

Alfalfa
House

NEWSBULLETIN

News from the Shop

► On July 24, Alfalfa House was voted the Best Fruit and Vegetable Store in the Inner West Local Business Awards. A big thank you to all those who voted for us.

► A warm welcome to Warren McLaren, our new Co-op Coordinator. Warren has many years of cooperative experience, most recently with the Bower Re-use Centre in Marrickville. A warm welcome also to Amity Lynch who joins us as a Shop Coordinator. And a fond farewell to Dave Tilley, our Stock Coordinator (Fruit+Veg) for the past 18 months, who leaves this month to study Chinese Medicine in Taiwan. Dave introduced a greater seasonal focus to our fruit+veg, buying directly from farmers and was a reliable source of information for shoppers and staff alike courtesy of his vast product knowledge. Dominika Grossy steps into his shoes.

► A reminder to get those surveys in before the end of the month if you haven't already. So far well over a hundred have been returned. Survey forms are available at the counter. When you're done, either place it in the box at the counter or post it to 113 Enmore Road Enmore 2042 or fax to 9565 5053. And don't forget, as an added incentive, you can go into the draw for a \$100 Alfalfa House voucher.

► If you have a spare two hours and would like to help out in the shop, we'd love to have you around, particularly on the weekend. There's a wide range of things to do. And remember each two hours you volunteer is worth a 25% discount shop.

– Adam, Amity, The Daves, Dom, Gab, Lara, The Lisas, Nat, Paul, Stevie and Warren



what's new

NEW TASTE SENSATION: DRIED OLIVES

They just get better
the more you chew

► These pitted organic dried black olives are quite unlike their briny cousins. They're grown on a small farm in Peru's high desert country, where chemical fertilisers and pesticides have never been used. After hand-harvesting – to avoid bruising – the olives are cured in spring water and sea salt and then sun-dried. And then there's the taste. However, they are in limited supply, so enjoy them while you can. They're certified organic and certified Kosher. *FROM ESSENTIAL LIVING FOODS*



Also new in the shop

► Incan berries, organically-grown in Colombia. These wildcrafted berries, once a staple of Peru, are best described as chewy citrus raisins: tart, sweet, and great for snacking on. They're a good source of vitamin C, pectin and bioflavonoids, the nutrient equivalent of several oranges in each raisin! Use in smoothies, pies, biscuits, slices and cakes or straight.

► Jasmine rice and Coral rice, both Fair Trade and organically-grown in Thailand.

► Organic Indulgence Dips: Humous, Summer Pea, Carrot+Coriander, Beetroot. All are organic.

► Cleopatra's butter. Made from the high-fat content milk of Jersey cows.

Special food grants
now available

Got a conference, workshop or public forum coming up soon and very little funding to cover the catering? Well, if you're part of a community or activist group with similar aims and objectives to Alfalfa House, you might qualify for a food grant. The co-op is offering for tender a monthly food grant of \$100 on store items to help with food costs for events. It's designed to further one of our objectives: "to stimulate community development, foster community spirit and promote sustainable living" and also aims to build on our relationships with other networks of community-minded people.

To find out more, view the pdf at www.alfalfahouse.org/assets/downloads/food_grant_scheme.pdf

SHOCK DISCLOSURE

Why is the natto miso
liquid disappearing?

Groceries Stock Coordinator Lisa Durante reports that the liquid from the natto miso has been disappearing at an alarming rate. "I'm not sure why. Someone's been draining the liquid from the last two batches. There was a suggestion that it could be because the liquid is highly-prized for its health-giving enzymes. But the liquid is no more highly-prized than the rest of the natto," she notes. "Maybe they just like the liquid part. Still, it's just not fair. Everyone is entitled to their fair share of the liquid."

Shop Coordinators will be on the look out for the culprit or culprits and when we find them, Lisa says, they'll get a stern talking to, they will!

NEWS FROM THE SUGGESTIONS BOX

Here are the latest suggestions (and replies) from the little brown box near the breads.

▶ Gluten-free fettucini in a flat storage box. It's hard to get out of the bin.

REPLY Great suggestion. They'll be in a flat box by the end of August.

▶ Lemon verbena.

REPLY It's just arrived at our supplier. Thanks for jogging our memories. We should have it in by the end of the month.

▶ Low-salt products, eg, vegetable stock cubes and breads.

REPLY Marigold makes a low-salt veg cube, which we'll have in on trial by the end of the month. As for the breads, we're asking our bakers to supply nutrition panels for their unpackaged breads and we'll investigate lower-salt varieties.

▶ Alpine-brand Quark.

REPLY Our supplier tells us that Alpine quark is made from Highland milk shipped from NSW to Victoria, turned into quark and then shipped back. Our supplier doesn't want to contribute to the "food" miles and neither do we. We have stocked quark in the past, but it didn't sell well and often went to cost price. However, we'll trial a 250g Mungalli Creek quark. Mind you, it comes all the way from Far North Queensland. Please tell us what you think.

▶ Mukti deodorant.

REPLY It's been a very slow seller. However, members can make a personal order if they wish.

F+V CORNER

what's good in fruit+veg with Dominika Grossy

▶ FD bush oranges – slight vanilla overtones, very juicy
▶ Globe artichokes – steam or boil, peel the leaves away and pull through your teeth to get to the soft centre. just add a little olive oil, salt and pepper.

▶ FD yakon – sweet and delicately-flavoured root vegetable; retains its crispy texture when steamed; can be peeled, sliced and added to salads and muesli; will absorb flavours from any herbs in a salad, such as coriander or fennel, or spices in muesli such as cinnamon or ground ginger. If you want more information on yakons or how to grow them, check out <http://davesgarden.com/guides/pf/go/53721/>

▶ Swiss brown mushrooms – earthy, nutty flavour, from the CERES ecovillage in Brunswick, Melbourne.

FD = farmer-direct

RECIPE OF THE MOMENT

from Nat Jurdeczka

Forest pie

Serves 8. Vegetarian, with vegan options
Quantities are for a 20cm baking dish

- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- clove garlic, crushed or finely chopped
- 400g swiss brown mushrooms, sliced
- 3/4 bunch silverbeet, chopped
- 300g white or cannelloni beans, cooked
- 100g pine nuts (or almonds), dry roasted
- 1 pkt Meredith Goats Fetta or other fine purveyor of the gift of the goat. (vegan option: 1/4-1/2 pkt Earnest Bean smoked tofu cubed, use with almonds)
- splash red wine or 125g balsamic vinegar with handful chopped rosemary or splash white wine with handful tarragon and/or 2 tbsps tamari

Pastry:

- 400g wholemeal spelt flour (gluten-free option: millet or quinoa flour)
- 1/4 cup olive or sunflower oil
- 1/2-3/4 cup of plain yoghurt (vegan: more oil and water/non-dairy milk – go slow until you get a workable consistency)
- Work oil evenly into the flour, gradually add remaining ingredients and work mixture until dough is elastic, usually 5 minutes.

- Preheat oven to 180°C
- In a pan, brown onions and garlic, add mushrooms and brown
- Add wine and herb of choice and reduce
- Add silverbeet, reduce and wilt
- Take pan off the heat, add beans and nuts, mix together. (If using tofu add now.)
- Oil inside of a pie/oven dish
- Roll out half the dough mixture to desired thickness (say, 5mm) and line bottom of dish
- Add mushroom/spinach mixture
- Crumble fetta evenly over the top
- Roll out rest of the dough, baste edges with whisked egg and milk or with water and place on top, trim edges and press pastry edges together with fingers.
- Spike with a knife/skewer evenly over the top to let pie breathe while baking and baste with extra egg/milk mix or oil.
- Bake until golden on top (20-30 minutes)

feedback

Hi all,
It has been great to read the eNews. The article about seasonal produce (July 2007) was particularly interesting, especially for those members who have not had the chance to be converted to the idea by David as I have been some time ago.

The idea of the co-op buying Farmer Direct produce also goes a long way towards the concept of ensuring more choice in the products grown, consumed and in maintaining sustainable agriculture within our region. It is a topic that would be great to read about more. It is also a concept which, I feel, needs far wider promotion especially for those members who may not get a chance to learn about the benefits to both consumers and farmers directly from David or the staff.

Would it be possible for David/Stevie to write a bit more about this e.g., profiling the various farms/farmers who supply this produce and some background on why Alfalfa House has made the choice to support this more personal approach to sourcing a fair amount of the produce the co-op has on offer?

Motra Hayward

Thanks Motra. Synchronicity abounds. David and I visited three Farmer-Direct farmers on August 9 and next issue we'll feature a story on our visit. It will also be available on the website.

Stevie Bee



Feed the newsletter

This newsletter is your voice and a great way to communicate with other members.

Please feel free to send in your hints, tips, ideas, suggestions and recipes to feedback@alfalfahouse.org

EDITED/DESIGNED BY STEVIE BEE (e: info@alfalfahouse.org)