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Should we buy a new home?

One of the topics in general business at the upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM) is whether we should, as a long-term goal, buy our own building.

It's long been a dream of many of us to have place for the co-op we could truly call home. And not just because we'd feel more secure not having to worry whether we can renew our lease

every few years. We'd probably make more of those repairs and renovations that we've had on the back burner forever. As we always have, we'd no doubt draw upon more of the many skills and know-how of our membership to create more of a home worth coming home to. While we've not done too badly with where we are, given our limited space and previous poor financial picture, what could we do if

owned our own building? Would it spur us to realise a better Alfalfa House?

We don't come together that often as a co-op apart from the odd fundraiser, so the AGM affords us a once-a-year opportunity to discuss such a question. So do come along on the 17th and share your thoughts.

– Stevie Bee

■ More on the AGM at www.alfalfahouse.org/html/agm09.htm

F+V

what's good in fruit+veg with Jamie Payne

LOCAL GREENS AND HERBS ARE THE GLOW AT THE MO'

ON THEIR WAY OUT

- ▶ ONIONS: Try making onion jam.
- ▶ CITRUS: Tangelo, navel oranges, grapefruit, mandarins. Some on special.
- ▶ STRAWBERRIES: We knew they wouldn't last long!
- ▶ YELLOW SQUASH: Still good but not around for long.

NEW ARRIVALS

- ▶ BROADBEANS: Delicious steamed and eaten with a tamari and lemon dressing or cooked in risottos. Short season
- ▶ GREEN BEANS, ROUND and FLAT
- ▶ ASPARAGUS: Short season
- ▶ CUCUMBER: Perfectly cool and refreshing for late spring.

- ▶ JOPPA ORANGES: FD, sweet and juicy.
- ▶ GREEN CABBAGE: FD, excellent

WHAT'S GOOD NOW

- ▶ PURPLE ITALIAN GARLIC: Small bulbs full of flavour
- ▶ MUSHROOMS: Swiss browns and white button
- ▶ ASIAN GREENS: Pak Choy, Tat Soi and Choy Sum.
- ▶ GREENS: Endives, Lettuce (many varieties), English Spinach, Silverbeet, Wild Greens, all jolly good now
- ▶ PEAS and BEANS: Round and Flat Green Beans, Broadbeans and Snow Peas
- ▶ KUMERA/SWEET POTATO: Purple, White (purple inside) and Gold
- ▶ BEETROOT BUNCHES: Gold and Red varieties, FD
- ▶ DUTCH CARROTS: Very sweet, perfect

with one of our dips.

- ▶ LOCALLY-GROWN GREENS and HERBS: Varieties include Romaine, Cos Lettuce, Parsley, Thyme, Chervil, Chrysanthemum, Endives. All freshly-harvested, locally grown, usually in of a Wednesday after lunch.
- ▶ YAKON: Aka the *Apple of the Earth*, sweet and juicy. Eat it raw, lightly steamed or dried out and eat as you would dried fruit. Can be used in savoury dishes as well as dessert and breakfast.
- ▶ PUMPKIN: Delicious and cheap. Great for savoury or in sweet dishes.
- ▶ PEARS: Packhams have turned brown but still hard and delicious. Buerre Bosc still delicious, but in sporadically.
- ▶ KIWIFRUIT from Victoria

SOON: Papaya, pineapples, star fruit

■ If you'd like to ask me about anything, or to order in bulk, please email produce@alfalfahouse.org

■ For week-to-week fruit+veg availability: go to www.alfalfahouse.org/html/PRODUCTS/fruit+veg.htm ■ FD: Farmer-Direct

Jamie

NEW, BACK & OUT

GROCERIES WITH MONIKA BAUMANN

WHAT'S new

- ▶ Two new types of organic **FAIRTRADE COFFEE** (ground and beans) from Sprocket Roaster, a small family-based roaster in Newcastle who are also certified carbon-neutral. They roast the beans using an innovative roasting technique that reduces both the chances of overcooking and greenhouse gas emissions by at least 90%. The process is powered by end-of-life waste stream products such as coffee grindings and paper waste collected from cafés, resulting in a very low waste, near closed loop. It even comes in returnable, reuseable metal buckets with one-way valves ensuring the coffee stays fresh.
- ▶ Organic **CORN BREAD** (sourdough, gluten-free) from Naturis, delivered Thursdays
- ▶ Organic raw **CACAO NIBS** due to popular demand
- ▶ Organic raw **CACAO-COCONUT BUTTER** – now in bulk from Loving Earth as a holiday season treat.
- ▶ Organic gluten-free **BLUEBERRY** and **VANILLA MUFFINS** from Bibba Baking, delivered Saturday mornings
- ▶ Biodynamic in-conversion **BRIE, CAMEMBERT** and **NUAGE BLANC** soft cheeses from Paris Creek
- ▶ Living Foods **RAW VEGAN BARS** certified organic from Victoria. There are five

flavours – raw cacao, apricot+goji, fig+almond, green energy and green cacao. These replace the raw Kitz bars and taste a lot better and smoother (note from the editor).

WHAT'S back

- ▶ Organic **MUNG DAHL** has returned. Although India stopped exporting organic beans a while ago because of its domestic food crisis, one of our suppliers

Gravity Bins

We've reached our target and the last of the bins will be in place soon.

THANKS TO
All who donated, fundraised, promoted and installed them.

was lucky enough to get the last three bags of organic mung dahl and the good news is they've offered all of them to us. As this is the last of the organic mung dahl in Sydney – and quite possibly Australia – we're restricting it to 1kg per membership per day.

- Organic **RICE CAKES** – supply has stabilised again

• MANUKA HONEY

- 30+** in 1kg tubs
- Organic **GOJI BERRIES**
- Organic **GENMAI MISO** and **MUGI MISO**
- Organic **SMOKED TOFU AND OLIVE DIP** from Earnest Bean
- Insecticide-free roasted and salted **PISTACHIOS** from South Australia

- Organic raw **COCONUT BUTTER** has made a much-awaited return
- Multipurpose **ORANGE CLEANER**
- Organic **MACADAMIA NUT BUTTER**
- Organic raw **CACAO BEANS WITH TESTA**
- Good news on the **BICARB SODA** front finally! We now have a new supplier who has guaranteed us a stable supply.

WHAT'S out

- ▶ Organic **BLACK MISSION FIGS**, and **TURKISH FIGS**, both waiting the new season's crop
- ▶ Organic **PECANS**, new season stock arriving mid-November
- ▶ Organic **MAPLE SYRUP** – more than a pallet's worth of maple syrup went missing on its way to Australia and our supplier is trying to track it down so it may be out until the holiday season. Try agave or honey instead.
- ▶ Organic **SAFE TOILET PAPER** won't be available until late November due to supplier problems.
- ▶ Organic **FRENCH GREEN LENTILS**, awaiting the next harvest
- ▶ Organic **RICE SYRUP** – still waiting for the shipment to arrive in Australia. Due by mid-November.

- ▶ Organic **PINENUTS** – unavailable at supplier
- ▶ I've discontinued the **LAVENDER CASTILLE SOAP** to make room for the multipurpose orange cleaner on the liquids shelf. We still have the original castile soap and the lavender one can be bulk ordered in the 9L container.

FOR REGULAR UPDATES VISIT
www.alfalfahouse.org/products.htm



SPEND JUST \$40 IN NOVEMBER AND KEEP THE VAMPIRES AT BAY!

During November spend \$40 and receive a bulb of new-season Farmer Direct garlic.

TO VIEW THE OFFERS GO TO www.alfalfahouse.org/assets/downloads/ah_calendar09.pdf

SHOPTALK

EGGS

To ensure the co-op doesn't run out of eggs as has happened a few times recently, we've introduced a new prepay system for those who want to buy larger quantities of eggs. If you want to buy more than two dozen eggs, you'll need to pre-order them and pay for them by 5pm on a Thursday for pickup the following Tuesday afternoon. This

system works the same way as prepay bread and dairy milk - just ask the Shop Coordinator at the till. Please remember to come in and pick up pre-pay items promptly.

SOAP

We've rearranged the soaps so that there are now labels on the display box to make it easier to identify them. And we're now wrapping the unscented soaps in paper to

lessen the scent wafting from other soaps.

BULK ORDERS

A friendly reminder that bulk orders must be collected no later than a week after you've been notified that they've arrived in the shop as we have limited storage space for bulk orders. Also, please include your membership number when placing a bulk order by phone, in person or

by email and specify the exact name of the requested item and the quantity you want.

GRAVITY BINS

We've just completed the penultimate gravity bin instal with the last one planned for November 14. Thanks to everyone for all your support on this major project. and for your patience as stock moves around the shop to accommodate the new bins.

LAST REMINDER

Alfalfa House

AGM

[ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING]

6.30PM FOR 7PM START

Tuesday November 17, 2009

Main Office Gallery

First building on your right inside the gates

Addison Road Community Centre

142 Addison Road Marrickville

FOR FULL DETAILS OF THE AGENDA, PLEASE GO TO www.alfalfahouse.org/html/agm09.htm

All members are invited and encouraged to attend, speak and vote.

3

Free Buckets

The co-op has plenty of 5 to 25L heavy-duty plastic buckets and containers with lids. Hundreds of household uses. Ideal for nappies, compost, garbage, pot plants, food storage, tools and so on. Come in, have a look and take one or more! If you'd like to know more please email produce@alfalfahouse.org

THE *what's* WHAT of Seaweeds

BY MONIKA BAUMANN

Seaweeds are marine algae and their distinctive colour distinguishes them from terrestrial plants. While sea vegetables have formed a staple part of Asian diets for many centuries, their health benefits and enormous variety are relatively new to the West. Sea vegetables can be used in variously in stews, stir-fries and soups as well as a setting agent in desserts such as cheesecakes, jellies and mousses. They can be used as a feature ingredient, a seasoning or to add substance and texture.

• **ALFALFA STOCKS** a range of seaweeds including agar agar, arame, dulse, golden kelp, kombu, nori sheets and wakame.

NUTRITION. Seaweeds are a rich source of many minerals, including manganese, zinc, selenium, chromium, molybdenum, cobalt, copper and nickel; a significant source of calcium, iron, potassium, magnesium and phosphorous and an excellent source of iodine. Quantities depend on where sea vegetables are sourced and they may contain worrisome levels of arsenic. Care must be taken not to consume too much seaweed as one teaspoon typically contains fifteen times the recommended daily iodine intake and regularly consuming large amounts may cause goitre.

The minerals in seaweeds benefit the nervous system as they help reduce stress, aid metabolism and boost the immune system. Studies have shown some seaweeds such as arame, wakame and kombu contain alginic acid, which binds with heavy metals, including lead, radium, mercury and cadmium in the intestine, helping to eliminate them from the body. Polysaccharides, laminarin, mannitol and alginic acid are the main carbohydrates found in sea vegetables. Alginic acid and agar are used to change the consistency and texture of food, for example, when making jelly. Seaweeds contain less than 1% fat, are rich in the antioxidant beta carotene and contain some of the B group vitamins. According to some



KOMBU

sources, seaweeds can help reduce cholesterol levels, improve skin clarity and the lustre of hair.

BUYING AND STORING Seaweed is typically sold dried and keeps indefinitely but should be stored in an airtight container. In contrast, fresh seaweed only keep for one to two days in the fridge and need to be rinsed well before use.

PREPARATION AND COOKING Preparing seaweeds varies greatly. Some need to be soaked for long periods and then cooked while others simply need rinsing and soaking for a few minutes to make them tender enough to eat. That said, most seaweeds expand substantially so remember to only use a small amount. More details are provided with the different types below.

TYPES OF SEAWEED

AGAR AGAR can be used to replace gelatine in savoury and sweet dishes such as custards, soups, flans, cheesecakes, mousses and jellies. It's made from eight different types of red seaweed and can be bought as flakes, strands, shreds, sticks or as a powder, all of which need to be dissolved in water before use. Some sources suggest it can be used as a laxative. Agar agar is taste neutral and has stronger setting properties than gelatine – it can withstand boiling water and doesn't require refrigeration. Consequently, only a small amount is required, although its gelling abilities will vary depending on the other ingredients present in the dish so you may need to experiment if using it to replace gelatine. As a general

guide, 10g of agar agar will set 600ml of liquid. To make a fruit-flavoured jelly: place 10g agar agar flakes in a saucepan with 300ml cold water and leave to soak for 15 minutes. Next, bring the water to boil and simmer until the flakes have dissolved before stirring in 300ml of fresh juice. Lastly, pour the liquid into the desired mould and then leave to cool and set before serving chilled.

ARAME is a stringy, black seaweed, typically with a wide leaf that is sliced into delicate thin strips before being sold. It is harvested in spring, sorted by hand and cooked for seven hours before being sun-dried. As it has a slightly sweet, mild flavour, arame makes a good seaweed to try if you haven't eaten sea vegetables before. It's high in calcium, iron and iodine and is recommended for high blood pressure and to treat female disorders. Cooking and soaking times for arame vary depending on how it's going to be used. For example, it can be added straight to moist dishes such as soups and noodles that are cooked slowly but must be soaked before being added to salads and stir-fries. Arame should be rinsed under running water using a sieve and then placed in a bowl, covered with cold water and left to soak five minutes. Once it has doubled in volume, drain and place in a saucepan before adding fresh water, bringing to the boil and simmering for 20 minutes until tender.

DULSE (*Rhodymenia palmata*) is a typical seaweed in terms of nutritional value and contains high levels of iron, phosphorous, potassium, manganese and iodine. Dulse is a coarse red to purple sea vegetable with flat fronts and broad leaves that can grow up to 30cm in length. It's chewy in texture and has a spicy flavour when cooked. Dulse must be soaked until tender before eating, after which it can be eaten raw in salads or added to vegetable dishes, soups and noodle dishes. Toasted dulse can also be crumbled and used as a garnish or to

flavour soaps or even chewed. It is mainly eaten in northern Europe, especially Iceland, Scotland and Ireland but is also harvested commercially in Canada and the US and traded on both sides of the Atlantic. Dulse keeps indefinitely and is typically sold dry in both shredded and sheet form.

KELP refers to any of the large brown seaweeds with thick, sometimes ribbon-like, leaves. This sea vegetable has a long history and has been used by the Greeks, Chinese and Romans as a fertiliser and food medicine. Pliny the Elder praised it in his natural history book in the first century AD. Americans in the northwest Pacific prepared it by peeling the hollow middle ribs, cutting them into slices and then pickling them in a sweet and sour liquid made from sugar, vinegar and various spices. Kelp is made into kombu in Japan via a complicated series of drying, boiling and compressions while it is boiled and reduced for a long time in Ireland to make a thick green gruel typically served with mutton.

Golden kelp meal is high in fibre, builds energy and is rich in vitamins A, B, C and E and has more than 60 minerals, including potassium, calcium, magnesium, copper, zinc, iron and trace elements. It also contains natural sea salt and is an excellent source of natural organic iodine. Kelp powder can be used as a gourmet seasoning, a salt alternative, a condiment sprinkled on food, in cooking or mixed with a fruit drink. Kelp powder may also be added in very small quantities to stews and casseroles and sprinkled on salads. Commercially, it is added to ice cream, prepared desserts and salad dressings. It is sold dry in granules, powder or tablet form and keeps for long periods when stored in a cool dry place.

● **ALFALFA STOCKS** golden kelp meal from Sea Health Products, a long-established commercial operation drawing from a sustainable supply of kelp and holding a

Marine Vegetation Collection Permit. It is hand selected from waters off the Australian coast; the stems and extraneous sea matter are removed; hand-washed and sun-dried to preserve flavour and valuable nutrients; and then milled and packed into sealed containers within a week of collection.

KOMBU is grey black to deep olive green in colour and grows best in cool, clean deep ocean waters. It is made from the thick, wide leafed ribbon-like kelp, *Laminarai japonica* after a complicated series of drying, boiling and compressions. Kombu is most commonly harvested in Japan, particularly near Hokkaido, the northern most island of Japan, but is



INSIDE THE HUMBLE NORI ROLL

also farmed in Britain. It has a very strong flavour and is typically sold in sun-dried 30cm long strips that vary from 6cm to 30cm in width. It has a long history as well, with some of the planet's oldest surviving writings and paintings depicting seaweed-gathering. Kombu is an excellent source of phosphorous and calcium, higher in iodine than other seaweeds and rich in potassium, iron and sodium. It is naturally used in MSG. As dried kombu develops salt speckles, the leathery dried strands should be gently wiped using a damp clean cloth but not washed before use. Lightly scoring the surface with a sharp knife releases the flavour and a piece of kombu may be used to make stock several times,

although flavour declines with each use. Kombu is a vital ingredient in Japanese cooking, giving dishes a characteristic flavour of the sea, and is combined with shitake mushrooms and bonito flakes to make the traditional Japanese stock dashi. It may be crumbled over hot rice, used in slow-cooked dishes, to flavour soup and sauce stock, sautéed or deep fried. A stick of kombu can be added to pulses during cooking to soften them, increase their nutritional value and digestibility. It's also widely used in Korean cooking, especially in hot, strong-flavoured soups containing chilli. Kombu keeps indefinitely if stored in an airtight jar and kept in a cool dark dry cupboard.

NORI YAKI is a dried sea vegetable from various species of the *pophra* genus of red algae and is also known as laver or sloke. It's most commonly sold in thin sheets, ranging in colour from deep bright green (toasted) to dull purple black (untoasted) and has a mild refreshing ocean flavour and delicate crisp texture. Nori is one of the few sea vegetables that does not require soaking and may be eaten raw or toasted. It is a typical seaweed nutritionally. In Japan, it is harvested from bamboo stakes – to which the seaweed attaches – that have been placed in sheltered waters including Toyko Bay; it's also harvested from the ocean in the cooler parts of Europe. Once collected, the frothy alga is placed on bamboo trays and left to dry in the sun before being compressed into thin sheets and cut into 23cm squares. While fresh nori may be used in soups and stews, it's most commonly used in dried sheet form. Nori makes an edible wrapper for Japanese rice cakes and sushi. Finely-cut shreds are also scattered over noodles, rice dishes and soups as a garnish in northern China, Japan and Korea. To make laver bread in Wales, nori is boiled into a thick puree and mixed with oatmeal. To toast nori, hold the sheet 10cm above a low gas

POSITIONS VACANT Three spots on the MC

There are three vacancies on the co-op's Management Committee (MC). If you'd like to help shape the direction of Alfalfa House, why not join? To find out more, including Directors' Duties and the minutes of the meetings, go to www.alfalfahouse.org/html/who_are_we.htm. If you'd like to chat to an MC member about it, email coordinator@alfalfahouse.org.

Recipes when you want them

All the recipes featured in the eNews are also online. Go to www.alfalfahouse.org/html/recipes.htm and navigate to the section you want to explore. So far there are 58 of them.

Our coconut butter is like no other

The reason we call our coconut oil coconut butter is because its texture is creamier and more buttery than other coconut oils. You can taste and smell the difference. And it's all in the process.



quickly absorbed by our bodies, and not left to circulate in the bloodstream like other fats. The MCTs in coconut butter have also been shown to support thyroid function. And because our cells are comprised

The coconuts used to make this butter are husked and immediately pressed onsite at a family-run plantation in Manzanillo, Mexico. A 'wet method' centrifuge extraction process expeller-presses the flesh of fresh coconuts into a pulp to form a coconut milk emulsion. (The processing temperature is kept below 25°C to maintain the nutritive quality of the butter.) That emulsion is then chilled to around 10°C, which weakens the protein bonds allowing the oil and water to separate during centrifugation. This process improves both oil quality and yield. It means our coconut butter is raw, light tasting and smooth.

primarily of saturated fats, coconut butter promotes cellular health by reducing damage from free radicals, which translates externally to a more hydrated skin.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS

- 1 Replace at least some of your oils and fats in dressings, cooking and spreads.
- 2 Replace margarine and butter on sandwiches, add it to smoothies for an extra smooth smoothie, or spread it on crackers and eat as is. Try it as part of a homemade spread, for example, mix it with cacao powder or carob powder and agave to make a better-than-Nutella treat.
- 3 Coconut butter is considered one of the most stable oils. With a smoking temperature of 232°C, it can also be used for frying and baking. The beauty of this coconut butter is that it won't overpower a dish.

- 4 On your skin in place of moisturisers and toners.

MORE www.raw-chocolate.net/superfoods.php?ancientsuperfood=coconut

HEALTH BENEFITS Coconut butter is known for its high quality saturated fats and its lauric acid content. Cholesterol does not naturally occur in the plant world. Unlike saturated animal fats, coconut butter is cholesterol-free. Lauric acid promotes immune function. Medium chain triglycerides (MCTs) are abundant in coconut butter. Unlike other forms of fat, the liver is able to metabolise MCTs. Coconut butter's digestibility means it's

flame or warm electric hot plate and move it around quickly so it toasts evenly and turns bright green and crispy. (If you feel you could scorch your fingers, use a pair of tongs to hold the nori sheet.) After leaving it to cool for a minute, crumble the nori and use it to garnish stir-fries or soups or sprinkle over salad. Nori must be stored in dry airtight conditions away from moisture otherwise it may attract mildew.

WAKAME (*undaria pinnatifida*) is a leafy vegetable that belongs to the brown algae group and is also known as salad seaweed or lobe-leaf. It has curly feather-like leaves, grows in strong cold ocean currents and is hand-harvested from the ocean floor. In dried form, wakame may be almost black or brown and can be confused with kombu. However, unlike kombu, wakame becomes a deep to delicate green when cooked or soaked and expands greatly. It is typically sold dried and must be soaked in cold water before use. Wakame is mild in flavour and is one of the most versatile sea vegetables. In terms of nutrition, it is a typical seaweed, being high in calcium, vitamins B and C, and low in kilojoules and has long been popular with Japanese women because it is considered excellent for both the complexion and figure! Wakame is used extensively in Japanese, Korean and northern Chinese cooking. It can be soaked and used raw in salads and raw blended soups or cooked and added to soups and simmered dishes or toasted, crumbled and used as a condiment. It should only be cooked briefly so its nutrients and flavour are retained. After softening in cold water, drain and simmer for a few minutes in stock or boiling water. Drain and serve with a vinegar dressing, in a salad or add it to soups and other dishes in the final minutes of cooking. When stored in an airtight jar it will keep indefinitely.

•ALFALFA STOCKS wakame produced by Marinova who are based in Tasmania, home to arguably the world's cleanest ocean. It meets organic certification standards.

SOURCES

What food is that and how healthy is it? Jo Rogers
The cook's book of ingredients Margaret Brooker
Wholefoods: A cook's kitchen handbook Nicola Graimes
spiralfoods.com.au
seahealthproducts.com.au
marinova.com.au

WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT Uncertified organic?

Thanks to all who emailed me their thoughts on Alfalfa House stocking uncertified organic fruit and vegetables. About 75% of those who responded were in favour of us supporting local growers selling uncertified organic/chemical-free produce as long as we visited the farms and everything was found to be legitimate.

We'll now figure out the best way to go about this and will let you know in the next eNews. If you have any feedback about how to do this or if you wanted to offer your time and expertise in checking out the farms please email me (produce@alfalfahouse.org).

Many thanks again. Jamie Payne, Stock Coordinator (Fruit+Veg)

Unlike most recipes in everyday cookbooks, these recipes steer clear of conventional cooking guidelines and of ingredients usually viewed as essential for rich savoury sauces and sugar-sweet treats.

A couple of recipes, although altered, are attributed to cookbooks for those with food allergies and/or food sensitivities. The rest I've concocted in my kitchen through the sheer necessity that comes from having a child who's highly allergic to some foods and intolerant of many others. I'm one of those unruly create-as-she-goes cooks, therefore most of the recipes have recommended measures only. So please play with the ingredients and measures and fashion them to suit your desired taste and the texture you want.

KEY TO SYMBOLS

All recipes are vegetarian
 V vegan Gf gluten-free Wf wheat-free
 Sf Free from refined sugar
 Lc Low chemical (low salicylate only)
 Mc Moderate chemical (moderate salicylate only) Mhc Moderate to high chemical (salicylate, amine, glutamate)

DIPS+SAUCES

SESAME-FREE HOMOUS

(Friendly Food: the essential guide to avoiding allergies, additives and problem chemicals by RPA Allergy Unit)

(V, Gf, Wf, Sf, Lc)

- 1/4 cup chickpeas, soaked overnight
- 1/4 tsp citric acid
- 1/4 cup pear juice
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 tbsp water
- ground sea salt, to taste

METHOD

- 1 Boil chickpeas until tender
- 2 Blend all together in a blender* or food processor

NUT-FREE BABY ROCKET PESTO

(V, Gf, Wf, Sf, Mc)

- 1 small bunch baby rocket
- 2-3 tbsp rice bran oil or preferred oil
- sea salt, to taste
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1/2 small thumb of ginger
- fresh lemon juice, to taste

METHOD

- 1 Roughly chop rocket with kitchen scissors
- 2 Blend all ingredients in a blender* until desired texture is achieved



TIP: As rocket bunches vary in size, gradually add more oil until the desired consistency is achieved.

* A stick blender with a small blending bowl attachment works beautifully

PEANUT-FREE SATAY SAUCE

(V, Gf, Wf, Sf, Mhc)

- 2 tbsp rice bran oil (or preferred oil)
- 3 tbsp maple syrup
- 1 tbsp brown rice vinegar
- fresh chilli (choose your heat)
- 2 garlic cloves, grated/pressed
- 1 thumb fresh ginger, grated
- 1/2 cup sunflower paste (nut-free peanut butter)
- 4 tbsp water
- sea salt to taste
- cracked pepper to taste
- 1/2 tsp lemongrass powder
- 1/4 tsp garam masala
- 1/4 tsp turmeric powder
- 1/4 tsp cumin powder
- 2 kaffa lime leaves, finely chopped
- 1 fresh lime or lemon

METHOD

- 1 Combine oil, maple syrup, vinegar, chilli, garlic and ginger in a bowl, stir with fork, set aside
- 2 In a saucepan on low heat, melt sunflower paste. Stir water into paste and continue stirring over low heat
- 3 Gradually add kaffa lime leaves, spices, salt and pepper to pan mix, increase heat to medium and continue stirring for several minutes
- 4 Add mixture in 1 to pan mixture, stirring for a few minutes. Add lemon juice and tamari, and stir
- 5 Simmer sauce on medium-low heat for 10 mins

MILD MARINADE

(V, Gf, Wf, Sf, Mc)

- 3 tbsp rice bran oil
- 3 tbsp maple syrup or agave
- 1 clove garlic, grated
- 1 small thumb fresh ginger, grated
- 1/2 cup coriander, roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp mirin (sweet brown rice wine)
- sea salt to taste

METHOD

- 1 Mix all ingredients in a bowl
- 2 Decanter

TIP: Marinade will keep in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. When ready to use, marinate sliced or cubed tofu 8 hours in lidded container, gently agitating container from time to time.

SWEET STUFF

PEAR JAM

(V, Gf, Wf, Sf, Lc)

- 750g ripe, peeled pears
- 1 unripened pear (pectin) see NOTE 1
- 36ml stevia liquid concentrate

see NOTE 2

METHOD

- 1 Puree pears and place in a saucepan and warm over medium heat
- 2 Stir in stevia
- 3 Increase heat and bring to boil, stir occasionally for 5 mins
- 4 Remove from heat and pour into prepared jars. See NOTE 3

■ NOTE 1 Pectin helps jam set. Since unripened fruit is high in pectin, it's not necessary to use commercial jam-setters, which also contain castor sugar.

■ NOTE 2 Stevia liquid concentrate: Mix equal parts water and stevia powder in a container – preferably one with a slow dripping pourer – and stir until dissolved. Make enough to keep for other uses.

3 drops stevia liquid = 1 tsp sugar

7 drops stevia = 1 tbsp sugar

48 drops stevia = 1 cup sugar

Unlike sugar, stevia won't preserve jam.

■ NOTE 3 Sterilising old jars with metal lids: Boil jars and metal lids for 20 mins, remove with tongs, fill with hot jam immediately, screw on lid and invert the jar until cool. Once cool, turn upright and depress the centre pop seal on the lid.

GINGERBREAD PEOPLE

(Sf, Lc)

- 125g butter
- 1/3 cup coconut sugar
- 1/3 cup molasses
- 3 tsp sodium bicarbonate
- 1 egg
- 3 1/2 cups plain flour

METHOD

- 1 Pre-heat oven to 180°C
- 2 Melt butter, sugar, molasses in a saucepan over low heat
- 3 Allow it to cool until lukewarm, stir in bicarbonate and egg
- 4 Place flour in bowl, make a well in centre and add liquid mixture
- 5 Knead to form dough, roll out and into people shapes
- 6 Bake approx 15 mins

Tamara

CHAMOMILE

Both German Chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*) and Roman Chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*, formerly *Anthemis nobilis*) are renowned medicinal herbs of the daisy - or compositae - plant family. They have been used widely for centuries. All the parts of the plant including the stem, roots and its flowers can be used medicinally.

German chamomile is an herbaceous annual, originating in south-eastern Europe, but which has spread across the globe. It's very common and can be found in uncultivated areas such as fields and roadsides. It loves heat, light and moist soils.

The botanical name 'Matricaria' derives from the latin word 'mater' (mother) and suggests the many uses in women's complaints. Documentation from ancient Rome, Greece and Egypt, shows that people have been using chamomile to treat a wide range of ailments such as fever, insomnia and abdominal discomfort. German chamomile is most commonly associated with problems in the gastrointestinal tract. In fact, the Germans regard the plant as a 'cure all'. It is also the most favoured and most widely-used medicinal plant in Slovakia. An old Slovak folk tale says that 'one should always bow when facing a chamomile plant'. Such deep respect derives from many centuries of European folk medicine usage to treat upset stomachs, relieve colic and aid sleep. Topically, it has been used traditionally to reduce inflammation and heal wounds, cuts, sores and bruises.

Many centuries of common usage have resulted in chamomile being officially recognised in the pharmacopoeias of 26 countries today. In modern herbal medicine, both German and Roman chamomile flowers are well-known for their pain-relieving, anti-inflammatory, mild sedative, anti-ulcer, antiseptic, diaphoretic (fever-reducing) and carminative (relieves flatulence and



soothes intestinal spasm and pain) properties. Its slightly bitter properties may help loss of appetite.

Chamomile is an excellent gentle sedative - safe for children - so can be



CHAMOMILE FLOWERS

An old Slovak folk tale says that 'one should always bow when facing a chamomile plant'.

used to treat anxiety, restlessness and insomnia. It is possibly the most widely-used relaxing nervine herb in the Western world. It relaxes and tones the nervous system, and it is especially valuable where anxiety and tension produce digestive symptoms such as colic, pain, flatulence, diarrhoea and ulcers. Indigestion, reflux and gut inflammation, such as gastritis, are also often eased with chamomile.

As an analgesic, the essential oil of chamomile can be massaged into the

tummy to ease menstrual cramps and flatulent colic. Or a poultice can be made by filling a cloth bag with chamomile flowers, and gently heating it by placing in boiling water or in the oven for a short time, then applying to the painful area for about 20 minutes.

Chamomile can also be used as a mouthwash for mouth inflammations, a gargle for sore throats and as an eye bath for sore eyes and conjunctivitis. As an inhalation over a steam bath, it will help reduce nasal catarrh associated with sinusitis. Externally, as a cream, it aids wound healing and reduces swelling. Essential oil of chamomile as well as the flowers, may be added to a bath to aid relaxation and reduce pain.

Caution should be exercised when using chamomile in any form for those with a known allergy to the daisy family. Do not use essential oil of chamomile in pregnancy.

RECIPE Chamomile infusions

Chamomile makes a wonderful late night tea to aid restful sleep or as relieving tea for travel sickness.

■ Pour a cup of boiling water onto 2 tps of the dried flowers and let it

infuse for 5-10 minutes.

■ For digestive problems, the tea should be drunk after meals. Combining 1 tsp of chamomile and 1 tsp of peppermint will be particularly beneficial for gut problems, especially flatulence, dyspepsia and colic.

■ A stronger chamomile infusion can be used as a mouthwash for conditions such as gingivitis.

● ALFALFA STOCKS loose chamomile flowers or as a blend with peppermint, lemon balm, rosemary and cornflowers know as 'Blue Moon Blend'.

Elaine Parry is a qualified and accredited naturopath, medical herbalist and clinical nutritionist. She practises at The Buddha Bar Healing Clinic, 434 King Street, Newtown. If you have any questions relating to this column or to herbal medicine or nutrition in general please contact her (elaine.parry@gmail.com).

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The eNews is edited and designed by Stevie Bee, Information Coordinator, for Alfalfa House Community Food Cooperative Ltd
113 Enmore Road Enmore ■ Tel. 02 9519 3374 ■ www.alfalahouse.org