



Sara's Favorite Market Hacks, Tips and Tricks

6.8.19



Freezing herbs:

Everyone's been there. You finish up a recipe that calls for 2 tablespoons of basil and you still have most of a bunch left. It lingers in your refrigerator for a week before turning all brown and gooey. There's an easy way to save that basil: just put a small amount of your leftover herbs into an ice cube tray and cover with oil. Use a leftover Garnish & Gather plastic bag (you keep those right?) to cover and store in your freezer. When you need a quick pop of herby flavor in your salad dressing, pasta or sautéed veggies, you can pop out a cube and you're all set! While it doesn't work great for adding herbs as a garnish, it does work well for recipes that will be pureed or pretty much any preparation that involves heat.

The Salad Heuristic

When I'm trying to figure out my dinner plans for the week, I have one market "go-to" that pretty much always ends up in the rotation and that's a market salad. My shortcut is that every salad needs 5 basic elements:

- 1) Lettuce or other greens as a base - kale, arugula, chard, etc.
- 2) 2 mix ins –1 vegetable and 1 fruit, or 2 vegetables, or 2 fruits, if that's what looks good at market
- 3) Cheese – Soft, aged, blue, goat, sheep, cow, I'm a cheese fanatic so go with whatever you like. I want a bit of cheese on every forkful, so I tend to use ones that you can crumble or grate easily
- 4) Nuts or Croutons – Perfect for a bit of crunch and saltiness. I make croutons using leftover bread from TGM since it's inevitable that I don't eat the whole loaf.
- 5) Dressing
- 6) Fresh herbs to garnish – optional, or you can toss one of those herb cubes into the blender while you make your dressing

I try to balance the flavors and textures in my salad so every bite has an element of salty, sweet, umami, tart, and bitter. It's just an easy way to put together a salad without thinking too hard. Today I'm using lettuce from HEIRLOOM GARDENS, strawberries and blueberries from GREEN OLA ACRES, chevre from CALYROAD CREAMERY, and croutons made from TGM BREAD. So speaking of croutons and dressing...

DIY Croutons

Slightly Stale Bread

TGM Bread

Olive oil to coat

Salt + Pepper + Seasonings

- 1) Cut bread into roughly 1 inch cubes, toss onto a lined cookie sheet
- 2) Drizzle with olive oil, salt & pepper, dried herbs or seasoning(optional), and toss to coat
- 3) Bake at 375 until toasty brown

Easy Peasy Dressing:

You really only have to remember one thing about making a vinaigrette: 1 part vinegar to about 3 parts oil and whisk like crazy (or just use a blender.) This isn't a hard and fast rule for every vinaigrette but it'll get you close. Always taste your vinaigrette before serving and adjust the balance of vinegar to oil if you need to. I always add a little honey to mine, partly because it adds that sweet element to your salad and balances out the vinegar, but also because it is a natural emulsifier, meaning your dressing is less likely to break. A tad of mustard helps too if you want to add a little kick, and bonus, it's also a natural emulsifier. My current favorite salad dressing is this Fire Cider dressing:

1 part Fire Cider PIEDMONT PROVISIONS

3 parts Olive Oil

Drizzle o' honey to taste DANCES WITH BEES

Fizzy Aguas Frescas

I love cucumbers. They're so good in salads, by themselves, pickled, dipped in dressing; there are just so many tasty things to do with cucumbers, but they're also phenomenal in drinks! My go-to is a cucumber fizzy agua fresca where I replace still water with seltzer.

Cucumbers, juiced HEIRLOOM GARDENS/MCMULLAN FAMILY FARM

Simple Syrup

Lime Juice

Herbs (today we're using mint & lemon balm) RODGERS GREENS & ROOTS

Seltzer Water

If you don't have a juicer, you can blend up the cucumbers with a little water until they are very finely pulped, then squeeze the pulp in some doubled over cheesecloth to get all the juice out. I use the leftover pulp in my homemade soaps but you can also toss it in your garden, it'll compost super quick.

All you do for this recipe is pour 3 oz of cucumber juice in the bottom of a glass, squeeze in half a lime, add 1 TBSP of simple syrup and muddle in a few leaves of fresh herbs. Add a few ice cubes and pour a can of seltzer water over the top. If you're a fan of gin, this recipe goes particularly well with gin (it's not too shabby with vodka either.) As with every recipe: taste as you go, add a little more cucumber juice or simple syrup as you like, use your favorite herbs, experiment and have fun!

Lastly, back to herbs:

You can infuse simple syrup with leftover herbs for making sodas and cocktails. All you do is add equal parts (by weight) of sugar and water into a small saucepan. Add your herbs and bring to a boil. Lower the heat to a simmer for 30 minutes. Strain the herbs out and let the syrup cool to room temperature before storing in the fridge. These syrups will last about 2 weeks in the fridge and make a fantastic addition to homemade cocktails, sodas, juices, and really anything else that can use a flavor boost from sugar and herbs.