

RECIPE for health

APRIL 2010 In partnership with Health4U and Culinary Services

Featured Food:

FENNEL



By Peggy Crum, RD, Health4U Nutritionist

Fennel is an intimidating vegetable. You may have seen the five-foot-tall plant with its feathery fronds flowing in the breeze or the odd-shaped green and white bulb in your grocer's produce aisle. The term "fennel" is used when naming the wild variety as well as the cultivated kind and is also in reference to the plant's many edible parts, including seeds, fronds, stalks and bulbs. (Fennel bulbs are not actually bulbs, but rather compacted layers of succulent leaves.)

What you find in the grocery store is known as "Florence fennel." Sometimes labeled "sweet anise," it is displayed with its celery-like stalks cut short and a frond or two still attached to its bulbous base. Look for firm, plump, rounded (not flattened) and undamaged bulbs. Fresh fennel can be stored in a plastic bag in the fridge for a few days.

How to Prepare Fennel:

1. Cut off the feathery fronds and tough stalks flat across the top of the bulb. Reserve some of the fronds to mince for use as a fresh herb. Save the stalks to add flavor when making stock.
2. Trim and discard a thin slice from the base. Remove and discard a layer or two of the course outer leaves to expose the white, unblemished heart of the bulb.
3. Small bulbs can be used whole. Cut larger bulbs in half from pole to pole. Then use a small knife to remove and discard the pyramid-shaped core from each half. Rinse the bulbs well and drain.
4. Braise or grill fennel bulbs whole, in halves or in wedges. To chop, place fennel half with cut side down on cutting board; slice from end to end and across to yield pieces of desired size. Thin strips are ideal for serving raw. If not using the cut fennel right away, place it in a bowl, sprinkle with lemon juice and cover tightly with plastic wrap.

Despite its nickname, the thick white leaves of the fennel bulb have a subtle flavor only slightly reminiscent of anise. Fennel is sweet and refreshing, used alone or in dishes to enhance other foods.

Fennel Stuffed Salmon

Recipe developed by Corporate Chef Kurt Kwiatkowski and featured in Residential Dining Services. Serves 4.

- 1 Fennel Bulb, cored and diced (yields approx. 2 cups)
- 3 tablespoons Olive Oil, divided
- 2 tablespoons Orange Juice
- ¼ Red Apple, small diced
- 1 tablespoon Unsalted Butter
- 1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon Honey
- 1 tablespoon Fresh Parsley, chopped
- 1 teaspoon Fresh Thyme, chopped
- Zest of ½ Lemon
- Kosher Salt, to taste
- White Pepper, to taste
- 4 Salmon Fillets (6 ounces each)
- Juice of ½ Lemon

Sauté diced fennel in one tablespoon of olive oil until lightly golden and starting to soften. Deglaze pan with orange juice and add apple. Sauté for one minute; remove from heat. Add butter and honey; once absorbed, add parsley, thyme, lemon zest, salt and pepper. This mixture can be made one day ahead and refrigerated until ready to use.

Remove skin from salmon fillets. Make a slit lengthwise over the top of each fillet, leaving ½-inch on each end uncut. Place some of the reserved lemon juice in the cavity and season with salt and pepper. Place ¼ of the filling inside each fillet. Place fillets in shallow baking dish. Brush olive oil over the top and bake at 350°F for eight to 10 minutes.

This recipe will be served for lunch at The Gallery at Snyder/Phillips, Riverwalk Market, Holmes, Holden, Brody and Landon on April 22.

Visit www.eatatstate.com for hours and menus.

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