



The Educated Vegetable Newsletter

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(805) 451-0289

skedlebob@hotmail.com

The Educated Vegetable Comes to Santa Barbara

After two years of extensive traveling and study, Micah Elconin has returned to his beloved home of Santa Barbara and the word on the street is that he has brought some educated cuisine with him. The Raisinets, a local all women's Mah Jongg club recently hired the chef to prepare an appetizer assortment for one of their weekly meetings. The Raisinets, who had gotten quite used to the usual simple snacks served at their gatherings, enjoyed five different dishes that each had something special to offer.

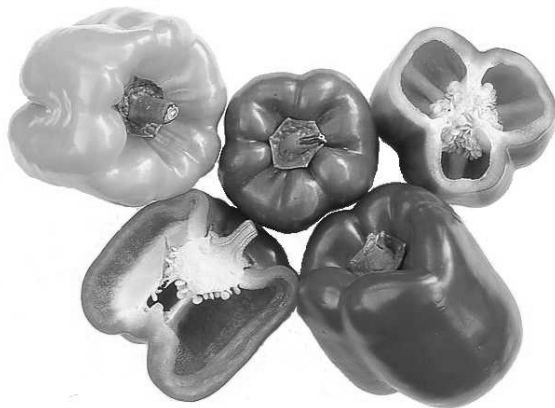
After a brief explanation of the dishes by the chef, the ladies dived into the local, seasonal, organic cuisine and a hum began to rise up from the silence. "Mmmmmm." moved through the house like an "Aummmmm" resonating in the Indian shalas Micah had only recently returned from.

The favorite dish of the evening was undoubtedly the *pistachio pesto deviled eggs*. The eggs were not only delicious, but the high levels of quality protein combined with the super brain nutrients choline and inositol found in eggs must have been partly responsible for the heated games of Mah Jongg that followed.

Another favorite was the *baked figs with chevre over fresh basil with thyme balsamic reduction*. The Raisinets didn't waste time adding a few of these summer treats to their plates. They must have known that figs are a very good source of calcium as well as other necessary minerals essential for strong bones.

For those looking for truly fresh and healthy food that is made with care, thought and passion, The Educated Vegetable seems to be a worthwhile option. "The trick in cooking is to use the best ingredients possible." Micah explained to one club member. "Good ingredients speak for themselves, I just have to blend their voices."

The Educated Vegetable can prepare food for your party too! Call or email to set up an appointment.



Educated Tips!

Sweet peppers are as sweet as candy (almost) right now, and at the local farmers market one can find many varieties. I highly recommend sampling some. Peppers are one of the best sources of vitamin C, but vitamin C is damaged by heat, so add them raw to salads or sandwiches. One large pepper has about twice the vitamin C as one large orange.

The Milk Debate

The age old debate continues... to drink or not to drink milk? Pro-Milker's point to milk's high levels of protein and calcium as support for their position, and they are right, milk does have high levels of both of these essential nutrients. The problem is that conventionally produced milk is laden with hormones, steroids, pesticides, and herbicides; all of which have extremely detrimental effects on the human body.

Drinking organic milk will hopefully help one to avoid most of these toxins, but a further complication is that the main protein in milk, casein, is extremely hard to digest. Luckily, nature has some solutions to this problem. Fresh milk is actually a live food. Similar to fresh fruits and vegetables it contains enzymes which help to breakdown the nutrients in it. When milk is pasteurized these enzymes are destroyed. Almost all milk sold at the grocery store has been pasteurized to protect us from possible bacterial infection, but many health professionals argue that this isn't necessary. Infants have ingested raw mothers milk since the beginning of the mammalian species, and it is this milk that has sustained them during a time when they are most susceptible to infection. Raw milk is now available at many natural foods stores but is quite expensive.

If raw milk scares you or you can't afford it another great option is yogurt or kefir. Both of these products have been inoculated with probiotic, beneficial bacteria that pre digest casein as well as lactose (the sugar in milk). The final product is then much easier for our bodies to digest and assimilate.

For those that want to avoid cow's milk completely there is also soy, rice and nut milks. All three of these are great alternatives, but fresh raw nut milk is a favorite of mine. Almond milk is nice because almonds contain high levels of protein and calcium which is why many of us were trying to drink milk to

begin with.

If you have any questions about this issue or need help replacing traditional milk in your diet please feel free to contact *The Educated Vegetable* by phone or email to schedule a consultation, or cooking class.

Raw Almond Milk

1/2 cup raw almonds

Water for soaking

2 1/2 cups water

2 medium dates, pitted

1 tsp pure vanilla extract (optional)

1. In a small bowl cover almonds with fresh water and soak overnight. In the morning drain and rinse.
2. Place soaked almonds, fresh water, dates and vanilla in a blender and blend on high until well blended (let it go at least a few minutes).
3. Either use as is or for strain through a cheese cloth as follows:
4. Place cheese cloth loosely over a large mason jar, or something similar shape and use a rubber band to secure it. This should create a nice rounded fine strainer that the milk can be poured through. Pour slowly and stop when clogged, remove cloth, squeeze out remaining milk and discard pulp. Then re-attach cloth and continue in this fashion until all milk is strained.
5. Store in a glass jar in refrigerator for up to four days.

