



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Fall 2011

Harvest list is online

The Back Page

Creamy Rapini Pasta
Eggs Florentine
Easiest Green in Tortillas
Glazed Baby Turnips
Spanakopita

Many more recipes in
our online recipe archive



Hakurei, or salad turnip



Rapini

Annual Holiday - Reminder

We will be closed during the last two weeks of December. The last pickups before the holidays will be on December 13th and 14th. Pickups will resume January 3rd and 4th.

You do not have to go online to put your share on vacation hold during that time. The system will do it for you.

TURN IT UP, TURNIP!

A few years ago my farmer friend Amanda Morse was slicing up white radishes and tossing them into a salad. "Look at those radishes!" I said, popping one in my mouth. It was so juicy and fresh, almost fruity. "It's so flavorful! But it's not spicy like other radishes."

"That's because it's not a radish," Amanda said. "It's a turnip!"

A salad turnip! Also known as Hakurei or Japanese turnips. These gleaming white radish-looking turnips can be eaten raw. Crunchier and less fibrous than radishes, Hakurei turnips may remind you also of jicama, but they're not quite as wet.

The Hakurei may be new to some of you, but its regular old turnip cousins are some of the oldest cultivated vegetables in the world. Pliny the Elder praised the turnip for its "utility," given that it can be used for animal feed and because it can be left in the ground until the next harvest. Indeed, turnips have a history of keeping famine at bay.

Hakurei turnips were developed in Japan in the 1950s as a way to address food shortages occurring as a result of World War II. Though a starch, they are less caloric than potatoes. Also a good source of vitamins C, B6, and E, as well as folic acid, potassium, and fiber.

The best way to eat them is raw, biting them right off the stem and popping them into your mouth. (The leaves are edible, too, of course, raw or cooked). If you can resist that temptation, though, try them roasted or in a stir-fry or a soup.

They'll last about 10 days in the fridge. But if you're smart you'll eat them on the way home!

RAPINI, WHAT ART THOU?

Rapini [rah-PEE-nee] is a vegetable of many names: a few of them are raab, rapa, rapine, rappi, rappone, taitcat, Italian or Chinese broccoli, broccoli raab, broccoli de rabe, Italian turnip, and turnip broccoli. It is a member of the Brassica genus, which includes mustard greens, cabbage, turnips, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, etc. This genus is remarkable for containing more important agricultural and horticultural crops than any other genus. Brassica vegetables are highly regarded for their nutritional value. They provide high amounts of vitamin C and soluble fiber and contain multiple nutrients with potent anti-cancer properties. Rapini in particular is a source of beta-carotene and vitamins C and K, as well as potassium, calcium, and iron.

It is commonly found in Mediterranean and Chinese cuisines but you are unlikely to find it in a common grocery store in the United States (although it is gaining popularity). The Chinese cultivars are called hon tsai tai (which we also occasionally get at the Tucson CSA) or choi sum, and they tend to have a milder flavor than their Mediterranean cousins.

Its spiked leaves look like turnip leaves and may surround heads of florets that look similar to small, leggy heads of broccoli. There may be small edible yellow flowers blooming from the florets.

The flavor of rapini is reminiscent of that of broccoli but more pungent and slightly nuttier. Its flavor is more complex than that of many greens as long as it is not overcooked. It can be steamed, braised, sautéed, broiled, stir-fried or, even better, oven-roasted. It pairs beautifully with beans or lentils, pork (try it with Italian sausage!) and chicken, and it works well as a side dish or in pasta dishes and soups.

Here's an easy way to cook rapini: Cut stalks crosswise into 2-inch pieces and drop them into salted (optional), boiling water. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes and remove with slotted spoon. Sauté the blanched broccoli rapini in a little olive oil and as much garlic as you like for 3 to 5 minutes until tender. Optional - Add a few dried red pepper flakes.

Creamy Rapini Pasta

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

The creaminess of this dish is provided by hummus rather than dairy products. Use a packaged, prepared hummus for a really simple recipe. Or you can make your own at home by pureeing any cooked white bean with garlic, oil, lemon juice, tahini and salt.

1 bunch rapini, cleaned and chopped
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 regular-size package pasta
About ½ cup hummus

While pasta is boiling in well-salted water, sauté rapini in olive oil in a large pan over medium high heat. When pasta is al dente, drain, reserving some of the cooking water. Add pasta and hummus to greens and toss together. Add pasta water, if needed, to help thin hummus and coat pasta. Season with salt and pepper, if needed, and serve.

Eggs Florentine

Lorraine Glazar, Tucson CSA

This Italian dish makes greens into a breakfast or brunch dish. This also makes a great light supper. This recipe is per serving, multiply as needed.

1 bunch CSA greens (depending on bunch size, one might serve two people)
2 eggs
Olive oil or butter
Garlic to taste
1-2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese

Heat an oven to 350 degrees. Prepare the greens. If young and tender (braising greens, beet greens, chard, etc.) just wash and cut into one-inch pieces, possibly eliminating stems. If older and spicier, wash, cut out stems, cut into wide ribbons and parboil. Heat olive oil in a sauté pan and brown the garlic. Add the greens, toss to coat with oil, and steam with the lid on. Butter or oil a small oven-safe dish. Place the sautéed greens in the dish. Crack eggs and place atop the greens. Bake for 10 minutes or until the eggs are done to your liking. Top with Parmesan cheese.

Easiest Greens in Tortillas

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This recipe is great with ‘stemmy’ greens, like bok choy and tatsoi. The tender, edible stems add bulk and texture. I prefer an Asian chile paste, but you can use salsa to spice the greens, too.

2 large handful greens (with stems), cleaned and roughly chopped
1-2 cloves garlic, minced
2 teaspoons oil
Chile paste (Sriracha is excellent), to taste

Mild, fresh cheese, if desired
4 corn tortillas, warmed

In a large skillet, over high heat, cook greens and garlic in oil, just until wilted. Sprinkle with water, if necessary, to prevent sticking. Drizzle greens with chile sauce and toss to coat. Top corn tortillas with greens and sprinkle with cheese if using.

Glazed Baby Turnips

From EverGreen Farm

1 pound baby turnips (about 1 1/2 to 2 inches in diameter)
1 ounce vinegar
1 ounce apple juice
1 ounce butter
1 ounce honey
Salt and pepper to taste
Fresh herbs, chopped

Cut turnips into quarters; blanch in simmering water. Drain well and reserve. Melt butter in saucepan, adding vinegar, honey, and apple juice. Heat until it simmers. Reduce the heat and continue cooking until turnips are coated. Season and garnish with fresh herbs.

Spanakopita

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This recipe is a great way to use up a backlog of greens, as it requires a few bunches. You can vary this recipe according to your own taste. Add in things like cooked ground beef, chopped nuts, hard-boiled eggs or even raisins. If you don't eat cheese leave it out or substitute crumbled tofu. I use pre-made puff pastry sheets because phyllo can be really fussy. If phyllo is all you can find, just follow the direction on the package for assembly. This filling is also great in a pastry crust, either baked in a pie tin or made into individual hand-held pastries.

2 large bunches greens, cleaned and roughly chopped
1 onion, sliced
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 handful feta cheese
About 1/4 teaspoon grated nutmeg
Salt and pepper to taste
2 puff pastry sheets, thawed

In a large skillet, cook onions in oil, over medium high heat until they begin to brown then add greens and nutmeg. Stir well and cover, cooking for a few minutes until greens are wilted. Add salt and pepper to taste then transfer mixture to a colander to drain.

Prepare puff pastry by lining a large rectangular baking dish with one sheet. Squeeze greens to remove excess moisture then mix in feta and any other additions. Spread filling over pastry sheet. Top with another pastry sheet, tucking pastry down around the edges. Bake according to direction on pastry box.