



Welcome

to CSNN Mississauga's



Virtual
Kitchen

March is a transition month. Winter is behind us and spring is on the horizon. Although we're still eating comforting stews and soups we can start to increase more raw foods using warming herbs and spices.

The importance of the quality & wholesomeness of the food we eat, avoiding additives, exposure to antibiotics, hormones and pesticide residues is another aspect of eating for optimal health. Purchase Certified Organic whenever possible.

It feels so special when Mother Nature sends us a hint of what's to come. This is when the blending of winter and spring defines what we choose to cook. We also start planning our vegetable garden.



"Savory Muffins" offer so much more in terms of nutrition and blood sugar balance. Plus they're a great 3 o'clock snack when hunger hits.



Raw Avocado Soup with a Cashew Sour Cream topping. Creamy, thick and delicious!

LOOK BACK

March 2018
VIRTUAL
KITCHEN

Looking back at March 2018 we featured a delicious Pad Thai recipe. This recipe is one that everyone loves and makes regularly. It has a large raw component to the ingredients. The perfect transition recipe as we look forward.

March Highlight

Set aside time to plan the meals for the week ahead. Go through recipe books, search the web and build a library of dishes you love and you feel confident to make. We keep ours in binders with the grocery list attached.

Try a new recipe each week to expand your skills and add to your recipe binder.



Meal Planning;

Whether planning a holiday, a party, or meal planning, it's the details that result in a much better outcome. To eat healthy, delicious meals takes focus and commitment. We hope the VK provides inspiration and the building blocks for creating easy, delicious meals. With time you will gain enough confidence to be creative and organized.

- Create a working schedule to keep your kitchen and pantry stocked with nutrient-dense foods.
- Don't let dinner be a one-hit wonder. For example, take last night's chili, fill a red pepper, top with a dairy alternative like Daiya Mozzarella Style Shreds. Heat it up, melt the cheese and enjoy later in the week.
- Make meal prep a pleasant time to relax after a busy day. Enjoy some music, Netflix, quiet time, and prepare your meals, not as a chore, but as a nutritious, delicious activity. It's a matter of perception.
- It's often said that the kitchen is the heart of the home. Rendezvous with loved ones for meal prep, conversation and, enjoy the food.
- Batch cook. By cooking extra you have easy meals all week long. Freeze meals in portion sized containers so there's always something nutritious to heat and eat.

Did you know Avocados are a stone fruit? They're a great source of vitamins C, E, K, and B-6, as well as riboflavin, niacin, folate, pantothenic acid, magnesium and potassium. They also provide lutein, beta-carotene, and omega-3 fatty acids. Avocados are creamy and full of healthy, beneficial fats that help keep you full and satisfied.

Spinach is an extremely nutrient-rich vegetable. It has high amounts of carotenoids, vitamin C, K, folic acid, iron and calcium.

When we think about Nutrition Intelligence this soup hits a lot of positive notes.



Organic fresh fruit & produce is the foundation for healthy, delicious meals.



Spinach Soup with a Cashew Sour Cream Topping

Put your apron on and let's get started. This raw recipe takes just minutes to make. Avocados are like fruit butter. They are a satisfying fatty fruit, rich in easily digestible monounsaturated fat.

Ingredients for the soup;

1	avocado (soft but firm to the gentle squeeze)
3	cups fresh spinach
1	medium cucumber
2 stalks	celery
3	limes, juice and zest
handful	fresh cilantro
2 tsp	cumin
1 tsp	ground coriander
1 tsp	onion powder
1/2 tsp	sea salt
1 tsp	Coconut Secret (a soy-free seasoning sauce)
pinch	cayenne pepper (to taste)
1 cup	filtered water (if you want a warm soup, use hot water)

Blend all of the ingredients in a high speed blender, transfer to a bowl and set aside.



Cashews, the inner shell is cracked to reveal a white, kidney-shaped nut that's high in vitamin A, potassium, phosphorus and magnesium.



Unpasteurized, unfiltered Apple Cider Vinegar is made from fermented apple cider and has a sweet-and-sour flavour. Apple Cider Vinegar is very high in minerals and promotes healthy digestion.



Sea salt is salt from seawater. Good quality sea salt is sun-dried and evaporated from seawater which preserves the precious trace minerals.

Ingredients for the cashew sour cream;

1 1/2 cups	cashews (soaked for 2 hours)
2 Tbsp	freshly squeezed lemon juice
4 tsp	apple cider vinegar
1 cup	filtered water
1/2 tsp	sea salt (to taste)

1. Blend the above ingredients until creamy and smooth.
2. Transfer to a bowl and keep cold.
3. You'll notice it thickens up a little, which is what you want.
4. This is delicious as a topping on the soup and also as a dip for fresh vegetables.

When ready to serve...

Pour the soup into a nice bowl, garnish with some diced avocado and a few sprigs of cilantro and drizzle cashew sour cream on top.



This is a nourishing snack because chickpea flour is both high in fiber and protein. Very satisfying and doesn't spike blood sugar levels. It also contains iron, magnesium and zinc.

Olive oil varies greatly in colour and taste. Some are golden and fruity, others are more green and rich. Source your olive oil from a trusted supplier of fresh, high quality extra virgin olive oil.

Apart from the mono-unsaturated fats in olive oil and specifically oleic acid, olive oil has another component: polyphenols. Polyphenols are phytochemicals, components that have antioxidant activity.



Savory Rosemary Basil Muffins

Enjoying a "savory muffin" as a snack or with lunch is a delicious and much healthier way to enjoy a muffin without all the added sugar or white flour. These muffins are gluten-free with a bold flavour. They freeze nicely.

Ingredients;

1	small sweet potatoe, peeled, 1/2 inch dice
1/4 cup	mild tasting extra virgin olive oil (or coconut oil, melted)
3	pasture-raised eggs
1 1/2 cups	chickpea flour
2 tsp	baking powder
1 tsp	dried rosemary
1/2 tsp	sea salt
1/3 cup	spinach, finely chopped
1/2 cup	fresh basil, finely chopped
1/4 cup	raw pumpkin seeds

Everyone agrees that vegetables give us life and are an essential component of a healthy diet. Veggies provide the broadest range of nutrients of any food group and are rich sources of vitamins, minerals, and carbohydrates.

Our savory muffin is a delicious way to increase your intake of vegetables!

Method;

1. Line your muffin tins with liners and preheat your oven to 350° F.
2. Steam sweet potato until soft. Put into a large bowl and mash with a fork.
3. Whisk the eggs in a small bowl and add them to the mashed sweet potato along with olive oil. Mix everything together well. Set aside.
4. Crush rosemary into small bits for better distribution.
5. Sift the chickpea flour, baking powder, rosemary and salt into a separate bowl. Stir.
6. Put the dry ingredients into the the large bowl with sweet potato and gently mix. Fold in the chopped spinach and chopped fresh basil.
7. Divide the batter among the 6-8 muffin cups and sprinkle with pumpkin seeds.
8. Bake for 30 minutes until lightly browned and an inserted toothpick comes out clean.

Enjoy them warmed up in the oven with a little organic butter or ghee.





An indoor herb garden can easily be grown in small, pots on a sunny window sill. Fresh herbs add amazing flavour and boost the nutritional profile of any meal.



Parsley, for example, is an excellent source of vitamin C which is a key nutrient that neutralizes free radicals. It's also a good source of B vitamins. It should be added at the end of cooking so it retains its taste, colour and nutritional value. Add lots, don't just use it as a garnish!



Build your skills

Knowing what's in-season and the best places to shop is a skill worth cultivating. It helps you meal plan more effectively, take advantage of better pricing and enjoy fruits and vegetables when they're at their peak.

Eating locally doesn't have to completely stop during the winter months. Cold weather crops like carrots, parsnips, leeks and kale are even sweeter in the winter. Here in the Virtual Kitchen our garden faces south so we're able to use a season-extension technique by using cold frames with clear tops allowing light to reach the plants but protect them from frost, snow and wind.

Where you shop, ask questions. We found our local healthfood store carried organic; parsnips, carrots, beets, celeriac root, mushrooms, radishes and turnip, all from **Ontario**.

Choosing ripe fruit and fresh produce takes time and practice but it's worth the effort to ensure your meals are delicious + nutritious.

There's an array of winter produce that is at its best in the colder months. They peak in the fall and due to cold weather storage methods, are available throughout the winter months.

Foodland Ontario's charts give you a month by month guide to what's in season in Ontario.

ONTARIO IN-SEASON VEGETABLES

Artichoke								Aug	Sept	Oct		
Asian Vegetables						Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	
Asparagus					May	Jun						
Beans (green/yellow)						Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Beets	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr			Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bok Choy						Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	
Broccoli						Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Brussels Sprouts									Sept	Oct	Nov	
Cabbage	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Carrots	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May		Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cauliflower						Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	
Celery							Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Corn							Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Cucumber (field)						Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Eggplant								Aug	Sept	Oct		
Garlic	Jan	Feb					Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Leeks	Jan	Feb						Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Lettuce (assorted)						Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Mushrooms	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Onions (cooking)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Onions (green)						Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	
Onions (red)	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr					Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Parsnips	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr				Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Peas (green)						Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Peas (snow)						Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept			
Peppers (field)							Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Potatoes	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pumpkin									Sept	Oct		
Radicchio						Jun	Jul	Aug				
Radishes					May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	
Rapini							Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Rutabaga	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Spinach					May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Sprouts	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Squash	Jan	Feb	Mar					Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Summer Squash						Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Sweet Potatoes	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Tomatoes (field)							Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Zucchini							Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		

ONTARIO IN-SEASON FRUITS												
Apples	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun		Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Apricots							Jul	Aug				
Blueberries							Jul	Aug	Sept			
Cherries						Jun	Jul					
Crabapples									Sept	Oct	Nov	
Cranberries									Sept	Oct	Nov	
Currants							Jul	Aug				
Gooseberries							Jul	Aug				
Grapes								Aug	Sept			
Muskmelon								Aug	Sept			
Nectarines								Aug	Sept			
Peaches							Jul	Aug	Sept			
Pears								Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Plums							Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Raspberries							Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Rhubarb	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun						
Strawberries (field)					May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct		
Watermelon							Jul	Aug	Sept			

From all of us in The Virtual Kitchen
we hope you've enjoyed this months recipes with all the
details we provide to ensure you are successful.

*We look forward to sharing more
Nutrition Intelligence in April...*

