

Natural Food

By Susie Iventosch



Open Sesame Natural Foods in Lafayette Photo Susie Iventosch

About 15 years ago, a good friend of mine served a mixed-grain mushroom pilaf to us at a dinner gathering. She'd found it in a 1990-something Martha Stewart Living magazine and saved it in her recipe file. It was absolutely delicious and every once in a while, I come upon the recipe (now in my file) and remember to serve it again.

Since I've been on a flax kick lately, I decided to change it up a little using an even wider variety of grains than the original recipe called for, plus the addition of porcini, otherwise known as God's gift to humanity!

I started looking for other interesting and healthy grains to add to the flax seeds I'd purchased earlier

at Open Sesame Natural Foods in Lafayette. One of my favorite past-times, perusing market shelves to see what's new and interesting, produced a new item I'd not heard of before – purple prairie barley. Naturally, I bought it and took it home.

Some time passed before trying the new purple barley and by then I'd already forgotten where I'd bought it in the first place. So, I phoned Timeless Seeds, the grower of this particular grain, and the CEO, David Oien, answered the phone. Chief among my questions was where I could possibly buy it again. He helped me out and also offered some very good information about this kind of barley. And, as a result, Open Sesame now carries this majestic wonder grain.

"We re-introduced this hulless heirloom grain about six or eight years ago," he said. "Hulless barley originated in the Nile River Valley and the purple hulless barley can be traced back for at least many centuries to the mountainous areas of Tibet, as well. Barley is an adaptive crop and can grow in both high heat and cool mountainous regions. It's been our observation that the purple pigmentation occurs due to fertile soil and adequate levels of rainfall."

The purple color, he says, is caused by anthocyanins, water soluble vacuolar pigments that serve as antioxidants, like those found in

blueberries, purple cabbage and beets. Purple barley is 15 percent protein and is the highest source he's seen for healthful, cholesterol-fighting beta glucans, immune response potentiators known to promote health in a number of ways.

He went on to inform me that pearl barley has an indigestible husk that must be removed before human consumption, and in the process many of the nutrients are lost. Flax seeds also promote good health, and according to Sue Jun, owner of Open Sesame, flax is good for fiber and is an excellent source of Omega 3-6-9 essential fatty acids, which can help to reduce cholesterol and inflammation, and fight heart disease.

After all that searching, and researching, Martha's good old mixed-grain pilaf evolved into a regular health-nut dish. The purple barley gives a rich earthy flavor, and when combined with flax seeds, wild rice, wheat berries, onions and porcini, it is good enough for a main course!

And, if you felt like adding toasted pecans before serving that would be very tasty too.

Open Sesame has served the Lamorinda area for 30 years and carries a wide variety of grains, including the purple prairie barley, many gluten-free products and several cookbooks containing wonderful, healthy recipes.

Open Sesame Natural Foods

983 Moraga Road, Lafayette, CA. 925.283.2207
Open Monday thru Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sources for nutritional information:
<http://www.timelessfood.com/purple-prairie-barley.html>
http://www.foodproductdesign.com/articles/463/463_651nutrinotes.html
<http://www.mind1st.co.uk/omega-3-6-9.asp>
<http://www.healingdaily.com/detoxification-diet/flaxseed.htm>
<http://www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/omega-3-000316.htm>

These recipe is available on our web site.
Go to: www.lamorindaweekly.com
Susie can be reached at suziven@gmail.com

Dining

Mixed-Grain Pilaf with Porcini mushrooms

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 cups cremini or brown mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 4 ounces dried porcini, reconstituted (use fresh if available) and chopped
- 1/4 cup flax seed
- 1/4 cup soft winter wheat berries
- 1/4 cup pearl barley
- 1/2 cup brown rice
- 1/2 cup purple prairie barley (or pearl barley if purple is not available)
- 1/2 cup wild rice
- 4 1/2 cups chicken broth
- Salt and pepper to taste



Five grains used in this dish: from center front left clockwise: pearl barley, wild rice, brown rice, dried porcini and cremini mushrooms, purple prairie barley, flax. Pilaf in center Photo Susie Iventosch

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
On the stovetop, melt the butter in a large oven-proof pot (with a tight-fitting lid) over low heat. Add oil, garlic and onion and sauté until translucent. Add mushrooms and increase heat to medium-high. Cook until mushrooms are soft and both onions and mushrooms begin to brown slightly. Add all of the grains, and stir well to coat them with the oil and onion-mushroom mixture. (You may need to add one more tablespoon olive oil at this point.) Cook over medium-high heat, stirring often for about five minutes. Add the chicken stock to the pot and bring to a boil. Remove pot from stove, cover immediately, and bake in oven for about 1 hour or until grains are cooked, but al dente. Season with fresh ground sea salt and ground pepper. You can substitute these grains with your favorites, or something new you happen to find on a market shelf, but keep the total quantity of grains the same – 2 1/4 cups. Also, toasted pecans and/or freshly grated Parmesan cheese are both nice additions to this dish.

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LAMORINDA's Restaurants

... updated March 18, 2009 ...

American	Ristorante Amroma, 360 Park St, Mor,	377-7662
Bistro, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	283-7108	
Chow Restaurant, 53 Lafayette Cir, Laf,	962-2469	
Quinzos, 3651 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	962-0200	
Ranch House, 1012 School St, Mor,	376-5127	
Terzetto Cuisine, 1419 Moraga Way, Mor,	376-3832	
The Cheese Steak Shop, 3455 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	283-1234	
BBQ		
Bo's Barbecue, 3422 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	283-7133	
Burger Joint		
Flippers, 960 Moraga Rd, Laf,	284-1567	
Nation's Giant Hamburgers, 400 Park, Mor,	376-8888	
Nation's Giant Hamburgers, 76 Moraga Way, Ori,	254-8888	
Cafe		
Express Cafe, 3732 Mt. Diablo Blvd # 170, Laf,	283-7170	
Ferrari- Lucca Delicatessens, 23 Lafayette Cir, Laf,	299-8040	
Geppetto's cafe, 87 Orinda Way, Ori,	253-9894	
Rising Road, 3643 Mt. Diablo Blvd Ste B, Laf,	284-8816	
Susan Foord Catering & Cafe, 965 Mt. View Dr., Laf,	299-2469	
California Cuisine		
Metro Lafayette, 3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	284-4422	
Shelby's, 2 Theatre Sq, Ori,	254-9687	
Chinese		
Asia Palace Restaurant, 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor,	376-0809	
Chef Chao Restaurant, 343 Rheem Blvd, Mor,	376-1740	
China Moon Restaurant, 380 Park St, Mor,	376-1828	
The Great Wall Restaurant, 3500 Golden Gate Way, Laf,	284-3500	
Hsiangs Mandarin Cuisine, 1 Orinda Way # 1, Ori,	253-9852	
Lily's House, 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #A, Laf,	284-7569	
Mandarin Flower, 581 Moraga Rd, Mor,	376-7839	
Panda Express, 3608 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	962-0288	
Szechwan Chinese Restaurant, 79 Orinda Way, Ori,	254-2020	
Uncle Yu's Szechuan, 999 Oak Hill Rd, Laf,	283-1688	
Yan's Restaurant, 3444 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	284-2228	
Coffee Shop		
Millie's Kitchen, 1018 Oak Hill Rd #A, Laf,	283-2397	
Squirrel's Coffee Shop, 998 Moraga Rd, Laf,	284-7830	
Village Inn Cafe, 204 Village Square, Ori,	254-6080	
Continental		
Petar's Restaurant, 32 Lafayette Cir, Laf,	284-7117	
Vino Restaurant, 3531 Plaza Way, Laf,	284-1330	
Duck Club Restaurant, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	283-7108	
French		
Chevalier Restaurant, 960 Moraga Road, Laf,	385-0793	
Hawaiian Grill		
Lava Pit, 2 Theatre Square, St. 142, Ori,	253-1338	
Indian		
Swad Indian Cuisine, 3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	962-9575	
Italian		
Giardino, 3406 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	283-3869	
Knock Restaurant, Lounge, 3576 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	284-5225	
La Finestra Ristorante, 100 Lafayette Cir, #101, Laf,	284-5282	
La Piazza, 15 Moraga Way, Ori,	253-9191	
Mangia Ristorante Pizzeria, 975 Moraga Rd, Laf,	284-3081	
Michael's, 1375 Moraga Way, Mor,	376-4300	
Mondello's, 337 Rheem Blvd, Mor,	376-2533	
Pizza Antica, 3600 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	299-0500	
Postino, 3565 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	299-8700	
Japanese		
Asia Palace Sushi Bar, 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor,	376-0809	
Blue Ginko, 3518-A Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	962-9020	
Kane Sushi, 3474 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	284-9709	
Niwa Restaurant, 1 Camino Sobrante # 6, Ori,	254-1606	
Serika Restaurant, 2 Theatre Sq # 118, Ori,	254-7088	
Yu Sushi, 19 Moraga Way, Ori,	253-8399	
Jazz Dinner Club		
Joe's of Lafayette, 3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Laf,	299-8807	
Mediterranean		
Petra Cafe, 2 Theatre Sq # 105, Ori,	254-5290	
Oasis Cafe, 3594 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	299-8822	
Turquoise Mediterranean Grill, 70 Moraga Way, Ori,	253-2004	
Mexican		
360 Gourmet Burrito, 3655 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	299-1270	
El Charo Mexican Dining, 3339 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	283-2345	
El Jaro Mexican Cafe, 3563 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	283-6639	
La Cocina Mexicana, 23 Orinda Way, Ori,	258-9987	
Mucho wraps, 1375-B Moraga Way, Mor,	377-1203	
Baja Fresh Mexican Grill, 3596 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	283-8740	
Celia's Restaurant, 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	283-8288	
El Balazo, 3518D Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	284-8700	
Maya Mexican Grill, 74 Moraga Way, Ori,	258-9049	
Munero Uno Taqueria, 3616 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	299-1333	
Pizza		
Mountain Mike's Pizza, 3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	283-6363	
Mountain Mike's Pizza, 504 Center St, Mor,	377-6453	
Pennini's, 1375 Moraga Rd, Mor,	376-1515	
Round Table Pizza, 361 Rheem Blvd, Mor,	376-1411	
Round Table Pizza, 3637 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	283-0404	
Village Pizza, 19 Orinda Way # Ab, Ori,	254-1200	
Zamboni's Pizza, 1 Camino Sobrante # 4, Ori,	254-2800	
Sandwiches/Deli		
Bianca's Deli, 1480 Moraga Rd # A, Mor,	376-4400	
Europa Hofbrau Deli & Pub, 64 Moraga Way, Ori,	254-7202	
Kasper's Hot Dogs, 103 Moraga Way, Ori,	253-0766	
Noah's Bagels, 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	299-0716	
Orinda Deli, 19 F Orinda Way, Ori,	254-1990	
Subway, 396 Park St., Mor,	376-2959	
Subway, 3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf,	284-2627	
Subway, Theatre Square, Ori,	258-0470	
Seafood		
Yankee Pier, 3593 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	283-4100	
Singaporean/Malaysian		
Kopitiam, 3647 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf,	299-1653	
Steak		
Casa Orinda, 20 Bryant Way, Ori,	254-2981	
Tea		
Patisserie Lafayette, 71 Lafayette Cir, Laf,	283-2226	
Tea Party by Appointment, 107 Orinda Way, Ori,	254-2206	
Thai		
Amarin Thai Cuisine, 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf,	283-8883	
Baan Thai, 99 Orinda Way, Ori,	253-0989	
Royal Siam, 512 Center Street, Mor,	377-0420	
Siam Orchid, 23 Orinda Way # F, Ori,	253-1975	
Vietnamese		
Little Hearty Noodle, Pho & Pasta, 578 Center St., Mor,	376-7600	

download our Restaurant Guide from our web site at www.lamorindaweekly.com

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