Radicchio Zine

Chicory Week

presents the

SAGRA del RADICCHIO

PORTLAND, OREGON • 28 OCTOBER 2022

EVENTS ALL WEEK IN WASHINGTON AND OREGON

Culinary Breeding Network

Food Systems
Washington State University

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This year's events are administered by the Culinary Breeding Network and the Washington State University Food Systems Program with funding from the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program administered through Washington State Department of Agriculture.

What is the Sagra del Radicchio?

Over the past several years, the Sagra del Radicchio has grown from a humble on-farm celebration of radicchio into a weeklong, multi-state extravaganza in Washington and Oregon organized by a group of farmers, researchers, chefs, and general radicchio enthusiasts.

A grant from the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, managed by Washington State University Food Systems and the Culinary Breeding Network, has grown the project further by making it possible for Northwest farmers to travel to Veneto to learn more about how to grow radicchio, as well as bringing Italian farmers and seed breeders to the Northwest to see how American growers are engaging with this wonderful plant. Read on to learn more about how the project has evolved from two of its organizers, Jason Salvo and Lane Selman.

The Radicchio Revolution in the Pacific Northwest
By Jason Salvo, Farmer/Co-Owner of Local Roots Farm

How and why did we start our radicchio adventure? Sometimes it's hard to know where a story begins. Each potential starting point has a precursor that seems equally important for understanding the whole. So perhaps, I'll begin in the present and work backwards. My name is Jason Salvo, and I own Local Roots Farm, a 15-acre diversified vegetable farm located outside of Seattle. I am also one of the founders of Chicory Week — a ragtag group of people who, for a variety of reasons (more on this later), have undertaken a mission to get more people to eat radicchio and other chicories.

My wife Siri and I became fascinated with radicchio after traveling and living in Italy in our early 20s. When we started farming, we grew lots of different varieties of radicchio, learning about its growth habits, the cultivation techniques that suited our region (which we affectionately refer to as "the Veneto of North America"), and how to develop a market for it. It quickly became our signature crop. We tried new varieties, dug deeper into the seed catalogs, and learned more about its history and lore. The more we learned, the more we loved it. The more we loved it, the more it loved us back.

What we found so inspiring about radicchio, beyond the fact that it's delicious, is the fact that it's so strongly associated with a particular part of the world. In America, we have lost many of the regional food traditions that Italy is known for. There's something especially profound about a vegetable or a recipe or a tradition that has been passed down for generations, especially those that are connected to a particular place. In many ways, our love of

radicchio comes from our increasing disconnect from our own cultural traditions. Radicchio represents a return to a way of life before big box stores, before convenience became the paragon, before homogenization started eroding the regional and cultural differences that make life interesting. But radicchio is only an avatar for the world we want to create. There was work to be done inspiring others to join us rebuilding a slower, collaborative, regional, culturally significant food system.

In 2014, inspired by farmers we saw on social media putting on festivals celebrating their favorite crops, Siri and I decided to host a Radicchio Festival on our farm. We invited our restaurant accounts out to the farm to tour our fields, followed by a raw bar style tasting of all the different varieties of chicories we grew. We hosted this modest event on our farm for a few years. Things got interesting when we started working with the inimitable Lane Selman.

Down in Portland, Oregon, Lane was putting on festivals celebrating vegetables, seeds, and plant breeding. She founded the Culinary Breeding Network as a way to connect plant breeders, chefs, and eaters, with the goal of helping promote vegetables that were bred for flavor, rather than being selected for corporate purposes such as shelf life, uniformity, or ship-ability. The events Lane put on were exceptional, the sort attendees left asking themselves how they could be lucky enough to have been there, filled with wonder and a sense of purpose. The Culinary Breeding Network was staging a food revolution, helping to take back control of a small part of our food system.

A few years after we started putting on our Radicchio

Festivals, we asked Lane if she would help us. After all, we are farmers, not event coordinators. The idea percolated for a few years, and in January 2017, Lane approached us about collaborating on the event. At our first meeting was Jackie Cross, restaurateur of Tom Douglas Seattle Kitchen and farmer of Prosser Farm; Brian Campbell and Crystine Goldberg, farmers and owners of Uprising Seeds; Yasuaki Saito, restaurateur of London Plane; and Cassie Woolhiser, radicchio lover and all-around badass. Together, we reimagined our little Radicchio Festival and created the Sagra del Radicchio — a truly magical festival connecting chefs, farmers, and eaters and celebrating all things chicory.

A question we still ask ourselves is "Why?" Why would a group of people work so hard to promote a relatively unknown crop that most people find unpalatably bitter, with a limited market, and not much economic upside? Radicchio is unquestionably stunning, but we aren't motivated by aesthetics, or by putting on a fun party — although those parts of this project certainly don't hurt. We are a diverse group, so what drives each of us is not uniform, but collectively I think it's safe to say that we believe that radicchio, as a crop, represents a return to local and regional food systems, a celebration of food and culture as an antidote to materialism, and a way for humans to connect with each other on a tremendously visceral level.

What's a Sagra?
By Lane Selman, Founder, Culinary Breeding Network

In Italy, a sagra is a festival, usually centered around food. The word comes from the Latin word sacrare, to consecrate, which refers to Italy's centuries-long history of bringing together — consecrating — a community with feasts that celebrate the harvest.

Ancient sagre usually had a religious aspect, and were celebrated in front of temples or churches during the Medieval era and often linked to specific saints or feast days. In addition to elaborate meals, sagre sometimes incorporated historical traditions, rituals, or sporting events, like horse racing. Modern sagre are distinctly more secular, something like a cross between a state fair and a church picnic, but they haven't lost steam; some estimate 20,000 to 30,000 sagre are held in Italy every year, usually between the months of June and September (prime outdoor dining season). They're casual, family-friendly affairs, and many attract a mix of international and domestic tourists. Almost as a rule, they're unpretentious, sometimes to the point of hokey — think fried foods, cheap souvenirs, and dunk tanks.

The first time I encountered the Italian concept of the sagra was the very first time I went to Italy in 2014. It was near the end of an epic day of overstimulation at Slow Food's international Terra Madre gathering in Torino. At a quiet booth along one side of the Salone del Gusto, I came across a small, accordion-folded pamphlet advertising something called the Sagra della Zucca — a pumpkin celebration in Cuneo, Italy.

On the cover was an illustration with an adorable gnome sitting under an archway made of pumpkins in the piazza of a medieval town. The inside listed three days of squash-filled festivities, from pumpkin cooking demonstrations and meals featuring pumpkin in every course, to squash carving expositions and classes for kids about how to make musical instruments out of winter squash. The sensation was one of immediate recognition, like discovering a word for a feeling in another language that your own lacks.

At that time, I was working as an agricultural researcher at Oregon State University, and moonlighting on the side as the market manager for an organic vegetable farm. But the last few years, something else had been taking up more and more of my time. I'd been hosting events — what I called "parties" — to build some connections between the people who breed plants, and the people who eat them.

If the world of vegetables were the land of Oz, plant breeders are the wizard behind the curtain. They have a huge amount of power over the foods we eat, but they're only human. They can't read minds to know, for instance, that chefs like smooth-shouldered peppers because they're easier to chop without waste, or that most winter squash is sold in the days before Thanksgiving. And since most of us don't really know that plant breeders exist, let alone know where to find them, we can't tell them about the qualities we care about most. I wanted to reconnect academic and commercial plant breeders to their communities by creating opportunities for consumers to give feedback about in-progress breeding projects. "Party" just sounds a lot more appealing than "feedback session."

That chance encounter with the brochure at Terra Madre gave me a new word, a new language, for these gatherings: Sagra. Over the past decade, the Culinary Breeding Network has teamed up with all sorts of partners to hold sagre – including Chicory Week and Washington State University to celebrate radicchio at the annual Sagra del Radicchio.

I can't claim that the Culinary Breeding Network's sagre are "authentic" in any particular way. Like any imported cultural artifact, there's something altered in the translation. But that chance encounter with a whimsical squash brochure in Piemonte years ago planted the seed for an idea that I hope helps Americans get more excited about eating regional foods by skipping the preachy eat-local lecture in favor of enjoying delicious foods (and making musical instruments out of vegetables) in community.

What Is Radicchio?

Radicchio is a cultivated form of *Cichorium intybus*, or wild chicory, a plant people have been harvesting and eating for millennia. It's in the same family as dandelions, and, like dandelions, prefers to grow in fields or open, disturbed areas.

C. intybus is native to the Mediterranean, but has become naturalized in much of the world—it thrives as a weed along roadsides from California to China, where you can recognize it by its soft blue flowers. Its bittersweet root is used as a coffee substitute in some traditions, especially Italy and the American South.

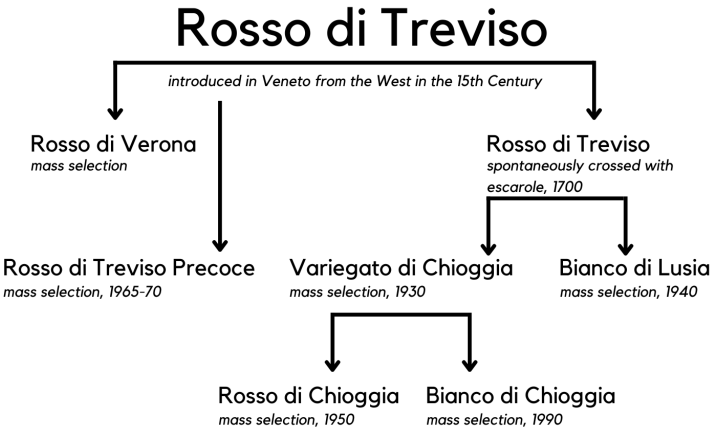
A number of vegetables trace their lineage back to *C. intybus*, including radicchio, frisée, escarole, endive, and "dandelion greens," also known as Catalogna chicory. In the United States, the term "chicory" is often used to refer to all of these vegetables generically. In Italy, cicoria (chicory) refers specifically to dark green, loose-leaved examples of the genus, either cultivated or wild.

Radicchio History

Cichorium intybus has been an important food and medicinal crop for people in the Mediterranean for millennia. Core samples taken of Bronze age villages in Veneto revealed seeds very similar to today's radicchio, and references to chicory in literature date back to at least 79 CE, when Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder describes the digestion-enhancing benefits of the bitter red-veined lettuces of Veneto and credits the Egyptians with breeding improved varieties of this important plant.

In the Middle Ages, monks cultivated *C. intybus* in their gardens. While the exact moment of the appearance of the term "radicchio" is unclear, by the Renaissance, writers were using the term. Pietro Aretino, a Tuscan writer of social commentary and pornographic sonnets, recommended that a friend plant radicchio and nepitella for a steady supply of flavorful salads.

Many of the named varieties of radicchio we know today, like Rosso di Chioggia or Rosso di Treviso, are actually fairly new developments, dating back only to the 20th century in their named forms. Italian growers have historically made their own on-farm selections and saved their own radicchio seeds, although today purchased hybrid seed is common. Radicchio crosses enthusiastically and has a deep well of genetic diversity, leading to a range of possible morphologies. This means there was likely a diversity of different shapes, colors, and sizes of radicchio grown on Italian farms, even before the modern commercial varieties became standardized.



In the United States, radicchio was mostly confined to the home gardens of Italian-Americans until the 1980s, when the rise of packaged salad mixes began to spur demand. Color was its initial selling point, particularly since American consumers generally dislike bitter flavors.

However, farmers found a more willing consumer base among chefs and restaurants. In the ‘80s, commercial growers began to promote the crop more aggressively. One grower, Joe Marchini of Marchini Farms in California’s Central Valley, would drive around San Francisco, giving away boxes of radicchio to restaurant kitchens in an effort to build demand. The rise of “California cuisine,” farm-to-table dining, eating seasonally, and farmers markets gave a boost to radicchio through the 1980s and 1990s. Seed catalogs for American home gardeners also began to offer it more widely, although variety selection was limited.

The round Chioggia/Palla Rossa type was, and continues to be, the primary one grown commercially at a large scale in the United States, although interest in the other forms is growing, particularly among small-scale market growers who want to offer their customers something unique (and beautiful!) all 12 months of the year.

Why Eat Radicchio?

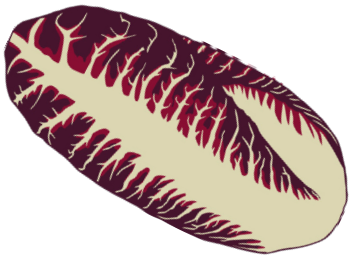
Radicchio is beautiful, versatile, and nutritious. It's also adaptable to a wide variety of climates and growing conditions, and can (and, indeed, should!) be grown during the winters in temperate zones, a time when many other fresh salad vegetables like lettuce or arugula are difficult to cultivate.

Radicchio is tough, which makes it compelling for farmers. It thrives without heavy nutrient inputs, is generally free from pests and diseases, and holds well in the field and in cold storage. When harvested properly, heads of radicchio can last for weeks or even months in cold, humid conditions. That means growers can offer fresh salad greens year-round, an important value proposition at farmers' markets and in distribution.

Radicchio is wonderfully flavorful compared to grocery store lettuce, but sometimes its natural bitterness deters diners. There are many ways to see this bitterness as an asset rather than a liability. Radicchio's rich flavor can stand up to other bold ingredients like nuts, cheese, zingy acids, or sweet fruit. It can also be cooked – which, indeed, is how it is mostly prepared in Italy – and cooking methods that produce char or caramelization like grilling,

high-heat roasting, or long braises can be particularly delicious.

If a radicchio is simply too bitter, try soaking the leaves in ice-cold water for 30 minutes to slightly reduce its bite. Before long, we're confident it will join coffee, beer, chocolate, and amaro in the pantheon of bitter flavors more and more of us are learning to love.



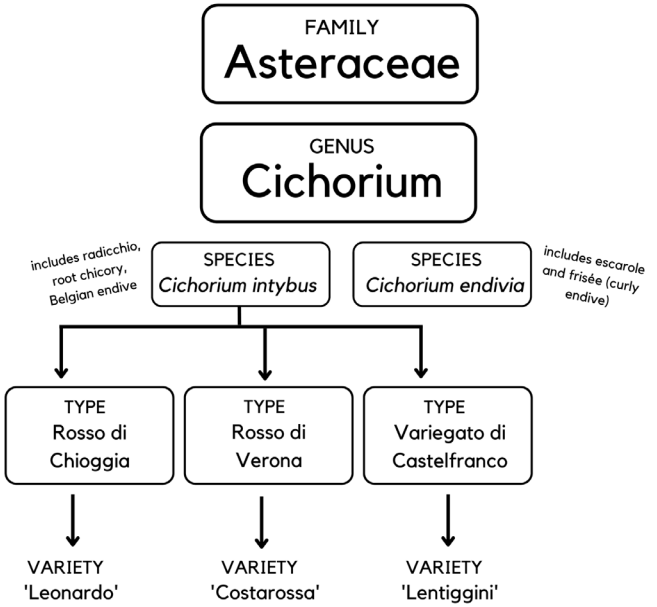
Types of Radicchio

There are many types of commercial radicchio grown in Italy, most of which are protected by an Indicazione Geografica Protetta (IGP). IGP status is granted to produce, wines, cheeses, meats, and other food items that are specific to a particular region. Once granted IGP status, only products grown within the geographic boundaries that meet all other requirements can be marketed using the protected name.

Some of the world's most famous foodstuffs are protected with a geographic indication, from Champagne and Stilton to Prosciutto di Parma and Marsala. These protections are recognized in trade agreements, and are one reason you might see various radicchio marketed with different names in the United States than in Italy.

Radicchio are categorized into types, such as Chioggia, Verona, or Treviso Precoce. These type names can also be longer and more descriptive, including the color and

place where it's from. For example, Rosso di Chioggia means "red of Chioggia," and Rosso di Treviso Tardivo indicates it is a late, red radicchio from Treviso. Within each type there are numerous varieties. Variety names should be enclosed in single quotation marks. For instance, 'Costarossa' is a variety of the Verona type, and 'Leonardo' is a variety of the Chioggia type.



To understand radicchio, it is helpful to understand a little Italian. The most important words to remember include:

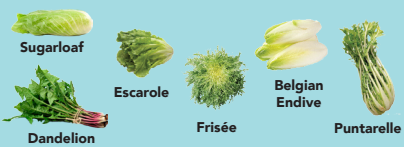
rosso: red
rosa: pink
bianco: white
precoce: early
di: of
tardivo: late
variegato: variegated/speckled

Radicchio of Northern Italy

Various regions across Northern Italy have their own traditional style of radicchio. Seeds were selected and preserved among families and farmers within their region. This map shows the five most common types of radicchio that hail from the Veneto region and the towns after which they are named. The types from the Veneto include Treviso, Verona, Chioggia, Castelfranco and Lusia. Gorizia is a less bitter selection with thicker, crunchier, textured leaves from the most northern coastal region surrounding Trieste.

Other Types of Chicory:

The Cichorium genus is diverse and includes more than just radicchio. It is comprised of two major domesticated species: *Cichorium intybus* (i.e. radicchio, Belgian endive, root chicory) and *Cichorium endivia* (i.e. escarole and frisée). Below are some examples of what this genus has to offer.



This poster was created for the Sagra del Radicchio and Chicory Week, a delicious educational celebration of the *Cichorium* genus.

Rosso di Chioggia

Rosso di Chioggia, also referred to as Palla Rossa (red ball) or simply Chioggia, is the most commonly known and widely grown type of radicchio in the world. It became commercially dominant in the 20th century following World War II in Italy, when its deep red color became desirable in salads. This type of radicchio is the most commonly available at grocery stores in the United States.

Rosso di Chioggia form dense, deep red, ball-shaped heads. The leaf is thin and relatively crunchy, and streaked with white veins. Unlike its cousins from Treviso and Verona, the ribs and veins on Chioggia are more integrated into the leaf, with essentially the same taste and texture. Chioggia are wonderful grilled as well as chopped raw into a salad. They are among the most bitter varieties of radicchio.

Rosso di Treviso Tardivo

Treviso Tardivo is the ancestor of all cultivated varieties of radicchio – the radicchio that started it all, so to speak. Emerging from local selections of wild chicories in the 15th century, Tardivo (which means "late" in Italian) was grown to be eaten in the dead of winter, when other fresh vegetables had long since died.

Treviso Tardivo plants are typically lifted from the fields, root and all, in late fall. The plants are then stored in a root cellar or other dark, damp environment, where growth continues in the absence of photosynthesis. This process is called forcing, or, in Italian, imbianchimento.

While the exterior leaves rot into unappealing slime, the interior of the plant continues to produce fresh, crunchy, deep red leaves punctuated with snow-white midribs.

After several weeks, growers peel away the slimy outer layers to reveal a beautiful bundle of slender, gently curling red and white leaves, with a mild flavor and very crunchy midrib. Visually arresting, Treviso Tardivo is also the mildest and crunchiest of all varieties. Traditional recipes often call for them to be cooked or grilled, but their nutty, mild flavor also makes them excellent in a salad, where their sculptural shape and remarkable color can be best appreciated.

Rosso di Treviso Precoce

Precoce means "early" in Italian, and you can indeed think of Treviso Precoce as the faster younger sibling to Treviso Tardivo. Like Tardivo, Precoce has deep red leaves and a thick white mid-rib, although its leaves are much more regular in shape. Unlike Tardivo, Precoce does not need to be stored in darkness to develop its final form. Treviso Precoce produces dense American football-shaped heads right in the field. It's among the least bitter of the radicchio, and after going through a few frosts, some might even describe the leaves as bittersweet.

Rosso di Verona

Rosso di Verona could perhaps be described as the cutest of all varieties of radicchio. Shaped like a squashed football, heads of Verona are a deep crimson red with a thick, crunchy white midrib. The leaves are somewhat triangular and cup-shaped, perfect for filling with a deli-

cious spread. They tend towards bitterness, although, as with all radicchio, they get sweeter as the weather gets colder in late fall and early winter.

Rosso di Verona was believed to have emerged in the mid to late 18th century in farming areas around the city of Verona. By the early 19th century, there is evidence that farmers began bringing it to market, rather than growing it just for personal use. It was often grown in the field in summer, then harvested with its roots on and stored in root cellars for forcing throughout the winter. Some stories describe farmers burying the stored plants in holes dug into composting manure piles, where the heat triggered the plants to put on new growth while the darkness accentuated its bright colors.

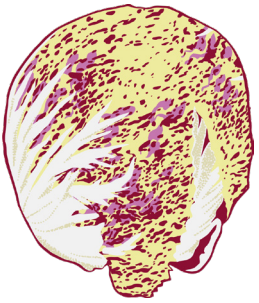
Rosa del Veneto

Rosa means both rose and pink in Italian (much like English), and in the case of this radicchio, the double meaning is intentional. Heads of Rosa del Veneto are a pale pink color and often shaped just like a rose, with an open architecture and leaves that resemble petals. These beautiful radicchio are a relatively recent addition to the pantheon, allegedly discovered in a field of Rosso di Verona and then selected to accentuate their pink color. The hue might be delicate, but Rosa del Veneto has a bracing bitterness. Because the color fades when cooked, they're best served raw; pair their brisk flavor with strong cheeses, nuts, or anchovies.

Rosa di Gorizia

Rosa di Gorizia is grown near Gorizia in northeastern Italy, not far from the Slovenian border, in the province of Friuli-Venezia Giulia. If you were to stick a floral wire into the base of a harvested head of Rosa di Gorizia, tack on a couple of fake leaves, and hand it to your sweetheart, they might never know that you'd given them a vegetable and not a token of your undying affection. Open heads, a deep red color, and leaves that curl back at the tips like petals make Rosa di Gorizia a dead ringer for a perfect red rose. Rosa di Gorizia is relatively petite, with silky leaves and a modest bitterness that makes it lovely in salads.

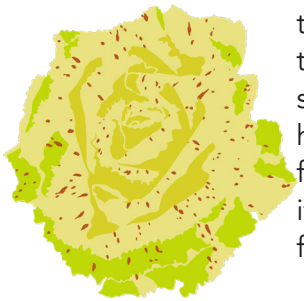
Variegato di Lusia



One of the few varieties without IGP protection, Variegato di Lusia gets its name from the town of Lusia about 40 miles east of Chioggia. Lusia heads are round like a Chioggia, but much less dense. The outer leaves are green, and take on a buttery yellow color towards the heart. All of the leaves – outer and inner – are flecked with red, which becomes more pronounced deeper into the head. The leaf texture is supple and tender, which makes Variegato di Lusia great served raw in a salad, or grilled or sauteed.

Variegato di Castelfranco

If Treviso Tardivo is the king of radicchio, Castelfranco is the queen. Dubbed the "tulip of winter" or "i fiori che si mangia" (the flowers that you eat), Castelfranco is undeniably beautiful. There is a story in the Veneto region of Italy that tells of a noblewoman from Castelfranco at-



tending a wintertime premiere at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan. This stylish woman apparently adorned her gown with a head of Castelfranco, and everyone believed it was an exotic flower imported from far away.

Castelfranco has a tulip-like shape with an open architecture. Sometimes heads are cone-shaped, and growers soak them in warm water and then "fluff" them outwards to better display the lettuce-like shape. Buttery yellow leaves with red flecks are thin yet crisp, and have a mild, almost nutty flavor that makes them shine in salads.

Bianco di Chioggia

This very recent descendant of Variegato di Chioggia (a type similar to Variegato di Lusia) allegedly traces its roots back to the 1990s, when a non-variegated off-type was found in a field of variegated radicchio. A savvy seed breeder saved the seeds, and a new variety was born. Bianco di Chioggia are loose, round balls, with a supple green leaf that fades to pale yellow at the heart. It is among the least bitter of all varieties, and some farmers have been known to eat an entire head raw in the fields while harvesting. It's great grilled as well as eaten raw.

Pan di Zucchero

With a name that literally translates to "sugarloaf," you'd expect that this would be a sweet radicchio – and you'd be correct. Oddly, however, it allegedly gets its name because of its resemblance to a nearby mountain, not its flavor. Hailing from the region around Milan – practically on the other side of the country from Veneto, where

most radicchio is grown – Pan di Zucchero has very tall, very dense, almost cylindrical heads. Thin, crunchy leaves fade from grass-green on the exterior to a soft yellow heart. Because of its dense architecture Pan di Zucchero is a great candidate for the grill, but it also makes a wonderfully mild radicchio salad.

Grumolo

This unusual type of radicchio doesn't make tight heads. Instead, they grow loose, open heads during the summer and fall. But they're not harvested then. During the winter, they die back, or the farmer cuts them back. Then they regrow new leaves in a rosette shape in the early spring. The heads look like flowers, ranging in color from green to deep red and magenta. They're a special treat during a time of year when fresh veggies are hard to come by.

Puntarelle

Puntarelle are not a radicchio, but they are a chicory. Puntarelle are grown and consumed in Central and Southern Italy, with different variations of it found in Lazio, Campagna, and Puglia. The name Puntarelle originally didn't even refer to the plant itself, but to the part of the plant you eat.

The plant is a Catalonian chicory (aka "dandelion" greens) that has been bred to produce a clump of hollow flower shoots emanating from the center of the plant. These bizarre, edible, asparagus-like flower stalks are called Puntarelle. Of all the odd-looking vegetables in the

world, Puntarelle is surely in the top five. It resembles a mad-scientist's experiment of crossing asparagus and fennel.

Italians from the various regions where Puntarelle is grown often feel strongly about there being only one proper way to prepare Puntarelle, but those methods vary by region. It's almost always eaten raw, with the flower stalks cut into thin strips by either knife or a wire mesh device (a tagliapuntarelle) that juliennes the stalks. The ribbons are then made to curl by being soaked in ice water. Those crunchy green curlicues are then dressed with emulsified oil, garlic, lemon juice, and anchovy. Or just anchovies and garlic. Or just oil and salt. Or just oil, salt, and lemon juice.

Growing Radicchio: Radicchiology

by Brian Campbell, Co-Owner of Uprising Seeds

Overview

Radicchio is primarily a fall and winter crop. It is botanically a biennial plant with bolting triggered by long/lengthening days so spring sown plantings rarely produce the desired shape for each type and often end up with a significant amount of bolting. Furthermore, it is the cool temperatures and overnight frosts of fall that bring out the tenderness and sweetness that balances the bitter notes and therefore yield the best quality harvest. Radicchio's ideal conditions are a temperate climate with a gradual transition to the cool days and frosty nights of fall. You can certainly have success in places with rapid harsh transitions, but it's often best to focus on the earlier maturing strains in those places for the best success.

Warmer climates, that don't achieve cool enough temps in the fall and winter, can produce aesthetically attractive crops but they tend to be more bitter as they do not experience the sweetening effects of frosty nights around harvest.

For growers looking to have successions of harvests in the fall, this can be achieved to some extent by multiple staggered plantings (just as you would plant green beans every couple weeks for a continual harvest through the season), but much more commonly in its homeland of the Veneto in Northern Italy, this is achieved with a single, narrowly timed planting of several varieties of the same type with different days to maturity. This is sometimes referred to as "slotting" and, as an example, there are different selections of Verona types that mature anywhere from 55 to 120 days. Using these different slotted varieties you can maintain harvests over a couple months from a single sowing of multiple varieties. Latest maturing varieties often provide the greatest reward in terms of size and quality, but also come with the greatest risk of unfavorable weather and severe cold (not to mention the mole pressure gauntlet!) as harvests move later into the winter. Earlier maturing varieties often offer the greatest flexibility of planting dates as well as reliability of successful harvest.

As radicchio continues to gain popularity here, increasingly, seed with this quality of specificity is becoming available in the US. We are leagues from where we were even 5-10 years ago in terms of the genetics available to North American growers.

Timing and Growing
Timing of planting is the single most important key to success with radicchio, and most often where people go wrong. In our area, radicchio is best sown (usually in flats) from around the summer solstice through the first third of July. Heading types (Chioggia, Verona, Treviso Precoce, Lusia, Rosa) are better sown towards the earlier part of this window. Looser or more cold tolerant types (Gorizia/ Isontina, Castelfranco, Treviso Tardivo, Catalogna, Rosa di Veneto) or the earliest slotted varieties of the heading types, have more flexibility and can be successfully sown later in the window. Grumolo (a late winter/early spring harvested type) can be sown into August. In growing areas characterized by warmer summer nights than the PNW, later sowing is sometimes preferred

Transplant at about four weeks into light to moderately fertilized beds. We will often use the earlier part of the season to grow a cover crop of clover or favas to be turned into the soil in preparation for late-July transplant season. As radicchio becomes a larger and larger part of your garden or farm, a couple nutrients to consider correcting for if deficient, are calcium (especially if you consistently see tip burn in the leaves) as well as boron. We have had success in both three rows (15" spacing) to a 4' bed top and single rows on 24" center systems. It really depends on preference for weed cultivation technique and equipment. For most varieties we use 12" between plants in-row.

While we find the crops to generally be healthy, they are very popular with deer and rabbits, and especially voles who can cause a lot of damage from eating the plants' significant roots. Mildew can be a foliar problem some seasons.

Forcing Types

While "forced" radicchio is considered among the most prized high-end categories of radicchio, it's good to remember, historically this form was a humble food produced to provide leafy greens in the lean winter months. Forcing is the process where plants are dug and removed from the field (usually in the late fall and winter) to grow a secondary-type growth in a more controlled, warmer, and protected environment- often in complete darkness. The primary types this is most commonly done with are Belgian Endive, Treviso Tardivo, and Goriziana/Rosa Isontina. While I am tempted to call these "graduate level" projects, they simply require more planning and attentiveness than they do any special skill or equipment or anything, at least on a small scale.

First some forcing "theory": *Cichorium intybus* (the radicchio family) is as we mentioned biennial and biennial vegetables often employ a couple tricks as strategies to survive the winter in order to produce seed the following year. One is to produce a significant taproot to store energy safely below the ground which it then sends back up to the growing tip in spring when it is safe to produce tender new leaf growth again (think carrots and other root crops), or they very tightly wrap the growing tip above ground with a dense layer of leaves to protect it against the winter elements as it lays vegetatively dormant in the field (think cabbage). Most of the forcing types (Belgian Endive, Treviso Tardivo, Goriziana/Rosa Isontina) go the former route, producing a large taproot. Direct seeding produces a superior root for forcing, but because of the high value of good radicchio seed and due to cultivation preferences it is often impractical to direct seed.

In the late fall, leaf growth slows as the plant begins to enter winter dormancy and the energy becomes concentrated in the roots. When you dig plants and bring them into a protected and warmer environment, you are essentially tricking them into thinking its spring and time to start growing leaves again. It is this very tender growth that can be the pinnacle of radicchio deliciousness.

Belgian Endive

The radicchio coolio crowd gives Belgian no love but honestly, if you gave it a cool Italian sounding name like "golden torpedo of Verona" it'd be all over their Instagram feeds. Personally, I'd happily argue all day that Belgian Endive is just a disenfranchised radicchio, and likely the most commercially successful forced vegetable in North American produce markets. In the field it looks like a wild, overgrown dandelion, but starting in October the roots (which look like giant parsnips) are dug and the leaves trimmed back closely (being careful not to nick off the apical meristem-the growing tip in the very center of the leaves). They are then placed in a dark room, densely packed in bins of circulating water or tubs of damp medium like sand or peat with just the crowns exposed, and over the next 4 weeks the familiar golden "chicons" grow from the trimmed crown. Complete darkness is critical to avoid greening and increased bitterness. We have found success in closets, kitchen cabinets, barns, basements, root cellar... We even grew a commercial crop when we were younger farmers in the crawlspace under the house at a mother-in-law rental in town.

One of the beautiful things about Belgian endive is that the roots are so substantial that once trimmed they can be stored in refrigeration (which slows leaf growth to a

standstill) for months and removed every so often to start a new round of forcing.

Treviso Tardivo
In the field, these grow plants with loose rosettes of very long slender leaves. The forced growth is the famous "squid", deep red slender leaves with succulent white midribs that curl fancifully inward toward the tip to form loose "heads". While the plant will naturally replicate this process if simply left in the field, in our opinion there is no quality comparison between the indoor forced product and that of "field-forced". Forcing yields a larger head of superior quality, especially in terms of tenderness and texture.

We start to look for this secondary growth and deep red coloration in the centers of the plants in the field to indicate that the crop is ready to dig. When ready, we lift plants and shake off as much dirt as possible in the field and stack on a trailer with the leaves still attached. Once plants are removed from the fields, we spray off the roots, pull off only the outermost leaves that are already showing decay, and pack them tightly in containers where the roots will be submerged in water.
On a small scale we have done this by packing them in shallow bins, trimming the roots a little if necessary to make sure the crowns are all at a similar height, and filling the container to a couple inches below the tops of the roots. If you have a drain plug, that can be helpful for changing the water (I recommend draining and refilling with fresh water once or twice per week).

On a larger scale, plants can be packed in plastic milk type crates or wire totes and placed in a shallow lagoon

of water. We have made a simple version of this using a pond liner or water impermeable tarp set in a shallow wood frame and filled with water. More professional systems often use large metal or concrete basins with circulating water. Again, it's good to drain or pump out and refresh the water a couple times during the growing cycle. Darkness during this phase is helpful but not necessary as if the plants are packed in tightly, the cores still blanch nicely. We have set up lagoons in our winter greenhouse under a shade cloth. A garage or barn can work very nicely. 45-55F/7-12C is a good temperature range to shoot for, and expect that there will invariably be some slime and decay in the outer leaves at harvest time to clean off.

Good air circulation is fairly important to reduce this but for me, part of the charm of the harvest is the emergence of a gloriously pristine core from an exterior of rot and slime. Traditionally about 2" of root is peeled and left attached to the head. It's not just for looks - it's delicious (and helps keep the head together when halved or quartered and roasted).

Gorizia/Isontina

This type is the famous "Rose of Gorizia" producing stunning rosettes usually in tones of pink to deep burgundy, though strains of yellow ("Canarino") and variegated also exist. We generally don't start forcing Gorizia/Isontina types until December. At this point the plants look quite a bit less vigorous in the field, the outer leaves start to decay a bit, and the energy is very much focused in the center of the rosette. At this point we will lift plants, shake off the roots, and pull off all but the very small center-most leaves.

Gorizia must be forced in darkness. It can be forced with the roots in a medium of sand mixed with peat or coir, damp wood shavings, or even packed in totes in water like Treviso. Air circulation is helpful so closing them in a bin with a lid on it to achieve darkness isn't the best strategy. Root cellars, dark closets, dark basements are all great places. 60F or under is best.

Recipes

There are infinite ways to enjoy radicchio, but the following are a combination of classic preparations and new favorites.

Various types of radicchio are more suited to certain treatments than others. Some of the following recipes call simply for “red radicchio.” This can be for several reasons: Chioggia, Verona, and Treviso Precoce types are more bitter, they hold up to cooking nicely due to their structure, and their color is vivid and beautiful.

Other recipes call for variegated radicchio, like Castelfranco or Lusia. These are more commonly called for in raw applications where their spectacular freckles and bright green hues can be appreciated. When cooked, they tend to turn an unpleasant shade of beige. But mostly, whatever radicchio you have on hand is fine - and perhaps you’ll end up with favorites to use in each recipe that are all your own.

Insalata Nostrana

Serves six to eight

This is the classic salad that introduced (and then hooked) at least a decade's worth of Portlanders to radicchio. It was created by chef Cathy Whims of Nostrana and is still one of our favorites. It is wonderful with the Rosso di Verona, but any radicchio will do. Try it as a bed for a roast chicken.

2 large heads of radicchio, like Rosso di Verona or Treviso Precoce
3 cups cubed focaccia bread or crusty country bread
4 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon chopped fresh sage
1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
2 cloves garlic
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons white wine
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
4 oil-packed anchovy fillets, finely chopped
2 egg yolks
1 cup extra virgin olive oil
black pepper
½ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Break apart radicchio into 1 ½-inch pieces and soak in ice cold water for at least 30 minutes, but up to 2 hours.

Meanwhile, prepare the croutons and dressing. Baker the bread cubes in a 375°F oven on a large baking sheet until toasted; about 10 to 15 minutes. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan, add the sage and rosemary, and cook until fragrant. Turn off the heat, add the toasted bread cubes and toss well. Let them cool.

Add the garlic, vinegar, wine, mayonnaise, anchovies, egg yolks, olive oil, and pepper to a food processor or blender and process until emulsified. You could also do this in a mortar & pestle with a little more time and elbow grease. Season to taste.
When you're ready to serve, drain the radicchio and dry well in a salad spinner. Place the leaves in a large salad bowl and toss to coat with the dressing. Add the croutons and a generous shower of Parmigiano-Reggiano.

Black Futsu Salad with Radicchio

Serves four to six

This recipe comes from Timothy Wastell in Portland, OR. It was created for the Eat Winter Squash project.

2 to 3 small heads of Treviso Precoce (or other red radicchio), soaked
1 small black Futsu squash, ripe
¾ teaspoon sea salt
1 shallot, finely chopped
1/3 cup fresh squeezed lemon juice
4 anchovy filets, packed in olive oil
1 clove garlic, minced
½ cup olive oil
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
2/3 cup grated Pecorino cheese

Prepare the vegetables by soaking the Treviso in ice cold water for about 30 minutes. For the squash, cut in half, lengthwise and scoop out the seeds. Cut each half into two or three wedges and peel away all skin from the exterior. Very carefully, slice the wedges very thinly (think the thickness of 4 to 5 sheets of notebook paper stacked). Season with ½ teaspoon salt and set aside.

Prepare the dressing by combining the minced shallot and lemon juice in a bowl. Add the remaining salt and set aside. Finely chop the anchovy filets and garlic until a paste forms, and then add the reserved lemon mixture. Drizzle in the olive oil and whisk until emulsified. Taste and adjust the seasonings with salt & pepper. This dressing can be prepared up to a week ahead and stored in an airtight container in the fridge.

Compose the salad by draining the Treviso thoroughly and cutting it into thin strips. Gently squeeze the sliced squash to remove excess moisture and toss with the Treviso. Liberally dress with the anchovy citronette and transfer to a serving dish. Grate Pecorino over the top and finish with more cracked pepper.

Radicchio Salad with Apple & Roasted Fennel

Serves four to six

This recipe comes from our friends at Wellspent Market in Portland, Oregon.

1 head red radicchio, chopped
1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced
1/4 cup walnuts, chopped
1 apple, thinly sliced
1 pomegranate or 1/2 cup pomegranate seeds
1 Tablespoon of Champagne vinegar (or other light vinegar)
1 Tablespoon pomegranate syrup
3 Tablespoons EVOO
flaky salt, to taste

Soak the radicchio in a bowl of ice water for 30 minutes.

Roast the fennel with olive oil and salt at 350F, for about 20 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove from the oven and let cool.

Toast the walnuts in the oven with the fennel for about 5 minutes. Let cool.

Stir together vinegar and pomegranate molasses, then add olive oil and mix well. Combine radicchio, fennel, apple, walnuts, and pomegranate seeds. Add the dressing, toss, and salt to taste.

Puntarelle alla Romana

Serves four to six

Puntarelle alla Romana is a classic Roman dish using puntarelle, the shoots of a type of chicory called Catalogna chicory. Puntarelle is crunchy and has a bitter flavour. It is prepared using the traditional tool, called a tagliapuntarelle to shred the Puntarelle into very thin slices, then seasoned with garlic, anchovies and vinegar.

One head of Puntarelle
5 anchovy fillets
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
2 cloves of garlic
5 tablespoons olive oil
Salt & freshly ground pepper to taste
Squeeze of fresh lemon juice (optional)

Prepare the Puntarelle by filling a large bowl with ice-cold water and having it on hand. Pull the hollow bulbs from the head of Puntarelle and pull away the leaves. If available use a tagliapuntarelle to shred the puntarelle. Otherwise, cut each bulb lengthwise into thin slices until you have a pile of thin strips. Now drop these into the ice water and let them soak for about an hour to become crisp and beautifully curly-cue.
While the Puntarelle is soaking, make the dressing. First cut the anchovies into small pieces and mix with the vinegar to let rest and soak up flavor.

Using a mortar and pestle, pound the garlic with a pinch of salt until it makes a paste. Mash the anchovies and vinegar into the garlic paste until well incorporated. Now drizzle in the olive oil slowly to emulsify the dressing. Taste and adjust with salt & pepper, and possibly a squeeze of lemon if needed. Let the dressing sit for a few minutes to let the flavors incorporate.

Drain the Puntarelle and dry the leaves using a salad spinner. Alternatively, you can dry the leaves by rolling in a towel and squeezing gently.
Toss the curly Puntarelle leaves in the dressing and enjoy fresh!

Radicchio Risotto
Serves four to six
Adapted from Martha Rose Shulman from the New York Times.

2 heads red radicchio (quartered cored and cut crosswise in thin slivers)
2 quarts chicken stock
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 onion, minced
1 ½ cups risotto rice, such as arborio or carnaroli
2 garlic cloves, minced
Freshly ground pepper to taste
½ cup dry white wine
¼ cup Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons parsley

Start by preparing an ice bath for the radicchio. Cut each head in half and core them. Let the radicchio soak in the ice water for about a half hour.

In the meantime, put your stock in a saucepan and bring it to a simmer over low heat. Season it to taste, and keep a ladle handy because you're going to need it when you start the risotto process.

Heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onions and let them cook slowly. Add a pinch of salt and keep stirring until they're translucent, but not brown. Add the rice and garlic and stir until the rice crackles and the grains separate. Add the wine and stir until it absorbs.

Now begin adding the simmering stock, a ladleful at a time. Each time you add stock, it should just cover the rice and be slightly creamy and bubbly. Stir often to prevent sticking to the bottom and let cook until the liquid is almost completely absorbed, but don't wait so long that the rice gets dry. Drain radicchio and add it to the rice; add another ladleful or two of stock and stir until almost dry, then repeat until the stock is nearly gone and the rice is tender, creamy, and flavorful. Add a bit more hot liquid (stock or hot water, if you run out of stock) and all the Parmesan. Stir well and season to taste. Before serving, garnish with fresh parsley.

Sausage Radicchio Soup

Serves four to six

We love Italian Wedding Soup, but who has the time? This riff on it originally comes from Martha Stewart, but we've made it chock full of chicory. It comes together quickly for a satisfying first course, or even makes a great busy weeknight meal.

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 pound bulk Italian sausage
3 stalks celery, sliced
1 onion, diced
½ cup dried lentils
2 quarts chicken broth
1 head radicchio, such as Castelfranco or Lusia, torn into pieces
Salt & pepper to taste
Hunk of Parmigiano-Reggiano for grating
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar

In a large pot, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the sausage and cook, stirring often to break apart, until golden brown on the edges. Add the celery and onion and cook until soft. Add the lentils and broth and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook until lentils and vegetables are tender, about 25 minutes.

Add the radicchio and season with salt & pepper. Cover and keep simmering until the radicchio wilts, about 5 to 10 minutes.

Serve hot with a hearty grating of Parmigiano-Reggiano on top.

Warm Radicchio, Cauliflower, and Apple Salad

Serves four

From Lauren Feldman, owner of Vif & Petit Soif in Seattle, WA, and a long-time radicchio supporter.

1 head red radicchio, cut into wedges
1 large head cauliflower
1 - 2 apples (with acidity and firm flesh for baking)
30 g minced shallot
100 g apple cider vinegar
15 g Dijon or coarse mustard
20 g honey
120 g EVOO
butter & olive oil, for roasting
flaky salt & black pepper to taste
dill
bread crumbs

Preheat oven to 450°. Slice cauliflower vertically in 1" thick slices through the core so that it stays in large pieces. Oil a sheet pan and sprinkle with some sea salt. Lay down the cauliflower, drizzle with some more olive oil and sprinkle with some more salt. Roast in the hot oven for 20 or so minutes. The cauliflower should be cooked through but not mushy and should have some nice caramelization.

While the cauliflower is roasting, make the vinaigrette. Let shallots macerate with the vinegar and salt for 10 minutes. I like to do it in a mason jar so that I can shake the dressing vigorously. Then add mustard, honey, EVOO, and some black pepper. Shake to blend and taste.

Char the radicchio. Remove loose outer leaves (keep them for a future salad!). Halve the radicchio through the core. Cut each half in 4 to 6 wedges, through the core so that they somewhat stay together in one piece. Drizzle olive oil on the radicchio and sprinkle with some salt. Char on a hot cast iron skillet until lightly blackened. Flip over and do the other side. Transfer to a cooling rack.

Peel and slice apple into wedges, toss in a little butter or better

yet, brown butter, and roast in the hot oven until cooked through-not too mushy!!

Rough chop the cauliflower and radicchio. Toss with the apples and some of the vinaigrette. Sprinkle with toasted bread crumbs (I used rye), dill and finishing salt. Delicious warm or at room temperature!

Focaccia with Radicchio & Figs

Makes 2 loaves

This simple bread can be started first thing in the morning, and with very little effort, be ready for the dinner table. For most of the day it lazily lounges about the kitchen developing flavor while you're off toiling. This forgiving dough can even be tucked away in the fridge for up to a day. If you keep a sourdough starter, use it instead of instant yeast for rounder, more complex flavor. If not, no worries. This bread develops slowly and has time to come into its own. This recipe is by Adrian from Thousand Bites of Bread.

300 grams stone ground sifted flour or all purpose (2 ½ cups)
250 grams water (about 1 cup)
2.5 grams instant yeast (½ teaspoon) or 15 grams sourdough starter
10 grams sea salt
1 head of red radicchio, shredded
6 fresh figs, sliced
1 sprig rosemary, chopped
120 milliliters olive oil (½ cup)
Flake salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Early in the morning, mix flour, water, and yeast (or sourdough starter) in a medium bowl. Using your hands, gently mix it around until you don't feel any dry flour clinging to the bowl. Flours vary in how much hydration they can handle. This dough is best when made pretty wet and supple. You want it to be somewhere between a batter and a loose dough. If it's stiff at all, add another 50 grams of water. Cover with a kitchen towel and let rest at room temperature for 15-30 minutes.

After the dough has rested, add the salt and mix around with your hands again until it's well incorporated. Let rest for another 15-30 minutes.

For the next hour or so, you're going to stretch and fold the dough every so often to help give it structure and develop the gluten. I usually do this every 30 minutes for up to two hours, but if you have to get somewhere, don't fret over it. Every 30 minutes,

moisten your hands with a little water and loosen the dough from the sides of the bowl by reaching a hand under the mass of dough and stretching it up to fold over itself. Turn the bowl a bit and do it again about 8 times until you've gone all the way around the bowl. Cover with a kitchen towel and let rest. After you've done this about 3 times with 20-30 minute rests in between, cover with a towel and let it rest at room temperature for 6-8 hours.

If you don't have time to sit around for all this folding, no worries. Just do it as often as you can and leave it be the rest of the time. It will turn out just fine as a no-knead process, as well.

When you're ready to bake, preheat the oven to 450°F. Using two 9-inch cake pans or pie plates. Using ¼ cup of oil, divide it among both pans to coat the bottom of each. It will be more than typically used to grease a pan, and will pool up a bit and smell for a moment like the Italian countryside. With the rest of the oil, mix the radicchio, figs and rosemary and toss to coat with the remaining oil.

Turn the dough onto a lightly floured surface and cut into two equal portions. Gently shape each portion into a round by folding in the corners and lightly pressing out in the bulging parts. Plop each round of dough, fold side up, into a prepared pan. This will coat the top with olive oil. Turn the dough over and press gently from the middle to the edges to reshape. It's okay if the dough doesn't come all the way to the edges. Top with the radicchio mixture and sprinkle with a generous pinch of flake salt.

Bake at 450°F for 25 minutes until the top is golden brown and the edges are sizzling with olive oil. Cool for about an hour before slicing if you can help it. These will stay fresh at room temperature for a day or two. They also freeze wonderfully. Simply let them thaw and crisp them up in a 350°F oven for about 10 minutes. Savor with delight and gratitude.

Boozy Winter Vegetable Cake

Serves 10 to 12

A cherished recipe by Adrian Hale. Try this twist on a classic carrot cake that uses parsnips and radicchio to give it heft. This is a simple bundt cake that can be served either for breakfast or with afternoon tea, or even after a weeknight dinner. It gets better with age.

For the cake:
340 grams butter (3 sticks)
250 grams parsnips, peeled and cut into chunks (about ½ pound)
250 grams radicchio, cored and shredded (about ¼ to ½ pound)
320 grams stone ground sifted flour or unbleached all-purpose flour (2 ½ cups)
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon freshly ground nutmeg
250 grams sugar (1 ¼ cups)
100 grams light brown sugar (½ cup)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ cup rum or bourbon
4 large eggs
107 grams walnuts (or your favorite nut), toasted and coarsely chopped (1 cup)

DAL FORNO

Heat the oven to 350°F.

First things first, put the butter into a large skillet and turn the heat to high. You're about to brown the butter, and there is no more luxurious act in the kitchen than to make browned butter. It's like a quick and dirty love affair that leaves you lingering in a sensual afterglow, but wanting more. So much more. It's best to use a stainless steel pan for this act, lest you let things go a little too far. When that happens, the butter will be burned and spent, and the love affair is over. Don't take too much time here. Let the butter do its thing, but as soon as it reaches perfection, pull it off the heat into a bowl to rest and catch its breath.

Prepare your pan. Have a nonstick 15-cup bundt pan or a 10x5 loaf pan at the ready. If you're feeling a little uneasy about the release of this cake, use protection by buttering and flouring for good measure.

For the parsnips, you have a choice. If you feel like hauling out the food processor, this will make quick and easy work of them. Simply zip them through with a regular blade until they're finely chopped, but not yet a paste. If you'd rather leave the food processor in the cabinet (or don't own one), take a little time to grate the parsnips or chop them finely by hand. Either way, they'll make a fine, moist cake with sweet earthen undernotes that can only be obtained from being plucked out of the ground in late winter or early spring. Mix them with the shredded radicchio and set aside.

In a small bowl, combine the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and nutmeg. In another larger bowl, whisk the sugar, brown sugar, vanilla, rum (or bourbon), and eggs until pale and frothy. Now you're ready to unite all these ingredients into a spicy, spirited cake that could rival any prohibition era confection. Emulsify the egg mixture with the brown butter by gradually adding the butter to the eggs while constantly whisking. When this looks velvety and smooth, stir in the flour mixture just until combined and no lumps remain. Add the walnuts and grated vegetable mixture. Stir to combine.

Scoop your batter into the prepared pan and bake for 1 hour and 10 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through cooking time.

Remove from the oven and let the cake cool in the pan on a wire rack for about 20 minutes. Invert the pan to release the cake and let cool completely.

I like this cake best when served with a smudge of sweetened cream cheese. Or better yet, mascarpone whipped with a little honey.

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Culinary Breeding Network

Chicory Week 2022