

Pantry News

July 2020 Issue # 8

Welcome to our eighth edition of the *Pantry News*. A newsletter designed with you in mind and giving you the opportunity to try out new recipes using food items that you receive in your pantry bag.

This week's vegetables come from Willow Wisp Organic Farm in Damascus. They have supplied us with escarole. Jane Bollinger has provided some interesting facts about escarole and a few tasty & healthy pasta recipe for all to try and enjoy.

Make sure to check out the back page for ways to preserve fresh eggs.

Escarole has a fresh, crisp taste with slight bitterness, which varies throughout the head. The inner, lighter-colored leaves are sweeter than the outer, darker green leaves. Escarole can be used both raw and cooked. Its flavor is brighter and more pronounced when raw and more mellow when cooked. One popular use for this leafy green is wilted in Italian soups. It's frequently paired with white beans, whether in soup or as a side dish with bacon or ham. Escarole can also be sautéed or grilled for a side dish or left raw and used as a salad green.



Pasta e Fagioli with Escarole

(Pasta and beans with escarole)

INGREDIENTS

3 tablespoons olive oil, plus more
1 large onion, chopped
1 (14.5-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes
3/4 cup canned vegetable broth or wine
1 (14.5-ounce) can cannellini (white kidney) beans (with their liquid)
Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
3 ounces any flat pasta, broken into pieces (lasagna pasta is especially nice, broken into large pieces)
1/2 head escarole, leaves torn into 2-inch pieces
Grated Parmesan for serving

PREPARATION

Heat 3 tablespoons oil in a large pot over medium. Cook onion stirring occasionally, until softened, 8–10 minutes, adding 1 to 2 garlic cloves, minced, during the last 2 minutes. Add tomatoes (and their juice), crushing the tomatoes with your hands, and cook, stirring often, until liquid is almost completely reduced, 12–15 minutes. Add wine, if using, or substitute vegetable broth. Bring to a boil, and cook until almost completely evaporated, about 5 minutes.

Add beans and their liquid; cook until flavors meld, 12–15 minutes. Add pasta; cook, stirring and adding water as needed, until *al dente*, 15–20 minutes. Add escarole and cook until wilted, about 1 minute; season with salt and pepper. Serve soup drizzled with oil and sprinkled with grated Parmesan cheese.

Escarole with Bacon, Dates, And Warm Walnut Vinaigrette

Ingredients:

1 7 to 8 oz head of escarole, coarsely torn	1/4 cup dates, chopped
1/2 cup walnut pieces, toasted	5 bacon slices, cut crosswise into strips
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil	1 large shallot, chopped (or one small onion, chopped)
2 TB red wine vinegar	Fine sea salt and black pepper to taste

Preparation:

Combine escarole, dates, and walnuts in a large bowl. Cook bacon in a medium skillet over medium-high heat until brown and crisp. Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to paper towels to drain. Add bacon to bowl with salad. Discard drippings from skillet; add olive oil. Place over low heat. Add shallot (or onion); sauté until soft, about 3 minutes. Remove skillet from heat; add vinegar and whisk to blend. Season vinaigrette with sea salt and black pepper. Gradually add warm dressing to salad, tossing to coat. Divide among plates.

How to Freeze Eggs

I can freeze eggs?? Who knew?? Eggs can usually be stored for a few weeks if covered in the refrigerator. However, sometimes you just have too many eggs to use before they go bad, or you have used the egg whites in a recipe but don't want to eat the egg yolk right away. Follow the instructions below to freeze these eggs safely without them losing their taste or texture.

Method 1– Freezing Whole Raw Eggs

1– Always begin by cracking the eggs into a large bowl or other container. Raw eggs, just like any material that contains significant amounts of water, will expand when frozen. If the eggs are frozen in the shell, this expansion could crack the egg, possibly mixing shell fragments into the edible part of the egg & introducing harmful bacteria from the outside of the shell. **2**. Beat the eggs together gently until well blended. Make sure to break the egg yolks to create a uniform mixture. Try not to beat too much air into the eggs. **3**. Add another ingredient to prevent graininess (recommended). Raw egg yolks tend to become gelatinous when frozen. When mixed with egg white, this can cause a grainy texture in the frozen egg mixture. There are two ways to prevent this, depending on your intended use for the eggs. If you are using them alone or in savory dishes, stir in 1/2 teaspoon salt for each cup of raw egg. If you are using them in sweet dishes, stir in 1 to 1 1/2 tablespoons of sugar, honey, or corn syrup. **4**. If you want the mixture more consistent and uniform, an optional step is to strain it through a sieve or colander over a clean bowl. This will also remove most shell fragments if any were mixed into the egg while cracking them. **5**. Pour the mixture into freezer-safe containers, leaving 1/2 inch of space between the egg mixture and the lid to allow for expansion. Tightly seal the containers. You can also freeze the egg mixture in clean ice cube trays first, then pop the cubes out into a larger, freezer safe container. This may make it easier to thaw the amount of egg you need. **6**. The eggs typically remain high quality for several months to a year, so it's important to label them rather than relying on your memory. Remember to include the date you froze them, the number of eggs you froze, and the additional ingredient you mixed in (if applicable). This helps avoid the unpleasant surprise of using salty eggs in a batch of brownies.

Method 2– Freezing Separate Raw Egg Yolks and Whites

1. Separate the eggs. The most common way is to break the eggshell carefully in half over a clean bowl, without dropping any egg. Transfer the raw egg back and forth between the two halves, letting the white drip bit by bit into the bowl until only the yolk remains in the shell. **2. As in Step 3 above**, mix yolks with other ingredients to prevent gelling. Raw egg yolk will become gelatinous when frozen, making them unusable in most recipes and unpleasant for most people to eat. **3**. Freeze the yolks. Store the mixed yolk mixture in freezer-safe containers, leaving 1/2 inch of space between the yolks and the lid to allow for expansion. Seal the containers tightly before freezing, and label with the number of eggs used, the date frozen, and the type of mixture (savory or sweet). It's best to use the egg yolks within several months for best quality. **4**. Gently stir the egg whites together to create a more uniform mixture, without introducing too many air bubbles into the mixture. Unlike the egg yolks, raw egg white does not require any additional ingredient to maintain its quality in the freezer for several months. If the mixture is too chunky or uneven for your preference, strain it through a sieve over a clean bowl. **5**. Freeze the eggs whites. As with the yolks, these should be stored in specialized freezer-safe, rigid plastic or glass containers. Again, leave 1/2 inch of space to allow for expansion. Seal tightly and label with number of eggs and date frozen. Any type of raw egg can be poured into a clean ice cube tray first, then transferred to a sealed container in the freezer. This makes it easier to remove only the amount of egg you need for a given recipe.

USING FROZEN EGGS

1. Thaw in refrigerator overnight. Whether raw or cooked, frozen eggs are best thawed overnight in a cold place like a refrigerator, to avoid being exposed to bacteria. Any temperature above 39 degrees Fahrenheit carries significant risk of bacterial contamination for thawing food. You may speed up the thawing process safely by placing the container under cold running water. Never attempt to cook frozen eggs directly on a frying pan or in a dish. **2**. Only use thawed eggs in well-cooked dishes. Insufficiently cooking thawed eggs can carry risk of bacteria. The internal temperature of the thawed egg or the food it is mixed into should reach at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit. **4**. Use 3 tablespoons thawed raw egg for each egg the recipe calls for. If the eggs were frozen separated, use 2 tablespoons thawed raw egg white instead of the white of one egg and 1 tablespoon thawed raw egg yolk instead of one egg yolk. Egg sizes vary greatly, so don't worry too much about the exact amount. If baking, you can adjust to a dry or wet dough by adding more wet or dry ingredients, respectively, to balance it out.