

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A quarterly newsletter by the Food Group @ UW



SEASONAL SPOTLIGHT: Chard

By Kate Winne

Welcome to Seasonal Spotlight! Every issue we'll feature a different seasonal item, list some facts about this fruit or vegetable, and give a delicious, healthy recipe featuring this food. Today's vegetable: chard!

Chard - it's that shiny, leafy vegetable with the colorful stems that you see all over grocery stores and farmer's markets in the winter. In fact, the leaves taste the best as the weather cools. Chard is in the same family as the beet, but while we generally only eat the root of the

beet, we eat the leaves of the chard plant. One cup of chard has only 35 calories, but it is a fantastic source of vitamins A, K, C, and E, magnesium, manganese, potassium, iron, and dietary fiber. Chard has a slightly bitter taste when eaten raw, so it's best to cook the leaves - they can be used in place of spinach in almost any recipe. The recipe below is a healthy, delicious way to try out this vegetable!

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Whole Wheat Pasta with Swiss Chard (adapted from Giada De Laurentiis)

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| 1 tablespoon olive oil | 1/4 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper flakes (or more, to taste) |
| 2 onions, thinly sliced | Salt and pepper |
| 2 bunches of swiss chard, trimmed and chopped (about 14 cups) | 8 ounces whole wheat pasta (linguine works well) |
| 3 garlic cloves, minced | 2 tablespoons freshly grated Pecorino cheese |
| 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes with juices | 2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts (optional) |
| 1/4 cup dry white wine | |

Heat the oil in a heavy large frying pan over medium heat. Add the onions and sauté until tender, about 8 minutes. Add the chard and sauté until it wilts, about 2 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in the tomatoes with their juices, wine, and red pepper flakes. Bring to a simmer. Cover and simmer until the tomatoes begin to break down and the chard is very tender, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes. Season the chard mixture, to taste, with salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook until tender but still firm to the bite, stirring frequently, about 8 to 10 minutes. Drain the pasta and add to the chard mixture and toss to combine.

Transfer the pasta to serving bowls. Sprinkle the cheese and pine nuts and serve.

(Note: This recipe is extremely flexible - all of the measurements are approximate, and you can add chicken sausage, or olives, or Feta cheese... Customize it as you wish! The tomato-chard mixture would also be great over polenta.)



FOOD GROUP at University of Washington promotes and raises awareness of nutrition on campus and in the greater Seattle area. We aim to increase access to nutrition information for students, conduct educational outreach and fundraise with promotional messages.



Seasonal Eating

By Alanna Boynton

The days are cold and rainy (or snowy), the nights are long... winter is definitely here! The grey, dreary days and wacky weather may be starting to get you down, but this is the perfect time to bring a little color into your life by brightening up your plate with vibrant fruits and veggies. One botanical family that is especially fresh and abundant in the winter is the brassica family, otherwise known as the cruciferous vegetables. This family includes not only broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, bok choy, kale, and brussels sprouts, but also mustard and canola seed. Cruciferous vegetables are famous for being nutritional powerhouses; they are good sources of vitamin C, folate, fiber, calcium, iron, and phytochemicals. Indeed, these powerful phytochemicals are thought to help prevent cancer—the American Cancer Society recommends emphasizing cruciferous vegetables as part of the suggested 5-9 servings of fruits and veggies per day. Plus, locally-grown varieties are available, and the flavor of these winter vegetables actually improve and become sweeter after a frost. Unfortunately, many vegetables from this group have a reputation of being rather unappetizing, but that doesn't have to be true! The idea of eating boiled brussels sprouts sends a shiver down my spine, but braising them with maple syrup and mustard turns them into one of my absolute favorite side dishes! Braising is one of the best ways to prepare these veggies, and roasting at a high heat is magnificent for cauliflower. If you are looking for a bit more guidance on preparation of brassicas, please visit the Food Group's website at <http://students.washington.edu/>



[foodgrp](http://students.washington.edu/foodgrp) for some easy recipes to help you include some of these tasty veggies on your plate this winter. Happy eating!

We Volunteer!

By Kate Winne

Recently, I had the opportunity to volunteer at Northwest Harvest. My group bagged over 4,000 pounds of frozen corn for people in need - it was a fun way to pass a few hours while helping the community. Beyond fun, however, Northwest Harvest is filling a huge need in Washington, and the more I've learned about Northwest Harvest, the more I want to tell people about this fantastic organization.

As our only statewide hunger relief agency, Northwest Harvest supplies food to over 300 food banks and meal programs across Washington. The organization also operates the Cherry Street Food Bank in downtown Seattle, as well as the Three Squares for Kids program in 20 Seattle elementary schools, which provides food for children after school, on weekends, and during school vacations. On average, half a million food services are supplied to people in need each month, more than half of whom are children and the elderly. Since 1967, Northwest Harvest has been supplying food to people, free of charge, without any state or federal funding - they rely on contributions from individuals and businesses. Their overhead is so low, and they have so many volunteers, that over 90 cents from every dollar donated goes directly towards purchasing food for people in need.

Most importantly, one of Northwest Harvest's top priorities is supplying nutritious food. In fact, fruits and vegetables make up 40.6% of the food distributed!

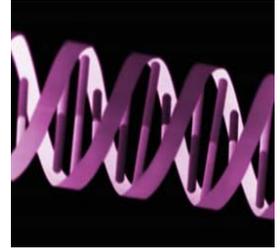
As reflected in the mission of the organization ("fighting hunger in Washington state in a manner that respects the dignity of those we serve"), Northwest Harvest is performing a critical service by providing our state's most vulnerable residents with high-quality, nutritious food.

Get more information (including how to donate, volunteer, or organize a food drive) online at northwestharvest.org.



Do you have a nutrition tip or questions? Let us know! E-mail your nutrition tip or question to foodgrp@u.washington.edu. It could be featured in the next edition of FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

Advances in human genetics are changing health care in the 21st century. The Human Genome Project is expected to create a paradigm shift in medical care, including screening, treatment, prevention, and policy. Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is the chemical compound that contains the instructions to develop and direct activities of nearly all living organisms. A gene is a unit of DNA that usually carries the instructions for making a specific protein or set of proteins while the complete set of DNA is referred to as the genome. Genes are switched on to begin the production of a protein through a process called gene expression.



The emerging discipline of nutritional genomics (nutrigenomics) is the study of the effects of diet on the activity of an individual's genes. Individual genetic differences can affect the way a person responds to nutrients (and other naturally occurring compounds) in foods, affecting overall health. These different responses may be explained by gene polymorphisms (slight variations in genes). Polymorphisms, or variations in genetic code, are thought to interact with specific nutrients in foods affecting gene expression either directly or indirectly which can influence an array of processes. The study of gene-nutrient interactions has great potential to identify specific changes or markers that may indicate responses to specific nutrients and genes. Understanding the complex interactions among genotype, diet, lifestyle, and environment is fundamental to understanding health and disease.

It takes time to move discoveries from the laboratory into the medical clinic. Nonetheless, new discoveries in genetics have already started to instigate a more personalized system of care for screening, prevention and treatment. The implications of this evolution are considerable as this knowledge has the possibility to also influence the future of nutritional recommendations. With nutrigenomics, it is possible to identify the genetic variations, nutrients, and their corresponding impact on health which may be developed into a more integrated system capable of recognizing personalized biochemical and metabolic profiling that can be used to guide dietary and lifestyle recommendations to modify or potentiate the effects of genetics. These results combined with bioinformatics may play a powerful role in determining treatment and prevention strategies to maintain health.

The National Coalition for Health Professional Education (NCHPEG) in Genetics has developed a set of recommendations for core competencies in genetics that are considered essential for all health professionals. The NCHPEG was founded by the American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association, and the National Human Genome Research Institute. In an attempt to bridge the gap in genetic knowledge, the core competencies emphasize many different principles such as basic terminology, patterns of biological inheritance and variation, and specific techniques in genetic profiling. Several members of the American Dietetic Association believe that the curriculum should be amended to place greater emphasis on the basic principals of genetics.

Advances in human genetics are rapidly changing our understanding of disease. Clearly genetics remains just one of several factors that contribute to an individual's risk of developing a disease. Diet, lifestyle, age, gender, and environmental exposures also play a critical role in many conditions. The applications of genetics to the practice of nutrition will continue to grow in importance – and are certain to offer exciting changes in the field!

Faculty Epicure: Liz Kirk, PhD, RD *By Celia Framson*



What do you eat for breakfast?

When I'm running late, an English muffin with peanut butter and jelly along with lots of coffee and some water. When I have a few more minutes, vanilla yogurt with granola and ground flax seed (coffee and water).

What is your favorite vegetable?

Hmmm. Tough question. I love broccoli and cauliflower. Corn's right up there. Carrots are a great snack. Fresh green beans can't be beat. Squashes are fantastic in the winter. Sautéed swiss chard is really yummy. Avocados are heavenly, but they're a fruit. Basically, I have many favorites!

What is your favorite Seattle restaurant?

Flying Fish.

When it comes to food, what is your guilty pleasure?

Ice cream— but I really have pretty minimal guilt about it.

How do you get active on the weekends?

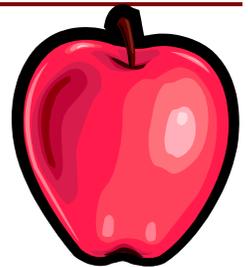
Chasing twin 17 month old boys around the house, yard, park....

Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

We get a box of organic fruits and veggies twice a month from Full Circle Farms in Carnation, and we love it..

Liz Kirk, Ph.D.,
R.D.
Dept. of
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U Wellness and Nutrition Day— March 6, 2007 *UW Nutrition Graduate Students Share Food Expertise With You!*



On Tuesday March 6th, Students from the University of Washington Graduate School of Nutritional Sciences will share great tasting food and nutrition tips with the UW community. As part of National Nutrition Month, they will be in 3 locations around campus sharing their culinary skills and nutrition knowledge—focusing on the needs of students and staff.

The University of Washington is a unique campus filled with a diverse clientele of commuting students, busy faculty and staff, and people from around the globe. The Nutritional Sciences Graduate Program, the Food Group, and Housing & Food Services have joined forces to provide a beneficial and educational day for those interested in learning more about good food and simple ways to improve health through nutrition.

In the HUB building on campus, students will demonstrate some easy ways to cope with life stress, as well as show you how to eat smarter away from home and on campus. In both the University's Terry-Lander and McMahon dining halls, students will display quick and healthy meal ideas for UW students and staff on-the-go, plus share some simple strategies on how new students can avoid the dreaded 'Freshman 15'. In all three of these sites students will also be preparing freshly made meals that are both nutritious, and delicious.

Good food is fun. The University of Washington Nutritional Sciences Graduate students promise to show you how to get the most out of what you eat and still enjoy it! Come visit them on Tuesday March 6th between 11am and 2pm in the HUB, Terry-Lander, and McMahon on the University of Washington campus.



Join the Food Group!!!

Joining the Food Group is FREE!

As a member of the Food Group you will be able to:

- Participate in fundraising and social events
- Get involved in community events related to healthy eating and exercise
- Meet other students interested in nutrition issues

For membership information, please contact foodgrp@u.washington.edu

<http://students.washington.edu/foodgrp/>