

Mustard greens, increasingly common in supermarkets today, cook as quickly as fresh spinach. Their assertive taste is terrific here in a warming winter soup.

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups chopped onions
- 2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 8 cups (or more) water
- ½ teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 bunch mustard greens (about 12 ounces), stems trimmed, leaves coarsely chopped
- 1 10-ounce package fresh spinach, stems trimmed
- Sour cream

Directions

1. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in heavy large pot over medium heat. Add onions and sauté until tender and golden, about 8 minutes. Add potatoes; sauté 3 minutes. Add 8 cups water and crushed red pepper. Bring to boil. Reduce heat. Simmer until potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, heat remaining 2 tablespoons oil in another heavy large pot over medium heat. Add garlic; sauté until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add mustard greens and all but 1 cup spinach leaves; sauté until wilted, about 3 minutes.
3. Add sautéed greens to potato mixture. Working in batches, purée soup in blender until smooth. (Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Cool. Cover and refrigerate.) Return soup to pot. Bring to simmer, thinning with more water, if desired. Season soup to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Cut remaining 1 cup spinach leaves into 1/3-inch-wide slices. Ladle soup into bowls. Add dollop of sour cream to each bowl. Garnish soup with sliced spinach leaves and serve.



Sisters Hill Farm

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Our Fall Potluck Picnic is October 12th at 3PM! Save the Date!



Earlier this summer I got one of those phone calls you never want to receive. I was sitting on a bench in the Burbank Airport across from one of those terminal newsstands, with junky neon key chains and "I love Hollywood" t-shirts. I was sitting, waiting for my sister, Jen, to pick me up. For her (awesomely unconventional) bachelorette party, we'd be backpacking in Kings Canyon National Park for five days, climbing over mountain passes up to 12,000 ft. I was both excited and starving. My biggest dilemma at that moment was the battle between my stomach and brain over whether to get fish tacos from the airport restaurant or wait it out for the authentic stuff in Sylmar. That's when I glanced down at my phone and saw Julie's name on my caller ID.

Though we met in college, Julie became one of my closest friends when we both worked in D.C. She had the sharpest wit of anyone, and the warmest smile. She was the one who knew the name of every 80's band at pub quiz, the karaoke crowd pleaser, and the person whose living room couch always came equipped with hours of conversation. She'd just landed a job as Press Secretary for Hawaiian Senator Brian Schatz, a coveted Hill position for someone just 25, and I thought it likely she was calling to share stories from a recent work trip to the Island.

She was calling from Georgetown Hospital. She had checked into the emergency room with a bad headache, and was leaving with cancer. She was 25; she went to the gym; she ate vegetables; she was in many ways the picture of health having just been given the sickest of sentences.

I don't remember much of what I said to her in response. I think I mumbled something about how she'd fight it- how I'd be with her the whole way. In my mind, I was Al Pacino, revving up the team in Any Given Sunday. In reality, I'm sure my words were heartfelt but somewhat cliché, my speech fumbled by shock and the sock in my throat.

When I hung up, I fought the urge to Google her cancer, knowing WebMD makes the common cold seem like a death sentence, and instead dialed my friend Sam, a third year at Tufts med, and asked her to tell me everything she knew about Hodgkin's Lymphoma. The quick, tough truth of it I said, like pulling off a sticky band-aid.

It turned out Julie was luckier than most. The tumor in her neck had caused noticeable symptoms early on- the aching headaches leading to early detection. But still, the fight wasn't easy. She started chemo a week after her diagnosis. Two weeks after that, my friends in D.C. arrived at her door with a bottle of champagne and electronic clippers, there to help her shave her head in style. As the cocktail of chemo meds continued, she'd have good weeks and bad ones. Feeling strong- even going for a jog- one week, the next, swollen and afflicted with side effects like muscle sensations that felt like a perpetual funny bone.

All summer long, I'd farm and think about Julie. Hoping on the nice days that she was feeling good too, and on mucky days remembering even then how lucky I was to be healthy, doing something I enjoyed so much.

Farming, like cancer, requires a resilient spirit. No matter how good your plan is, or how

skilled you are, the only thing you can count on is that (some) things will go wrong- Japanese beetles, unexpected downpours, and downy mildews will have their hay day.

Though despite the assurance of setbacks, is the absolute certainty of new beginnings.

This week marked Julie's final round of chemo treatments, and tests have confirmed no further signs of the disease. I think Julie, and everyone who suffers from cancer, all have a little bit of "farmer" in them. Even after the worst of times, they stand ready to wipe their dirty hands on their knees, and start again towards a blossoming future. —Julia

*****From EatingWell.com*****

Tomato Soup - 8 servings, about 1 cup each

This simple tomato soup is perfect paired with your favorite grilled cheese sandwich. Make a double batch and freeze the extra for rainy-day emergencies.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme or parsley
- 1 28-ounce can whole peeled tomatoes, with juice (see tip)
- 1 14-ounce can whole peeled tomatoes, with juice (see tip)
- 4 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth, "no-chicken" broth (see Note) or vegetable broth
- ½ cup half-and-half (optional)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper to taste

Directions

1. Heat butter and oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat until the butter melts. Add onion and celery; cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 4 to 6 minutes. Add garlic and thyme (or parsley); cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 10 seconds.
2. Stir in canned tomatoes (with juice). Add broth; bring to a lively simmer over high heat. Reduce heat to maintain a lively simmer and cook for 10 minutes.
3. Puree the soup in the pot using an immersion blender or in batches in a blender. (Use caution when pureeing hot liquids.) Stir in half-and-half (if using), salt and pepper

Tip: Use fresh peeled tomatoes—may need to cook longer

*****From Fine Cooking in Season Cookbook*****

Winter Squash

Keeping it fresh

Winter squash are great keepers. Most will last a month or longer stored in a cool, dry place—in the basement or garage or on a kitchen counter.

How to use it

Winter squash are extremely versatile, though rarely eaten without cooking. Pureed for a soup or cubed and roasted with fresh herbs, they can be prepared many ways and adapted to recipes for almost every course.

Preserving options

To freeze winter squash up to 6 months, steam or roast it, then cut into chunks or mash. Freeze in airtight freezer bags.

Butternut squash is ideal for mashing, pureeing, and baking in gratins.

*****From EatingWell.com*****

Roasted Turnips & Butternut Squash with Five-Spice Glaze

In this delicious side dish recipe, turnips and butternut squash are glazed with a mixture of molasses and flavorful five-spice powder. Try the dish with garlic-rubbed roasted chicken or pork.

6 servings, about 3/4 cup each

Ingredients

- 4 medium turnips (about 1½ pounds), peeled
- 1 small butternut squash, peeled and seeded
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 small red onion, halved and sliced
- 2 tablespoons molasses
- 1 teaspoon Chinese five-spice powder (see Tip)

Directions

1. Position racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 450°F.
2. Slice turnips and squash crosswise into 3/4-inch-thick slices. Cut each slice into 3/4-inch-wide strips or "sticks." Toss with oil, salt and pepper in a large bowl until well coated. Divide between 2 large rimmed baking sheets and spread into an even layer. (Set the bowl aside.)
3. Roast the turnips and squash for 10 minutes. Carefully transfer back to the bowl. Gently stir in onion, molasses and five-spice powder to combine. Return the vegetables to the baking sheets; roast, stirring once halfway through and rotating the pans top to bottom and front to back, until tender, 15 to 20 minutes

Tip: Chinese five-spice powder is available in well-stocked supermarkets and Asian markets. All blends contain cinnamon, fennel seed, cloves and star anise; some versions are made with white pepper, some with Szechuan pepper.

*****From Epicurios.com*****

Spinach, Mustard Green and Potato Soup - Serves 8