

"Coming up with recipes for cooking in the garden is really a matter of *not cooking*. Just putting the vegetables together in as much of a fresh form as you can and really just putting a little bit of flavor onto them, and letting them see all the colors naturally because obviously when you cook it, things change. But it's also about getting together, having a little harvest party, and every day *we sit together and we eat something from the garden* ... and that's what really gets you because everybody loves to eat."



— Tory Miller
Executive Chef & Co-Proprietor
L'Étoile Restaurant

Cooking &
Eating in
the Garden





Eating Fruits & Vegetables in the Garden

Growing, cooking and tasting activities are proven ways to get students to try new fruits and vegetables! When they take part in the entire process—from starting seeds to harvesting food to preparing meals—students enthusiastically incorporate more vegetables and fruit into their diets. Encourage everyone to try a small bite—it may take several times before a student develops a taste for a specific fruit, vegetable, or prepared dish in the garden.

Cooking in the Garden

Cooking is a favorite activity for students—many recipes can be prepared right in the garden, allowing young people to taste the fruits of their labor! This adds to the full experience of growing food. By cooking in the garden, students are not only introduced to the raw ingredients that make up some of their favorite foods, they can see first-hand how they are prepared in a healthy way. Even young children can be involved in preparing snacks and meals in the garden. Children as young as two can help with washing and scrubbing the fruits and vegetables harvested from the garden. They can also help by tearing lettuce leaves to prepare salad greens or snapping peas. Four and five-year olds can help mash soft fruits and vegetables, measure dry and liquid ingredients, and mix ingredients. Students older than five have many, many ways to get involved in cooking—they can chop, mix, mash and roll a wide variety of different ingredients. As students get older, they can further develop their culinary skills with a broader array of recipes and techniques. To make the cooking experience fun, safe and productive, it is important to have the right tools. Here are some suggestions:

- Stainless steel tables for preparing garden dishes.
- Colorful plates, bowls, and cutting boards are fun for students to use.
- Knives: Due to the sometimes chaotic nature of the outdoor kitchen, using stainless steel serrated dinner knives will eliminate the worry of students cutting themselves with sharper knives. They are usually heavy and sharp enough to cut most vegetables and fruits from the garden. If you are able to provide good training and supervision, students are also perfectly capable of using sharp knives. Make sure students are using the proper cutting techniques. Students should hold knife in one hand and object with a closed fist in the other hand.
- Stainless steel bowls of various sizes are great for mixing and collecting ingredients from the garden.
- Stainless steel or plastic strainers are great for washing garden produce.
- Big wooden or stainless steel spoons for mixing and mashing.
- Peeler for vegetables with tough outer skins like kohlrabi.
- Hand crank cheese grater for processing cheeses like parmesan for pesto.
- Scissors for cutting herbs like rosemary.

Sun Oven



Garden Kitchen



Earth Oven



Outdoor cooking appliances add a degree of fun to the garden kitchen while allowing you to make a wider variety of meals and snacks:

- **Solar oven:** A fun and educational way to bake garden treats using the power of the sun. These can be made either from inexpensive materials or purchased.
 - **Earth oven:** A great place for baking garden pizzas and this can be constructed out of clay, sand, and straw by students right in the garden!
 - **Hand-crank blender:** A must-have in the garden kitchen. Students will enjoy blending everything from basil pesto to tomatillo salsa!
- **Bike-powered grain mill/blender:** Another great way to add fun and fitness to the outdoor kitchen while teaching students about food. For example, students can learn first-hand how wheat berries are transformed into flour and then how flour is turned into pizza dough.

Farm Stand: Bringing the Food Home

Food that is not eaten fresh off the vine in the garden can be sent home with the students so that their families receive the benefits of fresh garden vegetables and fruits as well. During the harvest season, create a student-run farm stand where students and parents can select garden fresh food for use in meals and snacks at home. Students can harvest and prep garden produce to stock the stand during their daily time in the garden. Consider adding recipe cards or a parent newsletter that features daily offerings with recipes and information about storage and other tips for specific fruits and vegetables.



Safety Tips for Teachers

There are a few simple things to remember when cooking and preparing food in the garden, including the following:

- Raw fruits and vegetables may be a choking hazard for very young children. Cut fruits and vegetables into quarters or very small pieces or cook to soften before serving.
- Make sure students wash their hands or hand sanitize prior to any cooking and eating activities to ensure proper sanitation.
- Ensure students are properly supervised during food preparation and cooking activities.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables before eating under clean running water. For more information on food safety for fruits and vegetables, visit www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/health_professionals/food_safety.html.
- Practice good food safety—keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. For more information and resources for talking about food safety with kids, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/For_Kids_&_Teens/index.asp.

Favorite recipes from the Kids' Garden at Troy Gardens

KIDS' GARDEN REFRIGERATOR PICKLES

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup of vinegar
- 2 cups of water
- 8 teaspoons salt
- 1 cup dill (flowers, seeds, and stems all work)
- 5-6 medium cucumbers
- 4 pinches of mustard seed
- 6 black peppercorns

Harvest, wash, and slice the cucumbers into wedges. Place them in a bowl with the dill and salt, and mix them by hand or with a mixing spoon. Using two mason jars, add to each 2 pinches of mustard seed, 3 peppercorns, 1/4 cup of vinegar, and one cup of water. Add half of the dill/salt/cucumber mixture to each jar. Seal the lid and mix the pickles until you can't wait any longer to eat them!



Kids' Garden Tips:

- The longer the pickles sit in the vinegar mixture, the more sour and better they taste.
- Don't be afraid to add more or less salt depending on your taste preferences.
- Our pickles are so popular they rarely reach the refrigerator. If you do have leftovers, check with your local food safety specialist to see how long they keep.
- Add more vegetables to the mix, such as onion, radishes and garlic for new exciting flavors.

GARDEN SPRING ROLLS

Ingredients:

Rice noodles

Rice Paper

Chef Tory's Dipping Sauce (see below)

Any veggies fresh from the garden – try onion, garlic, broccoli, radishes, kale, green or red tomatoes, basil, carrots or anything else that might be in season.

Olive oil

Salt

Harvest the vegetables from your garden and cut them into small pieces. In the meantime, break the rice paper sheets in half, and soak them in a shallow dish or plate of water until soft (about 2 minutes). When the vegetables are ready, lay out the rice paper on plates or cutting boards, fill them, roll them up, and they are ready to go!

Kids' Garden Tips:

- When we run out of Chef Tory's Dipping Sauce, we switch to balsamic vinegar and it tastes great.
- On days that we make pesto, we also put it in the spring rolls for extra flavor.
- Cooking the noodles early in the morning or the night before makes set up very easy. It is also easier when the noodles are cut up.
- Cutting the rolls in half makes for less waste.



CHEF TORY'S DIPPING SAUCE

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1 tablespoon water

1 teaspoon rice wine vinegar

1 teaspoon sesame seed oil

Fresh grated ginger

Chopped scallions

Honey and hot sauce to taste

Peanuts or peanut butter (optional)

Mix all ingredients and taste for balance. Should taste deliciously sweet, spicy and tangy.

What's-That-Green-Stuff Can-We-Make-it-Again Pesto



Ingredients:

Large bowl of basil, about 3 cups
(or use 1/2 basil and 1/2 Red Russian Kale)

2 or more cloves of garlic

1/4 cup parmesan cheese

1/4 cup pine nuts (optional)

1/4 cup olive oil

Crackers or baguette

Chop or rip the basil and put in a blender. Add grated parmesan cheese, pressed garlic, pine nuts, and olive oil. Blend until mixture is creamy. Serve over crackers or baguette.



Kids' Garden Tips:

- Pine nuts can get expensive, and the pesto still tastes great without them.
- Add flavor to your pesto by including such vegetables and herbs as broccoli, radishes, mint and chives.
- Using a hand-crank blender works perfectly to blend the mixture, and the kids love blending!
- Serve pesto on crackers, slices of bread, radishes or cucumbers.



HOMEMADE FATTOUSH

(a Lebanese salad introduced to us by two of our youth gardeners)

Salad:

- 2 cups shredded lettuce
- 1 large or 2 small cucumbers, diced
- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped parsley
- 1/4 cup chopped mint leaves
- 1/2 to 1 green pepper, diced
- 1 bunch green onions, finely sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon sumac
- 2 pieces of pita bread toasted until golden brown, broken into pieces the size of a quarter

Dressing:

- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 to 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Pinch of pepper

In a small bowl, mix all dressing ingredients together. In a large bowl, mix all salad ingredients together. Toss salad with the dressing and serve immediately.

Troy Kids' Garden Tips:

- Break the pita bread into small 1" pieces and toast in a sun oven until the bread is warm to the touch.
- If ground sumac is not available, fresh red sumac berries can also be used. Soak the sumac in the lemon juice and mix it in with the dressing, instead of the salad.
- A small amount of balsamic vinegar can be added to the dressing to increase volume.

KIDS' GARDEN VEGETABLE PIZZA

Ingredients:

Marinara sauce (garden-fresh or store bought)

Pizza crust

Crackers

Whole wheat tortillas (or pita bread)

Mozzarella, Parmesan, or cheddar cheese

Any veggies fresh from the garden – try onion, garlic, broccoli, radishes, kale, green or red tomatoes, basil, or anything else that might be in season.

Harvest the vegetables from your garden and cut into small pieces. Spread pizza sauce on crust, crackers, tortillas, or pita bread and top with cheese (or you can make it without cheese for a vegan twist!). Add a variety of vegetables on each pizza and cook until the cheese is melted and sauce is warm.

Kids' Garden Tips:

- Use sun oven, earth oven, or wood burning grill to make the pizzas outside. The grill adds a strong smoky flavor.
- These can be made all summer long with any vegetables!
- Garden Pesto makes a great substitute for tomato sauce.



Kids' Garden Tips:

- If crackers aren't available to use, dip large pieces of vegetables into it (try broccoli, radish chips, carrots, kohlrabi, etc).
- Tortillas can be used in place of the crackers, or try the dip with spring rolls!



GARDEN YOGURT DIP

Ingredients:

2 cups plain yogurt

Dill

Crackers

Any veggies fresh from the garden – try onion, garlic, broccoli, radishes, kale, green or red tomatoes, cucumbers, basil, or anything else that might be in season.

Harvest the vegetables from your garden and cut into small pieces. Put yogurt in a small bowl and add vegetables. The more vegetables you add, the healthier it will be! You can blend the vegetables in a blender if desired, however whole pieces of vegetables work great (the yogurt also gets runnier the more it is mixed). Scoop the dip onto crackers and serve!

CUCUMBER SALSA

Ingredients:

3-4 large cucumbers

8 tomatillos

1 medium onion

2 garlic cloves

1 medium hot pepper

2 medium green (or red) tomatoes

Harvest and chop all of the vegetables in small chunks (the garlic can be minced or sent through a garlic press). Mix in a bowl until juices start to extract from the vegetables. Salsa can be served on crackers, chips, or with vegetable chips.



Kids' Garden Tips:

- Mashing the tomatillos with a spoon or fork makes the salsa juicier. It can also be blended in the hand-crank blender.
- If chips or crackers aren't available, the salsa can be served with large cucumber chips. They taste great!
- You could also put the salsa in spring rolls for a new taste sensation.