



WEEK OF APRIL 04, 2022 WEEK 14/52

### Life of A Fermentress

The original plan for my life at Eatwell, besides being the farmer's wife, was to make my lacto-fermented beverages, we named Drinkwell Softers. They, sadly, have been put on hold for a long time now. Partly, due to the fact that I was running into fermentation issues, and partly because I just don't have the time or the brain space to go down to our kitchen/warehouse and make them. For a seemingly simple drink, there is actually a lot going into their making.

Well, a few weeks back I had a bit of spare time, so I went down to make the base, which is the second half of part one. The first step is to drain the whey from the yogurt. After a few days of draining, I mix the whey with water, sugar and salt; then bottle and allow it to ferment for a week or two. This concoction, what I call "base", really is where all the magic comes from. The good bacteria from the yogurt eats up the sugar, reproduces, creating more good bacteria and during its life cycle it produces gas, or fizz!

The next step in my process is to take some of the base, mix it with one of our hydrosols for flavor, more water, sugar and salt. Bottle it up, and send it back to the proofer, (the little warm room we built) to let that ferment for another week or so. If all goes well and the Fermentation Goddess blesses me, I end up with delicious, high-probiotic, refreshing, slightly fizzy drinks. Sadly, the Fermentation Goddess and I have not been communicating properly and I finally had to walk away, when batch after batch failed. Plus, during the pandemic, we couldn't really sell them at the market, which is where the majority of my sales were.

Last week I spent a little time down in that kitchen and with great trepidation, but also great hope, I made a batch of Lemon Verbena. When I checked it last Friday, only after a couple of days of fermenting, the Softers were definitely fizzing! Hallelujah. It brought me so much joy spending that little bit of time in my kitchen, doing what I was supposed to be doing for the farm. It also made me feel a little sad, reminding me of a time that is forever lost to me. But something was re-kindled, and for the first time in a long time, I found great joy over my giant pot, and filling those bottles. Hopefully, fermentation will continue to bubble and I can make lots of Softers and you all can order them to come with your CSA BOX!

I originally learned about lacto-fermented drinks years ago when Nigel brought me to my first Weston A Price Foundation conference down near SFO. What an eye-opening weekend that was. People everywhere were going crazy over whole raw milk, raw butter and cheese. I have always been a dairy queen, so I felt like I had landed in a new world perfectly suited to me. Three Stone Hearth out of Berkeley had a stand and was selling what they called "Culture Coolers", whey based drinks made with hydrosols. I kept passing their booth wondering what all the fuss was about, so finally I stood in that line to get my own drink - mind blown. I went racing back to Nigel, told him he had to try it. I was so excited because I never liked Kombucha, but this was a fermented - probiotic drink I could really love. AND it was flavored with hydrosols, which we were already producing.

As a side note - if you aren't familiar with hydrosols, they are not the same as flower water, which most commonly is distilled water with fragrance added. Here is the definition of true hydrosols, from our dear friend Jeanne Rose: *hydro' means water and 'sol' means solution - the new liquid that results from plant distillation. It is the aromatic non-alcoholic distillate left from the distillation process of organically grown plants that contains water-soluble parts of the plant material and micro-drops of the essential oil. Organoleptically, it has strong taste, strong scent and a pH of less than 5.5....Jeanne Rose 1990 Now you know:)*



But getting back to that conference, I felt like my life was transformed by one simple drink. And to make it even more exciting, Nigel was friends with Jessica Pretense, one of the owners of Three Stone Hearth and the author of the cookbook that introduced me to fermented drinks and foods. I was thrilled to meet her, and was honored, when I asked her for guidance in starting my little drink business, that she gladly connected me to the man who made the Culture Coolers at Three Stone. I think his name was Chad, and in my year of learning about fermentation, lacto-bacillus and bacteria, he was so encouraging and helpful. I literally spent a year working on my version of drink which finally became Drinkwell Softers. And what a year it was, it included many flops, exploded bottles,

peach goop all over my kitchen, even on the ceiling. It became quite the rabbit hole that ultimately led me to Elaine Ingham and the Soil Food Web. I listened to tapes of her conferences and learned about good bacteria living in the soil, and years later I took one of her week long soil & microscope courses. Which then got me thinking about using whey and fermenting our grain for the chickens. Funny how life is, we don't live in a bubble, and as I was discovering and learning all this cool stuff, these ideas were fermenting in the world around me. The crazy people who talked about feeding the soil, making sure there is balance in that universe, weren't sounding so crazy anymore. No-till and regenerative farming, were terms that were starting to buzz. Today everybody is at least talking about regenerative farming and those practices are more common and certainly accepted, thanks to the decades of work of people like Dr. Ingham. But I digress, and you can see what I meant by rabbit hole. That year of reading every thing I could find on bacteria, probiotics and fermenting food, opened my eyes to so much more than just a refreshing soft drink. I didn't discover anything new, but all of a sudden all of these unrelated pieces came together and made sense of a universe scientists are now thrilled to explore, the micro-biome. The more we learn about soil health and human gut health, the more we learn just how important it is to eat *and* drink, fresh, living foods. Bet you didn't think you would get all of this from an article about a simple little drink, but each week the newsletter is a new rabbit hole for me, cheers!



# RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

Requesting some help. I don't really want to be a downer, but I have been caring for my mom for almost two years now. This week I called in hospice. I know many of you have gone through this, so you know how distracting life can be when caring for someone taking their final journey on this earth. My request is this, would any of you like to help me with recipes for the next few weeks?

Maybe you could shoot a couple of suggestions with links, or write them up and send them to me no later than Monday night? If you would like to help this way, please let me know, and if you just want to send a random recipe that works well with what is in the box, awesome, and I will appreciate any help coming to me. And by the way, if you would ever like to write a short story for the newsletter side, I would love to share it with everyone.

I just got a good whiff of our csa boxes and I walked away with a strong craving for Chicken Pot Pie. Between the green garlic, spring onions and the sage, wow, it was Marie Calendar living her best life! If you are not a chicken/meat person, you can easily make a vegetarian version using cubes of marinated tofu. I would marinate small cubes in a mixture of water, Braggs Liquid Aminos, or soy sauce, a bunch of the sage and garlic. Maybe even bake it for a few minutes to really help it absorb those flavors. Your pot pie can include diced cooked carrots, onion, garlic, some of the Stir Fry mix chopped up and lightly sautéed. If you want to make it chicken you can use leftover roast chicken. [Simply Recipes](#) has a delicious looking recipe and you can click on that link to see the entire thing.

## Mustard Greens, Yuba and Gochujang Walnut Vinaigrette

Farmhouse Kitchen Recipe & Shape.com  
I made this the other night and it was so satisfying. If you aren't familiar with Yuba, it is the skin from the tofu making process. And when you run it under warm water and unfold the thin sheets, you can cut it into strips like pasta. It is very high in protein and so delicious. AND you can order it to come with your CSA BOX, just like the Gochujang and Walnuts. You could make this recipe with cubed raw tofu, or maybe some pasta or cubed meat, or turn it into a grain bowl; all of those options would taste good.

Step one, make a batch of Gochujang Walnut Vinaigrette. I linked this recipe in the Thursday email two weeks ago, but here it is:

Recipe found on [shape.com](#)

2 TB Gochujang (Korean chile bean paste),

2 TB fresh Lemon Juice

2 TB finely chopped Shallots, but I used Green Garlic instead

2 TB finely chopped Basil, of course I used Parsley instead:)

1/3 cup Extra-Virgin Olive Oil

1 TB Toasted Sesame Oil

1/4 cup finely chopped toasted Walnuts

Kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

In the bottom of a large bowl, whisk together 2 tablespoons gochujang (Korean chile bean paste), 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, 2 tablespoons finely chopped shallots, and 2 tablespoons finely chopped basil. While whisking, slowly pour in 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil and 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil. Stir in 1/4 cup finely chopped toasted walnuts, and season

with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper. Mixture can be made up to 3 days ahead and refrigerated in an airtight container.

For the Bowl/Salad

1 Bunch Mustard

1 Bunch Radishes

1-2 Avocados

Some Yuba, cut into strips

Blanch the mustard 1 or 2 minutes in boiling water. Drain well, and cool, then squeeze out the excess water. And chop. Slice the radishes. Separate the Yuba sheets according to instructions, or prep your alternative ingredients. Mix the greens with the Yuba, and spoon on some of the Gochujang

Vinaigrette, to taste. Add some salt or a splash of soy sauce to season. Top with sliced radishes and avocado and enjoy!

## Soup

This week I made a giant pot of chicken soup. I had no onions in the house, so I used loads of green garlic. AND I took all the leftover veggies from the fridge, fennel, turnips, tons of parsley and a several bunches of bok choy, chopped them up, sautéed a couple of minutes and added them to home made chicken stock. I added an organic vegetable cube, salt and pepper and yum! I had cooked up chicken I found in the bottom of my freezer from Root Down, the seal had broke and it has resided in there for a very long time. So I made stock with it. To my bowl of really hot soup I add a bit of chopped up chicken from the stock pot, and some cooked noodles. The bok choy adds something like celery to the soup, and it tastes so good. Now I am thinking of taking some of the leftover chicken and soup and using that as a base for a pot pie sauce. See how that all loops around?

## Garlic Parmesan Roasted Carrots

Recipe from [Cafedelites.com](#)

I cut this recipe in half and it is enough for 3 servings

1 lb Carrots, washed and halved

1/4 cup Olive Oil

4 large cloves Garlic, minced (or 1 tablespoon minced garlic) Or use a bunch of Green Garlic

1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

2 tablespoons Panko bread crumbs, (or normal breadcrumbs)

Salt and pepper, to taste

Fresh chopped parsley, optional

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Lightly grease or spray a baking sheet with cooking oil spray. Arrange carrots on baking sheet. Add the olive oil, garlic, parmesan, bread crumbs, salt and pepper. Toss all ingredients together to completely coat the carrots. Spread out and bake for 20-25 minutes or until tender. Toss with a spatula half way through. Remove from oven and serve immediately. Top with fresh parsley if desired. You might try frying up a little bit of that sage, then chopping and topping.

### This Week's Box List

\*Carrots, TF

\*Green Garlic

\*Radish

\*Stir Fry Mix

\*Sage

\*Eatwell Oranges

\*Bok Choy

Fennel OR Celery

Spring Onions

Mustard

Spinach

\* = Items in Box for 2