



A Cookbook and Guide to Fresh Food

Meet the Team

We are a group of teens and adults changing the world one neighborhood at a time. We have been investigating food in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, and talking to residents about eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, home cooked meals, and learning where their food comes from. We are restoring our community garden and teaching kids in our community how to grow and cook fresh food.

Cookbook Contributors

Alivette Plasencia Maricarmen Torres
Anisa Farugui Sandro Kuszek
Edward Guzman Scarlet Encarnacion
Henry Angel Taisha Martinez
John Hernandez Vicky Feliciano
Karen Guzman Emma Donnelly
Luis Sanchez Bijan Kimiagar

We would like to thank...

*John Kixmiller and the Neighborhood Center Staff
Barbara Sampayo and the 64th Street Gardeners
Jonah Braverman and the Added Value Youth leaders
&
Barbara Cervone and What Kids Can Do*

Table of Contents

GUIDE TO FRESH FOOD

<i>Our Research.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Teaching Children to Garden.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>The Fresh Food Festival.....</i>	<i>19</i>

RECIPES

<i>Food Prep Tips & Basics.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Easy Snacks.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Homemade Dishes.....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Drinks and Dessert.....</i>	<i>46</i>

Our Research



A Worrying Fact: The Increasing Rate of Obesity and Diabetes in the United States

by Karen Guzman

Obesity is a condition where there is excessive accumulation of fat and fat storage in the human body. This is measured by the Body Mass Index (BMI), ratio of weight in kilograms to the square of person's height in meters. Since 1985, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has collected data on the rate of obesity in the U.S., which has steadily increased over the past thirty years and has dramatically increased over the past twenty years. According to this data, New York State has an obesity

rate of 24.2 percent. We, the Food Justice Project, have realized this unfortunate fact and are talking with residents of New York City, particularly Sunset Park, Brooklyn, about healthier eating habits.

According to the 2006-2007 CDC data, obesity tends to lie more within specific ethnic and racial groups such as whites (non-Hispanics), Hispanics, and blacks (non-Hispanic). Blacks had 51 percent higher prevalence of obesity, and Hispanics had 21 percent higher obesity prevalence compared with whites. This may be related to the lack of availability and affordability of fresh and healthy food. Since the majority of the people living in Sunset Park are Hispanics, about 50%, it is of great concern for the Food Justice Project to take action on

this issue.

In general, the Food Justice Project is a research group composed of teenagers who work at the Center for Family Life's Neighborhood Center at P.S.503/506. Part of our mission is to learn about healthy food. One of the many things we have learned is the process of cultivating healthy foods like fruits and vegetables. For instance, we are a part of the 64th Street Community Garden where we educate children about the nutritious foods planted there. We gained further knowledge about growing food through trips to urban farms such as the Added Value Farm in Red Hook, and have talked, via video chat, with young people at the High Rocks Camp for Girls in West Virginia. The Food Justice Project uses

this information, as well as information from interviews and surveys about the availability of healthy produce in Sunset Park's local stores, to inform neighborhood residents. Although our work concentrates on the neighborhood of Sunset Park, we believe that it will also be a big step toward success in New York City at large.

The Connections with a Local Organic Farm

by Henry Angel

The Food Justice program has the goal of bringing information on healthier foods and eating organic vegetables to the community of Sunset Park. Everyone has eaten vegetables in their life, but many people haven't had local, organically grown vegetables. An issue today is that people aren't eating enough healthy and fresh foods. People are lacking foods like greens that help make a healthy diet. This affects children the most because obesity among children has risen in the last 10 years. Most of this is because of the lack of exercise and eating the wrong foods, like Mc Donald's, Burger King, Wendy's

and other fast foods.

The Food Justice Project is trying to reach out to the community of Sunset Park to speak with them about the benefits of fresh, local, and organic foods. One way the Food Justice Project has done is by allying with a local, organic farm called Angel Family Farm. Their son, Henry Angel, joined the Food Justice Project to provide knowledge about farming and the difference between locally fresh organic vegetables and vegetables you typically find at the supermarket. Henry explained how when vegetables are local it has more of the nutrients than those shipped across the continent to supermarkets.

With the help of John Kixmiller, the Food Justice Project started working in the 64th

Street Community Garden to learn how to grow vegetables. Henry also helped out by teaching the different ways of planting and taking care of the plants. Today, many vegetables in the garden are being harvested such as corn, tomatoes, basil, and lettuce. Many more are still growing.

Recently, some of the teens in the Food Justice Project took a trip to the Added Value urban farm in Red Hook, Brooklyn. There they participated in workshops to learn about food systems and took a tour of the farm. The group has continued to find ways to reach out to the community to talk to them about the information they have learned about fresh, organic vegetables, and have started writing a cookbook with fun and easy recipes for

home cooked meals that contain vegetables. The cookbook was the idea of John Hernandez, one of the original Food Justice Project members. "People aren't eating right because they don't know how to cook foods that are healthy," he says, " I would like to learn to cook myself."

This is how this cookbook, with many recipes and more information on food, came about!

Mapping Fresh Food in Sunset Park

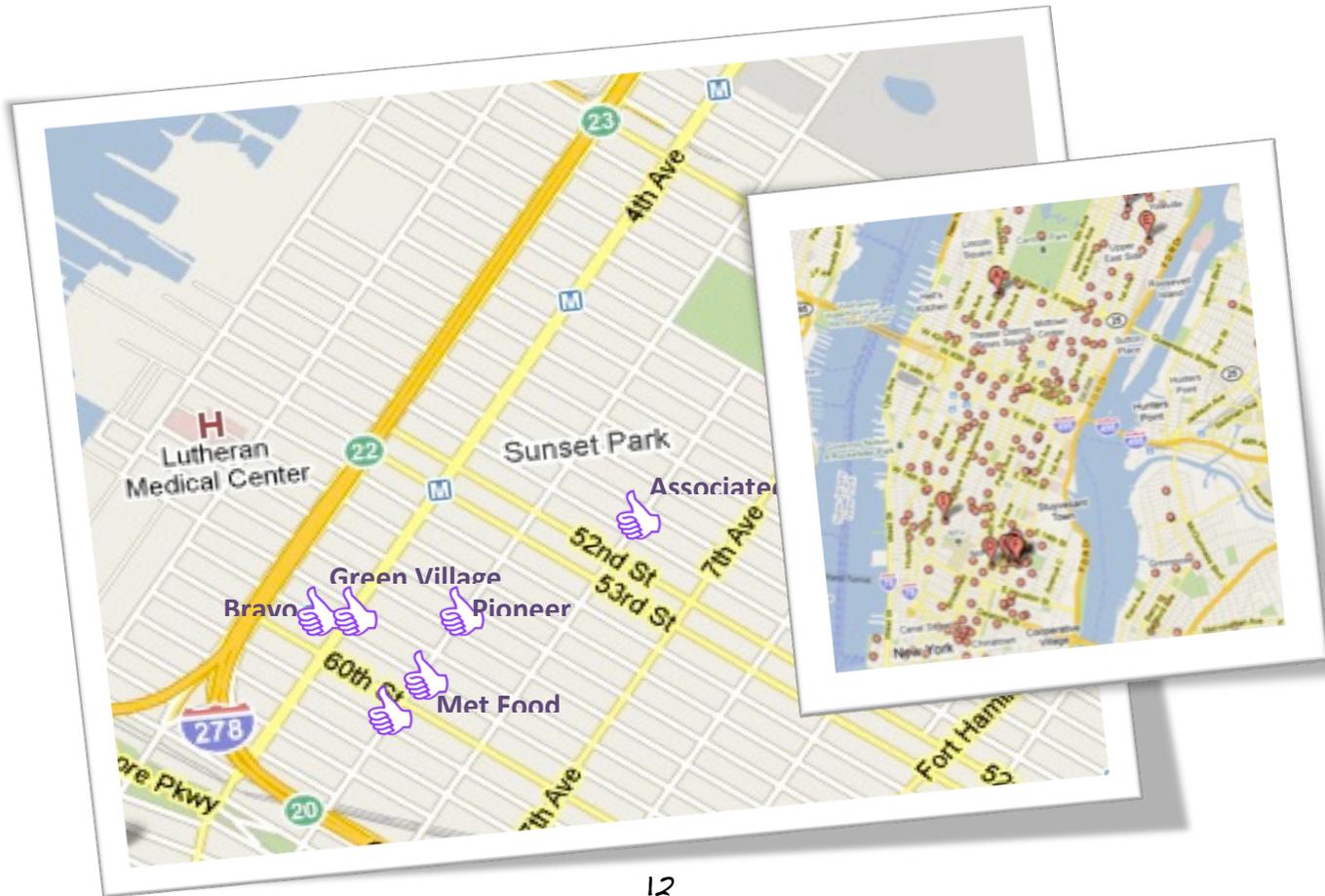
by Alivette Plasencia

My map has places where they sell fresh foods for people around Sunset Park. I created that map so people can see where they can get fresh foods. There are no organic fruits and vegetables in these places. Why are there no organics in these places? I'm guessing people can't afford it in Sunset. So maybe that's why people don't buy organics.

Conventionally grown foods usually have had pesticides sprayed on them. Pesticides are chemicals that kill insects, but do not harm the plant. However, the pesticides can harm people too! We just

don't know about it because it happens little by little. Organic foods do not have chemicals, but they are still expensive.

So where are organics? In my smaller map, you can see that many stores that sell organic foods are in Manhattan. Why not Sunset? One reason may be that more people in the city have the money for organic foods so more stores carry them. People in Sunset would buy the organics if they could afford it. I think we should have more community farms in and near Sunset so that we could grow organic produce and it could be cheaper because it is local! Please see my map on the next page...



The 64th St. Garden by Scarlet Encarnacion

The Food Justice Project and the Center for Family Life are part of the 64th Street Community Garden. Back in, 1998 this section of the block use to be a junkyard with a lot of scrap metal and abandoned cars. A local resident, Barbara Sampayo, with the help of neighbors, asked the City of New York to convert the area into a garden. In 1999 work began to clean-up and build the garden. Now it is a place that people passing by stop and say, "Wow! This really looks different from before!"

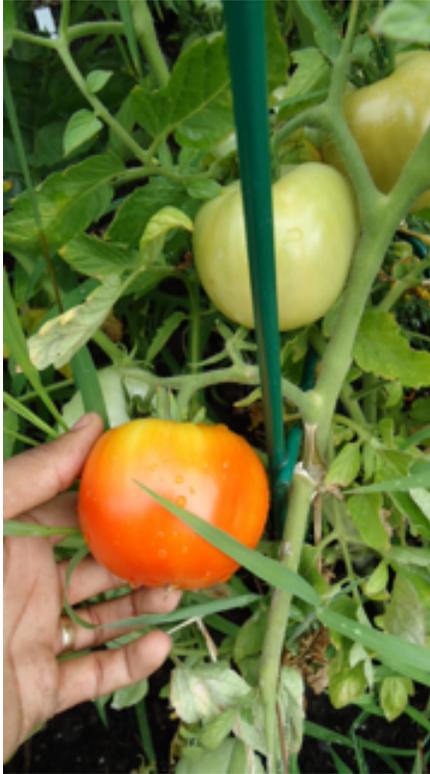
When we, the Food Justice Project, first decided to be a member of this community garden we thought it would be great if people could go and pick out vegetables to

add to their dinner. We also thought that we could take kids from the nearby schools and teach them how to grow vegetables. So instead of being in school all day, they could go to the garden to learn about the process of vegetable growing and enjoy some time outdoors.

The garden is in a place where people don't really notice it from the main streets, but by using maps, we are telling people where it is. We are also telling people how young kids can be an important part of the community. Some people think that kids aren't able to improve the neighborhood, but when they see that kids are working in the garden, they are surprised and inspired. We are also talking to kids about what fresh food is and where are places they can get it. This way, they can tell their friends and family to eat more fresh foods and vegetables and have healthier diets.



Vicky and Taisha look at food labels to find specific ingredients like high fructose corn syrup and carrageen. High fructose corn syrup can be found in many processed food products. Carrageen is made from red algae and makes foods stick together. You can find it in everything from shampoo and toothpaste to chocolate pudding and ice cream.



FUN FACTS ABOUT TOMATOES!

- *Tomatoes are very high in the carotenoid. Eating foods with carotenoids can lower your risk of cancer.*
- *A hornworm can eat an entire tomato plant by itself in one day!*
- *In the United States, more tomatoes are consumed than any other single fruit or vegetable!*
- *Actually a fruit, it took a ruling by the Supreme Court in 1893 to make the tomato a vegetable.*

Teaching Young Children to Garden







The Fresh Food Fair - June 12th, 2010



Sandro and Maricarmen helped Henry sell produce from his family farm at the Fresh Food Festival. All the food was picked the day before or even the same day.

He even brought some fresh squeezed apple juice. Everything was organic and tasted delicious!





The Seed Game

Scarlet and Emma play the seed game with a group of children. Seeds come in many different shapes, sizes and colors. Sometimes it is very surprising what you a plant's seed looks like.

*The Food Justice Project's
Food Prep Tips &
Favorite Recipes*

Some basics about preparing food...

Cooking is fun. There are thousands of easy and delicious recipes. Cooking brings friends and family together. FJP has been involved in the Fresh Food Festival at the Center for Family Life. This festival is a space created in the center of Sunset Park to share good food that we have all grown or prepared. This cookbook is a way to extend the Fresh Food Festival into our lives, homes, and our neighborhoods.

A few tips and guidelines will help to make sense of these recipes and the complex and diverse ways we can cook for each other and ourselves.

Chopping and Dicing

How to cut a vegetable.

1. Choose your vegetable.
2. Think about what you want to make.
3. Choose your knife. For most veggies a bigger knife is more useful than a smaller one.

CAUTION! TO AVOID CUTS ON YOUR FREE HAND, KEEP YOUR FINGERS CURLED IN SLIGHTLY AS IF HOLDING A TENNIS BALL.

4 Grab a plate or cutting board.

5. Follow these simple steps:

A. Wash your veggie by using a large bowl full of cold water. Use a veggie scrubber or your hand. Then rinse. And bring over to the cutting board.

B. Trim your veggie. Cut the green tops off of carrots, cut the stem areas of each vegetable. You can deseed peppers by carefully cutting a circle around the stem and pulling the seed out along with the inner white part.

C. If your veggie is grown "conventionally" meaning with chemicals such as pesticides, and if it is a carrot or cucumber then peel or cut the skin off of your veg (this takes away some of the pesticides).

In a recipe, next to the vegetable under the ingredients should be written the way that it should be cut.

The difference between chopping and mincing is with mincing you just chop your veggie into smaller and smaller pieces until it is the size of a bean or smaller. Chopping and mincing are more uneven than the other types of ways to prepare vegetables. Chop large for snacking and for putting in soups.

Chop smaller for adding to stir fries, salsas, salads, and pastas.

The Popular Chop and Mince

To chop tomatoes, potatoes, cucumbers, carrots, peppers, asparagus cabbage, beets, radishes just cut longwise down the center of the veggie from top (usually stem) to bottom.

The lay the veggie flat down on the cutting board and depending on the shape you want cut the two pieces into four pieces trying to keep them looking the same size.

Mincing is similar, but it is looser cuts not so worried about the method as mentioned above. Mincing requires a see saw motion with the hand on the knife lifting it up and down, and steadily chopping the vegetable until it is in small pieces. This method is great for making chunky thick and homemade salsa.

EASY SNACKS



Mango Salsa

This mango salsa is pretty simple and delicious to put on top of salmon or white fish, or to eat with chips.

- 1. Chop a fresh and ripe mango into pieces almost as small as the tip of your pinky, about an inch thick or more.*
- 2. Mince one ripe mango until it is almost pulpy and juicy.*
- 3. Mince one onion. It can be red onion, sweet onion, Spanish onion or green onions/scallions (mostly the white of the scallion)*
- 4. Chop red and/or green peppers to the same size as the larger 1-inch chunks of mango*
- 5. Add a few teaspoons of fresh squeezed lime, however much you like, and add some squirts of lemon if it suits you.*
- 6. Add a few dashes of cayenne to spice it up, but be cautious not to put too much in at first.*

Fresh Tomato Salsa

4 cups diced tomatoes, (5-6 medium)

3/4 cup finely diced red onion, (about 1 small)

1/4 cup red-wine vinegar (lemon juice can replace this)

1-2 jalapenos, seeded and minced

1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro

1/2 teaspoon salt

Pinch of cayenne pepper, or more to taste

- 1. Combine tomatoes, onion, vinegar, jalapeno, cilantro, salt and cayenne in a medium bowl.*
- 2. Refrigerate until ready to serve.*

The JV Dip

*1 large Aguacate (Avocado)
1 bunch of Cilantro
8 ounces of Monterey Jack
Cheese, shredded
2 Tomatoes, chopped
8 ounces of sour cream
1 bag of white corn chips,
preferably small 'scoop' shapes*

*Slice up the avocados and
tomatoes into chunks. Add to one
side of a large bowl. Add cheese.*

*This is called the JV Dip because
Vicky and her dad, Johnny, invented it.
They were watching a cooking show
and it made them hungry, so they used
whatever ingredients in the fridge to
make this dip.*



Quesadillas

tortillas

cheddar cheese

black beans, rinsed and heated with sautéed veggies

sauté or grill your favorite veggies such as:

peppers, onions, tomatoes, spinach, carrots, red onion, corn (can be steamed or boiled and then kernels cut off the cob)

place tortilla on the frying pan on the stove at medium heat.

cover lightly with grated cheese

add bean (to taste)

HOMEMADE DISHES

Lasagna

- 9 "strips" of lasagna (better if fresh)
- 1 lb of shredded mozzarella

~For Beef Filling~

- 2 lbs of ground meat
- 2 tablespoons of tomato paste
- 1 small red onion diced
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- Black pepper
- Oregano
- Salt

~For sauce~

- 10 very ripe tomatoes
- 1/4 teaspoon of ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- pinch of oregano
- 1/2 tablespoon of mashed garlic



This is a picture of some lasagna that Alivette made for one of the meetings. It was delicious!!!

1. In a bowl, mix the ground beef with the onion, oregano, pepper and salt. In a shallow pan heat a tablespoon of oil. Add the ground beef and stir so it cooks uniformly. Add two tablespoons of water and the tomato paste. Let simmer at medium heat. Adjust water when necessary. When the meat is ready let all the liquid evaporate, adjusting salt to taste. Turn off the heat and set aside.
2. Put water to boil. Submerge the tomatoes in the boiling water for a few seconds to loosen the skin. Skin, and cut into small pieces getting rid of the seeds. Sprinkle oregano and salt on the tomatoes. Heat up the oil and add the tomatoes and garlic. Simmer at very low heat until it turns into about 2 1/2 cup of tomato sauce. Add a few tablespoons of water if necessary. Adjust salt. When the sauce is ready turn off the heat and set aside.
3. Boil the pasta until slightly harder than al dente having added a teaspoon of salt to the water. Spread 1/4 of the sauce in the bottom of a glass pan. Lay 1/3 of the pasta on top.
4. Boil the pasta until slightly harder than al dente having added a teaspoon of salt to the water. Spread 1/4 of the sauce in the bottom of a glass pan. Lay 1/3 of the pasta on top.

Herbs

Herbs can make foods tasty and interesting. We grew many herbs in our garden including basil, rosemary, sage, and cilantro.



Sancocho (aka Ajiaco)



1/6 of beef (on bones)
1 1/2 lb of fresh chicken
1 lb of fresh pork
2 green plantains
1 lb of yuca*
1/2 lb of potatoes
3 large onions
Small bunch of cilantro

2 stock cubes of beef or chicken
Vegetable oil at your discretion
5 cloves of garlic
1 small portion of oregano
5 liters of water
salt to taste
Lemon juice

Preparation:

1. Peel your garlic cloves and place them into the mortar together with the oregano and salt, then mash them together well.
2. If you don't have a mortar, just crush all the above ingredients with the side of a heavy knife on a chopping board (remember to flush your board well with cold water immediately after doing this to avoid transfer of garlic flavor to things you might not want to taint, later on!)

3. Peel and chop the onions in quarters. Now take all the meat and cut it into fairly equally sized pieces (for beef and pork, 4cm or 1 1/2 inch cubes - for chicken 'small joints'), if using meat on the bone, leave it on the bone for extra flavor, wash the meat well with plenty of water. It is also better if you remove the skin of the chicken and any excess fat from the other meats.
4. Once you have done this, place all the meat in a large bowl and 'wash' the meat again with lemon juice, and drain about half the liquid off. Once the meat is washed and ready, add the mashed combination of garlic and herbs you have in the mortar. At this stage you can add a bit of vinegar (say a good teaspoon full), some vegetable oil and half of the chopped onions (leaving the rest for later). Now stir the meat and these ingredients well and let it rest to develop the flavor for about half an hour, while you prepare the other items.
5. Whilst the meat is resting, peel the plantain, yucca, yam, potatoes, Spanish pumpkin and eddoes. Then cut them into pieces roughly the same size as the meat 'chunks'.

Cooking the meat

Place a large pan (ideally one that's not too deep - a wide bottomed, heavy lidded, braising pan is best) on the heat with some vegetable oil, say about half a cup.

Once the oil is reasonably hot you can add the meat (The meat should sizzle appetizingly when it goes into the pan, BUT be careful the hot oil doesn't splash you...or anyone else!!). Don't add too much meat in one go, and let the heat come back into the oil as add each 'batch'. Make sure all the meat is 'seized', or 'browned' on all sides...this will help keep it moist and reduce the chance of it flaking to bits during the cooking process.

Once all the meat is browned, immediately add about a teaspoon of salt and a pint of stock. Stir well.

Let the pot just come to the boil then turn down the heat and let the meat simmer, with a good heavy lid on the pot, for at around 40 minutes before starting the rest of the cooking.

After this time the meat will be more than half cooked, turn it off for the time

being. Now you can start the second step.

Take another big cooking pot, quite deep this time, put it onto the heat and add three liters of water.

Add all your plantain, yucca and the other vegetables to the cooking pot together with the coriander, the rest of chopped onion and the chopped green peppers. Also crumble into the pot the other stock cube, and stir.

After heating the pot for 15 minutes, by which time it should be coming to the boil (if not already turned to simmer) carefully mix in all the contents of the meat pan. Add more water if necessary, so that all contents of the pan are just covered, and bring back to the boil before turning down to a simmering heat again.

From now on the Sancocho will start developing a good color and thickening. You need to check it every ten minutes to ensure it doesn't get too dry, it will have the tendency to do this as moisture evaporates and stock is absorbed by vegetables.

You should add a little more water if necessary.

Tomato Basil Soup

8 to 10 tomatoes, peeled, cored and chopped, or 4 c canned crushed tomatoes

4 c tomato juice or part tomato juice, part chicken or vegetable stock

12 to 14 fresh basil leaves

1 c heavy cream

1/2 c (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened

Salt and pepper to taste

Over medium heat, combine tomatoes and juice in a large saucepan and simmer for 30 minutes. In a food processor, combine tomato mixture and basil leaves in several small batches and process until smooth. Return blended mixture to saucepan over low heat. Stir in cream and butter, then season with salt and pepper. Continue stirring over low heat until soup is heated through. Serves 8.

Cuban Black Beans

*2 cans of black beans
½ tablespoon of ground cumin
½ tablespoon of oregano
Some olive oil
6-10 large Spanish olives
2 Bay leaves, whole
1 medium white onion
1 tablespoon of chopped garlic
1 tablespoon of brown sugar
1 tablespoon of salt
1 sprig of cilantro*



- 1. In a medium size pot, sauté the white onions over a low heat in a skillet, caramelize with the brown sugar.*
- 2. Keep on medium heat and add the rest of the ingredients.*
- 3. Do not chop up the bay leaves or cilantro. Keep them whole so you can easily remove them later. Cook until the beans begin to breakdown to serve over rice, or serve as a soup.*

Glazed Carrots

2 tablespoons of butter.

2 tablespoons of brown sugar.

1 teaspoon of orange peel, grated.

½ teaspoon of salt.

- 1. Cook the carrots in hot water until they are tender. Drain.*
- 2. Melt the butter in a suitably sized skillet.*
- 3. Add the cooked carrots, sugar, grated orange peel, salt.*
- 4. Cook over a medium heat, stirring constantly, until carrots are glazed.*
- 5. Serve as desired.*

Drinks and Dessert

Mint Granita

2 cups water

1 cup chopped fresh mint leaves

1/2 cup sugar

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Garnish: fresh mint leaves

1. Bring water, mint, and sugar to a boil in a 1- to 2-quart saucepan, stirring until sugar is dissolved, then reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, 3 minutes.

2. Add lemon juice and pour through a fine-mesh sieve, pressing hard on solids and discarding them, then cool.

3. Freeze mixture in a 1 1/2- to 2-quart shallow metal container, stirring and crushing lumps with a fork every 30 minutes, until evenly frozen, 2 to 3 hours.

4. Scrape with a fork to lighten texture, crushing any lumps.

5. Spoon into glasses or bowls.

Mint Raita

3 cups whole-milk yogurt

1 cup packed fresh mint leaves

3/4 teaspoon salt

1. Drain yogurt in a paper-towel-lined sieve set over a bowl, chilled, 3 hours.
2. Pulse all ingredients in a blender until mint is finely chopped.
3. Transfer to a bowl and chill, covered, at least 3 hours.

Note: Raita can be chilled in an airtight container up to 1 day (but color will not be as vibrant if made more than 3 hours ahead).

Cucumber Lemonade (Agua de Pepino)

1 cucumber, peeled and cubed

1 lemon

5 C water

Sugar to taste

Add cucumber and water to a blender and puree. Strain. Add juice of lemon and sugar to taste. Serve over ice.

AREPAS

- 1 tablespoon of soft butter*
- 3 cups of evaporated milk*
- 3 cups of water*
- 2 cups of corn flour*
- 1 1/2 cup of sugar*
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt*
- 1/4 cup of raisins*
- 4 cinnamon sticks*
- 1 cup of coconut milk*



- 1. Mix all the ingredients and set aside.*
- 2. Put in an iron pot and put on the stove, stirring constantly to avoid sticking.*
- 3. When it breaks a boil lower the fire to medium and continue stirring until it reaches cream cheese-like consistency.*
- 4. Put into the baking pan and put in the oven for 30 minutes, it should be golden brown on top.*
- 5. Let cool before removing from the pan. Serve with hot cocoa or coffee.*



Copyright ©2010 by The Food Justice Project