



100% Local

**BASIC ROOTS**

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**& our community of farmers who help to make it all work!**

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# Basic Roots Community Foods

[www.basicrootscommunityfoods.kaysue.org](http://www.basicrootscommunityfoods.kaysue.org)

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## Early Spring SUNCHOKES

are one of the only 5 food crops indigenous to North America. You might guess corn and soybeans are the other 2 since so much is grown here but No! Count Sunflowers, Pecans, Blueberries & Cranberries as the other 4.

Interestingly enough, Sunchokes are in the same family as the Sunflower (Helianthus) while the descriptive Latin adjective sets them apart: annus meaning annual for the Sunflower and tuberous (meaning edible roots) for the Sunchokes.

Sue & I are very fond of Sunchokes. Their texture & taste is quite unlike any other root. Crunchy, juicy and sweet as raw in salad. Firm, meaty & stand out flavor when roasted.

Versatile is another way to categorize them. When cooked, they can be a substitute for potatoes or water chestnuts. They can be made into a puree, a gratin or creamed. Use in soups, stews, pancakes & fritters while pairing especially well with leeks & poultry.

More commonly known as JERUSALEM ARTICHOKEs, several North American Indian tribes used Jerusalem artichoke as food prior to the arrival of European settlers. The artichoke became a staple food for North American pilgrims and was thought of as a new food in a "new Jerusalem", (New World), hence the name Jerusalem.

- **Stirfried**...Sunchokes may be sweeter, but can be used readily in place of water chestnuts in any stirfry recipe.
- **Steamed**...  
 "Sunchokes can be steamed along with other vegetables. Sometimes it works to just act like you know what you're doing."  
 Groom and chop sunchokes coarsely.  
 Place in steamer on medium for about 5 to 7 minutes.  
 Mash and proceed similar to with mashed potatoes or season/toss with a dressing combination
- **Boiled**...Sunchokes can be prepared like potatoes, or in most recipes alongside potatoes. They cook at roughly similar speed to potatoes of the same size this way."  
 Groom.  
 if **whole**: boil for 10 to 15 minutes. if **cut**: boil for 5 to 8 minutes. Season. ( Mash. )Serve.
- **Souped**...They can be used to supplement soups (especially puréed/blended soups) in place or alongside of parsnips or potatoes, even rutabagas.
- **Raw**  
 "If sunchokes are new to you (or perhaps even if they are not) they are quite stunning just raw, and have a mild, sweet, crisp taste and texture."  
 • **Oven or pan frying and roasting:**  
 "As with most roots, sunchokes are fabulous when roasted. Toss with yr favorite oil & season with garlic, rosemary & thyme. 350 degrees for about 30 min, again using the fork test are the many ways one can use these roots. The roots you receive still have the organic soil they were grown in, attached. Best way to clean the roots is to soak them first in water to loosen the soil, rinse & scrub them lightly. No need to peel off the skin. For those of you who like to grow their own, save a few roots back to plant. Plant NOW about 4" deep with the "eyes" (where they're sprouting) pointing upwards. Will grow to about 12' tall. Harvest February/March next year.

## Jazzin' up that POPCORN!

Sue & I have discovered that Peanut Oil performs the best & gives the popped corn a real good flavor. We pop in a covered 4 qt sauce pan with enough oil to pop about 1/4 C of kernels. Peanut oil doesn't smoke when heated up, like olive oil would. Throw in a couple of kernels as the oil heats up. When they pop add the rest & shake well over the stove, keeping it on the heat. Since this popcorn is so fresh, it will pop like gang busters.

Now hot & fresh, throw it in a bowl & toss immediately with parmesan; salt, pepper & garlic powder; pizza seasonings; Bragg's Liquid Amino (good soy sauce substitute) (Sue's favorite way) & my favorite way is to sprinkle nutritional yeast flakes & toss well. Heck, with enough creativity you can make a meal out of that popcorn or try dessert by tossing in dark chocolate chips. So decadent!!

## Cooking up your Cracked Wheat & Oat Cereal

1/3 C Cereal      1 C Water      pinch of Salt

Bring water to a boil. Add cereal, reduce heat & simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent clumps. It will become a pudding like texture similar to Coco Wheats (but not tasting like that) or Buckwheat Grits if you have tried them. To them you can add some jam or jelly, fresh fruit, butter or milk.

Sage Advice from Mike at Bridgeton Mills: "The whiter the bread the sooner your dead. Eat whole wheat & stay on your feet."

## SWEET OMELET

I know we are heavy on the egg recipes this time but isn't it fun to have some flexibility in your Basic Roots haul? Have you ever thought about sweetening your omelet with say a little bit of natural sugars? Often Sue & I make big omelets (we are big eaters) & towards the end of say, an onion, pepper, cheese omelet I add some jelly. So, so good & gets you out of the traditional flavor of what you might expect. Remember though we get the cream of the crop products, the products farmers are creating to give you new tastes & experiences.

Jerusalem artichoke tubers resemble potatoes except the carbohydrates composing 75 to 80% of the tubers are in the form of inulin rather than starch. Once the tubers are stored in the ground or refrigerated, the inulin is converted to fructose and the tubers develop a much sweeter taste.

### Basic Method for Cooking your Sunchokes

Groom the roots by scrubbing, etc. Drop into cold water, adding a tsp of lemon juice. (**Big Note: When cut, they will turn gray when exposed to air, like potatoes turn brown, lemon juice or any other acidifier helps them to retain their natural color**). Then bring water to a boil & simmer for around 10 min or so. Try the fork test- they should be a bit resistant in the center but not hard. Remove from heat & drain.

Slice, tossing with parsley & butter, Salt & Pepper to taste.

**Creamed Sunchokes:** Just before serving toss them in 1 C of Bechamel (white) Sauce. Serve hot.

**Basic Bechamel Sauce:** is basically just flour, milk & butter with seasonings to compliment.

Heat 1 1/4 C Milk in small saucepan, slowly so as not to scorch it. Meanwhile, melt 2 TBS butter in heavy saucepan. Stir in 2 TBS of flour slowly, so as not to clump up. Cook, stirring constantly, until the paste cooks & bubbles a bit (don't scorch the butter!), about 2 minutes. Now add the hot milk, continuing to stir as the sauce thickens. Bring to simmer, add your seasonings & cook, stirring often for 2-3 min. Remove

## Patch's Favorite Basic Salad utilizing Sunchokes & Chard

### core ingredients:

Any greens: chard, kale, romaine, arugula, green peppers, and/or spinach // **chard** is difficult to beat  
roughly 1/4lb to 1/2lb feta  
black, green, white, and/or pink peppercorns // here in order of importance  
handful or so cranberries or other (dried) fruit  
good olive oil

### optional ingredients:

shredded or cubed (marinated/plain) carrots, beets, **sunchokes**, and/or apples  
cooked corn or black eyed peas, soaked, roasted, and/or raw nuts

Rinse greens, ((pat dry,)) then stack and cut to bitesize

OR stack and cut greens to size, then rinse and spin.

Get a plate or bowl. Grind in pepper liberally. Crumble in feta.

Add cranberries in.

Toss. //use your hands or a pair of tongs.

Side Note: I noticed in packing the sunchokes that they are starting to sprout a teeny bit, breaking their dormancy. Can't blame them, it was a long winter. It won't affect the taste etc. You can pinch them off or eat as is for a little bit more nutrition.

## **JAM BARS**

My sister, Cindee, was in Home EC in High School and would experiment to create all sorts of desserts from ice cream jelly rolls to jam bars. This is her recipe from 40 some years ago.

1/2 C Shortening ( remember 40 years ago. Substitute coconut oil or real butter)  
1/2 C sugar  
1/2 tsp vanilla  
1/2 tsp almond extract  
1 of your Eggs  
1 1/2 C Flour

1 tsp baking powder  
1/2 tsp Salt  
pinches of cloves & Cinnamon  
Fruit Jam or Jelly

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Grease an 8-inch square pan. Cream the shortening with the sugar, vanilla and almond extract. Stir in the egg and blend well. Mix together the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, cloves and salt, add to the first mixture and combine thoroughly. Spread half the dough in the pan. Cover with a layer of jam or jelly. Pat the remaining dough on top and bake for about 25 minutes. Cool & cut into bars. Will make about 16 bars. FUN, FUN, FUN!

## **SWEET FRENCH PANCAKES (ala Crepes)**

*Simple to make & extraordinarily versatile, they are good plain, stuffed & rolled or sweetened (in this case with your jam). Like a velvet cape wrapped around a simple dress, they will transform any good leftovers into something pleasurable.*

2 of your eggs 1 C Flour 1 C Milk pinch salt 2 TBS Butter, melted Jam or Jelly  
Beat the eggs well, then beat in the milk, salt, flour and butter. Cover & let stand for at least 30 minutes. Batter must be fluid, if not add a little more milk. Heat a 7-inch, or 5-inch or crepe pan until moderately hot, then film it with butter or oil, using a brush or folded paper towel. Using a ladle or small cup, pour in several tablespoons of batter, then quickly tilt the pan about so that the batter spreads evenly in the thinnest possible layer. Cook for a few minutes, until the bottom is lightly browned & the edges lift easily from the pan. The pancake should then slide loosely about in the pan. Turn it with a spatula or by catching an edge with your fingers & flipping it over. Cook the second side for a few; it will brown in spots, not as evenly as the first side, but it doesn't matter because this side should be used inside when the crepes are rolled. Remove to a plate & film the pan again lightly each time you make another crepe. Spread warm crepes with your jelly or jam. Roll them & dust them with confectioners' sugar. Melt in your mouth, MMMMM

## **OVEN FRENCH TOAST**

Ok, so my other sister, Jamie, was a cook too. She left behind in her passing a plethora of old school recipes. I remember this as a kid lovin this recipe. It's a good way to use up stale bread.

2 Local Eggs 1/2 tsp Vanilla  
1/2 C Milk 4 slices of your toast Bread—day old  
1 TBS granulated Sugar or substitute 1/4 C melted Butter  
2 TBS Sugar Cinnamon to taste

Whisk eggs, milk, sugar & vanilla. Arrange bread slices in single layer. Pour egg mixture over & let stand until the egg mixture is absorbed.

Put toasts on baking sheet & brush in butter. Bake 10 minutes— turn over & brush on butter. Bake 8 minutes. Combine sugar or substitute & cinnamon, sprinkle on & serve.