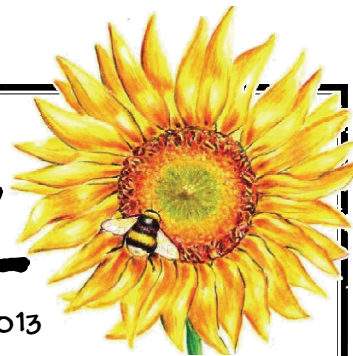


THE BUZZ



Isla Vista Food Co-op Nutrition Newsletter, May, 2013

Bitter Greens! The five specific flavors our tongue can detect are: sweet, sour, salty, pungent, and bitter. While we typically get plenty of sweet, salty, sour and even pungent, the Standard American Diet is lacking in bitters. Eating bitters used to be much more common; Dandelion in particular was widely used in Britain during the 1900's in the form of salads, "coffee," and medicinal tonics. This every day weed hitched a ride to America with the early colonists who prized it for its healing qualities on the frontier. Today, bitter greens are all but forgotten. Not for long!

So, what are the benefits of Bitter Greens?

MAIN POINTS:

Arugula, chicory, Dandelion greens, endive, escarole, kale, mustard greens, parsley, radicchio, spinach and Swiss chard are all examples of bitter greens. It can be said that most of us have come to associate the taste of bitter with something unpleasant; this is perhaps the byproduct of an evolutionary response to avoid certain toxic substances. In spite of this, not all bitter is bad.

TONING QUALITIES

Bitter greens have a high content of vitamins, minerals, and compounds that have an overall toning effect on our internal organs. Bitters are also great for cleansing the organs by stimulating the liver and gallbladder to flush out accumulated toxins.

PREBIOTIC

Some bitter greens, namely Dandelion, contain high

concentrations of *inulin*, a carbohydrate indigestible to humans, but a preferred food source for the beneficial bacteria that reside in our digestive tract. This fiber has been shown to help regulate blood sugar, and increase beneficial HDL cholesterol.

VITAMIN A

Arugula, endive, mustard greens and Dandelion greens are all an excellent source of Vitamin A. Vitamin A is essential to proper immune function, as well as growth and development. Most people are familiar with vitamin A's role on the visual structure. This is because the human retina is composed of vitamin A reliant compounds. If you experience night blindness, there is a chance you could be deficient in vitamin A!

VITAMIN C

Most of the bitter greens mentioned above contain significant amounts of

vitamin C. Vitamin C is in charge of making collagen, a crucial protein that holds our body together. You may have heard of scurvy... the sailor's gum disease. This is brought about by a deficiency of Vitamin C. In addition immune function is influenced by Vitamin C due to its ability to enhance white blood cell activity, antibody levels, and antibody response.

FOLIC ACID

Arugula, mustard greens, kale, spinach and Swiss chard are all good sources of folic acid, a vitamin essential to cellular division, and DNA synthesis. Folic acid works in conjunction with vitamin B-12 to reduce *homocysteine*, a byproduct of protein digestion. Folic acid deficiency is the most common vitamin deficiency, despite its natural concentration in many plant foods.

- Digestive aid
- Vitamin A
- Provide inulin
- Tones organs
- DNA synthesis
- Prevents scurvy
- Builds collagen



FORAGE FOR BITTERS!

Getting back to our hunter-gatherer roots, we can find many bitter greens naturally growing in our own backyard (or maybe our neighbor's!). Growing up in rural Northern California, I had quite a few different types of edible greens growing around my house. Dandelion is a common weed, named for its serrated leaves and cheery yellow blossom (the flowers are edible too). Another common wild California green is mustard: you have probably

noticed the bright yellow fields growing along the CA coast. My favorite wild green is called Miner's Lettuce, native to Northern America, named for the miners who used to eat it during Gold Rush times to prevent scurvy. The petiole is round like a lily pad and has a similar texture and taste to spinach. My little brother and I made "salads" from these wild plants, which I would then force him to eat. On that note, please be sure you are

correctly identifying the plant you are about to eat! Get a local plant guide, and use it to ID your edible bitters. Another thing to take into consideration is the location of gathering: has it been sprayed with Pesticides? Is it near a heavily trafficked road? Did a dog just pee on it? Once you feel prepared, don't be afraid to go out and forage! Our ancestors did it for thousands of years. It is free, sustainable, fun, and incredibly healthy!

Wild Edible Bitters:

Dandelion

Chickweed

Wood Sorrel (*oxalis*)

Miner's Lettuce

Wild Mustard

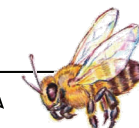
greens

Plantain

Sow Thistle

young!

Bitter Cress



RECIPES

Endive Tuna Boat

- 1 (5 oz. can) tuna packed in water
- 1 ripe avocado
- 1-2 tsp mustard
- Pinch sea salt
- 1 head endive (Belgium).
- 1 medium pink lady apple, cored & sliced
- 2 oz. raw sharp cheddar



Drain tuna and dump into a small bowl. Add avocado, Mustard, and sea salt and mash until incorporated. Wash endive and cut off ends, separating pieces into individual "boats". Fill each boat with 2 TBS tuna mixture, and top with cheddar and apple slices.

Liver Cleanse Juice

(adapted from Botanical Bodycare. Uphoff 2007)

- 1 C grapefruit juice
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/2 inch ginger root
- 1 C filtered water
- 1 TBS Extra Virgin olive oil
- 6 leaves dandelion greens
- 6 leaves kale
- 1/2 apple

Run first batch of ingredients through juicer. Mix in olive oil, and sip slowly.

Fifteen minutes later, make your green juice with the dandelion, kale, and apple. Refrain from eating for at least two hours after taking juice # 2 to allow your liver to detox.

Remember, when carrying out a cleanse, it is natural for your body to expel toxins in the form of rashes, acne, nausea, exhaustion or even emotion.

Steamed Bitters

- 1 TBS coconut oil
- 1/2 yellow onion, sliced
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 1 bell pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 TBS pumpkin seeds
- 1 bunch kale, chopped
- 1 bunch red dandelion greens, chopped

- 1 medium organic chicken breast cut into strips, marinated in
- 1 TBS tamari &
- 1 tsp sesame seeds

- 1/2 C brown rice, rinsed
- 1 C water

In a medium pot, mix rice and water together and bring to a simmer. Cover and turn heat to low. In a large cast iron, heat coconut oil, and add onion. Stir until they begin to turn translucent 2-3 minutes.

Add chicken breast with tamari and sesame seeds, stir for 4-5 minutes until meat begins to turn white. Toss in chopped carrots, stir and cover for about 3-4 minutes. Add bell pepper, garlic, and greens. Stir and cover for another 2-3 minutes. Serve!

Buzzy says:

Adding greens last for a light steam ensures a high amount of nutrients. Vegetables should be green when cooked!



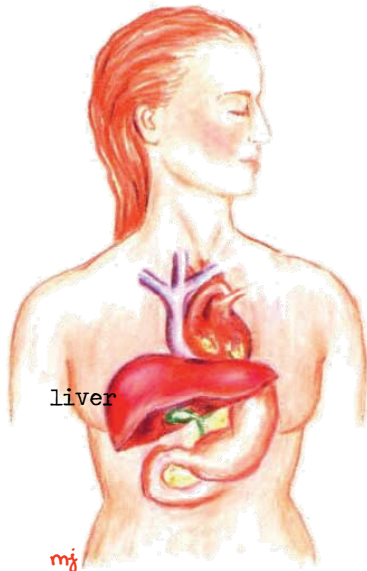
LIVER HEALTH!

Most of us are familiar with the liver, the largest organ in your body, located on your right side above the stomach (underneath the ribs). You might also know that the liver is in charge of detoxing, but did you

know it is essential to digestion and storage of nutrients as well? Your liver works hard to filter and cleanse all the blood in your body before distributing it out to general circulation. The liver is capable of filtering two quarts of blood every minute! In order to carry out this process, it requires a large amount of oxygenated blood. If your liver is toxic, it will most likely be swollen or fatty, a common result of diabetes, hypertension, obesity or alcohol consumption. A damaged liver is different from other bodily organs because it can regenerate up to 75% of itself, once cleansed.

The liver works closely with the gallbladder, secreting bile in order to digest fats, and neutralize fat-soluble toxins. *Glycolysis*, the process of breaking down sugar for energy, also occurs in the liver, and the resulting glycogen is stored for later use.

Bitter greens, and the taste of bitter in general directly affects the liver. When that specific taste hits our tongue, it immediately stimulates the liver to make more bile, and get rid of any previously accumulated toxins. In today's world of standard American food, bitter tastes are hard to come by because they lose the popularity contest between sweet, salty and fatty. For this reason, many Americans have clogged, unhealthy livers that have become lazy from lack of stimulation. Because the liver cleanses our entire body, we want it to be in good shape. Get your dose of bitter greens to ensure proper bile flow, detoxification, and digestion.



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