



fennel

fava beans

asparagus

artichoke

English peas

Fresh-picked flavor

Spring vegetables, harvested by a farmer near you, are just about the greenest food you can eat

BY MOLLY WATSON PHOTOGRAPHS BY LEIGH BEISCH

**Braised spring
vegetables**





FROM FARM TO YOU

Getting close to the source of your food is a green way to eat, but it can also be fun. Make it more personal by “adopting” a farm through a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program.

Q: What’s a CSA?

A: You buy a membership with a farm and receive weekly deliveries of fruits and vegetables at their best.

Q: How long is the commitment?

A: Most often it’s a quarterly or monthly membership.

Q: What does it cost?

A: \$25 to \$40 per week.

Q: What do you get?

A: Some farms offer different sizes of boxes; others have flower, egg, or meat options. And some even allow you to choose items from a list of what’s likely to be available.

Q: How do I find one near me?

A: Go to localharvest.org/csa or call 831/475-8150.



Asparagus and butterhead lettuce salad



Fresh peas with mint and green onions

Braised spring vegetables

Slowly cooking young vegetables with olive oil brings out their natural sweetness.

PREP AND COOK TIME 1 hour

MAKES 4 servings

NOTES If you don’t like fava beans or can’t find them (check upscale grocery stores and farmers’ markets), you can leave them out and double the amount of peas. Green garlic is very young, mild garlic, picked before the cloves have formed; it resembles a green onion. It’s available in spring at farmers’ markets, but if you can’t find it, double the green onions.

2 lbs. fava beans in the pod, shelled (about 2 cups; see Notes)

1 lemon

4 large artichokes

1 fennel bulb, fronds attached

5 green garlic stems (see Notes)

5 green onions

¼ cup olive oil

About ½ tsp. salt

1 lb. English peas in the pod, shelled (about 1 cup)

2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

1. If using favas, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add favas and cook 2 minutes. Drain and rinse with cold water. Pull the top off tough skin on each bean and pop bean out of skin. Set beans aside.
2. Fill a large bowl with water and add juice from lemon. Working with 1 artichoke at a time, trim and discard stem end and about 2 in. of prickly top. Pull off and discard all tough outer leaves until only tender, very light green and yellow leaves remain (you may need to trim top further to fully remove leaves). Trim any tough green peel from stem. Be aggressive; you want the entire trimmed artichoke to be edible. Quarter artichoke lengthwise and scrape out the fuzzy choke (any choke left behind will add a lot of bitterness). Put trimmed artichoke in lemon water. Repeat with remaining artichokes.
3. Trim fennel bulb of dark and medium green tops. Chop feathery fronds and reserve 2 tbsp. of them. Discard remaining tops. Halve bulb lengthwise and cut into ¼-in.-thick wedges. Set aside.
4. Trim root ends and dry or tough dark green leaves from green garlic and green onions. Cut into 2-in. pieces (if the green

*Braised whole-pod
fava beans with dill*



garlic has a small bulb on the end, halve it lengthwise). Set aside.

5. Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add fennel wedges and drained artichokes. Sprinkle with ½ tsp. salt and stir until sizzling. Add green garlic, green onions, and 1 cup water; cover, reduce heat to medium, and cook, stirring occasionally, until artichokes are tender, about 20 minutes.

6. Add peas and fava beans, cover, and cook 2 minutes. Stir in fennel fronds and remove from heat. Add salt to taste.

7. Divide evenly among 4 shallow bowls and drizzle with extra-virgin olive oil.

PER 1-CUP SERVING 420 CAL., 47% (198 CAL.) FROM FAT; 15 G PROTEIN; 22 G FAT (3.1 G SAT.); 49 G CARBO (19 G FIBER); 515 MG SODIUM; 0 MG CHOL.

Asparagus and butterhead lettuce salad

The texture of butterhead lettuce keeps this salad light and delicate.

PREP AND COOK TIME 30 minutes

MAKES 4 servings

NOTES You can use any tender, sweet lettuce in place of butterhead. Find perlini mozzarella at specialty grocery stores and Italian markets, or use a 4-oz. piece of fresh mozzarella grated on the large holes of a box grater or cut into ¼-in. pieces.

1 bunch asparagus (about 1 lb.)

2 heads butterhead lettuce such as Boston or Bibb (see Notes)

3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

5 tsp. fresh lemon juice

½ tsp. honey

½ tsp. salt

¼ tsp. freshly shredded lemon zest

¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

⅛ tsp. dry mustard

4 oz. perlini mozzarella (tiny balls; see Notes)

2 tbsp. pine nuts

1. Hold the end of an asparagus stalk and bend until it snaps off. Repeat with remaining stalks and discard woody ends. Slice trimmed spears on the diagonal into ⅛-in. lengths, leaving tips about 1 in. long.

2. Remove and discard outer leaves of lettuce heads. Tear remaining leaves into bite-size pieces. Rinse and dry. Set aside.

3. In a small bowl or measuring cup, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, honey, salt, lemon zest, pepper, and dry mustard until creamy-looking.

QUICK TIP >>

ASPARAGUS: THIN OR THICK?

Thin asparagus looks dainty and cooks more quickly; thick ones are meaty and sweet but tend to cook unevenly because they're often tapered. Streamline fatties by shaving off some girth with a vegetable peeler.

4. In a large bowl, toss lettuce with 3 tbsp. dressing. Divide lettuce among 4 salad plates. Toss asparagus pieces with remaining dressing and spoon over lettuces, dividing evenly. Sprinkle salads with perlini and pine nuts. Serve immediately.

PER SERVING 240 CAL., 75% (180 CAL.) FROM FAT; 11 G PROTEIN; 20 G FAT (6.4 G SAT.); 7.2 G CARBO (2 G FIBER); 411 MG SODIUM; 25 MG CHOL.

Fresh peas with mint and green onions

Peas with mint is a classic combination that's more than the sum of its parts.

PREP AND COOK TIME 30 minutes

MAKES 8 servings

NOTES For the final sprinkling of salt, use kosher or sea salt for a clean, bright taste.

4 lbs. English peas

2 green onions

12 large mint leaves

2 tsp. unsalted butter

¼ cup chopped chives

Salt (see Notes)

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Meanwhile, shell peas (you should have about 4 cups). Cook peas in boiling water until tender, about 2 minutes. Drain well and transfer to a medium bowl.

2. While peas are cooking, trim and discard the root ends and dark green leaves of green onions. Halve white and light green parts lengthwise and thinly slice crosswise. Set aside. Chop mint and set aside.

3. Add butter to hot peas and toss until butter is melted and peas are coated. Add green onions, chives, and mint and toss to combine. Sprinkle with salt to taste and serve immediately.

PER ½-CUP SERVING 69 CAL., 17% (12 CAL.) FROM FAT; 4.1 G PROTEIN; 1.3 G FAT (0.6 G SAT.); 11 G CARBO (3.9 G FIBER); 4.9 MG SODIUM; 2.6 MG CHOL.

Braised whole-pod fava beans with dill

Fava beans are a culinary highlight of spring, but double-shelling them takes time. Very young favas, though, can be eaten pod and all.

PREP AND COOK TIME 45 minutes

MAKES 6 servings

⅓ cup olive oil

1 sweet onion, halved and thinly sliced

1½ lbs. fava bean pods, ends trimmed and strings removed

¾ tsp. salt

1 tbsp. sugar

¼ cup chopped dill, plus 1 tbsp. for garnish

Plain whole-milk or Greek-style yogurt

1. Put oil and onion in a large pot over medium-high heat. Cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add favas, salt, sugar, and ¼ cup water. Bring to a simmer. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, 20 minutes.

2. Add ¼ cup dill, cover, and cook until fava pods are tender and starting to fall apart, about 10 minutes. Sprinkle with 1 tbsp. dill and serve warm or at room temperature, with yogurt on the side.

PER SERVING (WITHOUT YOGURT) 222 CAL., 53% (117 CAL.) FROM FAT; 9.2 G PROTEIN; 13 G FAT (1.7 G SAT.); 24 G CARBO (FIBER N/A); 322 MG SODIUM; 0 MG CHOL.

Roasted asparagus

Roasting intensifies the woody flavor of asparagus. A thin crust of earthy parmesan cheese adds a bit of crunch.

PREP AND COOK TIME 25 minutes

MAKES 6 servings

2 bunches asparagus (about 2 lbs.)

2 tsp. olive oil

¼ tsp. salt

⅛ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

⅓ cup packed freshly shredded parmesan cheese

2 tsp. fresh lemon juice

1. Preheat oven to 475°. Hold the end of an asparagus stalk and bend until it snaps off. Repeat with remaining stalks and discard woody ends.

2. Toss asparagus with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and toss well. Arrange asparagus in an even layer in a shallow baking dish. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese and bake until asparagus is crisp-tender and cheese is browned, about 10 minutes. Sprinkle with lemon juice. Serve hot or warm.

PER SERVING 84 CAL., 49% (41 CAL.) FROM FAT; 7.6 G PROTEIN; 4.6 G FAT (2.1 G SAT.); 5 G CARBO (1.2 G FIBER); 274 MG SODIUM; 7.5 MG CHOL. ■



Roasted asparagus