

Vegetable versus fruit debate continues

Boy oh boy! The age-old "Is it a fruit or is it a vegetable?" question really stirred up a lot of interest last week! It seems that I am not the only one slightly perplexed by a seemingly simple question.

So far the only further information I can add to last week's column is this. What we consider, nutritionally to be a fruit (such as rhubarb) may in fact, botanically speaking be a vegetable. And vice versa (as in the case of the cucumber). We consider a cucumber to be a vegetable because we eat it as a vegetable. But, botanically, it does carry the seed of the plant and is therefore a fruit. The same goes for tomatoes.

I have spoken to Foodland Ontario and am attempting to get information from a couple of other sources. If any more insight on this exciting topic turns up, I will keep you posted!

In the meantime, if any readers have documented definitions of fruit and vegetables or any information that would help us understand this issue more thoroughly—let me know. Specifically—is there a plant that yields both a fruit and a vegetable from the same plant?

You can reach me at lori@kentnerscatering.com.

This week's soup is a personal favourite. You can substitute the root vegetables if you like: try any kind of squash, turnip or rutabaga. Just keep

What's cookin'?

Lori and Gerry Kentner



the quantity of vegetable roughly the same. You can also adjust the amount

of liquid in the soup to make it thinner or thicker. I like a pretty thick soup, but some prefer a more broth-like soup.

And I know it is not on my diet, but the whipping cream and the bacon make all the difference in the world to this soup. The idea with the bacon is that you cook it until it's crisp, process it in the food processor and then it gets added to the soup.

This way, you don't end up with flabby pieces of bacon floating around in your nice soup, but you do get that fabulous smoky flavour. You can skip the part where you add the reserved bacon fat to the soup. This certainly helps to make it rich and flavourful but it is a treat that a lot of us cannot afford!

Have fun and keep cooking!

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Smoky Roasted Root Vegetable Soup

Ingredients

- 1 large Spanish onion
- 2 large sweet potatoes
- 3-4 large parsnips
- 3-4 large carrots
- 2 red peppers, seeds removed
- olive oil
- 1 lb sliced bacon (not maple flavoured)
- 1 can (14 oz) puréed pumpkin
- 6 cups chicken stock (approximately)
- 1 1/2 cups whipping cream (approximately)
- salt and pepper

Method

1. Peel and chop vegetables into large chunks. Spread vegetables on one or two baking sheets, generously drizzle with olive oil.

2. Bake vegetables in a preheated 375 F. degree oven. Total baking time is approximately 30 minutes (depends on size of vegetable chunks), turn halfway through cooking. Vegetables are done when they are soft and caramelized (they should be brown, if not black in some areas).

3. Chop bacon. In a large pot with a lid, cook bacon until crisp, but not burnt.

4. Drain most of the fat from the bacon, reserve 1/4 cup of the bacon fat and set aside.

5. In a food processor, purée the vegetables and set aside. Use a little chicken stock to help purée if it is too thick. Set aside.

6. In a food processor, purée the crisp bacon until fine.

7. In the same large pot that the



bacon cooked in, mix in the puréed vegetables, puréed pumpkin, bacon, 1/4 cup of reserved bacon fat and chicken stock. You can add more or less chicken stock depending on how thick you like the soup to be.

8. Heat soup over low heat until simmering.

9. Add whipping cream and season with salt and pepper.

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