

FRESH, LOCAL & GLUTEN-FREE MARKET TALK WITH KIM CHRISTENSEN

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Kim Christensen is a gluten-free, allergy-friendly blogger living in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Her experience with multiple food allergies, digestive disorders, and Chronic Lyme Disease encouraged her to learn a new approach to whole foods cooking and healthy living. Kim writes about her food and healing journey on her blog **Affairs of Living** (www.affairsofliving.com). She is currently compiling recipes for a gluten-free cookbook and plans to attend graduate school for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine in 2011.

CULTURED KOHLRABI "PICKLES"

Yield 1 qt | Kim Christensen, www.affairsofliving.com

These naturally fermented, vinegar-free kohlrabi "pickles" are crunchy, salty, and tart, and very reminiscent of classic cucumber pickles. The natural fermentation process allows the development of beneficial bacteria and creates a live food that helps regulate digestion and restore proper intestinal flora, just like yogurt or kefir.

2-3 large kohlrabi bulbs

2 Tbsp high-quality sea salt (Himalayan pink salt, Real Salt, or Maldon are excellent)

2 Tbsp minced fresh dill

1 Tbsp whole yellow mustard seeds

2 garlic cloves, peeled, crushed, sliced in half lengthwise

optional: 1/2-1 tsp red pepper flakes

1-1 1/2 c filtered water

1 1-qt. glass canning jar, sterilized with boiling water

Wash and peel kohlrabi well, then slice into long sticks about 1/4" x 1/4". Arrange sticks in jar, layering with dill and garlic. As you are putting them in jar, press down lightly with a wooden spoon, and continue filling until there is about 1" between kohlrabi and top of jar.

Mix together salt, 1 cup of water, mustard seeds, and red pepper flakes, and pour over kohlrabi. Add additional water as necessary to cover kohlrabi and fill until there is 1" space at the top. Cover tightly.

Let jar sit out at room temperature (ideally, 65° -70° F) for 3-4 days in a dark place on a plate or in a small dish to catch any possible leaks.. Hotter temperatures will make things ferment more quickly, cooler temperatures will make for slower fermentation. you may notice hissing sounds coming from the jar - that's a good thing! After 3 days, carefully open jar over the sink (pressure builds up and it may fizz when you open), and try a pickle. It will be very salty, and should taste tart, slightly sour and yeasty. If not sour enough for your tastes, put cover back on and let sit another day or two.

Transfer to cold storage after fermenting. Can be eaten immediately, or kept for up to 6 months in the refrigerator. The flavor gets better with age!

SAUTEED ZUCCHINI WITH GARLIC SCAPE & SPINACH PESTO

Yield 4 servings | Kim Christensen, www.affairsofliving.com

This is a delicious side dish that is easy to prepare and delicious. To make it a main course, toss it with cooked pasta, rice or quinoa, add white beans or cooked chicken, and stir in more pesto, to taste. Serve hot or chilled for a wonderful, versatile dish.

4 medium zucchini
olive oil
1/2 cup pesto, or more, to taste (recipe follows)
2-3 Tbsp toasted pumpkin seeds
1-2 tsp lemon zest
sea salt & freshly cracked pepper
optional: lemon wedges, for serving

Heat a heavy bottom saute pan and add pumpkin seeds. Toast until golden and starting to pop. Remove from heat. Add oil to saute pan, and heat over medium heat. Add sliced zucchini, stir to coat, and saute over medium high heat for 4-5 minutes, until just slightly softened and lightly browned. Remove from heat and place in serving bowl. Toss with pesto, adding sea salt and freshly cracked pepper to taste. Serve hot or chilled, garnish with pumpkin seeds, lemon zest, and lemon wedges.

GARLIC SCAPE & SPINACH PESTO

Yield 2 cups

This pesto can be used a multitude of ways - toss with raw or cooked vegetables or pasta, use as a flavorful base for dressings and sauces, or use as a spread in sandwiches or wraps.

1 cup chopped garlic scapes
3 cups fresh spinach, lightly packed
1/3 cup fresh basil leaves, packed
1/3 cup fresh parsley leaves, packed
1/2 cup raw pumpkin seeds, toasted
1 cup olive oil or 1/2 cup olive oil + 1/2 cup cold chicken or vegetable broth
juice & zest of 1 1/2 large lemons

Toast pumpkinseeds in a saute pan over medium until golden and starting to pop, stirring often. Remove from heat and let cool while preparing other ingredients. Place garlic scapes and lemon juice in a blender or food processor and process until lightly chopped, then add spinach and herbs, and continue processing until just starting to mix. Slowly add olive oil/ broth and continue to blend until smooth, scraping sides as necessary, then add pumpkin seeds and blend until finely chopped. Adjust seasoning to taste, adding more lemon juice if necessary. Serve immediately, or store in the refrigerator for up to a week. For longer storage, freeze in ice cube trays, then transfer to freezer bags. Thaw in refrigerator or at room temperature.