacon until brown and crispy. Using a slotted spoon, remove and set aside to drain on a paper towel. If using bacon, remove some of the rendered fat.

If the split chicken breasts are large, cut them in half. If using boneless, slice in large pieces. Sprinkle chicken pieces with salt and pepper and sauté them until just brown in the same pot used for the salami, chorizo, or bacon. Remove the chicken and set aside. Add onion, carrots, and celery to pot and sauté until soft, adding garlic at the end. Stir in diced tomatoes or, if using tomato paste, sauté it a minute or so, which adds a roasted flavor. Add white wine and simmer a bit until slightly evaporated, then add chicken broth, dried thyme, bay leaf, and salt and pepper. Submerge chicken breasts in the mixture, cover pot half-way and simmer about 20 minutes, just until chicken is cooked through and feels firm to the touch. Thighs will take a bit longer.

Remove chicken and allow to cool. If mixture is too watery, simmer until reduced a bit. Add artichokes and beans and simmer about 5 minutes, just until heated through. Meanwhile, remove chicken from bones and slice into pieces. Remove bay leaf and stir in salami or chorizo. If using bacon, crumble it on top when serving so that it stays crisp. Allow mixture to sit covered for about 5-10 minutes for all flavors to mix and intensify. Taste for salt and pepper.

Contributed by Co-op member Marcia Reiss

Relishing Antioxidants at Thanksgiving with the Best Cranberry Relish

The classic Thanksgiving meal does not always exemplify healthy eating—except for the amazing cranberry. Cranberries are high in Vitamin C and fiber and helpful in reducing urinary tract infections. They're also called a superfood because they are higher in antioxidants than almost every vegetable or fruit that we commonly eat except blueberries. At Thanksgiving, cranberries play an important role in balancing out the flavors, textures and color of the whole wonderful feast. I bet very few of us sit down to a table without cranberry sauce or relish.

My mother always made what we called "that raw cranberry relish" according to the directions printed on the package. I've always done the same until a few years ago when I came across a more exciting version in the New York Times by Marian Burros. Like I do with almost everything, I fooled around with it until it was just right. I always volunteer to make it for Thanksgiving because it's such a good, sweet and tart counterpoint to everything else that is so deliciously rich.

This is a raw cranberry and orange recipe so I always make mine using the Co-op's organic ingredients. (I do not relish eating the skin of an orange that could have been sprayed with insecticides or wax.)

The Best Cranberry Relish

15 minutes

Make at least a day ahead of time to meld the juices.

- 2 cups fresh cranberries
- 2 oranges (Valencia oranges have a thin skin and are juicier than navels)
- 6 Tbs maple syrup
- 2 Tbs orange liqueur such as Grand Marnier, Courvoisier, triple sec or Creole Shrub)
- ¼ Tbs freshly grated nutmeg
- 6 Tbs toasted and chopped pecans
- pinch of salt

Wash cranberries. Scrub the skin of one orange and using a vegetable peeler, peel just the outside orange part of the skin. Then quarter both oranges removing any seeds and process with the cranberries, using a food processor or meat grinder with fine blade, until they are finely and uniformly chopped. Keep watching as it can easily turn the corner and become mush.

Put into a quart size jar and mix in the maple syrup, orange liqueur, nutmeg, and pinch of salt. Taste for sweetness adding more maple syrup if you prefer. Refrigerate at least a day ahead of time. Before serving, mix in the toasted pecans.

Yield: 3 cups

Luckily this usually makes enough for leftovers. It is dynamite mixed half and half with mayonnaise as a spread on turkey sandwiches.

Contributed by Peg Winship