



Fennel

Fennel has a wonderfully mild flavor of licorice in a juicy and crunchy form. The plant itself is very giving... you can use the entire thing from the bulb to the stems to the feathery plumes at the tips. If you have never had it, I suggest you try it raw first before you start experimenting with cooking it so you can experience how tasty it is.

Fennel is very versatile and can be eaten raw, pureed into mashed potatoes or with some cream into a soup, parboiled and finished in a sauce, grilled, sautéed, stir-fried, baked, fried, braised etc. Fennel takes a little time to cook, but still holds its shape remarkably well, so it's O.K. to cook it ahead of time and reheat it when you need it.

Try this the first time you cook it: heat a little butter in a shallow pan and sauté some sliced fennel (bulb and cross-cut stems) and garlic for a few minutes until things soften up a bit and some juices are released. The smell of fennel and garlic that will waft through your house is divine. Add some wine or water or stock to come

about 1/3 of the way up the pan sides and cover. Simmer slowly for about 20-30 minutes. The fennel should have a little resistance when you bite into it, but not be crunchy. Season with salt and pepper and garnish with the chopped tips of the leaves and stir.

Fennel flavor seems to vary quite a bit from bulb to bulb, and if you like a stronger fennel taste you can add a little fennel seed at the beginning of cooking; the leaves also add some fresh fennel flavor.

– *Derek Morricks, Farm Chef 2004*

FENNEL TSATSIKI

Tsatsiki is usually made with cucumbers and is found in Greek cuisine. This would be perfect served with Wisconsin trout.

- 1 medium fennel bulb with fronds
- 1 tsp. fennel seed
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 2 c. plain yogurt
- 1 ½ tsp. salt

Trim fennel, reserving fronds, discarding stalks. Finely chop fronds and bulb. In a small, dry skillet, toast fennel seeds until fragrant and slightly darker. Grind seeds. Stir together ingredients. Taste and adjust seasoning.

To make the cucumber version, use 1 - 2 cucumbers in place of the fennel and a teaspoon of freshly chopped mint in place of the fennel seed.

FENNEL SLAW

- 2 large fennel bulbs, about 4 cups shredded
- 1 bunch green onions, sliced thin
- 1-2 garlic scapes, chopped fine (or use green garlic)
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons vinegar (white balsamic, white wine, or champagne)
- 1 teaspoon stone-ground mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon celery seeds
- 1/2 tablespoon grated horseradish, preferably fresh (optional)
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

ASSEMBLY ON BACK



A Midwestern Palette - Eating With the Seasons

Though many fresh foods are available year round, our regional agricultural community, and the urban communities surrounded by them, benefit when we choose to eat seasonally from local producers. Knowing the seasonality of our favorite produce allows us to make informed choices.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
						Summer Fennel			Fall Fennel		

Fennel can be grown successfully in the Midwest in early summer and again in early fall, but not during the hottest summer months. It likes cooler weather, but is only moderately tolerant of frost.

Preparation and Storage Tips

When trimmed for use or storage, fennel looks like the picture on the front. Rinse clean; then trim off the leaves and about a 1/4 inch off the hardened base of the bulb. The bulb will keep for up to two weeks in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. The feathery tops should be wrapped in a moist towel, refrigerated, and used within a few days.

Fennel can be cooked any way you want, or not cooked at all. It seems to benefit from being cooked with some liquid or enough fat to keep it tender and juicy. When roasting, try quartering the bulbs, searing them in a hot, oiled pan until the edges brown and putting them in a pan with enough broth to cover the bottom of the pan. Cover with tin-foil and roast at 350 degrees until fennel is very tender, about 30 to 45 minutes. You can then enjoy it hot with a little balsamic vinegar, olive oil, salt, and pepper; or cold, sliced and put in a salad. It can be braised, sauteed, even grilled. The tops are usually used fresh as a garnish or in salad; try substituting them for dill. They can also be dried for future use.

CARROT, FENNEL, AND ORANGE SOUP

- 1 medium fennel bulb, thinly sliced
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 ½ lb. carrots, thinly sliced (about 4 c.)
- 1 clove garlic, thinly sliced
- 3 c. water
- 1 tsp salt, pepper to taste
- 1/3 c. fresh orange juice
- ¼ c. sour cream
- 1 T. pastis or pernod liquor, if you have it

In a heavy 3-qt. saucepan, cook fennel in butter over med. heat, stirring, until it is soft and golden. Add carrots and garlic; cook 1 minute. Add water and salt and simmer covered for 20 minutes or until veggies are very tender. Stir in sour cream, orange juice, salt and pepper, and puree. Stir in anise flavored liquor. Check seasoning, garnish with fennel fronds, and serve; or chill before serving.

FENNEL SLAW *CONT'D FROM FRONT*

Remove wispy fennel leaves. Chop and reserve for garnish. Cut bulbs in half and slice as finely as possible across width, discarding hard cores. Place in bowl.

Combine remaining ingredients in another bowl. Add a half a cup at a time to fennel just until well-moistened. You don't want a pool of dressing at bottom of bowl. Toss well and store in refrigerator.

Harmony Valley Farm is a family owned farm in western Wisconsin, dedicated to producing high quality, beautifully clean, and deliciously fresh certified organic produce. Our farming methods protect the environment and enhance diversity.