

Fenugreek gives potatoes a heady boost

Fresh fenugreek, when in season like it is now during colder months, has a heady fragrance and is delicious in creamy or tomato-based vegetable dishes or stews.



Anita Jaisinghani
HOUSTON HARVEST

However, because of its bitterness, fenugreek needs to be balanced with sweet, tart or creamy flavors.

Potatoes cooked in fenugreek, aka aloo methi, is a traditional North Indian preparation and can be eaten alongside anything from a steak to grilled fish. Or enjoy it like an Indian, with dal and roti. You won't find fresh fenugreek in your usual supermarket, so take a trip to an Indian grocer to look for it.

Anita Jaisinghani is the chef-owner of Pondicheri restaurant in Houston. Her website is india1948.com. Email: anita@pondicheri.com.

FENUGREEK POTATOES

2 pounds of red potatoes, unpeeled cut into 1-inch pieces
½ bunch fenugreek, washed and dried (roughly 2 cups loose)
4 tablespoons olive oil or ghee
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 cup minced onion
2 teaspoons minced garlic
1 cup canned crushed tomatoes or 2 cups of fresh minced tomatoes
1 teaspoon red chile powder
1 teaspoon crushed coriander seeds
2 tablespoon ginger puree
2 teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon garam masala
Juice of 1 lemon

Instructions: Wash the potatoes and set aside to dry. Mince the fenugreek, discarding the bottom 3 inches of the stems and set aside separately.

In a frying or a sauté pan over high, warm the olive oil and when hot, drop the cumin seeds in it. The seeds will pop and sizzle for just a few seconds; immediately add the minced onions and potatoes. Cook for 10 to 12 minutes



Carolina Ayala/Contributor

on medium to high heat, covered, frequently stirring so the potatoes and onions turn golden brown. Add the minced garlic, tomatoes, red chile powder, coriander seeds, ginger puree and salt. Bring the whole mixture to a simmer, then cover and cook for another 5 to 8 minutes or until the potatoes are tender and some fat has emerged on top.

Add the fenugreek and cook for a minute or two after. It should wilt but remain bright green in color. Finish with garam masala and a squeeze of lemon juice.

Notes & variations

If you find the recipe too bitter, add a tablespoon or two of honey, sugar or maple syrup.

If you do not have fresh fenugreek, use half a cup of dried fenugreek as substitute.

This recipe can also be made with sweet potatoes, which is a delicious combination with fresh fenugreek as well.

Serves 4 to 6

From Anita Jaisinghani

REVIEW

From page A14

part, Th Prsrv manages the complexities very well, with adept service, timely commentary and good coordination.

There were no lectures about the evils of colonization, to my great relief, and I enjoyed the menu trek from ancient to modern a great deal. Chef G's offerings traveled from the simplicity of Gulf snapper with green squash, a sweet-sour dash of tamarind and palm sugar, and an edge of fingerroot, a type of ginger, to the modern sass of wild boar with Thai chilies, green peppercorn and Makrut lime leaf. Skinner began with that elemental sunflower-seed butter to go with leatherwood honey and that dense baton of blue corn cake, then finished with an up-to-the-minute dessert that reminded me of my sugar-on-snow childhood.

"Memories of Fallen Snow" was in fact its name, and it combined tonka bean ice cream with a pleasantly astringent spruce-tip syrup that lifted me up and deposited me in a wintry forest landscape far, far from a Kemah summer night.

Skinner and the Painters said they hoped to expand Th Prsrv dinners to three nights a week, but I wonder if that might be a stretch too far. It's a long drive from the Painters' East End territory to the Bay Area, and they're on the brink of moving to a new Street to Kitchen space that triples their footprint. Chef Painter has travel opportunities that come with her James Beard award; and Skinner superintends complex tasting menus at Eculent three nights a week — simultaneously with Th Prsrv dinners on Thursday and Friday.

That's a lot of plates to keep spinning in midair. But so far, so good — and so interesting.



Allison Cook/Staff

Th Prsrv in Kemah has the feel of a rainforest.

WHAT TO KNOW

TH_PRSRV, 709 Harris Ave., Kemah, 281-857-6492

Food: An improbable, provocative tasting-menu dance of Indigenous American and Thai food through the centuries, as ingredients traveled between the Old and New Worlds.

Vibe: Madcap combo of a secret society banquet, a food history seminar and a magical mystery tour.

Prices: Set price of \$149, plus 20% service charge; optional \$129 Indigenous wine and cocktail pairing.

Hours: Thursday and Friday dinner only.

Reservations: A must.

Who's there: Bay Area foodies, Inner Loop devotees of chef Benchawan, couples celebrating anniversaries and birthdays.

What to order: You're in for the whole 14-course ride, so buckle up.

Service: Welcoming and informative.

Noise level: Moderate.

Parking: Plenty in the upstairs winery's free lot (ignore the signs cautioning you it's for winery guests only).

Ventilation: Big, high-ceilinged room with good air circulation.

THE 8TH ANNUAL WEEK OF ITALIAN CUISINE IN THE WORLD

The Consulate General of Italy in Houston is delighted to present the 8th annual "Week of Italian Cuisine in the World" from November 13 - 19, 2023. This year, the Consulate collaborated with the Italian Trade Agency, as well as the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce in Texas, to feature Houston's most renowned Italian culinary experts at the kick-off event on November 7th at Rice University's Moody Center for the Arts. The evening was catered by chefs Maurizio Ferrarese, Giancarlo Ferrara, Alfredo Mojica, and Roberto Crescini from Houston establishments Alba, Amalfi, Amore, and Davanti, respectively.

The "Week of Italian Cuisine in the World" was initiated in 2016 by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation with the intention of promoting Italian culture through its outstanding cuisine. Now, eight editions later, the event can be found globally anywhere that the Italian nation is represented—from the EmQuartier Plaza Zone in Bangkok, Thailand to the Institute of Italian Culture in San Francisco.

Past editions of this prominent event have brought themes based on regions like Puglia, chefs like Pellegrino Artusi, or concepts such as "food sustainability". This year's theme, "well-being with taste" or "il benessere con gusto", presented the city of Houston with dishes rooted in the fresh, health-conscious ingredients of the Mediterranean diet.



Chef Maurizio Ferrarese

While the natural beauty, cultural vivacity, and deep history of the Mediterranean region may overshadow a topic as specific as the health benefits of its cuisine, it's not a quality to be overlooked. According to the Mayo Clinic, the healthy fats and plant-based foods of the Mediterranean diet can reduce the risk of factors (such as high cholesterol and hypertension) that cause heart disease.



Chef Giancarlo Ferrara

Furthermore, scientist from the Harvard school of public health state that the Mediterranean diet can support healthy aging as well as healthy weight loss.

Because the 20 diverse regions of Italy offer a variety of cultures and traditions, these health-conscious dishes present themselves in many different forms and flavors.

The north of Italy, for instance, has a gastronomic tradition based on vegetables like "radicchio".



THE EXTRAORDINARY
ITALIAN TASTE

In fact, the globally famous vegetable soup "minestrone" originated from this region. The center of Italy, on the other hand, is known for its use of mushrooms—especially in the region of Umbria. According to UCLA Health, these mushrooms can lower sodium intake, protect brain health, and stimulate gut health. The southern regions of Italy are considered especially "Mediterranean". This region is known for its emphasis on fish, shellfish, aromatic spices (basil, oregano, etc.), and —of course—olive oil. Altogether, these wholesome and natural ingredients are the pillars that make Italian cuisine "well-being with taste."



Chef Alfredo Mojica



Chef Roberto Crescini

Perhaps just as diverse as the regions of Italy is the city of Houston, Texas. With over 12,000 restaurants and consular offices representing over 86 nations, the city of Houston is an international hub with the finest cuisine. The Consulate General of Italy in Houston, along with its collaborators, were thrilled to have showcased the unforgettable taste of Italy in the Houston. There was no better way to kick off the "Week of Italian Cuisine in the World," as the private event was a great success with high attendance from its selected guests.

(Angela Jardina)



Consulate General of Italy
Houston



ITALIAN TRADE AGENCY



ITALY-AMERICA
Chamber of Commerce of Texas



Get all the
information on the
Italian Restaurant
Week 2023