

Rat Routes and Reasons to Gather:

*Culturally Diverse Culinary Journeys
in Edmonton's Wild and Natural Spaces*

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Land Acknowledgement

This book is about relationships to the land and to each other through growing, foraging and preparing local ingredients. We are a group of immigrant women from many different parts of the world, and one Métis woman, who all live and harvest in the City of Edmonton. We want to begin our story by acknowledging that we live on, and are sustained by, land located within Treaty Six Territory. This is the traditional land of First Nations and Métis people, as well as a traditional gathering place for diverse Indigenous peoples. We understand gathering to include both coming together and the harvesting of plants for food: the heart of our project.

The City of Edmonton currently has the second largest urban Indigenous population in Canada, as well as one of the highest immigration rates, but neither Indigenous nor immigrant communities are currently well represented in discussions relating to urban greenspace and food systems in the City. This lack of representation is based on colonial and racist systems and policies. We want to emphasize that building inclusive and sustainable relationships must involve learning the layered and relational histories of this place through the ongoing sharing of diverse perspectives and experiences. Connecting to urban natural space and local ingredients in order to create this book augmented our respect for the land on which we live and for its original and continuing stewards, agriculturalists, and knowledge holders. We hope that our recipes encourage further reflection on land, food and relationships in the City: past, present and future. ■

Sarah De Lano

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MFRS Multicultural Family Resource Society



ECALA

Alberta Government



Parkdale Cromdale Community League



A Note on Organization

These are the stories of encounters with(in) the green and wild spaces of Edmonton, and the fruits, vegetables and plants that generously grow here. With this in mind, we organized the recipes not by type of dish, but rather by ingredients and where we might find them around the City. This book was a community project from start to finish, so you will also notice variation in recipe style and format, which we embrace as a celebration of our diverse voices. We hope that the places highlighted here, and the many possible harvests they provide, will inspire you to create and share your own Edmonton food stories, as well as to explore those of others.

The recipes and ingredients gathered in this book represent only a pinch of the great diversity of foodways in Edmonton, hence the blank pages at the end, which are for the documentation of your own culinary imaginings, horticultural wisdom, or maps to secret berry patches. They are a reminder that there are many stories yet to be heard.

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Introduction

Simple and humble as a handful of dirt, complex and unexpected as perfectly whipped eggs mixed with flowers and front-yard shrubbery, this is, above all, a storybook. It is an anthology of our everyday journeys in green and wild spaces in Edmonton. The recipes provided here are the culmination of a year (in some ways generations) of urban gardening and foraging in the City; of experiencing and reflecting upon the land that we inhabit and all of the places to which we trace our individual and collective belonging.

In this book, we highlight some of the beautiful, healthful, and versatile foods that can be cultivated, as well as those that grow wild, right here in the City. We invite you to engage with our recipes-as-stories, offering a window into who and where we are, and to diverse perspectives on green city spaces where planning, projects, policies and histories do not always include the voices of women, mothers, newcomers, people of colour, and Indigenous people. In the making of this book, we viscerally connected to and reflected on local food systems, land and one another, in ways that are both deeply joyful and at times difficult. We wish to encourage, beyond these pages, the sharing of other stories and recipes that open our minds to the possibilities of belonging, as people who are both similar and different, to the land on which we live; our common ground.

The metaphor of a handful of dirt is not fortuitous. We are inspired by the tale of the Muskrat, namesake of the Rat Creek/Kinnaird Ravine that offered us its abundance of berries in the heart of the City. The Muskrat (as is told in some versions of a Nehiyo and Anishinabe creation story), though not the strongest of swimmers, dove deep down in the water after a great flood to clutch in his tiny paw a whisper of soil. In so doing, Muskrat made it possible for the whole world to be created anew atop the shell of a great turtle. Just as this world is said to have begun with a humble gift in unlikely hands, we think that the stories and recipes of our year of urban farming and foraging will help for(a)ge a preliminary path toward a re-imagined and more inclusive city that celebrates its unique culinary and natural identity, as well as its rich diversity of ingredients, experiences, knowledge systems and communities.

Keep this book close to hand and heart as you traverse alleyways and river valley trails, streetcars, funiculars, and footbridges, ribbons, promenades and flats in the City. Scribble your own lists of meaningful plants, places, people and histories, and learn as much as you can about others who grew and harvested plants and produce, and continue to do so, here in Edmonton. Try out these recipes as a way to honour the existence and importance of the experiences and perspectives of others. These are stories meant to occupy space not only on a kitchen shelf, but in our shared and vibrant City.



We love to use fresh products



English for Community Intergration

Who We Are

This book is the result of a project carried out by a group of women who have come, recently or many years ago, from countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. Our instructor in the classroom but student in the kitchen is a Métis woman with roots in Edmonton and surrounding areas. Along the way, we gathered additional participants by walking at a leisurely pace, casually conversing, and occasionally breaking into song, as we exchanged our classroom space for the University of Alberta's Prairie Urban Farm (PUF) and the Edmonton River Valley, specifically the Rat Creek/Kinnaird Ravine in north-central Edmonton.

The decision to move our lessons outside was based on our own curiosity about urban gardening and natural spaces, as well as the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, which meant we were not able to gather indoors (you will notice that we wear masks when outdoors in some pictures and not in others, as restrictions waxed and waned throughout the project). The pandemic increased interest in both urban parks as well as urban gardening here in Edmonton (and beyond), raising questions about how these spaces are managed, who has access to them, and whose voices and experiences are underrepresented in the planning and use of such spaces. We spent 2020 volunteering at PUF, picking berries in the Ravine, and then collectively reflecting on these experiences. Based on these reflections and the ingredients that we harvested, we created our recipes.

Our instructor also investigated immigrant and Métis women's involvement in green space use and management in Edmonton, interviewing representatives of local organizations that work with immigrant and Métis populations in the context of greenspace and urban agriculture. This research was part of a thesis project on diversity in urban greenspace for a Master of Arts in Community Engagement at the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension. The stories and recipes of these representatives and organizations also helped shape this book and, along with our own, are intended to provide not only food, but food for thought.

This book is a very small scale and preliminary attempt not only to share our experiences, but in so doing to include ourselves in the shaping of urban agriculture in Edmonton and the future of the City more broadly.

Where We Are

We begin, as perhaps do many good stories and recipes, with our roots, locating ourselves both here and now, in present day Edmonton, and in many other times and places. The previous section of Who We Are is inextricably and intrinsically linked to where we are, as we are all complex human beings with identities grounded in the places we have been, where we now live, and the city we hope to inhabit in the future. In horticultural parlance, we are all cross-pollinated and hybrid varietals, both adapting to and changing the places and people we grow in and with.

The land that we belong to, whether we interpret belonging as a status or a relational process (and our project itself seems to imply that our perspective tends toward the latter), is located in what we now know as the City of Edmonton, within Treaty Six territory. However, many of us also have and still do “belong” to other lands and experiences. In our recipes, we reflect on the spatial and temporal multidimensionality of belonging, especially referencing our mothers and grandmothers, and gardens and forests near and far. We carried out our project in two specific sites within the City of Edmonton, exploring how connection to green and natural spaces influences us, as well as the influence we exert on these spaces by simultaneously accessing and storying them.



Wild and Natural Spaces



PUF, the Magic Garden

While discussing Prairie Urban Farm in one of our weekly reflection meetings, one woman exclaimed: "For me, it's a magical place, here we find nature in the middle of this big City." PUF is a volunteer-run community farm located on the South Campus of the University of Alberta. Many individuals and groups volunteer here and are rewarded with fresh produce to take home. The farm also runs a small market on site, a box program, and donates produce to different groups around the City. Beyond this logistical description, PUF is also, as this woman astutely observed, a magical place, with flowers chaotically peeking out between vegetables, an ever-changing labyrinth of footpaths and rows culminating into an almost-mandala at the garden's centre, and children running amongst the sunflowers and tomatoes with rainbow streamers and laughter following close behind. Here we take a break from loading wagons full of mulch and rescuing tiny squash plants among weeds to stroll with the children to a nearby pond. At the pond, we find raspberries and wild chamomile, and converse about the day with the sun on our faces and our lips stained red.

Rat Routes to Berried Treasure

On our first berry-picking adventure in the Rat Creek, a woman sighed deeply: "It's paraíso, I can't believe it!" While another added: "We are not used to seeing Edmonton like this", referring to the surprise at finding this beautiful forested space in the heart of the City. The Rat Creek Ravine is part of the River Valley Trail System in Edmonton, the largest urban park in Canada. The Ravine is home to countless edible plants, and a community based art gallery that showcases colourful murals on the wooden retaining walls that run along the edge of the forest. The Rat Creek Ravine also sits on land that was once Métis River Lot 26, and borders Lot 28, where some of the Métis ancestors of our instructor once lived, gardened and foraged for berries, and very close to where she now does the same in the community of Parkdale.



Rat Creek/Kinnaird Ravine



Chapter 1

Rooting Ourselves

PUF provided a tremendous bounty of vegetables, from squash and pumpkin to cucumbers and tomatoes, as well as hearty root crops of carrots, potatoes, beets and onions. Watching these vegetables grow steadily over the season, we became enamoured with them, marvelling at their variety in size, colour and shape, and the heightened flavour experience they provided.

They were so delicious that we sometimes ate them fresh, straight from the garden, or combined them together in a quick and easy soup. Here we share some of our favourite garden vegetable recipes from the farm.

I love the onions! Just seeing them peeking out like that all purple.

-ECI participant

The first time you told me about the group and the research, I just wanted to come and help. But then I saw all the beautiful carrots and big potatoes under the dirt.. It was very exciting. Every time I felt I'm connecting myself to the earth, ground, nature, and no chemicals. Then I met all these friends and had conversations and we worked together. And the harvest every week. I wanted to go every week, and in the winter too!

-ECI participant

The onions were so fresh and cute, the colour was so pinkish and nice. The ones from the store are all the same, they look like factory made products. In a garden you see different sizes, colours, they are delicate and fresh, and more crispy and juicy.

-ECI participant

Summer Stroll Carrot Halwa

This is a good place for us to start. When Irum joined our group, we were just returning from a leisurely walk to a duck pond surrounded by small plots of raspberry bushes. We were chatting and enjoying the sun, the kids' faces red with berry juice and from running circles around us, as we slowly made our way back to the farm. Irum had followed her curiosity and Google Maps to the farm, and was taken by our casual and collective approach to gardening. She immediately integrated into our happy crew as we watered onions and harvested potatoes and carrots. Her daughter, Yana, was especially interested in digging the prairie jewels and yukon gold from the rich earth. Many hands and a few singing voices made light work that afternoon.

This dish, we think, is as sweet and wholesome as that sunny day in good company.



Summer Stroll Carrot Halwa



Summer Stroll

Carrot Halwa *by Irum*

- 4 large carrots
- 8-10 pistachios
- 6-7 almonds
- 4-5 cashew nuts
- A few raisins (or dried currants/saskatoons)
- 3 tbsp ghee
- 2 cups milk
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 3 tbsp condensed milk
- 1 tsp cardamom powder

- 1.** Grate carrots. (Irum uses a manual grater.)
- 2.** Chop 8-10 pistachios, 6-7 almonds and 4-5 cashew nuts. Take all these ingredients and a few raisins and add them to a heavy bottomed frying pan (this is important to avoid the dessert sticking to the pan). Add 2 tablespoons of ghee. Fry them all. For an extra-Edmonton twist, add dried currants or saskatoons instead of raisins.
- 3.** Once the nuts are crunchy, take them out. Once raisins are plump, take them out. Keep all of these aside.
- 4.** In the same pan, add 2 cups of milk and grated carrots. Cook it on a low flame, until the milk evaporates completely. It takes 40-50 minutes. Keep stirring occasionally to avoid carrots sticking to the pan.
- 5.** Add sugar (a little more than half a cup, as the dessert should be sweet to taste) and stir.
- 6.** Let the moisture evaporate half-way.
- 7.** Add condensed milk, 2-3 spoons or milk cream (Irum makes this at home by boiling milk and cooling it. The cream floats on the top.) and 1 spoon ghee. Stir well.
- 8.** Cook until the halwa thickens. Before turning off the flame, add cardamom powder (1/2 to 1 teaspoon). (You can make this at home by taking a handful of cardamoms and a little sugar, and grinding it in a mixer.)
- 9.** The halwa is ready! Garnish it with the crunchy nuts and raisins or other dried fruit.



Cheesy Stuffed Potatoes

Similar to Baradho Kuskuusan in Sahra's native Somalia, these magical potato balls somehow reign in gooey cheese and mashed potato goodness into the perfect hand-held snack. Sahra too is the glue that keeps our sometimes disorganized crew together, whether rounding up and entertaining the many children always in tow, or touting a large jug of fresh water with which we all gratefully wash our hands after harvesting vegetables at the farm or picking berries in the Ravine. Sahra enjoys the easy community that these places and tasks create. She loves the long walks to the pond, where we all catch up on our lives, crossing the street as a big, safe group, and hemming the children inside a careful circle. One of her favourite tasks at the farm is painting rocks that the kids pick from garden patches that need tending before they are ready for planting. Painting rocks is a short but peaceful break from running and exploring in the garden, and the kids enjoy it almost as much as they love eating this dish, which is pleasing, like PUF, to children and adults alike.

Cheesy Stuffed Potatoes

Cheesy Stuffed Potatoes *by Sahra*

14 small potatoes (baby potatoes), boiled and peeled
1 tbsp bread crumbs
1/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp lemon pepper
A handful of cheddar cheese
1 egg
1/2 cup bread crumbs
Oil for frying
Red peppers flakes (optional)

- 1.** Mash potatoes and place them into a big bowl.
- 2.** Add half of the bread crumbs, salt and lemon pepper.
- 3.** Make small balls of potatoes from the mixture and flatten them.
- 4.** Place cheddar cheese in the middle and wrap the potato mixture around the cheese.
- 5.** Use two separate bowls, one for whisked egg and the other containing the remaining bread crumbs.
- 6.** Coat the potato balls in the egg, then roll in the breadcrumbs.
- 7.** Fry at medium heat until browned on all sides.





Tigist and Julia, from Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op (MCHB) and the Grocery Run Program, provided us with this mouthwatering lentil soup recipe. Julia (the coordinator of the Grocery Run Program and the hardest working person we know) and other MCHB volunteers often worked alongside our group at PUF.

Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op

Grocery Run Red Lentil Soup

by Tigist Dafla and Julia Tran

10 cups water
250 grams red lentils
5 tbsp olive oil (regular or black truffle flavored)
3 tbsp turmeric powder
10 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
2 tbsp ginger, chopped
5 stalks of celery (with or without leaves)
1 pc of zucchini, medium size, sliced
1 whole yellow onion, chopped
1 jalapeno, sliced
3 pcs of bell peppers, small sweet tricolor, sliced (seeds in)
3-4 tbsp Vegeta spice

1. Heat water in a medium size stock pot on medium heat. When water is about to simmer, add the lentils without washing. Add olive oil, turmeric powder and Vegeta spice. Let the mixture boil.

2. When the lentils change color from bright orange to soft yellow or almost white, add the rest of the ingredients. Let it simmer until the vegetables are cooked. No need to add salt and pepper to taste, as Vegeta spice will add saltiness and flavor.

3. Serve hot with crackers.

If using large or regular size bell peppers, it is advisable to remove the core and seeds. However, at the time this recipe was done, Tigist did not remove the seeds since she used the sweet, bite-size kind of peppers.

Sopa Andina for Cold Mountain Mornings

Like this comforting soup, Neida warms any space she enters with her easy laughter. She never turns up the opportunity to share a story or a song, especially from her home country of Venezuela. For all of her delightful levity, she is also a diligent and hard worker at the farm, and first to affirm that what we are doing, at PUF and in the Rat Creek, is important work.

This soup is ideal to start a cold morning when there is gardening work ahead. It could also be served in a thermos while picnicking in autumn beside a favourite chokecherry harvesting spot on the North Saskatchewan. Neida tells us that this soup is a great breakfast on a cold mountain (or frigid Edmontonian) morning, especially if you have been partying the night before. Delicious and guaranteed to cure both home-sickness and hangovers!



Sopa Andina for Cold Mountain Mornings



Sopa Andina for Cold Mountain

Mornings *by Neida*

4 big potatoes
4 eggs
1 cup cheese, cut into small squares (fresh
cheese is best, but mozzarella will do)
Cilantro, oregano and salt to taste
¼ cup whole milk

- 1.** Peel the potatoes and chop into medium pieces.
- 2.** Boil potatoes in a pot with salted water for 15 minutes, then add the milk, oregano and butter, and boil for 5 more minutes.
- 3.** Lower the heat and add eggs one by one carefully, so that they remain whole. Once eggs are all in the pot, turn the heat up to simmer.
- 4.** Add the cilantro and cheese pieces and simmer for 2 more minutes. If you prefer, add more cheese when you serve the soup. Enjoy!

Prairie Pandaria Carrot Sauce

Prairie Pandaria Carrot Sauce

Patricia, like most of us, was often reminded of family at PUF, particularly of her dad in his bakery and the kale on her grandmother's farm. This was perhaps part of the magic she described feeling at the PUF farm, whether discovering photogenic purple kale or musing at the appearing and disappearing, but ever affectionate, barn cat.

This recipe is PUF carrots meets puff pastries, a sauce inspired by Patricia's father's bakery in Brazil. This is a delicious and versatile sauce for everything from salads to bread. Don't miss this baker's daughter's breads and desserts in other sections of the book!

Prairie Pandaria Carrot Sauce

Prairie Pandaria Carrot Sauce *by Patricia*

1 tomato, roughly
chopped
1 onion, roughly chopped
1 carrot (a medium one),
roughly chopped
1/2 cup of canola oil
1/4 cup of vinegar
1 tbsp hot sauce
Salt to taste
Chives (optional)

- 1.** In a blender, add all of the ingredients in order.
- 2.** Mix everything in the blender until it forms a thick cream. Do not worry if the tomatoes are in the bottom of the blender, it will be no problem to mix all the ingredients after.
- 3.** Just do it! This carrot sauce is amazing to serve with salads, meats, barbecue, breads and pastries...Fantastic!



South Campus Squash Arepas

These beautiful, peach-coloured squash arepas are reminiscent of a South Campus sunset after a long shift at PUF. Inspired by her Venezuelan recipe, and using squash harvested at the farm here in the City, these have become a staple at Neida's house. A definite crowd pleaser!



South Campus Squash Arepas

South Campus Squash Arepas



South Campus Squash Arepas

by Neida

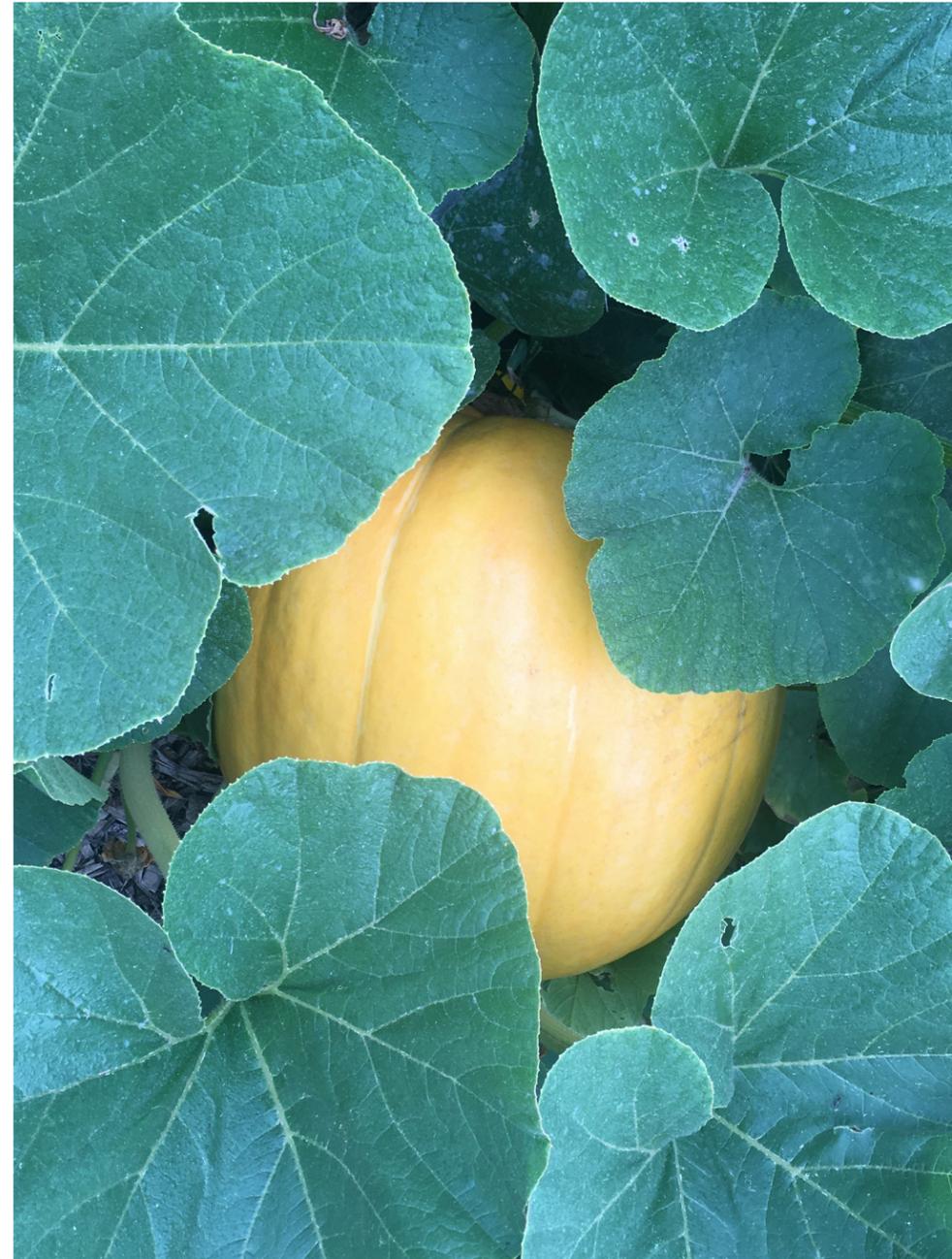
1 kg of squash
1 cup precooked corn flour
Salt to taste

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Peel and remove seeds from squash and cut it in cubes.
3. Put squash in a pot with water and cook until soft.
4. Drain water and mash squash into a purée.
5. Add half of the flour.
6. Add salt and begin to knead dough, adding the remaining flour until the dough is soft.
7. Moisten your hands with water periodically while working the dough into balls, and then flatten to about half an inch thick. Arepas should be approximately the size of the palm of your hand.
8. Spread oil over the surface of a preheated frying pan with a paper towel.
9. Cook for 1 or 2 minutes on each side, then place in the oven for about 15 minutes.
10. Remove from the oven, cut in half and fill with butter, cheese or the filling of your preference.

PUF Pumpkin Bread *by Patricia*

4 to 4-3/4 cups all-purpose flour
 1/2 cup brown sugar
 2-3 tsp Fleischmann's® Yeast
 1 to 1/2 tsp salt
 1/2 cup evaporated milk
 1/4 cup butter
 1 cup canned pumpkin (or prepare your own puree by boiling and mashing fresh pumpkin)
 2 eggs
 1 tsp cinnamon
 1 to 1/2 tsp ginger, chopped

- 1.** Combine 3 cups flour, sugar, undissolved yeast and salt in a large mixer bowl.
- 2.** Heat milk and butter until very warm (120°F to 130°F), and stir into flour mixture. Beat 2 minutes at medium speed of electric mixer, scraping bowl occasionally. Stir in pumpkin, eggs and 1 cup flour. Beat 2 minutes at high speed. Stir in cinnamon, ginger and enough remaining flour to make soft dough. Cover and let rest for 10 minutes.
- 3.** Divide dough into 4 equal pieces; roll each piece to 7-inches long. Place side-by-side on a greased baking sheet.
- 4.** Cover; let rise until doubled in size, about 1 hour. Brush with egg white mixed with 1 table-spoon water.
- 5.** Bake at 350°F for 25 to 30 minutes or until done. Remove from pan and cool on wire rack.



A delightfully savoury pumpkin bread from Patricia, the baker's daughter. This bread, buttered and warm out of the oven, smells, looks and tastes like fall!

Family Favourite Peruvian Rice with Chicken



Family Favourite Peruvian Rice with Chicken

When Giovanna remembers her time at PUF, she thinks most about time spent with family and friends at the farm. Her oldest son helped with the harvest while her youngest son was often examining insects with a magnifying glass, or following around the resident barn cat. (We named this cat “Hugelita”, as her favourite spot seemed to be sunning herself on top of the experimental Hugelkultur mound.) Giovanna’s daughter, on the other hand, could be found running circles around the mound and through the garden paths, twirling a rainbow ribbon behind her.

Giovanna’s recipe uses some of the carrots, onions and peas we took home from the farm, as well as the fragrant parsley and cilantro, and like PUF, this dish is a hit with the whole family!

Family Favourite Peruvian Rice with Chicken

by Giovanna

1/2 cup olive oil
4 chicken legs
1/2 red onion, chopped finely
1 tbsp cumin
1 tbsp ají amarillo chili pepper paste
1 tbsp ají panca chili pepper paste

1 cup cilantro leaves
2 cups white long-grain rice
1 cup malt beer (optional)
1/2 cup green peas
1/2 cup carrots, cooked and diced
2 1/2 cups chicken stock or water

Salsa Criolla relish (optional)
1 onion, julienned
1 small limo chili pepper, chopped
1 tsp parsley, chopped

1 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp lime juice
Salt and pepper to taste

- 1.** Season the chicken with salt and pepper, and fry at medium heat until seared all over (not cooked inside).
- 2.** Heat a tablespoon of oil in a pot and fry the onion, ají amarillo paste, ají panca paste and cumin for 2 minutes over medium heat.
- 3.** Blend the cilantro into a paste and add to the pot, mix well and let the ingredients cook for another 5 minutes or until the onion is soft.

Family Favourite Peruvian Rice with Chicken

4. Add the chicken legs to the mixture and cook for 20 minutes, or until the chicken is completely cooked inside.

5. Add the rice to the same pot where you cooked the chicken and add the 2½ cups of stock or water. Mix the ingredients until the rice is covered with cilantro paste. Bring to a boil. Cover the pot and let the rice cook at low heat for 15 minutes. (If using beer, replace half a cup of water or chicken stock with beer.) Add the cooked carrots and peas. Place rice on each plate, top with a piece of chicken and serve with salsa criolla.

6. To prepare the salsa criolla, mix red onion, limo chili pepper, parsley, olive oil, lime juice, and salt and pepper.



Chapter 2 Kale Queens

Since this book is promoting diversity in greenspace, we think it is worth mentioning that PUF boasted four varieties of kale last year, the most plentiful greens at the garden. We all laughed at how creative we had become by the end of the season with working this easy-to-grow superfood into our diets, nicknaming ourselves the “queens of kale”. The titles of this section and the next are a nod to the Tragically Hip’s song Wheat Kings. We celebrate the beautiful Prairies that we call home, while also claiming our own small “queendom” within the City (on a farm that grows not a mighty monoculture of wheat, but a great diversity of all things green).

We harvested many greens at the farm. Some were crops that had been carefully planted and some grew wild, all on their own. Many of us rescued dandelion greens and pigweed that other volunteers had pulled, and took them home for dinner. We also experimented with beet greens and carrot tops. These are some of our green inventions that we like best.

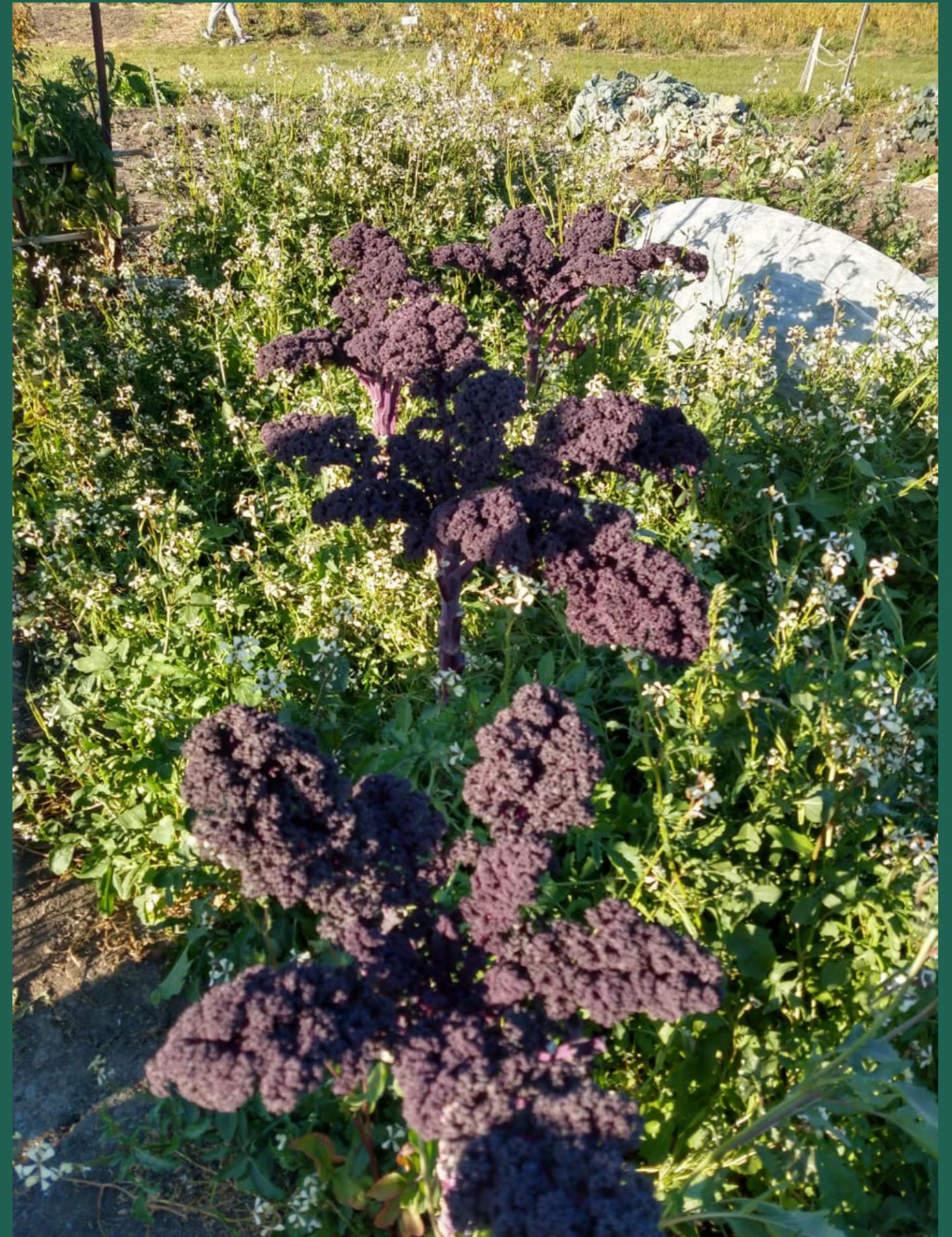
*I felt nature, oh my god, it's really different!
I've never been with all this natural organic
food. I felt so good, so happy. And all kinds
of colours...It was really beautiful to see all
the kinds of green!*

-ECI participant

The spinach was very different, very yummy.

*Yes! The taste, it's a different feeling when
you're eating. More organic and natural. It's a
different feeling eating it.*

-Conversation between two ECI
participants



Mom's Potato Patch Kale & Garlic Fried Potatoes

Sabine was perhaps our most expert gardener, and the potato patch at PUF reminded her of harvesting potatoes on her parent's farm in Germany, a task that sometimes took all day. She valued the time spent working together at PUF, explaining that putting in work to grow food, especially as a group, makes that food more of a reward than just buying it at the grocery store.

Reflecting on this recipe with the group, Sabine expressed a sentiment that came up often in our discussions: "Now that I hear Irum speaking about the moms' recipes, I feel connected to Germany through my mom. This is not her recipe, but in the grand scheme of things, it is. Everything I do comes from what she did."



Summer Stroll Carrot Halwa



Mom's Potato Patch Kale & Garlic Fried Potatoes *by Sabine*

Kale and Garlic Fried Potatoes

- 6 big potatoes
- 1 bunch kale
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Herbed Sour Cream Dip:

- 500 ml sour cream
- 2 tbsp parsley
- 2 tbsp chives
- 2 tsp onion
- 2 tsp garlic
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 tsp mustard
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 tsp lemon juice

- 1.** Cut potatoes in cubes and fry them (covered) in olive oil until half done.
- 2.** Strip kale off stems and rip into bite-sized pieces. Add kale to potatoes and fry uncovered until potatoes and kale are done (browned and crunchy). Add garlic, salt and pepper, and fry another 1 to 2 minutes until garlic is starting to brown.
- 3.** For the dip, combine sour cream, minced onion, minced garlic, salt, pepper, mustard, olive oil, apple cider vinegar and lemon juice. Mix thoroughly. Then add minced parsley and chives. Mix well.



Kevin is an always-on-the-go community connector. He is one of the co-founders of the Parkdale Cromdale Community League's garden group, known as the Grower's Dozen, and the current President of the League as well. The Grower's Dozen puts on an annual harvest feast for the community using the produce they grow, and Kevin explains the unorthodox method they have for coming up with the menu: "Especially for the first harvest dinner it's almost like 'Jesus take the wheels'. We didn't know what we would have and what kind of stuff that we could create. So, it's all about seeing what's available without going beyond the means, like we want to find the most economical way; the easiest way to provide the biggest benefit to the community."

Kevin shared this healthy and delicious recipe with us that follows this logic, explaining: "I picked this recipe because it's easy, it's fast and it's my mom's recipe."

Parkdale Cromdale Community League

Get 'er Done Garlic Gai Lan

by Kevin Wong

1 bunch gai lan
3 cloves minced garlic
Sugar and salt to taste
1 tsp oil

- 1.** Wash the gai lan and cut off the dried-up stem ends.
- 2.** Boil a pot of water with salt and oil.
- 3.** Cook the gai lan in water for 1 minute.
- 4.** Fry minced garlic with oil in a pan for 2-3 mins on medium heat.
- 5.** Put the gai lan in the pan, and fry until the garlic is well mixed in.
- 6.** Put in sugar and salt to taste.

Lady Flower Garden

Running Smoothly Smoothie

by Kelly Milly

¼ cup celery
¼ cup spinach
¼ cup parsley
½ cup cucumber
1 apple, peeled and chopped
½ cup water
Ginger (optional)

- 1.** In a blender, combine celery, spinach, cucumber, parsley, apple and water. (If you like, you can put a bit of chopped ginger in there as well.)
- 2.** Blend until smooth.
- 3.** Add the fresh apple and cucumber and blend.



Kelly explains that Lady Flower Gardens includes a 75-acre old growth forest nestled in the oxbow of the North Saskatchewan River, as well as agricultural land. The project sees the land owners partner with agencies that serve populations experiencing severe obstacles to mental health and wellness. Lady Flower Gardens believes in land-based community development whereby people who may not have access to a backyard can still participate in gardening, while also growing community, pun intended. Kelly is always in action keeping things running smoothly at the Garden, and has shared her super fuel, detoxifying green beverage made entirely with ingredients from there.



One of the discoveries we made this past year, drawing on the collective wisdom of all of the members of our group, is that most of the greens found at the garden are edible (and delicious), including many “weeds” and the green tops of root vegetables. Finding farmer’s markets at times a bit too commercialized and expensive, we all felt that the access to fresh vegetables was a privilege. Because we worked hard at the farm and really valued the harvest, we tried to use everything we brought home, and therefore prepared many dishes using carrot tops. This recipe is an invention inspired by Irum’s mom. While the original recipe used only dill, Irum added carrot greens with delectable results.

Farm Fresh Carrot Top and Dill Curry with Prawns

by Irum

1 bunch of carrot greens
 1 bunch of dill
 2 tbsp oil
 ½ onion
 ½ tsp ginger paste
 ½ tsp garlic paste
 1 tbsp coriander powder
 1 tsp turmeric powder
 Red chili powder to taste
 1 Roma tomato
 10-12 large sized prawns
 Salt to taste

- 1.** Wash carrot tops and dill leaves, and finely chop them.
- 2.** In a frying pan, heat 2 tbsp of oil. Dice and add onions, and let them turn slightly brown.
- 3.** Add ginger paste and garlic paste to the onions. Add red chili powder, coriander powder and turmeric powder. Chop and add tomato.
- 4.** Fry everything well on a medium flame until the tomato softens completely.(Keep stirring at regular intervals while frying.)
- 5.** Add prawns (cut into 2 pieces each) and fry for 2 minutes. Add salt as per taste.
- 8.** Add enough water to soak the vegetables.
- 9.** Cover it with a lid and let the vegetables cook until mushy/soft on a slow flame. Do not dry out the water completely. Serve!

Artist's Touch Prairie Pesto

by Zulima

1 cup whole arugula leaves loosely packed (or try mixing in half a cup of carrot tops or wild greens, like dandelion leaves)
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp crumble goat or sheep feta
1 tbsp lemon juice
½ tsp Italian seasoning or dry basil leaves
1 garlic clove, peeled and cut in half lengthwise
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Place all the ingredients in a blender or food processor, and blend for 1 1/2 minutes pausing every 30 seconds, until you reach the desired consistency.

2. Enjoy!



Zulima, a prolific artist whose beautiful sketches are featured in this book, has this added tip: "I once was in a fit recipe group where one of the members from Italy said that you could make pesto out of anything! So every time I have extra arugula, parsley or cilantro, I turn them into pesto, and this summer's arugula from the garden was extra tasty. I usually add other Italian herbs for flavor and aroma, and since I have been on a hypoallergenic diet for the last few months, I tried replacing the parmesan cheese, traditionally added to pesto, with goat cheese. It tastes delicious!"

Garden Group Vegetarian Ghormeh Sabzi

Melica chose this recipe because it is a vegetarian take on the most traditional Persian dish.

Melica is the poet of our group, deeply reflexive and joyously expressive about our gardening adventures and forest forays. On warm afternoons in the garden, the bright greens and fragrant herbs would draw all of her senses back home to Iran. Sampling chokecherries on the forested Ravine paths as well, she was reminded of the taste of Persian plums.



Garden Group Vegetarian Ghormeh Sabzi



Garden Group Vegetarian Ghormeh Sabzi

by Melica

1 bunch spinach
1 bunch cilantro
1 bunch parsley
1 medium onion
6 tbsp cooking oil
2 tsp dried fenugreek
2 cans red kidney beans

½ tsp turmeric
½ tsp curry powder
½ tsp paprika
½ tsp garlic powder
Salt to taste
1 cup water
½ cup lemon juice
1 cup chopped potatoes

- 1.** Heat 3 tbsp cooking oil in a frying pan and add 2 tsp of dried fenugreek.
- 2.** Finely chop spinach, parsley and cilantro, and let them cook in their own juice.
- 3.** Add kidney beans, turmeric, paprika, curry powder, garlic powder and salt.
- 4.** Add water, lemon juice and chopped potatoes. Bring to a boil and then let simmer until the potatoes are soft.

Prairie Urban Farm

Beet Greens Fugath

by Kevin E. Jones

500g beet greens and stems
1 tablespoon coconut oil (or any other oil, except extra virgin olive oil)
1 teaspoon brown or yellow mustard seeds
1 sprig curry leaves (opt)
1 medium onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, sliced thinly
Salt to taste
2 - 3 tablespoons shredded coconut (fresh or dried)

- 1.** Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a wide pan, and add the mustard seeds. When the seeds pop (about 10 - 30 seconds) add the curry leaves (if using) and the onion.
- 2.** Cook on a medium heat until the onion is soft and just beginning to colour, about 3 - 4 minutes.
- 3.** Add the sliced garlic, and stir for 30 seconds.
- 4.** Add the beet greens and stems, and sauté for about 5 - 7 minutes until the greens are tender. Season to taste with the salt.
- 5.** Take off the heat and stir in the coconut. Serve as a side dish with any meat, or with rice or roti as a simple meal.
- 6.** Recipe reproduced with the permission of Michelle Peters-Jones and the tiffinbox.ca



The gardening season is fast in Edmonton, and the barren grounds of spring rapidly fill with produce during long summer days. Such is the frenetic pace of growth that harvests can quickly become overwhelming as our kitchens get crowded with the product of our labours. This is my experience with beets each and every year. By late spring I am buried in beet greens from thinning rows, and as roots come out of the ground the piles get higher. But, I have found a solution! Or, rather my very patient mother in law from the South of India has found a solution. She groans every time I show up from the farm with more greens saved from the compost heap. However, this quick and flavourful recipe for Beet Green Fugath -- a fusion of a South Indian style of cooking and PUF beets -- makes short work of the piles and has become a summer staple in our household. Maybe next season, I'll plant just one more row of beets.



Chapter 3 Pretty Things

There is probably nothing that deepens our sensuous experience of place and memory in garden and forest space more than the delicate aromas, flavours and vibrant colours of herbs and flowers. From herbal teas that evoke the care of mothers and grandmothers, healing that which ails our bodies and souls, to bright blossoms that remind us of paths walked before and boost our mood as we navigate this current route. Herbs and flowers came to represent for us remedies, memories, knowledge and gifts shared openly among our group. What can be more healing and uplifting than family near and far, a good friend new or old, a hot cup of tea, and taking time to smell the (wild) roses?

Carrot greens connected me to Edmonton because I had never used the greens, so here I was exposed to so many new vegetables. They connected me to my home country as well, because my mother would use dill in the same way, like the carrot greens. I follow mom's recipes so I am connected to home.

-ECI participant

Mint reminds me of Iran, it's like going back in time and being there.

-ECI participant



Dandelion Green and Caragana Blossom Omelette

Our instructor's daughter, Maiara, is her most faithful and long-standing companion on walks in the River Valley. Maiara's favourite plant to gather are (is?) caragana blossoms, which have a beautiful yellow colour and taste like fresh pea shoots. Caragana blossoms are quick to green after the long winter, and plentiful in the Rat Creek Ravine during the spring.

The first dish Maiara mastered in the kitchen was an omelette, so she decided to harness some of the herbaceous harbingers of the new season to create this delicious breakfast that ushers in the springtime. This is a perfect Sunday morning recipe, as it encourages a dewy stroll in the Ravine before coming home to prepare breakfast, and reminds us that some of the best ingredients and experiences are those that money can't buy.

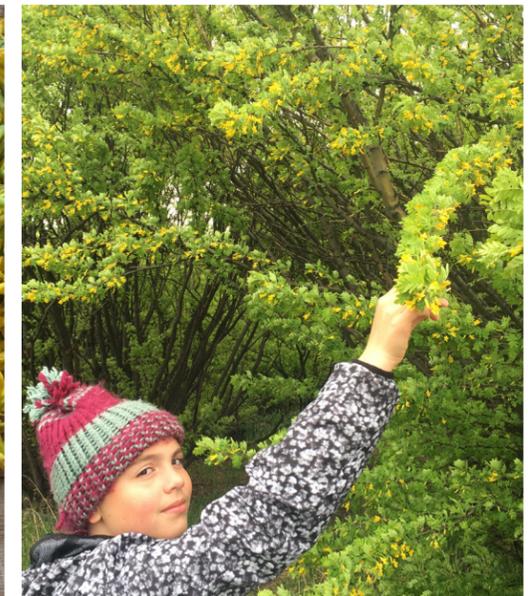
Dandelion Green and Caragana Blossom Omelette

by Maiara

2 tbsp olive oil or butter
6 eggs
¼ cup milk
¼ cup dandelion greens

¼ cup caragana blossoms
¼ cup garden herbs
½ cup grated cheese
Salt and pepper to taste

- 1.** Before you begin, head to your local ravine or backyard to harvest dandelion greens and caragana blossoms. These are extremely plentiful in Edmonton in the spring. Be sure to harvest in a space that is free from pesticides (and dogs).
- 2.** Heat oil in a pan at medium heat.
- 3.** Mix eggs and milk together in a bowl, beat lightly.
- 4.** Finely chop dandelion greens and garden herbs. Remove stems from caragana blossoms but leave flowers whole. (We used oregano, basil and chives, but any available herbs are fine. If using chives, you can also add the purple tops for a very flowery and visually pleasing omelette.)
- 5.** Add the greens, herbs and flowers to the egg mixture.
- 6.** Pour mixture into pan and cook on medium-low heat until it is of a solid consistency (approximately 10 minutes).
- 7.** Add grated cheese of your choice and allow to melt.
- 8.** Serve and enjoy! We served this omelette with biscuits and jelly made from berries harvested in the Rat Creek. (We have made jam from elderberry, chokecherry, highbush cranberry, and saskatoon.)

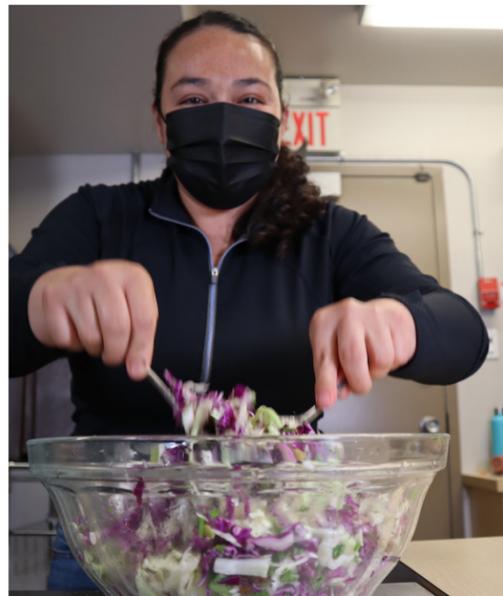


Beat the Heat Parsley, Sunflower Seed, and Apple Salad

Lorena and her kids are regulars at PUF and the berry expeditions in the Ravine, braving both the chilly fall weather and the sometimes intense midday summer heat. This very refreshing salad was inspired by those hot days in the sun and the fragrant parsley that soaked up all of that sunshine. We should mention, as well, that whether heaving large watering cans out of rain barrels or handing out much-needed snacks to the group at breaktime, no one has quite as consistently sunny a disposition as Lorena.



Beat the Heat Parsley, Sunflower Seed, and Apple Salad



Beat the Heat Parsley, Sunflower Seed, and Apple Salad

by Lorena

Salad:

- 1/2 green cabbage
- 1/2 red cabbage
- 1/2 bunch parsley
- 4 scallions
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 1 tbsp sunflower seeds
- 1 medium green apple or 2 tart Alberta apples

Dressing:

- Juice of 1/2 lime
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt, pepper and oregano to taste

1. Roughly chop cabbage and parsley and slice scallions and apple.
2. Mix together with tahini.
3. Prepare dressing in a separate bowl.
4. Add sunflower seeds and dressing.

Meet and Greet Mint Chutney

by Irum

5-6 mint stems
1-2 green chillies
(depending on how much
heat you like)
3 tbsp grated coconut
1-2 garlic cloves
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp sugar
Juice of ½ lemon

- 1.** Pluck the leaves from the stems of mint and discard stems.
- 2.** Combine mint with green chillies, coconut, garlic, cumin seeds and sugar.
- 3.** Grind the above ingredients into a fine paste by adding little water.
- 4.** Squeeze half a lemon into the paste and mix.
- 5.** Mint chutney is ready, share it with someone!



Irum explains that this fresh and delicious Mint Chutney is normally an accompaniment with snacks like a samosa, or meat dishes like Biryani or kebabs. We find it inviting and versatile like the PUF garden space and the community league kitchen where we cooked together. In both places, we all felt welcome to join in, share knowledge and experiment with new ideas. This Chutney, like the other recipes in this book, is not only an appetizing conversation starter or backdrop but also, dare we say, helped build community!



La Vecina Querida Soothing Lemon Balm Tea

by Neida

1 small bunch lemon balm
1 tsp-1 tbsp honey
Juice of ½ a small lemon

- 1.** Steep lemon balm in almost boiling water for 3-5 minutes.
- 2.** Add honey and lemon, adjusting amounts to your preference.
- 3.** Enjoy!

When Neida picks lemon balm at PUF, she remembers her neighbourhood in Venezuela, where she grew lemon balm in her backyard. She would prepare a healing tea to soothe a sore throat or a heavy heart, as everyone who lived close by knew. Neida explains that this tea is also good as a sleep aid and as an everyday medicine. For us, this tea represents the knowledge we gained by working together in the garden, forest and kitchen spaces, as well as the relationships formed while growing, picking, preparing and drinking tea. These connections, like a neighbourly gesture or a good cup of tea, continue to provide us with warmth and well-being.

Risk-it Biscuits: Shortbread Cookies with Flowers and Herbs

by Sarah

4 cups flour
1 cup berry sugar
4 tbsp cornstarch

1 pound butter
½-¾ cup seasonal flower petals or herbs
of your choice

1. Preheat oven to 250°F.
2. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar.
3. Mix flour and cornstarch together, and add to butter and sugar mixture.
4. Add thoroughly washed flower petals or finely chopped herbs. We like to use dandelion petals (remove all green parts), as they add a light, honey-like sweetness, or lilac for a more floral flavour. Mint, sage or oregano all work nicely as well. Go ahead, get crazy!
5. Knead thoroughly for at least 15 minutes, until smooth and silky.
6. Shape into a sheet about ¾ inch thick.
7. Place 2-3 layers of parchment paper on a cookie sheet and place shortbread on top. Prick with a fork every couple of inches.
8. Bake for 1 hour.
9. Remove from the oven and mark into squares while still warm, but let stand until cool before cutting all the way through the dough.
10. It is best to wait a day or two before eating, but being Edmontonian risk-takers, we think it is OK to break this rule.



Our instructor's grandmother Gemma was a fearless, accordion playing French-Canadian feminist from St. Paul. She travelled the world, toured with a band, and was married and divorced three times. We think it is only fitting, then, to tweak her traditional shortbread recipe by taking it for a rebellious stomp through the woods and into the garden dirt. This wanton disregard for shortbread etiquette is also a nod to the downtown mural that touts "taking a risk" as the most Edmonton thing we can do. Take a whisk (our favourite way to connect to the City and land around us), build up confidence while creaming the butter, and don't be afraid to experiment with the delicious flowers and herbs that can be harvested in public space and community gardens all across the City!



Melica shared this perfect recipe for utilizing some of the fresh and fragrant garden herbs. While strolling along PUF's labyrinthine paths on a particularly warm and green-hued afternoon, Melica looked around and exclaimed "It's paraíso! I can't believe it!"

This recipe captures that moment in the garden, smelling the gentle aroma of the many herbs that transport each of us to different times and places. A delight for the senses, we think this recipe will become a regular in your kitchen repertoire.

Persian Paraíso Herb and Egg Patties

by Melica

1 bunch parsley
1 bunch cilantro
½ bunch spinach
4-5 leaves of kale
3 green onions

5 eggs
Turmeric, curry powder, paprika, and salt
and pepper to taste
1 tbsp flour
Cooking oil of your choice

1. Wash the greens thoroughly and chop them finely.
2. Put the greens in a large bowl and crack the eggs on top.
3. Add the spices and flour and mix the ingredients.
4. Heat cooking oil in a frying pan and pour the batter into the pan.
5. Cover and cook on low heat for a couple of minutes, until the underside is crispy.
6. Once the underside is crispy, cut it like you cut pizza and flip the slices to fry the other side.
7. You can serve it with bread, make a sandwich with it, or just eat it alone or with rice.
8. Adding sour cream or plain yogurt on top also makes it very tasty and nice! Enjoy!

Chapter 4 Is Bigger Really Better?

The size jury is in: We choose the “cute” and flavourful garden fruit over the larger grocery store varieties. When cooking with fruit, a lot of participants drew inspiration from their home countries, and remembered picking fruit directly from gardens, bushes or trees there. The act of picking fresh fruit as well, its scent and flavour, brought a lot of participants back to their childhood. Sharing this activity with our own children at the garden (nothing was more popular with kids at the farm than picking handfuls of raspberries and strawberries) was an important aspect of this project. One participant summed it up best by saying: “It shows a community bonding, the kids, they will carry these memories throughout their lives, passing on information to the next generation.”

In the store they obviously modify (the produce) to grow more. In the garden they are smaller but have much better flavor

-ECI participant

When I eat the small apples or pears, or when I worked on the farm, that could connect me to Edmonton. The recipes reminded me of home. When I turn them into food, the ingredients, they connect me to my home country.

-ECI participants



Petite Pear and Alberta Apple Crisp



Petite Pear and Alberta Apple Crisp

This recipe is inspired from a PEI neighbor's apple crisp recipe that Zulima learned while living there. Her family enjoys it every fall with tart Alberta apples, as they allow for a nice contrast of flavors. This year, adding the small PUF pears to the recipe made a delicious dessert that all of us will be repeating.

Petite Pear and Alberta Apple Crisp

by Zulima

2-3 apples
2-3 pears
1 cup rolled oats
1 cup brown sugar

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup flour
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp cinnamon
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup butter
Vanilla ice cream (optional)

1. Clean and slice apples and pears. Place the slices in a greased pan.
2. In a separate bowl mix oats, brown sugar, flour and cinnamon. Cut in butter with a table knife.
3. Cover the apples and pear slices with the oats mixture. Bake at 375°F for 40 minutes until crispy and light brown in color.
4. Serve warm or cold with a scoop of ice cream.

River City Rhubarb-Strawberry Crumble





Prairie Pear and Copious Carrot Sauce

by Giovanna

4 carrots, peeled and chopped
2 pears, peeled, cored and chopped (or 4 Alberta-grown pears. What they lack in size they make up for in flavor!)

¼ cup water
2 tbsp white sugar
¼ tsp ground cinnamon (optional)

- 1.** Stir carrots, pears, water, sugar and cinnamon together in a saucepan over medium heat.
- 2.** Cover the saucepan with a lid and cook until carrots are soft (15-20 minutes).
- 3.** Cool and mash with a fork or potato masher to desired consistency.
- 4.** Feed to hungry kids!

Giovanna, somewhat of a magician who can handwrite forwards and backwards, is always trying new tricks to keep up with her children's appetites. Inspired by the small pears that grow at PUF and the copious amounts of carrots we took home each week, Giovanna gives us this more interesting twist on applesauce.

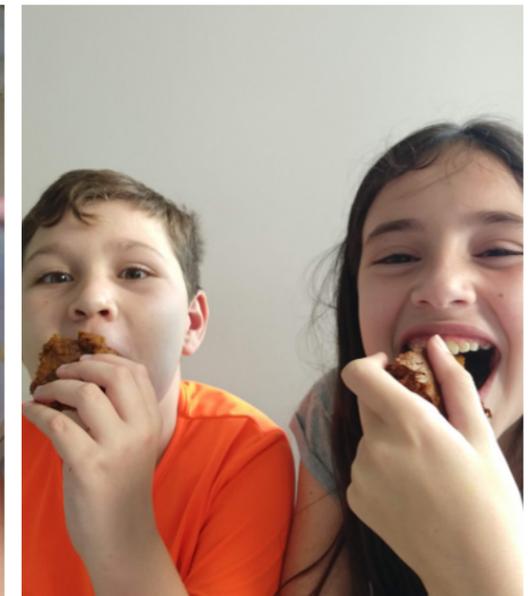
Alberta Apple Meets Brazilian Banana Loaf

by Patricia

2 cups flour
1 cup oatmeal
1 cup brown sugar
1 cup canola oil
3 eggs
3 mashed bananas

1 apple (or 2-3 Alberta apples)
1 tsp baking powder
Cinnamon to taste
¼ - ½ cup chocolate chips or walnuts
(optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a bowl, mix the flour, oatmeal, sugar and cinnamon.
3. In a blender, mix the canola oil, eggs and ½ apple.
4. Combine the wet ingredients with the dry ingredients in a bowl and stir.
5. Chop ½ apple in small pieces, add the mashed bananas and combine everything using a spoon (if you want you can add chocolate chips or walnuts).
6. Mix in the baking powder and transfer the batter to loaf pans.
7. Bake for 40-50 minutes, or until a cake tester comes out clean.





Morgan sent this recipe over from the Métis Nation of Alberta's head office here in Edmonton. We considered filing this recipe under "Forest Fruit", as blueberries grow wild and are harvested by many in the boreal forests to the North of Edmonton. However, the MNA is currently growing blueberries in the garden at their office (close to what will be the Blatchford neighbourhood), as part of a project to help youth reclaim traditional knowledge and connection to land and plants. Morgan mentioned how important it is to make visible past and present Métis land use and cultural practices here in Edmonton. Bringing the boreal blueberry back into town, therefore, is a powerful gesture. This bannock recipe provided by the MNA, with its berries and wheat flour, combines two images that have defined our City: The Prairie on the one hand (namesake of PUF), and the forested ravines, like Rat Creek and the River Valley, on the other. It also combines two ideas about food production: cultivation, as in a garden, and foraging in the wild. We like that this recipe blurs the lines between binaries, and reminds us that the City has been, is, and always will be defined by a kaleidoscope of overlapping and sometimes opposing stories. This bannock, especially when shared around a fire, invites us to listen to these stories, to reflect on them, and to tell our own.

Métis Nation of Alberta

Boreal-Blatchford Blueberry Bannock *by Morgan Hrycak*

4 ½ cups flour
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
2 cups tepid water
1 cup melted lard
1 cup blueberries

- 1.** Mix the first three ingredients in a bowl.
- 2.** Make a well in the middle of the mixture.
- 3.** Add lard and water into well.
- 4.** Slowly mix from the middle. Add ½ cup of your blueberries as you knead the dough.
- 5.** Flatten and pierce with a fork or spoon.
- 6.** Place in a lightly greased fry pan (any oven-safe baking dish will do!).
- 7.** Bake in oven at 450°F for 20-30 mins.

River City Rhubarb-Strawberry Crumble



River City Rhubarb- Strawberry Crumble

Mary loved the colours at the garden, the feeling of freedom, and eating fruit right off of the trees and bushes. Picking berries, apples and rhubarb reminded her of picking fresh fruit in her home country of Dominican Republic.

This recipe combines the tartness of rhubarb with the sun-ripened sweetness of fresh picked strawberries. Mary also likes to add other fruit if she has it, bringing some of the many colours of the garden to life in her kitchen. This vibrant, sweet and colourful dish reminds us of summer days together at PUF: rainbow streamers, bubbles and laughter floating in the breeze, and children with berry-stained hands and cheeks.

River City Rhubarb- Strawberry Crumble

by Mary

1 cup white sugar
3 tbsp all-purpose flour
3 cups diced rhubarb
3 cups sliced fresh strawberries (or other seasonal fruit)

1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 cup rolled oats
1 cup butter

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C)
2. In a large bowl, mix white sugar, 3 tbsp flour, strawberries and rhubarb. Place the mixture in a 9x13 inch baking dish.
3. Mix 1 ½ cups flour, brown sugar, butter and oats until crumbly. You may want to use a pastry blender for this.
4. Crumble on top of the rhubarb and strawberry mixture.
5. Bake for 45 minutes in the preheated oven, or until crisp and lightly browned on top.

River City Rhubarb-Strawberry Crumble





Chapter 5 Foraging Connections: Forest Fruit

Connecting to nature in the City through gathering food was a special experience for all of us, as well as the starting point on our recipe project journey. Our trips to the Ravine revealed that there are wild food sources all around us in Edmonton, with historic, culinary and cultural importance to many different groups of people. The forest was perhaps where we reflected most deeply on place and belonging. We developed respectful and caring relationships with each other and with the land itself through the berry picking process that often saw us veering off the trail and sharing stories as we worked. The berries picked were treated with reverence, as precious gifts freely given, and as an invitation to learn more about the plants and the land that have nourished and healed communities here for thousands of years. These plants and this land continue to provide, for all Edmontonians, diverse reasons to gather.

It was a long journey, you were halfway down the trail. I thought to turn back. Then I saw Melica picking berries and it was so lovely. She was climbing into the forest. It was a beautiful sight.

-ECI participant

I loved going as a group: walking together, talking, crossing the street together, conversation on the way, going through the forest... I felt I was not in the City, like I had my own farm...I really enjoyed it.

-ECI participant

It's unbelievable. How can we pick food in a park for free. That's surreal, to pick up real edible food right there in the middle of a park, available to anyone.

-ECI participant

In a Jam Currant-Cranberry Jelly

by Sophie

Black or red currants and highbush cranberries (or other berries)
Sugar (1 cup sugar to 1 cup berry juice)

- Put berries into a large pot and fill with water just until the berries float. (You can use any ratio of currants to cranberries, or just one or the other. Sophie likes to make a mixed red and black currant jelly, and our instructor loves chokecherry jelly.)
- Boil berries until they start to soften and pop. You can gently pop the berries with a potato masher if you like, being careful not to press too firmly on the cranberry pits, which can make the jelly bitter.
- Strain berry mush in a cheesecloth or other mesh. (Sophie hates cheesecloth for some reason that remains a mystery to our instructor, and prefers to use a mesh cloth cut from a cheap Ikea curtain.) You can hang the mesh over a bowl for a few hours (or even overnight) to get as much juice as possible out of the berries.
- Put the strained juice into a large pot and bring to a boil with equal parts of sugar (1 cup juice to 1 cup sugar).
- Boil mixture until it thickens slightly. No pectin is needed for this jelly, as the berries contain natural pectin. (When describing how to make jelly, Sophie proudly proclaims: "I have NEVER used pectin!")
- To check if the juice is thick enough, dip a spoon into it, lift it out and hold it sideways over the pot. The drops of liquid from either side of the spoon should join together into one drop before falling from the spoon, rather than falling separately.
- Pour the jelly into sterilized jars. Lids will audibly snap (some right away, some will take a while). Jelly should thicken in a few hours.



This entire project began with picking a few berries in the Rat Creek Ravine and making jelly. Some of the ECI students at that time were wondering how to use the chokecherries we had picked and, being an extreme novice in the kitchen, our instructor called in reinforcements. Her mom Sophie, jelly-maker extraordinaire, arrived promptly at the community league, and we all went home with a jar of delicious jelly. This recipe combines currants from PUF with highbush cranberries picked in the Ravine, and is so simple that (as her mother would say) even our instructor can make it! The recipe can be used to make other jellies as well, such as chokecherry, elderberry (we like to add apple to that one), or even lilac or fireweed (these will likely require added pectin). Use your imagination and what is in season in the forests and gardens of Edmonton and, when in doubt, call your mom!



Chinese Benevolent Association

Grierson Hill Goji and Chicken Herbal Soup

by Lan Chan Marples

goji berries (backyard grown and dried by Lan's mom in Edmonton)
red dates
angelica root
astragalus root
codonopsis root
ginseng pieces
Chinese wild yam
solomon's seal
honey dates
whole chicken
salt (to taste)

*The herbal ingredients can be found in a Chinese grocery store or in an herbalist shop.

- 1.** Wash the chicken under cold running water. Clean the chicken cavity and remove any debris. Remove the fat and part of the skin from the chicken (this will keep the broth from being cloudy).
- 2.** Bring a pot of water to a boil, submerge the chicken, and boil it for 2 to 2 minutes until the debris and blood from the chicken float to the surface.
- 3.** Remove the chicken from the pot, and rinse it under running water for the last time before making the soup.
- 4.** Rinse the herbs under running water and put them into a pot with chicken and water. Cook for 1 hour or until chicken is tender. Season with salt to taste at the end.

Northland Urban Farm

Saskatoon Pie, From the Queen(s) in the North

by Patty Milligan

Pastry:
6 cups flour
1 lb lard
1 tsp baking powder
1 egg
Water to fill one cup (with egg)
1 tbsp vinegar

Filling:
2 ½ -3 cups saskatoon berries (you can pick these in the Kinnaird Ravine, if you like)
2-3 tbsp cornstarch
¾ cup sugar
Cinnamon and sugar for sprinkling on top of the pie

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F.
2. Mix flour and baking powder. Work the lard into the flour mixture until it is crumbly. Form it into a pile and make a well in the middle.
3. Crack the egg into a liquid measuring cup, and fill the rest with water and vinegar up to 1 cup. Stir it until the egg is thoroughly broken up.
4. Pour some liquid mixture gently into the well. Work in the flour along the edges of the well. Pour a little more liquid. Work in a little more flour. Repeat until it is "wet" or malleable, or until the liquid is gone. If it is still too dry, put in a wee bit of extra water.
5. Chill the dough in the fridge for a few minutes. It is easier to handle when cool.

6. Break off about a 4" ball and roll it out onto a floured surface. When it is a bit bigger than the size of your pan, put it in the pan and pat it down. Let the edges hang over.

7. Roll out the second piece of pastry. Cut ventilation holes in it. You can make a pattern if you want —Patty's mom always makes a design of pussy willow branches. Fold this piece into quarters (which makes it easier to lift onto the pie later.)

Filling:

1. Cook saskatoons on top of the stove in a half an inch of water. Let them boil and then turn off the heat.

2. Mix 2-3 tbsp (depending on how juicy the saskatoons are) of cornstarch into ¾ cup of sugar, and then stir the mixture into the cooked saskatoons.

3. Pour into the bottom crust.

4. Put your second piece of pastry on top of the saskatoons. Unfold the quarters. Let the edges hang over.

5. Pinch the two layers of pastry together around the edges of the pan. Cut the excess dough with a paring knife.

6. Sprinkle white sugar and cinnamon on the top crust.

7. Bake the pie at 425°F for 10 minutes. Then take it down to 375°F for about 35 minutes. You know it is done when the top is brownish, and you can see the bubbles through the vents.



Patty Milligan, Education Specialist at Northlands Urban Farm, not only gave us a tour of the amazing gardens growing on site, but she also shared with us her mom's saskatoon pie recipe, and a story about picking saskatoons in the City as a child!

"My mom (Rita Milligan) lived in Jasper Place (90th Ave and 152nd Street) for part of her childhood (late 1940s). At that time, it was possible to have animals—even cows, pigs, chickens in the town, and most people in their neighbourhood produced their own food one way or another! In the summers, my grandmother would take her four kids to pick saskatoons in the area where the Valley Zoo is now.

My grandmother would wash and then can the berries. My mom remembers one summer, my grandmother canned 700 jars of fruit—including saskatoons, raspberries, and bruised fruit my granddad picked up from a wholesaler! My mom also remembers, whenever they ate a jar of saskatoons (or other fruit), my grandmother would swish the jar out and the kids would fight over who got to drink that liquid—to them it was a treat!"

Flo's Five Generations Forest Berry Beet Loaf



Flo's Five Generations Forest Berry Beet Loaf

Our instructor's great-grandmother, Florence Belcourt, was related to the Fraser family of River Lot 28; the lot right next to the one that was home to the Rat Creek. She was born in Ft. Smith, NWT, and moved to Edmonton as an adult. Though we will never know for sure, we like to imagine that she would often venture into Edmonton's lush ravines to pick berries, some of the same ones she picked in the boreal forest as a child. Her moccasins, at the very least, have come to know the ravine on our instructor's daughter's feet.

Sophie, our instructor's mother, tells us that grandma Flo's favourite berry was the tart highbush cranberry, and that she also used to make a delicious loaf out of beets. This recipe, while not hers, is our homage to great-granny Flo. The loaf is moist, dark and earthy like the forest floor, while the icing glaze is flavoured with highbush cranberry and sprinkled with saskatoons. The berries were picked in the Ravine by our instructor's daughter, who represents the fifth generation of Florence (and the seventh of Rat Creek foraging).

Flo's Five Generations Forest Berry Beet Loaf

by Sarah

1 cup white flour
 1 cup whole wheat flour
 1 tsp powdered ginger
 1 tsp cinnamon
 1 tsp baking soda
 ¼ tsp baking powder
 Pinch of salt
 1-1½ cup sugar
 3 eggs
 ¾ cup olive or vegetable oil (Our instructor likes olive oil in baking, but many people do not)

1 tsp vanilla
 3 cups grated beets
 1 cup chopped walnuts, optional
 1 tbsp orange zest, optional

***Icing glaze:**
 ¼ cup butter
 ¼ cup cream cheese
 1/8 cup highbush cranberry juice
 ½ -¾ cup icing sugar

Beet Loaf:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Mix together dry ingredients, except sugar.
3. In a separate bowl, mix together sugar, eggs, oil and vanilla.

Flo's Five Generations Forest Berry Beet Loaf

4. Add grated beets followed by dry ingredients. You may also add orange zest and walnuts.
5. Pour batter into a loaf pan and bake for 70 to 80 minutes. Insert a toothpick to check if it is baked through (toothpick should come out clean).
6. Let cool and frost with icing glaze (see below).

Forest Berry Glaze*:

1. Juice highbush cranberries by boiling them in a pot with just enough water to make them float. Cranberries will pop and soften, and can be strained in a fine mesh. (Cheesecloth works, as does an Ikea curtain -which you already know if you read the jelly recipe in this book).
2. Cream butter, cream cheese and sugar together with an electric mixer. You can adjust the amount of icing sugar to your preference. Our instructor used a smaller amount to end up with a shiny glaze, rather than an icing.
3. Add cooled highbush cranberry juice.
4. Spread or pour (depending on desired consistency) on loaf.
5. Garnish with orange zest and forest berries. We (Our instructor) used saskatoons and wild strawberry leaves from the Ravine.

*Our instructor's own invention, proceed with caution.





Cherry-Berry Tamarind Tease

by Melica

Assorted forest berries
Lemon juice
Honey
*Quantity will be based
on how many berries you
pick and how sweet or
tart you want the juice.
Feel free to experiment!

- 1.** Cook fresh berries together in a pot with enough water so that all berries float. Boil until berries are soft and start to disintegrate. (We used elderberries, highbush cranberries, rosehips, and chokecherries.)
- 2.** Strain berries for juice.
- 3.** Add lemon juice and honey to taste.
- 4.** Refrigerate or add ice to cool.
- 5.** Enjoy!

A lot of the berries we picked in the Ravine were tart and had pits, so we ended up using their juice for jellies, baking with them, or drying them for teas. Sampling the berries in the forest, however, we were amazed at how fresh and juicy they tasted, and wanted to be able to capture that fresh, tart flavour in a recipe. Melica, Neida and Irum likened the taste of highbush cranberries to tamarind, and Melica and Zulima both came up with this delicious juice recipe, whose vivid taste stirs up fond memories of afternoon berry picking and sampling in Edmonton, as well as drinking fresh tamarind juice in Iran, Venezuela and India.

Conclusion

Conclusion

A wealth of perspectives on place and food inform this book. We found the magic of urban agricultural spaces, both forests and farms, to be that they foster diverse understandings of place, belonging and identity. In our recipe-based practice and in these pages, we honour our mothers, fathers and grandparents. We represent them here in the City, whether or not they are now or have ever been in Edmonton. Their experiences and knowledges, alive in us, have guided us into the depths of reflection, to grasp the soil with which to build a City that feels like home for all of us. In reference to the story of the humble creature that rebuilds the earth, this is our Muskrat Manifesto. We pass on these recipes-as-stories to our children; that they may understand the relationships we have built on (and with) this land, and carry them proudly and visibly into the shared future City. We dedicate this work, also, to you and your children, knowing you too have stories to tell through food and recipe. We invite you, then, to take a whisk and a walk in the woods. These might just be the most “Edmonton” things you can do.

Rat Routes and Reasons to Gather:

*Culturally Diverse Culinary Journeys in
Edmonton's Wild and Natural Spaces*

BY: SARAH DE LANO

WITH: ZULIMA ACUÑA, LORENA BARAJAS MORENO, PATRICIA FREGOLENTE, INES G. BRUNO DE GINGRAS, NEIDA GOITIA,
SAHRA HASHI, IRUM KHAN, GERONIMA MATEO, MELICA NARGESS SAGHAFI, AND SABINE SCHMELZ