

Add the eggplant and cook until the eggplant is softened. Stir in the zucchini and bell pepper and cook for about 10-15 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes and cook until the vegetables are tender. Stir in the oregano, the thyme, the coriander, the fennel seeds, the salt, and the pepper to taste and cook the mixture, stirring, for one minute. Stir in the basil and combine the mixture well.

Serving

The ratatouille may be made one day in advance, kept covered and chilled, and reheated before serving.

Health benefits

Zucchini contains significant quantities of potassium, folate, and vitamin A, all of which are important for general good health. Zucchini, when eaten regularly, can effectively lower your homocysteine levels.

TARO ROOT (KOCHU) SOUP

Ingredients:

2 whole kochu (arbi/kochu) roots (the lower white part, without the leafy stems)

1 tsp garlic paste

4-5 small onions sliced

1 garlic diced

½ tsp fennel seeds (dry roasted for about 1 minute)

Pinch of nutmeg, pinch of turmeric, salt and pepper to taste

½ cup lemon juice

Method:

First set a pan full of water on boil.

Meanwhile, peel the taro roots and wash them carefully. Taro roots have a lot of dirt on them, so wash them then peel, then wash them again in boiling hot water and then finally set them aside to drain. After



drying the roots wipe them clean with a kitchen towel. On a clean chopping board chop the taro in quarters. Next rub the taro roots with some salt and turmeric powder and set aside.

After about two hours wash them again lightly then set them to boil. Once they are completely tender, cool them and blend in a processor with some water. In a separate skillet now sauté the onions and the garlic together until transparent then remove from fire and grind them into a paste. Mix this to the blended taro and in a pot put them on the stove again. Once they are about to boil add the fennel seeds, lemon

juice and boil it for about 5 minutes. Add the pinch of nutmeg, adjust the pepper. After about 10 more minutes take it off and strain it in a bowl.

Serving

Sprinkle some shredded ginger on top and decorate with coriander leaves before serving. It can also be consumed cold as a dip or a sauce.

Health benefits

The taro root has good amounts of potassium, an important component of cell and body fluids that help regulate heart rate and blood pressure. The corms carry a lot of dietary fibre, and antioxidants in addition to

moderate proportions of minerals like zinc, magnesium, copper, iron, manganese, in addition to vitamins.

SWEET POTATO KHEER

As the winter evenings leave us chilled and craving for something hot and preferably sweet, here's a yummy sweet potato dessert of the Western part of the sub-continent. Sweet potatoes have been known to be in use from even 8000 years ago, found in some South American excavations. It was possibly domesticated in Central America.

Ingredients:

1 kg sweet potatoes boiled and mashed (make sure the strands are properly sieved out)

½ kg powder milk; use half milk to make a thick pot of milk and keep the powder for later

Sugar to taste or use brown sugar

A drop of kewra essence

Almonds, cardamom, raisins whole cinnamon stick, according to your preference

Method:

After boiling the sweet potato, mash it up ensuring the long strands are removed. Boil half the amount of powder milk into a thick liquid; add powder milk to the mashed potato and mix it well. Then add this mixture to the milk, add sugar, cardamom, cinnamon and the essence and cook till it all starts bubbling up. The powder milk added to the potato gives it an extra bit of body. Once the mixture has reached the thick consistency of a 'kheer', take it off the stove and sprinkle almonds and raisins on top before serving.

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