



TUV HA'ARETZ CSA
AT THE
FOREST HILLS
JEWISH CENTER

TUV HASHAVUA: BEST OF THE WEEK

Preserve Summer Fruit & Herbs Sans Canning

Emma Christensen, Recipe Editor at *thekitchn.com*

Let's face it: not all of us are cut out to be canning super stars. That is totally fine because, when it comes to preserving the season, we have other tools at our disposal — ones that don't involve buying whole crates of produce or standing over a hot stove all weekend. If you have a freezer, an oven, or just a jar of vinegar, you're just a few steps away from "putting up" without ever picking up a mason jar.

For those of us who aren't into canning, the freezer is really our best friend. Besides freezing whole fruits and vegetables at the peak of their ripeness, we can freeze batches of summer pesto, containers of tomato sauce, and apple sauce, and even garden herbs in olive oil. These can be the foundation of quick weeknight meals in the busy months ahead.

If you have a dehydrator, you are likely already putting it to work making dried fruits and "sun-dried" tomatoes. Our ovens actually make decent stand-ins for dehydrators — this is the way I was able to preserve a huge batch of sour cherries I had a few years back.

And last but not least, infusing vinegars and alcohols with fresh summer fruits lets us bring those fresh flavors into our salads and marinades (and cocktails!) when the fruits themselves have gone out of season. These summery infusions also make fantastic gifts!

Here are some ideas for a non-putter-upper's pantry:

FREEZING HERBS. The freezer can be a powerful, overlooked method of preserving. One of my favorite ingredients, a handful of fresh herbs from the garden, is one of the simplest things to preserve in the freezer, and I just learned a new, better way — put them in oil! This reduces some of the browning and freezer burn that herbs can get in the freezer. Note that "hard" herbs like rosemary, oregano, sage, and thyme work best for this method — just put some herbs into an ice cube tray and $\frac{3}{4}$ fill with olive oil. Once frozen solid, pop them out of the trays and store in Ziploc bags in the freezer. Soft herbs are better preserved as pesto (see below).

It's also a great way to have herbs immediately ready as a base for winter stews, roasts, soups, and potato dishes. These dishes usually call for oil to start with, and so you take a cube of frozen oil, herbs inside, and cook the onions and garlic in this herb-infused oil — the taste of the herbs spreads through your whole dish.

PESTO. Besides how heavenly it tastes, the other thing I love about pesto is that it can be whatever you want it to be. Traditional Genoese pesto is made strictly with basil, pine nuts, parmesan, garlic, and really good olive oil. It's a classic sauce, no contest. But you can switch out the basil for another handy herb or leafy green, replace the (crazy expensive, if delicious) pine nuts with a different favorite nut, or swap the parm for pecorino or asiago. Heck, you can

"B" WEEK #14 9/2/2014
Thanks to Our Volunteers:

9/2 Pick-up: 5:00 to 8:00PM

Nina Lincoln

Takako Murai

Monica Lagnado

Unclaimed Shares Delivery:

Alfred Rosenblatt

9/9 Pick-up: 5:00 to 8:00PM

**Lauren Griffiths, Katy Chiu,
Susan Ticker, Marta Blyth**

Unclaimed Shares Delivery:

Volunteer Needed (TBA)

9/9 CAYUGA PICK-UP: Due to shortages at Cayuga, we are also buying shares from Purcell Mountain Farms, which offers grains and beans from small farms. (Shares will be held for "B" pickup the following week)

**FLOUR: Millet ... GRAIN: Hulled Barley, Whole Oat Groats ...
BEAN: Black Turtle, Pinto**

TUV HA'ARETZ CSA at the
Forest Hills Jewish Center
106-06 Queens Blvd.
Forest Hills, NY 11375
718-264-7000, ext 250 | tuv@fhjc.org

- **Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA:**
www.foresthillstuvcsa.com
- **Facebook:**
www.facebook.com/tuvFHJC
- **Twitter:** twitter.com/#!/tuvfhjc
- **Golden Earthworm:**
www.goldenearthworm.squarespace.com
- **FHJC:** www.fhjc.org
- **Hazon:** www.hazon.org

even make a lower-fat pesto by replacing some of the olive oil with ricotta cheese! Bottom line: herb + nuts + cheese + olive oil = awesome sauce, literally. Whiz it up in a blender or food processor; seal in an airtight jar and keep in the fridge. If you plan on freezing your pesto, add the cheese only after thawing, just before serving.

VINEGARS. Fruit vinegar is a delightful thing that can be used beyond salad dressing – try a shrub, which is a sweetened fruit vinegar cordial (concentrate) mixed with water – as a refreshing alternative to lemonade.

Mash the fruit and cover with a good quality vinegar. Simmer for one minute, then pour into a sterilized jar and cap for about a week. Strain and bottle to store for longer. Herb vinegars are similarly processed, and the longer you keep your produce in contact with the vinegar, the stronger the taste.

FROZEN FRUIT. It's tempting – and maybe intuitive – to just throw those fruits in a freezer bag and be done with it. But frozen this way, the fruits often freeze together into one solid brick, which makes things difficult when you need just a few cups to make a dessert or want to fit them nicely into a pie crust. Thawing the fruit turns them into a watery, pulpy mess – fine if they're already encased in pastry dough, but less ideal for working with.

A better way to freeze fresh fruits is to first prepare them just as you would if you were going to use them immediately – peel and core apples and pears, remove the pits from peaches, and chop them into small bite-sized pieces. Berries and other small fruits can be left whole. Then freeze all the fruits in a single layer on a baking sheet. The small individual pieces freeze solid and can easily be transferred into a freezer container for longer storage. Removing as much air as possible from the bag or container will also help protect the fruit from freezer burn.

Just don't plan on using frozen fruit like fresh fruit to decorate a tart. They may not look the prettiest, but they taste just as good! This means that they're best when used in baked goods like pies, cobblers, and crumbles – or even folded into quick breads or scones. Don't bother thawing them before making your pastry; use them straight from the freezer. (Try putting them in a plastic bag and freezing them in a pie plate with the starches and flavorings you would use in pie filling – pie-ready fruit discs!)

DRYING. Turn your oven as low as it will go – about 200° – and space the racks evenly apart. Cover a few baking sheets with parchment or foil and spread the fruit out in a single layer. To see if it made a difference, we tried drying some of the fruit directly on the baking sheet and another batch with the fruit suspended over the baking sheet on a wire cooling rack.

At about the four-hour mark, we started to see signs of shriveling. The fruit on the wire rack was done after about 6 hours, and the fruit on the baking sheet was done after 8 hours. By the time they were done, the cherries we were testing had shrunk to the size of raisins and turned deep purple. We left them a tad chewy – dehydrated enough to keep for a few months in an airtight container. (Saves fridge space!)



9/2 What's in the Box:

Yellow Watermelon, Scallions, Garlic, Green Bell Pepper, Red Tomatoes, Cherry Tomatoes FRUIT: Peach, Bartlett Pear

WATERMELON & TOMATO SALAD

Mark Bittman, *dinersjournal.nytimes.com* | Serves 4

- 2 1/2 cups watermelon, in 1-inch cubes or balls (cut over a bowl to catch the juice and reserve it) [see NOTE, below]
- 1 1/2 cups cherry or grape tomatoes, cut in half
- 1/2 cup finely diced or crumbled Stilton, Gorgonzola, Roquefort or Maytag blue cheese
- 1/2 cup minced scallions
- Salt, to taste
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp sherry vinegar
- Pinch cayenne
- 1/2 cup cilantro or parsley, roughly chopped

Combine the watermelon, tomato, cheese, scallions and salt in a bowl.

Whisk together about 2 tbsp watermelon juice, oil, vinegar, cayenne. To serve, dress the salad with this mixture and garnish with cilantro. Do not refrigerate. Serve within 30 minutes.

NOTE: There's crunch in this salad, from an unusual source: the seeds, in limited quantities at least, are not only tolerable but an asset.

GRILLED VEG SALAD

adapted from Tim Love, *foodandwine.com* | Serves 10

- 8 tomatoes, cored, cut into six wedges each
- large bunch scallions
- 1-2 green peppers
- salt and pepper, to taste
- ¼ cup olive oil, plus extra for rubbing
- 3 tbsp fresh lime juice

Rub vegetables with salt, pepper, oil. Grill over high heat till vegetables are blistered and charred, about 1 minute per side. Place on a platter, drizzle with ¼ cup olive oil, lime juice, and extra salt / pepper if desired.

NOTES FROM THE FARM:

Please note that your gorgeous yellow watermelon (THANK YOU Farmer James!) needs to be refrigerated! Be sure to pop it in the fridge as soon as you get it home.

"The best way to ripen the fruit is to take it out of the plastic bag and let the condensation dry off so the moisture doesn't encourage any spoilage. As soon as it is ripe, eat it right away or put it in the fridge." - Farmer Clark, Briermere Farms

