

Cooking with the Hokies the Celebration of Agriculture, Food and Culture

April 1, 2022

Group 1- 2:30 – 3:30 pm; Group 2 – 3:45 – 4:45 pm

“Food is not just about fueling the body. It’s about giving and taking and sharing and nurturing and communicating. When you share food with someone, especially with people who are unlike you culturally, you gain a greater understanding of them and yourself. It’s not just a meal. It’s communion with your fellow citizens stuck together on this big ball of dust floating in the universe”. Anthony Bourdain. Food and culture are highly integrated in every global society. Food is the central core of every celebration: birth, wedding, major calendar events (New Year), and religious holidays. Thus, in the food lab, all recipes across the grain and horticultural crops discussed in class will be used to make festival foods (foods prepared during major holidays and celebrations).

April 1, students from the World Crops: Food and Culture class will prepare and share several dishes that connect food and culture. Here are the dishes we are preparing for the visiting Hokies: The crops: Wheat, Corn, Rice and Lentils.

The crop/grain: Wheat. Wheat is one of the most important crops in the world. Wheat has accompanied humans since remote times (as far back as 3000 to 4000 BC) in their evolution and development, evolving itself (in part by nature and in part by manipulation) from its primitive form (emmer wheat) into the presently cultivated species.

The celebration: Shabbat

The Recipe: Challah

Jewish Shabbat bread. A loaf of white leavened bread, typically plaited in form, and baked to celebrate the Jewish Sabbath. Traditionally, there should be two loaves, but we will be making only one/food lab. (Adapted by Ben from the inimitable Paul Hollywood’s seminal book “How to Bake” to insure a bit more authenticity to the challah I remember eating at my aunt’s house on Shabbat).

Ingredients

- 4 to 4½ cups bread flour
- 2 tsp salt
- ¼ cup powdered sugar
- 1 packet instant yeast
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 2 medium eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup lukewarm water
- 1 medium egg beaten for glazing
- Sesame seeds



Preparation

- In a large bowl, sprinkle yeast over barely warm water. Beat in sugar, oil, 2 eggs, and salt. Add the flour one cup at a time, beating after each addition, graduating to kneading with hands as dough thickens. Knead until smooth and elastic and no longer sticky, adding flour as needed and form into ball.
- Put it into a lightly oiled large bowl, cover with cling film and leave to rise until at least doubled in size (~1.5 to 2 hours).
- Line a baking tray with parchment paper
- Tip the dough onto a lightly floured workbench and fold it inwards repeatedly to knock back the dough. Divide into 3 equal pieces and roll each piece into a sausage roughly 9 inches in length. Press the three pieces together at one end, and braid all the way down. Press the ends to bind the strands, and tuck them under.
- Lift the dough lightly onto the baking tray. Put inside a plastic bag and leave to prove for ~20 mins or it springs back quickly if you prod it.
- Preheat oven to 375 F
- Brush with the remaining egg and sprinkle liberally with sesame seeds. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until it sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom. Keep an eye on it because the sugar and egg will cause it to brown quickly.

The crop: Corn

Corn Facts:

1. In many regions of the world, corn is still of the utmost importance as a staple food for large parts of the population. In Central and South America, it is used to make almost all of the cereal products that are made from wheat or rye elsewhere.
2. **The world has over 50, 000 edible plants. Just three of them, rice, maize and wheat, provide 60 percent of the world's food energy intake.**

Corn and the indigenous people: Corn has been considered a sacred plant and important food to many Indigenous People for more than 3,000 years. The first woman was given corn, a symbol of fertility. Along with corn, the Indigenous People also developed and introduced the concept of symbiotic planting, known as the Three Sisters – corn, beans and squash. The tall stalks of corn supported the bean vines and shielded the squash at the base of the plant, while also acting as ground cover, giving protection and support to the roots.

The festival: Celebrating Indigenous Peoples Day

What is Indigenous Peoples' Day? Typically, on the second Monday of October, Indigenous Peoples' Day recognizes the Indigenous communities that have lived in the United States for thousands of years.

The Recipe: Tomato and Corn Crostata

Prep Time 20 mins; Cook Time 45 mins; Total Time 1 hr 5 mins; Servings: 6 to 8

Ingredients

- 1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup fine cornmeal
- 1 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 6 Tablespoons unsalted butter in 1/4" cubes
- 3 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 cup ice water
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 2 leeks white and pale green parts only, thinly sliced (or white onion)
- 2 cloves garlic finely chopped
- 1 ear of corn kernels removed
- 1/2 cup fresh basil coarsely chopped
- 1-pound ripe tomatoes
- 1/2 cup shredded white cheddar cheese
- 1 egg yolk mixed with 1 teaspoon of milk or cream



Preparation

1. In a large bowl, mix together flour, cornmeal, and salt. Use pastry cutter to mix in butter until it's evenly distributed and a coarse crumb form. Add the olive oil and ice water little by little until the mixture comes together. Gather the dough with your hands, form a ball, flatten into a disk, wrap with plastic and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan. Cook the leeks for 5-7 minutes until soft and lightly browned. Stir in the garlic and corn and continue to cook for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat, stir in basil and season to taste with salt and pepper.
3. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Roll out the dough on a floured sheet of parchment paper to one 15-inch round or two smaller rounds. Spread the vegetable mixture into the middle of the dough leaving a 2-inch border along the sides. Sprinkle evenly with cheese. Deal out the tomato slices into a single layer then season with salt and pepper. Fold over the edges of the dough, pleating and pinching as you go. Brush the dough with egg mixture.
4. Lift the parchment onto the baking sheet and bake for 35 to 45 minutes until the crust is golden brown. When done, lift the parchment onto a cooling rack and cool for at least 10 minutes before slicing and serving with a garnish of basil. Can be enjoyed hot or at room temperature. Return to the oven to reheat any leftovers.

The crop: Rice

The story of rice in Lowcountry – Red rice

Rice is a staple food in the South. This edible starchy grain is a great side dish that pairs well with many of our favorites; beans, cabbage, tomatoes, and gravy. Rice, which is oftentimes considered a necessary food item, was made into a fulfilling dish by enslaved African Americans. In the Lowcountry history, rice was served with meats and shellfish and used to make breads, biscuits, flour, puddings and cakes. In addition, many Lowcountry African Americans grew up eating rice more than once a day. Sometimes for breakfast or lunch, and dinner “Carolina Gold” rice was served. These traditions of rice still continue and have become more popular in a dish called red rice.

3.The recipe – red rice

Servings = 4, prep = 20 minutes; cooking time = 25 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 medium onion, brown, finely diced
- 1/2 lb. sausage, smoky, hot sliced
- 1 medium bell peppers (capsicums), red finely diced
- 1 tsp salt, ground sea
- 1 tsp black pepper, ground
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 cup tomatoes, canned, chopped or passata
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 2/3 cup rice pre-cooked



Instructions

1. Pre-heat oven to 350 f (180 c).
2. In a non-stick pan, heat the olive oil over a medium heat. Add the garlic and onion and saute for 2 minutes. Add the sausage and saute for a further 5 minutes.
3. Then add the salt, pepper, paprika, chopped tomatoes and tomato paste. Combine well and when it comes to the boil, simmer for 5 minutes. Then add the pre-cooked rice to the pan stirring until well combined.
4. Transfer the mixture to a baking dish and bake, covered for 25 minutes. Check half-way through to ensure the red rice is not drying out and if so add a little extra chopped tomato or water.

The Crop: Lentil

The cool season food legume crops, listed in order of U.S. production are **pea, lentil, chickpea,** and **faba bean or fava bean**. Members of the Fabaceae family, these legumes are distinguished by providing delicious and nutritious (high quality protein, mineral nutrients, vitamins and fiber) grains to the diet. These crops serve as an important part of sustainable agricultural systems by providing biologically fixed nitrogen and serving as a key rotation crop. India is the leading producer and consumer of lentils and chickpea. **Everyone needs a daily dose of LENTILS!**

The recipe: Samosa Pastry (with lentils) – (Africa, Middle –East, Asia) Street food in India and several African countries.



Ingredients

For the Pastry: Use Wonton Wrap.

Filling

- ½ cup yellow or red onions (finely chopped)
- 1 lb. of dry lentils (washed)
- ½ tsp. ground ginger or minced ginger
- ½ tsp. garlic powder or 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1-2 TSP oil for the filling, you can use olive oil for the filling.
- A pinch of cardamom, cumin, white pepper (all optional but good to add)
- Green pepper (optional); Salt to taste
- 2-3 cups water or more to cook the lentils

Direction:

1. Saute onion, garlic, and ginger with the oil for 5-10 minutes. Add the rest of the ingredients and cook for 5-10 more minutes. Wash and add the lentils. Reduce heat and cook till all soft and all the water simmers away, stir often to prevent mixtures from sticking, especially during final stages. mixture simmer uncovered. Correct flavor for spices and salt balance. Let the mixture cool slightly before stuffing.
2. Cut the wonton wrap into half and make a cone. Holding the cone in one hand, fill it with 1½ to 2 tsps. of the Samosa filling. Moisten and press the top edge of the cone to close. Pour 3 cups of the vegetable oil in a heavy skillet and heat until oil sputters. Fry the Samosa, several at a time, until golden brown on both sides. Place the golden brown Samosa on thick paper towels to rid excessive oil. Serve hot or cold with or without chutney. Serving 6-8.