

Recipes: Going beyond savoury dishes with garlic

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*Fermented Tea Garlic Salad has a unique combination of flavours that will have you looking at garlic and tea in a different way, says certified tea sommelier Carol Mark. She plans to serve the salad at the Toronto Garlic Festival on Sept. 18, 2016. THE CANADIAN PRESS/HO-Carol Mark, Empower T/Toronto Garlic Festival, *MANDATORY CREDIT**

TORONTO — For a burst of flavour and seasoning, nothing beats garlic, a fundamental ingredient in many savoury dishes. But creative cooks are finding other uses for the "stinking rose," which is now in season. People might be surprised to bite into ice cream, chocolate, jams and jellies and detect garlic.

Carol Mark, a certified tea sommelier and cookbook author, recently created a sweet treat combining raspberries and white chocolate ganache surrounded by a pool of darker chocolate. The secret ingredient was garlic.

"It actually heightened the flavour of the raspberry, which is a really nice complement with the darker chocolate. It made it kind of a different sweetness on the tongue," she says.

Mark grew up in Toronto's downtown Chinatown where fresh garlic was common in food.

"My mother used to grow watercress in the backyard right in downtown Toronto. We would use whatever was fresh and garlic was one of those ingredients."

She's grown her own in containers on her condo's terrace. "I love garlic so much and was tired of getting bad garlic in the supermarket that was old, that was dry, and it doesn't add anything to a dish."

Mark, a former nurse, became intrigued by the use of garlic and tea as a healing agent when she was recovering from cancer. She has reinterpreted a salad featuring fermented tea and garlic, which she plans to serve to attendees at the Toronto Garlic Festival.

The Sept. 18 ode to garlic will also give enthusiasts a chance to expand their knowledge beyond the palate. Various speakers will extol its uses, including whether it may be harvested one day on the red planet. Michael Dixon, a University of Guelph professor, will lead a discussion on Canada's contribution to the international effort to grow food for long-term space travel.

Along with sampling shots of fresh garlic and taking in a stinkiest breath contest, visitors can try garlic flavoured savoury ribs, fries, fish and mac 'n' cheese, along with jellies and pesto, and jams, relish and dips.

Another garlic fest is slated for this weekend in the town of Stratford, Ont., where chefs and farmers will be on hand to celebrate garlic.

Mark shares a tip for those who find garlic causes indigestion: Remove the little piece of hard stem found in the centre of the clove when it's cut in half lengthwise.

Here are some recipes with uncommon uses of garlic:

FERMENTED TEA GARLIC SALAD

This salad's unique combination of flavours will have you looking at garlic and tea in a different way, says Mark, author of e-cookbook "The Love of Tea."

"It's like the first time you had pad Thai," says the tea sommelier. "You taste it and you're not sure if you like it, but the mouth explosion is like 'wow' — all these wonderful things going on in your mouth and your taste buds. And the tea salad is the same way."

"Lahpet" is Burmese for fermented or pickled green tea. It is an important national dish, since Myanmar is one of few countries where tea is eaten as well as drunk. Historically, lahpet has been used as a symbolic peace offering between warring parties. In contemporary society, it is a popular dish for both ceremonies and street food alike.

The salad can be served as a main or side dish.

Part 1: Fermented Tea Leaves

- 125 ml (1/2 cup) white vinegar
- 20 g (8 tsp) high-quality organic loose-leaf green tea
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) water
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) fish sauce (vegan option: substitute soy and miso)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) lemon juice
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) vegetable oil
- 60 ml (4 tbsp) sesame oil

Bring white vinegar, green tea leaves and water to a boil for 20 minutes. Turn off heat and let cool for 30 minutes. Drain liquid completely. In a bowl, combine tea leaves with fish sauce, garlic, lemon juice, vegetable oil and sesame oil. Mash with hand blender (bruising the tea leaves slightly helps start the fermentation process). Store mixture in a bottle and keep in refrigerator for at least 2 days, allowing tea leaves to ferment.

Part 2: Salad

- 1 l (4 cups) Napa cabbage or romaine lettuce, chopped
- 2 to 3 stalks green onions, chopped
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) fried yellow chick peas (available at South Asian supermarkets)
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) toasted sesame seeds
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) roasted peanuts
- 2 cloves fried garlic, minced
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) diced tomatoes
- 1/2 of fermented tea mixture (add more to taste)

Arrange all ingredients on a large platter. Mix immediately before serving. Serve with additional fresh garlic, lemon or lime wedges and flaked chilies on the side.

Makes 6 servings.

Source: Carol Mark, <http://www.drinkempower.com>.

GARLIC GRAPEFRUIT GRANITA WITH SPARKLING WINE

- 350 ml (1 1/2 cups) sweet sparkling wine (such as Spumante Bambino)

250 ml (1 cup) white granulated sugar
15 ml (1 tbsp) light corn syrup
5 ml (1 tsp) lemon and/or grapefruit zest
2 medium cloves fresh-pressed garlic
350 ml (1 1/2 cups) freshly squeezed grapefruit juice
50 ml (1/4 cup) freshly squeezed lemon juice
15 ml (1 tbsp) Angostura bitters

In a saucepan, place wine, sugar, corn syrup and zest. Bring to a vigorous boil so that sugar completely dissolves. Add garlic and remove from heat. Let stand for 10 minutes.

Strain into a stainless-steel bowl (stainless steel will help the mixture cool faster); add grapefruit juice, lemon juice and bitters.

Cover with plastic wrap and chill in freezer until mixture turns to slush. Mash slush completely with fork and return to freezer until firm/frozen. Use blender to combine and return mixture to stainless-steel bowl. Freeze again until firm.

If using an ice-cream maker: Cover mixture with plastic wrap after adding bitters and chill overnight in refrigerator. The next day, process the mixture in the ice-cream maker according to the manufacturer's instructions. Transfer mixture to a storage container and freeze until firm, at least 6 hours.

Makes about 1 l (4 cups).

Source: Kari Marshall, The Pop Stand <http://www.popstandtoronto.com/>.

GARLIC KIMCHI GRILLED CHEESE

85 g (3 oz) kimchi
2 to 3 cloves garlic, minced
20 ml (4 tsp) butter
2 slices bread (preferably sourdough), no more than 1 cm (1/2 inch) thick
125 ml (1/2 cup) grated Swiss cheese
Pinch kosher salt

Set a large frying pan on medium-low heat. While pan warms, mix kimchi and garlic together in a bowl and set aside. Add butter to frying pan. Once melted and evenly distributed, lay in bread. Place equal amounts of cheese on each slice of bread and cover pan. Cook for 4 to 6 minutes or until cheese has melted. Add kimchi to one slice of bread, sprinkle salt on top of kimchi and cover with remaining slice of bread. Remove from heat, cut in half diagonally and serve.

Makes 1 serving.

Source: Kari Marshall, The Pop Stand <http://www.popstandtoronto.com/>.

Online:

<http://www.torontogarlicfestival.ca/>

<http://stratfordgarlicfestival.com/>

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