

Recipes from *Blood Orange*

China Bayles #24

By Susan Wittig Albert

Another favourite brew was that of armsful of Meadowsweet, Yarrow, Dandelion, and Nettles, and the mash when sweetened with old honey and well worked with barm [yeast], and then bottled in big stoneware bottles, made a drink strong enough to turn even an old toper's [alcoholic's] head.

Maude Grieve
A Modern Herbal, 1931

Ruby's Orange Rosemary Muffins

1/2 cup butter or margarine
2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup sugar
2 large eggs
1 cup yogurt
1/2 cup orange juice, fresh
zest of one orange
1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, finely chopped

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line muffin tin. Set aside. Melt butter and set in refrigerator to cool. In a large bowl, mix flour, baking powder, salt, and baking soda. In a separate bowl, mix cooled butter, sugar, and eggs; add yogurt, orange juice, zest, and rosemary. Mix well. Add to flour mixture and stir until just combined. (Don't overmix) Fill muffin cups about 2/3 full. Bake for 12-15 minutes (mini muffins) or 20 minutes (large muffins). Cool in pan for 3-4 minutes before removing to cool on a rack.

Mary Beth's Blood Orange Granita

4 cups blood orange juice
1/2 cup lemon juice
1/4 cup simple sugar syrup (2 parts sugar to 1 part water, heated to boiling)
1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom

Combine all ingredients in a mixing bowl. Adjust sugar to taste. Pour liquid into large shallow stainless steel pan and place in freezer. When frozen, scrape with fork until fluffy and serve.

Mary Beth's Orange-Rosemary Liqueur

3 oranges
1 cup sugar
2 cups water
3/4 cup coarsely chopped rosemary leaves
1 cup vodka or Everclear
1/2 cup brandy or rum

Wash the oranges thoroughly, let them dry, and zest them. Combine the water and sugar in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve sugar. Add the rosemary and simmer for 5-6 minutes, stirring occasionally. Strain through a fine sieve; discard the rosemary. Pour into a clean quart jar. Add orange zest and cool. Add vodka and brandy or rum. Cover tightly and store in a dark, cool place for 1 month. Strain, discard the zest, and rebottle. Cover tightly and age for another month.

Blood Orange, Avocado, Grape and Spinach Salad

4 large handfuls of spinach
2 blood oranges, segmented
1 avocado, diced
18-20 red grapes
Green onion, sliced diagonally
2 ounces (about 1/3 cup) goat cheese (or blue cheese), crumbled

Orange Vinaigrette

3 tablespoons orange juice
2 tablespoons white wine or Champagne vinegar
1 teaspoon finely minced garlic
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons honey
1/3 cup olive oil
Finely ground black pepper

To make the salad: In a large serving bowl, combine the greens, oranges, avocado, grapes, onion, and cheese.

To make the vinaigrette: Whisk together the orange juice, vinegar, garlic, mustard, and honey. Gradually whisk in oil until well blended. Add pepper to taste. (If you have some of Mary Beth's Orange-Rosemary Liqueur, substitute that for the orange juice and increase the vinegar to 2 tablespoons.) Drizzle dressing over the salad and toss. Serve immediately. (Makes 4 side salads, 2 dinner salads)

Spicy Henbit*

4 cups henbit leaves, chopped (avoid tough, stringy stems)
Water to cover greens
3 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon sweet curry powder
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
2 tablespoons flour
3/4 cup sour cream

Cover the greens with water, bring to a boil, and simmer for 10 minutes. In a separate pan melt three tablespoons butter. Stir in curry powder, cinnamon, and cloves. Stir and cook for one minute, then stir in flour. Whisk in a half cup of hot water from the simmering henbit and stir until smooth. Remove from heat and stir in sour cream. Drain the henbit and mix with the sour cream mixture. Return to heat and cook on low for 5 minutes. Serve hot.

*Spring-flowering henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*) is a member of the mint family. It can be eaten raw, as a salad, or cooked as a green. Consult a foraging guide to be sure you know what you're gathering.

Cass' Overnight, No-Cook Orange-Mint Oatmeal

1 cup yogurt, any flavor
1/3 cup uncooked old-fashioned or quick-cooking oats
1/4 cup orange segments
1 teaspoon chopped mint
sprig of mint for garnish

Mix yogurt and oats. Stir in orange segments and chopped mint and top with a sprig of mint. Cover and refrigerate overnight. If you prefer, for oranges substitute 1/4 cup of sliced bananas, blueberries, raspberries, pineapple tidbits, diced kiwifruit, sliced grapes. Serve with a crunchy topping, such as chopped nuts.

Caitie's Favorite Pasta: Tortellini with Lemon Basil Butter Sauce

1 package fresh or dried tortellini (14-16 ounces)
1/2 cup butter or margarine
1 green onion, chopped
1 teaspoon lemon zest
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
Salt and black pepper, to taste
Grated Parmesan cheese
Extra basil for garnish, optional

Cook tortellini according to package instructions. Drain and pour into a serving bowl.

Melt the butter or margarine in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add the green onion and cook until tender, about two minutes. Stir in the lemon zest, lemon juice, and basil. Cook for an additional 2 minutes. Pour sauce over the tortellini and stir gently to combine. Garnish with Parmesan cheese and (if desired) extra basil. Serve immediately.

Coffee Pecan Liqueur

1 cup vodka
1 cup brandy
1 1/2 teaspoons pecan extract
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon orange zest

1 cup strong coffee
1/3 cup white sugar
2/3 cup light brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt

In a quart jar, combine vodka, brandy, extracts, and orange zest and set aside.

To make syrup: In a saucepan, over medium heat, bring coffee, sugars, and salt to a boil, stirring constantly. Reduce the heat and boil gently, stirring until the sugars have dissolved (3-5 minutes). Remove from heat and cool for 15 minutes or so.

Pour syrup into jar of alcohol mixture, stir well to mix, and cover tightly. Store in a cool, dark place for at least one month, shaking occasionally.

Blood Orange Liqueur

4 blood oranges
1 lemon
Fresh ginger, about 2" long, peeled and sliced
2 cups vodka

1 cup water
1 cup sugar

Wash and dry the oranges and lemon. Peel the skin from the oranges and lemon (but leave the pith on the fruit). Put peels in a quart jar. Remove the pith from two of the oranges, reserving two others for another use. Cut the cleaned oranges into pieces and place in quart jar, smashing with the back of a spoon. Add ginger and stir. Pour the vodka into the jar.

To make simple syrup, combine water and sugar in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Cool.

Pour the syrup into the fruit-alcohol mixture, stir well, and cover tightly. Store in cool, dark place for at least a month, shaking occasionally.

Strain the liqueur through a double layer of cheesecloth into a pitcher. Strain a second time through a new double-layer of cheesecloth into bottles. Cap and store or use immediately. ``

Strawberry Shrub

1 cup sliced strawberries
1 cup sugar
1 cup red wine vinegar
1/2 cup mint leaves, bruised

Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl. Mash the berries to release the juice, and stir until the sugar has nearly dissolved. Refrigerate overnight. Place the fruit mixture in a nonreactive saucepan and heat gently over medium-low heat, just to dissolve remaining sugar. Strain through a mesh strainer; strain again through a coffee filter. Refrigerate. Use to flavor sparkling water or top ice cream. Makes about 2 cups.

In place of strawberries, you can use any seasonal fruit: raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, peaches, mango, pineapple. Experiment with fresh "sweet" herbs, too: lemon balm, pineapple sage, scented geraniums, tarragon, basil, rosemary (but do crush rosemary leaves). And try adding spices: cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, mace, ginger.

China's Homemade Real Ginger Ale

1 1/2 cups chopped peeled ginger (about 8 ounces fresh ginger)
2 cups water
3/4 cup sugar
Pinch salt
About 1 quart club soda
Fresh mint for garnish

To make the ginger syrup: In a small saucepan, partially covered, simmer chopped ginger in water for 45 minutes. Remove from heat, cover, and let steep for 30 minutes. Strain through a sieve into a bowl, pressing ginger to remove all liquid. (Discard ginger.) Return liquid to saucepan. Add sugar and a pinch of salt and heat over medium heat, stirring, until sugar has dissolved. Chill.

To make a drink: Stir ginger syrup into club soda: start with 1/4 cup syrup to 3/4 cup club soda, adjust to taste. Serve over ice, with a sprig of fresh mint.

Connie's Stress-Buster Orange Banana Slush Lunch

1 cup water
1 can (6 ounces) frozen orange juice concentrate
1/2 cup cold milk
3/4 cup (6 ounces) yogurt
1 frozen (unpeeled) banana, sliced
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

In a blender, combine the water, orange juice concentrate, yogurt, sugar, milk and vanilla; cover and process until smooth. Pour into chilled glasses; serve immediately. Yield: 3 8-ounce glasses. Can be refrozen.