

Market Basket

Lettuce

Lettuce has a storied past dating back to Ancient Egypt where it was an offering to Min, the Egyptian deity of fertility. Later, it appears in Greek mythology as a sacred plant of Aphrodite although in this instance it is valued for its sedative effects rather than the vitality Ancient Egyptians attributed to it. The Romans also appreciated lettuce though more for its therapeutic properties than mythical attributes. Roman Emperor Augustus is said to have been so grateful for the curative powers of lettuce that he built a statue in honor of it at one of his temples (Spencer, *The Vegetable Book*).

The Ancient World knew only varieties of cos lettuce. In present day, there are hundreds of varieties of lettuce, distinguished from other leafy vegetables by being cultivars of *Lactuca sativa*. These varieties are organized into five categories - leaf, cos, butterhead, stem lettuce, or crisphead.

Interestingly, leafy vegetables that resemble lettuce are actually spread across many vegetable families. Endive is in the same family as lettuce but it is not a cultivar of *Lactuca sativa*. Rocket also known as Arugula is also not a lettuce but a member of the cabbage family along with kale, watercress, and mustard greens. Spinach and swiss chard belong to the beet family and thus are more closely related to beetroots.

Lettuce in general provides a small amount of dietary fiber, some carbohydrates, a little protein and a trace of fat. The dietary fiber is in the spine and ribs, while vitamins and minerals are concentrated in the leaves. Its most important nutrients are vitamin A and potassium. The vitamin A comes from beta carotene whose yellow-orange is hidden by green chlorophyll pigments. Beta carotene is converted to vitamin A in the human body. The darker green the leaves are, the more beta carotene. To enhance the nutritional value of lettuce, try combining several varieties in salads.

Handle lettuce gently, rinsing before serving with very cold water. Pat dry with a clean towel. Limp leaves can be revived by immersing in ice water for a few minutes. Do not cut or slice lettuce leaves in advance because damaged cut leaves release an ascorbic acid oxidase which destroys vitamin C and turns the leaves brown. Dry leaves before serving because dressing will only cling to dry leaves.

In *Chez Panisse Vegetables*, Alice Waters writes that lettuces are best enjoyed in a very simple fashion with salads "composed of nothing more than a few kinds of tasty lettuce and other greens picked fresh, washed, dried, and tossed" with a simple dressing. She suggests a light coating of vinaigrette as the best way to dress such a salad. The basis for most of her vinaigrettes are finely diced shallots tempered in vinegar for twenty minutes to an hour, salt and pepper, and extra virgin olive oil with the oil and vinegar in a 3 to 1 ratio.

Lettuce, of course, can also be the basis for a main course. Nicoise salad is in the words of Julia Child "an inspired combination that pleases everyone." Below is Salad Nicoise a la Cafe 55 from Rachel Ray's *Cooking Round the Clock*.

4 large eggs, hard-boiled
1 and 1/2 lbs. small red potatoes
coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 lb. trimmed fresh green beans
1 endive, chopped
12 ounces of mixed baby greens (Ray's appeal is her ability to make interesting recipes in an accessible and efficient manner, but bagged lettuce, one of her favorite time saving devices should be avoided when possible because of the extensive packaging process it goes through.)
A handful of fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
1 small shallot, minced
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
Juice of 1/4 lemon
crusty farm-house style whole-grain bread
1 rounded teaspoon Dijon mustard
3-4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tins French or Italian tuna in olive oil
1/2 cup nicoise olives
3 tablespoons drained capers
2 tins anchovies

After hard-boiling eggs, place potatoes in a second pot, cover with water and bring to a boil. Salt the water and reduce heat to simmer. When potatoes have cooked about 10 minutes, add green beans to the water and cook 3 minutes more. Lift beans out with a slotted spoon and transfer to cold-water bath to stop cooking. Drain potatoes and return to warm pot to dry them off. When cool enough to handle, quarter them.

Combine greens, endives, and parsley leaves in a salad bowl. Start the vinaigrette: Place shallots, vinegar, and lemon juice in a small bowl and let stand 5 minutes. Make the toast from the whole-grain bread. Add Dijon mustard to the vinaigrette.

Whisk in the olive oil. Chop beans and eggs in bite-size pieces. Open tuna and drain off excess oil. Toss greens in vinaigrette. Add the rest of ingredients and serve.

With kids involved, an alternative to combining the ingredients and serving is to serve in a build-your-own fashion so that each diner may assemble the salad to his or her own taste. The choice of ingredients makes this salad surprisingly pleasing for toddlers and adults alike with toddlers enjoying an array of finger foods and adults enjoying a flavorful meal. Another great thing about this recipe is its versatility. Salmon works as well as tuna. Mushrooms can replace the potatoes if carbohydrates are a concern. Ray suggests mixed greens, Child suggests using Boston lettuce, but any lettuce on hand works great. Kalamata olives can easily replace the nicoise olives.

Feeding Challenges and Strategies from the American Academy of Pediatrics

A **food jag** is when a child insists on eating one and only one food, meal after meal. The AAP suggests that if it is healthy food, there is no harm in accommodating the child's whim as long as the child is hungry at mealtime and that he is offered other foods at each meal prior to the jag food. According to the AAP, after a few days, the child will try other foods and food jags rarely last long enough to cause any harm.

It is also common for children to go on **food strikes**, refusing to eat what's served. If tolerated, food strikes can easily lead to "short-order cook syndrome" As with food jags, the AAP suggests the best way to combat this is to make sure the child comes to the table hungry. Another strategy is to offer fruits and whole grain breads at each meal as children rarely turn these options down. As frustrating as this can be, the AAP says, "Be supportive, set limits, and don't be afraid to let the child go hungry if he or she won't eat what is served."

In the intense media driven environment our kids are growing up in, "the tv habit" is a pervasive problem that can interfere with healthy eating habits. The AAP is clear on this one. TURN OFF THE TV, the association advises. Nothing is better at interfering with family interaction and a child's eating than the incessant pull of the TV.

"The Complainer," a child who whines or complains about the food served, is a grating challenge parents face. The AAP offers a two step response.

First, ask the child to eat other foods offered at the meal. If this has no effect, the second response should be to have the child go to his room or take a time out away from the table until dinner is finished. Stay firm by not allowing him to have dessert or eat until the next planned meal or snack.

The child who will only eat white bread, potatoes, macaroni and milk, a combination known as “**The Great American white food diet**” also presents a challenge. The AAP recommends ignoring it as much as possible since focusing on it will have the adverse affect of reinforcing it, while at the same time continuing to offer a variety of foods from all food groups. As with food jags, the AAP says, the child will eventually move on to other foods. A creative way to deal with this is to use color to your advantage by organizing a meal around a single color, for example, a red meal comprised of red jam on toast, red peppers, and red sauce on pasta.

The final issue the AAP addresses is an unwillingness to try new foods. As with “The Great American white diet,” the AAP believes a low key approach to **fear of new foods** is best. They suggest that parents resist the urge to force children to try a feared food and instead aim for small victories like getting the child to allow the food to be placed on his plate. Repeated exposure is also a good tactic as well as making a show of enjoying the food yourself.

The Mathematics of Orange Vinaigrette

This is an edible learning experience dealing with percentages and proportionality taken from Making Mathematics Delicious. The lesson is geared toward 6th grade students.

Ingredients: 1 teaspoon orange zest , juice of 1 orange, 1 clove garlic - peeled and minced, 3 tablespoons white vinegar, 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, 3/4 cup olive oil, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 8 grinds pepper

Method: Combine all ingredients except the olive

oil in a mixing bowl. add the olive oil slowly, whisking constantly..

Delicious Math: 1. Create a chart that could be used to convert measures given in cups to table-spoons. 2. What proportion of the liquid in this recipe is vinegar? 3. What proportion of the liquid in this recipe is oil? 4. What proportion of the liquid in this recipe is orange juice? 5. Make a drawing to show the proportions of oil, orange juice, and vinegar to the total liquid used in the recipe. **Useful Conversions:** There are 16 tablespoons in 1 cup. The juice of 1 orange equals about 1/2 cup

Baskets

Market Basket offers the following four market baskets, each containing a diverse variety of fresh, healthy, affordable produce:

- **The Regular Basket @ \$17.00**, offers a variety of conventionally grown fruits and vegetables designed to feed 2-4 people for the week
- **The Junior/Senior Basket @ \$9.00**, about half the Regular Basket, it is intended to accommodate smaller households (1-2 people)
- **The Sustainable Basket @ \$28.00**, offers a variety of organically grown fruits, vegetables and herbs designed to feed 2-4 people for the week
- **The Fruit Only Basket @ \$17.00**, offers the weekly selection of fresh fruits.

Greens

In addition to the baskets, you can order the following Milwaukee greenhouse grown greens in 1/4 increments:

- **Pea Shoots @ \$16.00/pound**
- **Sunflower Sprouts @ \$16.00/pound**
- **Zesty Sprouts @ \$16.00/pound**
- **Winter Salad Mix @ 12.00/pound** . For orders 1 lb.. or over, use \$8.00/lb.

• **Spinach @ \$6.00/pound**. For orders 1lb or over, use \$4.50/lb.

Meats

Market Basket also offers a selection of all natural, free-range or pasture-raised meats. Eggs, pork chops, and beef are sold out until further notice.

- **Whole Chickens @ \$16.00/each**
- **Lamb Racks @ \$13.00/pack** (each pack about 1.25 lbs.)

Delivery Dates

Friday, April 24th and Friday, May 8th. Pick up in the gym between 2:45 - 3:15.

Fundraising

Growing Power is a non-profit organization. In return for our coordinating a site, they encourage us to use the baskets as a healthy fundraiser. Please add 10% of the total to the final payment. This 10% is recorded and subtracted from your fundraising commitment. Non-school families may designate a beneficiary.

Contacts

To learn more about Market Basket, visit www.growingpower.org, call Lauralyn at 773-486-6005, Mindy at 386-2813. or email amarketbasket@hotmail.com. Laura Nowicki an Ascension parishioner with a degree in nutrition is also happy to discuss nutritional issues (660-9788).

Recipes

If you have a favorite healthy recipe or nutritional tip to share with the Ascension community, feel free to email it to amarketbasket@hotmail.com.

April/May Market Basket Order

Name _____ Address _____
 Phone _____ Email _____

Please choose from the aforementioned selections, indicating amount where necessary, add fundraising, total and send to school with payment by **Thursday, April 9th**. Checks should be made payable to Ascension School.

April 24th Delivery

Subtotal _____

May 8th Delivery

Subtotal _____

Fundraising (10%) _____

Total _____