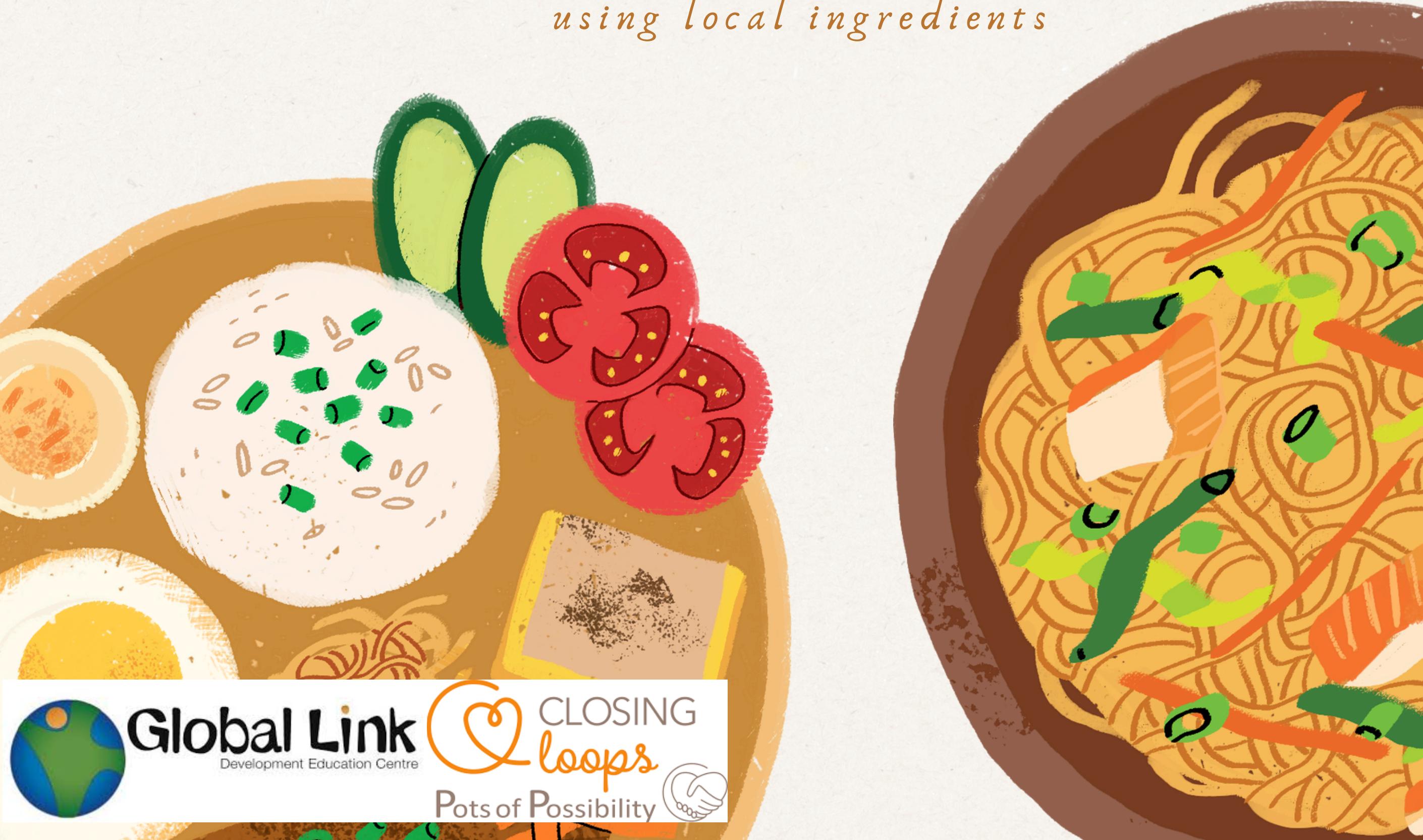




A Taste of Home



A Global Link project

Recipes from refugees and asylum seekers in Lancaster,
using local ingredients



The taste “A Taste of Home” project is a small local initiative organised and delivered by Global ^{Body} Link DEC in Lancaster, and funded by Pots of Possibility.

Global Link is a Lancaster-based charity whose main aim is “Creative learning and action for a just and sustainable world”. Operating for more than 30 years in the local area, Global Link has run cultural heritage projects, sustainability projects and in the last few years supported refugees and asylum seekers in their journey.

This project is the child of the above, as cooking is a deeply rooted cultural identity in the lives of most refugees and asylum seekers. This sometimes clashes with the global sustainability goals that include using local produce in an effort to reduce food miles. Many from the above group prefer to cook and eat imported food that reminds them of their home.

So in May 2023 we came up with the idea of running a project that encourages people to create recipes using ingredients grown in our patch on Claver Hill farm, recipes that are inspired from their home cultures enriching the culinary diversity of the local area as well as familiarising the Global Link service users with local produce. We also made a point of covering recipes focused on produce preservation, as there are many methods used in other parts of the world that have more localised supply chains and depend on produce seasonality. Although the art of preservation is largely lost today in our society, we hope to inspire you to embark on this journey.

The result of this little pilot project, kindly funded by the Pots of Possibility funding, is a collection of stunning recipes, preserves, colours and tastes from all over Europe and the Middle east. The participants really experimented, played and created with the available produce, proud to grow it themselves, harvest and cook it. As an added bonus all the recipes are vegetarian or vegan, most gluten free and as sustainable as possible, with bold exotic flavors.

We hope that the recipes below also inspire you to try the local produce, creatively and sustainably for “Creative learning and action for a just and sustainable world”

Enjoy

Nijat's potatoes with kale



This session launched our “A Taste of Home” workshops with a wonderful chef called Nijat. Nijat is an asylum seeker from Azerbaijan and has worked as a chef in many places and countries, bringing his knowledge to Lancaster. Nijat’s challenge was to create something with Kale. This was our most difficult ingredient by far as few countries closer to the equator use it. Nijat created a beautiful and colorful dish with it, also using potatoes from Claver Hill, a few spices and herbs. Check the recipe in the next page!

Ingredients for 4 people:

1 kg waxy potatoes

1 small bunch of kale, the more tender it is the better

1 teaspoon of turmeric

1,5 teaspoon cumin seeds

4 tablespoons of chopped dill

Olive oil for frying

Spring onion

Salt and chilli to taste

Method

Chop and parboil the potatoes until they are almost cooked

In a hot pan, add the olive oil and kale and cook until it is crispy.

Add the spices and cook for 30 seconds until they are fragrant. Add the potatoes, with the herbs and spring onion and mix until everything is cooked and coated with the oil.

Serve warm and enjoy!



Khalil's Pickled Garlic



Khalil has been an instrumental volunteer for Global Link as he has helped a lot with getting established in our new building. He painted, plastered and created a beautiful mural from concrete depicting Lancaster. Aside from building, Khalil knows how to make pickled garlic, a delicacy that aside from being very tasty, preserves garlic for up to 3 years outside of the fridge. It is a delicious condiment and side that can be added to food or made into a paste to spread on bread, potatoes and many other foods. Check the recipe below!

Ingredients

All the garlic you can spare, skin on
Red wine vinegar

Sugar

Salt

Dill

Method

Parboil the garlic until it starts to soften but not too much
In a separate bowl add the red wine vinegar (enough to cover the garlic in the jars you will be using). Add some sugar, salt and dill until you have a strong taste (the strong taste is needed to infuse the garlic). Place the garlic in washed and dry jars, cover with the liquid and store in a dark place. It will be ready in 2 weeks but can last for years.



Moslem's pickled cauliflower



Moslem joined us from Iran, and he is a multi-talented, multi-skilled asylum seeker. A trucker by profession, Moslem loves to grow vegetables, cook them, preserve them and in-between sessions he gives massages to other tired farmers!

Moslem is particularly knowledgeable about pickles (toursia in Farsi) as he doesn't want any produce to go to waste. Last year he created for us pickles that we still sometimes use today in our lunch drop-ins.

Ingredients

1 head of cauliflower

3 carrots

1 cucumber

1 tablespoon pickling spices (mustard seeds, coriander seeds, dried chilli and anything else you like)

2 tablespoons turmeric powder

3 bay leaves

Chilli to taste

Water

Vinegar

Salt

Method

In a pot add the chopped up vegetables and spices, and add boiling water, just enough to cover everything. Cook very little, until they just start to soften. Drain the water in a pot, measure it and add equal parts of the vinegar. Add salt to taste. Place the vegetables in the jars and cover with the hot brine. Keep in the fridge for as long as needed.



Turkish Pickled red cabbage



This beautiful recipe comes from Turkey as the spice profile will tell you. It is bold, sweet, tangy and extremely aromatic, an excellent way to preserve red cabbage (that is higher in sugars than white cabbage anyway). It can then be added to salads like a spiced, colourful coleslaw or even in borscht soups where it plays greatly with the other flavours.

Ingredients
1 red cabbage
2 tablespoons salt

Brine Ingredients
4 cups white or apple vinegar
2 cups water
2 tablespoons sugar
8 whole cloves
2 cinnamon sticks
2 tablespoons peppercorns
4 bay leaves
2 tablespoons coriander

Method

Chop the cabbage finely and mix with the salt. Leave in a bowl or colander for 30 minutes or preferably overnight to dehydrate the cabbage.

In a pot add all the brine ingredients and simmer for 10 minutes until the spices have infused the brine. Let the brine cool.

Pack the cabbage in clean jars, fill with the brine and keep in the fridge. The cabbage can last for years in the fridge.

Iranian Mint Sherbet



Another fantastic recipe from Moslem, this time tackling one of the most fast spreading herbs in the UK- mint.

If you have mint in your garden you will know how fast and wide it can spread with minimal effort. If you, like us, have more mint than you know what to do with,

why not try this excellent mint sherbet recipe that uses concentrated mint and can travel you without leaving your garden.

The sherbet can be preserved unsweetened in the fridge for years, and then sweetened with sugar or honey and some ice cubes for a refreshing drink. It can also be added to baked goods that require a mint aroma or in any dish.

Ingredients

All the mint you want to use, the more the better

Water

Method

In a wide pot add the mint (no need to chop up, put just enough water as for the mint to not burn, put a bowl in the middle to receive the concentrate and a plate above so that the liquid that evaporates, condenses at the lowest point of the plate and drips into the bowl. Simmer for 1,5-2 hours adding water as needed.

When the bowl is full with the concentrate, chill and keep in the fridge until consumption. It can last for years.

Middle-Eastern

Roasted eggplant omelette



This recipe almost didn't make it into the book because of how difficult it is to grow aubergines in the UK. If the gardening gods have smiled on you and you have in fact managed to grow aubergines, don't give this recipe a miss! Beautiful chargrilled aubergines and tomatoes, cooked onions, garlic and turmeric make the base for this omelette and it is served hot on pita bread.



Ingredients

3 fleshy aubergines

1 large onion

4 garlic cloves

1 large or 2 medium tomatoes

Turmeric to taste

Olive oil

Parsley

Method

Place aubergines and tomatoes over open flame and roast slowly, turning them as they blacken. We are cooking the flesh while burning the outside for a fantastic smoky flavor.

Once flesh is soft, leave on the side to cool and with wet hands start removing the chargrilled skin.

In a pan add the onion, garlic and turmeric with olive oil and cook over medium fire until onion is translucent. Add the cooked aubergines and tomatoes and simmer until most of the juices have evaporated. Add 6 beaten eggs and cook into an omelette. Garnish with some chopped parsley and serve over hot pittas.

Fluffy rice with spiced tomato



This recipe is a great way to use surplus tomatoes. Summer allotment tomatoes are sweet, fragrant and very versatile and they lend themselves to cooking. This lovely recipe stars tomatoes as they are cooked in spices until they become a paste and then rice is added to result in a fantastic dish, that can serve as a main or a side. The rice is cooked in the existing juices which concentrates the taste even further. If you don't want to add rice, you can add eggs and make a shakshuka variation or even have it as a spread on pita breads.

Ingredients

0.5 kg basmati rice

2 kg tomatoes

0.5 kg onions

3 cloves of garlic

1.5 teaspoons cumin seeds

1.5 teaspoon turmeric

0.5 cinnamon stick

Oil



Method

Chop the onions and garlic, add to a pot with the spices and oil and fry over low heat until onion is translucent and the spices fragrant. Add chopped tomatoes and cook over medium heat, stirring often until the tomatoes completely dissolve and the consistency is thicker. Add washed and drained rice, mix and make a mound. Cover with a lid that is covered by a towel to absorb the extra moisture and leave on really low heat until the rice is cooked and fluffy. Only add extra liquid if absolutely necessary.

Enjoy!

Middle-Eastern Potato kofta



For the hashbrown lovers out there, this recipe delivers an extremely aromatic kofta that really shines when using new potatoes. Mint, parsley and dill are added for their fragrance and turmeric for color. Alternatively, if you are not a fan of dill and mint, add cumin seeds for a warm savoury result.

Ingredients

2 kg new potatoes
1 bunch spring onions
5 tablespoon chopped dill
3 tablespoons chopped mint
3 eggs
Oil

Method

Peel and boil potatoes, then mash leaving some chunks. Chop onions and herbs finely, mix with mashed potatoes and the eggs. Season with salt and pepper and form into koftas.

Place koftas in hot oil, but don't overcrowd and fry until golden on each side. Serve warm or cold.



Pumpkin pancakes



This recipe offers a beautiful use for pumpkins, that when they come, they come in big numbers! Naturally versatile, but essentially sweet they offer some lovely flesh to be turned into sweets, pies and soups. This time we made a lovely breakfast/brunch item with them- pumpkin pancakes!

Check next page for recipe

Ingredients
1/2 *pumpkin*
All-Purpose flour

Sugar

Lemon zest

1 cup milk

2 eggs

3 teaspoons baking powder

Vegetable oil

Method

Cut the pumpkin into chunks and place in the oven at 180 C. Roast until it is soft. Puree the pumpkin and after it has cooled add the eggs and milk. Then add the lemon zest and enough flour and sugar to make into a sweet batter. Add the baking powder last and mix just until combined. Add a small amount of oil into a hot pan and add some of the batter. Fry over medium heat until golden on both sides and serve warm :)



Romanian Rhubarb Pie



This is a really airy and light dessert recipe that is very versatile as you can add any garden fruit. The possibilities are endless, from berries and poached apples and pears, to rhubarb that is the star of this particular recipe. It comes from Romania but it was greatly enjoyed by people from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria who mostly eat rhubarb with salt as a savoury snack.

Ingredients

5 thin stalks of rhubarb

150 g sugar

6 eggs

1,5 cup flour

1/2 cup milk

4 spoons vegetable oil

vanilla essence

1 tbs baking powder

juice of 1 lemon

4-5 tbs semolina

For the meringue:

6 egg whites

8 tbs sugar

pinch of salt



Method

Peel and chop rhubarb in 2 cm pieces. Leave aside with a bit of sugar sprinkled on them to release their juices.

In a bowl beat the egg yolks with the sugar until they are almost white. Add the vanilla essence, dilute the baking powder in the lemon juice and add it to the mix, add the milk, the vegetable oil and lastly the flour. The batter should be thick enough so that the rhubarb pieces do not sink so add flour accordingly.

Place in a pan on baking paper and place the rhubarb pieces on top. Sprinkle with the semolina and bake at 180C for 20 mins or until a toothpick comes out clean.

While the batter is baking, beat the egg whites into a meringue and slowly incorporate the sugar and salt. Once the batter from the oven is ready, take out, spread the meringue on top as smoothly as possible with a knife and return to the oven until golden.

Serve at room temperature and enjoy

(In this recipe you can add any spices you would like with ginger being a favorite!)

Russian okroshka soup with lettuce



This is a lovely summer soup that comes from Russia, and especially from Natalia's cookbook. It is served cold as a refreshing appetizer. It makes great use of surplus lettuce, especially if it has started to bolt and become a bit bitter. Other summer vegetables like spring onion, dill, new potatoes and radishes are added, topped off with some boiled eggs for protein and some sour cream for that delicious tanginess. You can also add boiled and pulled chicken pieces to make it more substantial, but that is completely optional.

Ingredients

2 heads of lettuce

1 bunch of spring onions

1 bunch of dill

2-3 boiled eggs

5 radishes

4 boiled new potatoes

Greek yoghurt or sour cream to taste

Salt and pepper

Water

Oil

Method

Chop up the lettuce and dill finely, the radishes in thin slices, the potatoes in bite sized chunks and the eggs as finely as possible and set aside.

In a pot mix 5 cups of water with 1 cup of sour cream, salt and pepper to taste, oil and a bit of vinegar if you would like it more acidic. Add the liquid mix on the vegetables and serve cold.

Enjoy!

Broad beans with herbs from Crete



This is a mediterranean recipe coming from Crete, in Greece. It is a star of spring recipes as it uses only ingredients that come out in spring to create a very colourful dish that can be served on its own over rice or as a side dish. Broad beans are the base of this dish, tender ones preferably, and the flavour profile is elevated by using spring herbs. Mint, garlic scapes and spring onion. Then the dish needs “aleyroksydo” which is vinegar and flour to add acidity and a bit of thickening to make it into a lovely thick stew-like consistency.

Ingredients

2 kg tender broad beans

1 kg onion bulbs with their green tops

Green part of 5 garlics or garlic scapes

1 small bunch of mint

Olive oil

Flour

Vinegar

Salt and pepper

Method

Chop up the broad beans in bite sized pieces, the onion bulbs, garlic cloves and herbs finely. In a wide pan add olive oil, and once hot add the broad beans and chopped onion bulbs and garlic cloves. Add salt and pepper to taste. Cook for 1-15 minutes over medium heat until the broad beans are tender but not mushy. Add the chopped herbs and aromatics and separately in a bowl mix flour with vinegar and water if required. Remove the pan from the heat and add the vinegar mix slowly until it reaches required acidity and consistency.

Serve warm and enjoy!

Fermented eastern european vegetables



This is an eastern European end-of-summer recipe. It makes great use of all the produce that is left over at the end of the summer and doesn't have the time to ripen.

Green tomatoes, cauliflower, carrots and celery lactoferment in the crisp autumn temperatures to create a lovely tangy and crunchy result that is full of probiotics, is shelf stable for months and can provide some vegetables in the midst of winter. The vegetables can then be eaten by themselves as a side or added to stews and curries for a great tangy and crunchy result. Even the brine can be used instead of imported lemons to sour soups naturally, the vegetables can be further dehydrated and powdered to make a condiment...The possibilities are endless!

Ingredients

Firm green tomatoes

Carrots

Celery sticks and leaves

Cauliflower

Horseradish root

For the brine

Salt (non-iodised and without anti-caking agents)

Bay leaves

Peppercorns

Any other seeds you like



Method

Bring to the boil 2 litres of water with 2 heaped tablespoons of salt and the spices. As soon as it boils, remove from the heat and let cool. Strain to remove the spices and place on the bottom of the jars. Then add the vegetables over the spices (to keep them from floating to the surface) and on top of the jars add horseradish root pieces in an X patterns to keep all vegetables below the brine level (whatever is above the brine will get moldy and horseradish also keep any mold from appearing due to its antibacterial properties). In the end add the brine, close the jar and keep it in a place with stable temperature. Bubbles and signs of fermentation should appear after one week. After that point keep tasting the result (using a clean fork each time) until the desired acidity is achieved. Then place in the fridge, or leave outside to complete the fermentation and make completely shelf stable.

Enjoy!

We hope this little booklet gave you an idea of all the fun we have been having with our “Taste of Home” workshops so far, and inspired you to try a new approach in your cooking with local ingredients. The wealth of knowledge, techniques and tastes to be discovered is almost infinite and we only scratched the surface with this pilot project.

We are surrounded by people that come from countries where this knowledge is still thriving and being passed down in communities and families, being sustainable without knowing it, being community driven without trying.

This is a vision we have for the future here and we are committed to continue bringing different cultures together and benefit mutually from it, “Creatively Learning for a Just and Sustainable World”.

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foodfutures.org.uk/pots-of-possibility

