

## Common Soil Recipes for August 2023:

It's abundance time! The team at Common Soil are harvesting aplenty and this week's boxes are bringing joy to us all - thank you so much team. With the abundance of Mother Gaia, this is the time to start pickling and preparing for the less generous seasons.

**Veggie boxes and member's share table: green beans, chard, kale, beetroot, cucumbers, tomatoes, onions, courgettes, flowers, sage, dill, basil, mint, some salad leaves, radishes, parsley, apples and plenty more!**

**Tomatoes:** the tomatoes here at Common Soil are so delicious. Grown in the poly-tunnel alongside the cucumbers, green beans and basil, they are a joy to eat and grow. Arriving in your boxes in a variety of colours and shapes, they provide important

nutrients like folate, vitamin K, vitamin C, calcium, and potassium. They're loaded with antioxidants—one of which is called lycopene, others are beta carotene, lutein, flavonoids, phenolic acids and tannins. Did you know that a medium-sized tomato can fulfil 28% of your daily vitamin C needs? So, eating tomatoes are a fabulous way to maintain your health & reduce the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, certain cancers and are great for bone repair. Tomatoes belong to the nightshade family of fruits. The family includes chilli peppers, white potato, aubergine, courgette and bell pepper.

**Slow dried tomatoes in oil – makes 2-3 225g jars.**

**2 kg tomatoes**

**2 tsp salt**

**2 tsp sugar**

**100ml white wine vinegar**

**200-300ml olive oil (organic) or combo of balsamic and olive oil**

Preheat oven to 100°C/Gas mark ¼. Cut the tomatoes in half around their middles and scoop out the pips with a teaspoon. Put the tomatoes, cut side up, on a wire rack with a baking sheet underneath. Sprinkle a few grains of salt and sugar on each tomato half. Leave for 10-15 mins for the seasoning to infuse and then turn the tomatoes over. Place the tomatoes/baking sheet/rack in the oven & leave them to dry for 6-10 hours. They are ready when they're dry but feel a little plump and fleshy. Remove from the oven and allow to cool. Transfer to a dish. Pour the vinegar over the tomatoes and leave to stand for around 30 minutes. Pack the tomatoes into sterilised jar. Pour the remaining vinegar into the jars, followed by the oil/balsamic, until the tomatoes are fully covered. Seal with a lid and store in a cool, dark place for up to 4 months. Once opened eat within 6 weeks.

**Cucumbers:** the cucumbers this year have been magnificent so start pickling them before we run out. Cucumber is a member of the gourd family - the plant itself is a creeping vine. The cucumber we eat is actually a botanical berry but we tend to consider it as a vegetable. Cucumbers are very hydrating as they are around 90% water. Despite this, they are nutritionally dense – full of vitamin K, C, most of the B vits and also contain copper, potassium, magnesium, manganese, phosphorous, iron and zinc.

**Green Gazpacho (serves 4)**



Super quick and very tasty! Change your “cream” to a vegan alternative if prefer.

**1 large Common Soil cucumber or 2 smaller ones**

**1 large Common Soil tomato or 2 smaller ones, chopped**

**2 cups raw almonds**

**Large handful Common Soil fresh parsley, chopped**

**1 cup cream – I would use Oatley crème fraiche or cream but opt for any cream you prefer**

**½ cup extra virgin olive oil**

**¼ cup white wine vinegar**

**2 tbsp spring onions or regular onions, chopped**

**2 cloves garlic, minced**

**Black pepper**

**Drizzle of olive oil & basil or mint leaves to serve.**

Add all ingredients except for basil or mint to a blender or food processor and process until smooth. You can leave a little texture if desired. Portion into individual bowls, and top with a drizzle of olive oil, a sprinkle of fresh chopped herbs, and a few cracks of pepper. Serve chilled. Enjoy!

### **Cucumber Pickle (Riverford) (serves 4)**

Not a true preserve as the pickle is very light but will keep well in a container. This is easy to make, just reduce the ingredients if you want to make half the quantity. Also, make it when the cucumbers are fresh and leave plenty of time to salt the cucumbers and onions. This pickle must be stored in the fridge once opened. Makes 2-2.5kg.

**5 Common Soil cucumbers**

**1kg onions, halved**

**about 80g sea salt (or cooking salt)**

**500ml distilled malt or Mother apple cider vinegar**

**350g granulated sugar (or soft brown)**

**4 tsp mustard seeds**

**generous ½ tsp ground cloves (or use a few whole cloves instead)**

**generous ½ tsp ground turmeric**

Slice the cucumbers and onions very thinly (a mandolin is ideal for this). Layer them in a bowl, sprinkling with the sea salt as you go, then weigh them down with a plate and leave for a few hours or overnight. Drain off the liquid, rinse the vegetables well and drain in a colander.

Combine the vinegar, sugar, mustard seeds, cloves and turmeric in a pan and bring slowly to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar.

Add the well-drained cucumber and onion mixture and bring back to the boil for 1 minute. Transfer the mixture to sterilised jars, using a slotted spoon.

Bring the liquid back to the boil and simmer until slightly reduced for about 15 minutes, then divide it between the jars, filling to the brim. Put on the lids and label. The pickle will keep for several months.

### **Green Bean Kimchi (Melanie Steel)**

This recipe works well with other crunchy vegetables such as carrots, cucumbers and courgettes.

**Around 400grams green beans cut into mouthful-sized pieces**

**2 cups water (more if needed, see instructions)**

**2 tablespoons non-iodized salt (sea salt)**

**2 cloves garlic minced**

**1 tablespoon grated fresh peeled ginger**

**1 tablespoon fish sauce or vegan kelp flakes**

**1 tablespoon hot pepper or chilli flakes**

**1 shallot finely sliced**

**1/2 teaspoon sugar (substitute with coconut sugar if you prefer)**

Prepare a brine by mixing water and salt together in a bowl. Add the beans and let soak for a few hours or overnight. Make sure there is enough water to completely cover the beans; add more if needed. After the beans have soaked strain.

In a separate bowl, combine the garlic, ginger, fish sauce, red pepper flakes, shallot & sugar. Mix into a paste. Add the paste to the green beans and use your hands to massage and thoroughly coat the beans.

Pack the beans into a small jar and cover with a lid. Let the kimchi sit at room temperature for 1-5 days. Check the jar everyday. Hopefully little bubbles begin to occur which means fermentation is taking place. Taste the kimchi when you check the jar. If it tastes right for you than move to the fridge and eat in a few days time! By the way, don't use table salt for making kimchi as the iodine inhibits the beneficial bacteria during the fermentation process. Substitute chopped courgette, cucumber or julienned carrot for the green beans as variations.

### **Apple and Herb Jelly: (Riverford)**

With an abundance of herbs and apples from Daniela this week, it seemed wrong not to include an apple and herb recipe. By the way, apples are high in pectin which helps the jelly "set" so you won't need to add additional pectin. Serve with whatever you fancy – it's both sweet and savoury. This recipe makes 5 x 225g jars – reduce the ingredient quantities to make less.

**1.5 kg apples**

**1 medium bunch of sage, rosemary, mint, tarrogan, dill, thyme or basil**

**Sugar (you could use Stevia or Yacon or coconut sugar as alternatives)**

**100ml Mother apple cyder vinegar (The Bath Cheese company at Stroud Saturday market sell a good cyder vinegar)**

Roughly chop the apples, discarding any bad parts, but don't peel or core them. Place in a pan with your chosen herbs, reserving a few sprigs to put into the jars. Barely cover the apples with water. Bring to the boil then simmer gently for around 45mins-1 hour until the fruit is very soft. Tip contents into a piece of muslin or jelly bag. Suspend over a bowl and leave to drip for at least 2 hours but preferably overnight. Measure your strained juice, it will be around 570-600ml. Now add around 400 grams sugar (good grief!) and return to the pot with the vinegar. Warm the mixture gently until the sugar has dissolved. Once the sugar has dissolved, bring to the boil and allow to bubble briskly for at least 10-12 minutes, or until it starts to set (it should begin to coat the back of a wooden spoon). Once it has reached setting point, remove from the heat, skim off any scum from the surface with a spoon & leave to settle for 5 minutes. Spoon into your warm sterilised jars, seal with a wax disc and lid and store for up to 6 months. Once opened, keep in the fridge and eat within 4 weeks.

**Justine Evans is a Registered Naturopath and degree qualified Nutritional Therapist living in Stroud. She is passionate about seasonal living and runs online cleanses and courses which link with the Wheel of the Year. Please visit her website for more information: [justineevans.co.uk](http://justineevans.co.uk)**