

Feeding the Movement

w/ Ayo Ngozi

Wild Ginger Herbal Center Cooking Series 2022

At its most basic level, resistance, just like any other active thing, needs to be fed in order to sustain.”

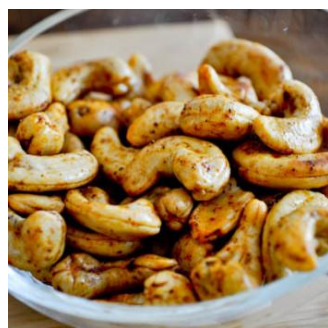
Julia Turshen,

Feed the Resistance: Recipes + Ideas for Getting Involved



Quick Snacks

For activists and any other folks who may overwork and forget to eat (cut it out!), it can be a great support to maintain a “snack bag” or shelf in the fridge or pantry. This is a great way to guarantee to find something that is nutrient dense (a good energy delivery system), quick to prepare, inexpensive, and works during online meetings or on the move.



Spiced nuts & seeds: Cashews, almonds, sunflower seeds, walnuts and other nuts and seeds or your choice, toast quickly in a skillet with olive or coconut oil (or ghee or butter) and warming aromatic spices. Think turmeric, garlic powder, white or cayenne pepper, smoked paprika, thyme, oregano... finish with a trace of honey, maple syrup or Himalayan sea salt.

Herbal popcorn: One of the best Zoom meeting icebreakers I’ve seen is a popcorn recipe contest, where attendees bring their A game to seasoning popcorn before sitting down to organizing. A variation on this: the herbal popcorn bar (or lazy susan). Use some of the same ideas for this and for seasoning nuts and seeds above, and remember that popcorn can go savory or sweet (or both!).



Another favorite: Apples! They are inexpensive, store well, and can be eaten fresh, cooked into applesauce and apple butter, dehydrated into chips, sliced into salads, etc. My hands-down favorite is the old elementary-school standby, apple slices with nut butter. (Sometimes I'll take it extra-fancy and make it into "nachos" with raisins or dried blueberries, sesame seeds, grated coconut, etc. This used to be a great one in pre-COVID in person meetups. Sigh.)



Eating for Action

Nourishment and rest are key for us to have the reserves and resources available to us -- whatever we choose to do, and however we direct our energy and intention toward change.

Preparing meals that are deeply nourishing to our bodies (and especially our nerve, adrenal, & digestive function) can set us up with greater energetic capacity and mitigate burnout.

This simple bean dish is an example of great "movement food." It's really fast to prepare and easy to clean up, is full of b-complex vitamins, protein, fiber, healthy oils and carminative herbs to make our gut happy, and everyone loves to see it at a potluck. It heats up well (better the second, third and fourth days!), can be eaten alone or over rice or *injera*, and reminds me of where I was and what I was doing as a young activist and artist in the 1990s (including living on beans and rice in the DC area).

DMV CURRIED LENTIL SOUP

(Serves 8)

2-3 Tbsp coconut oil
2 cups dried red lentils or yellow split peas
2 medium onions, chopped
1 medium tomato, diced
1Tbsp fresh garlic, minced
¼ cup grated fresh ginger
1 can (6-7oz) tomato paste
1 can coconut (or other nut) milk
Salt to taste
2 Tbsp berebere powder
2 tablespoons curry powder



¼ cup flat parsley, finely chopped
8 cups water

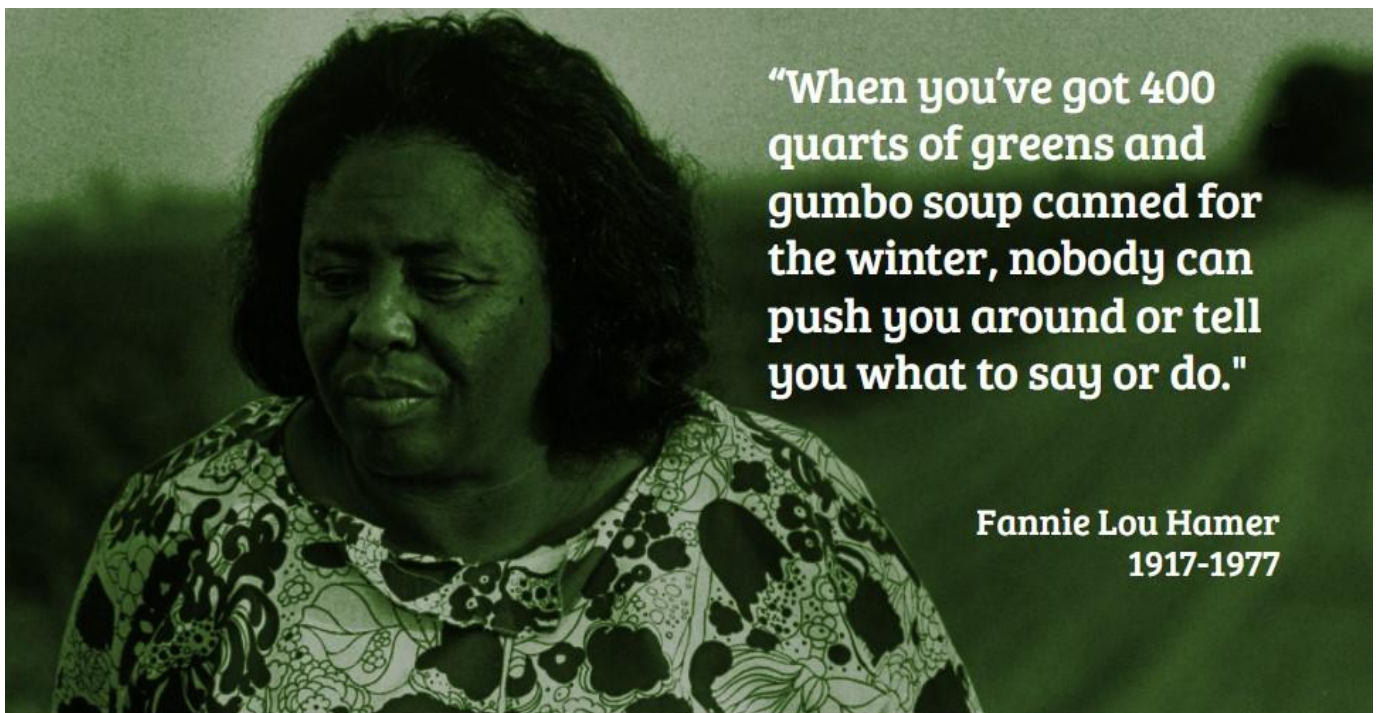
Instructions

Saute onions, garlic, and ginger in half of the coconut oil over medium heat, until they soften and start to caramelize. After about 10 minutes, add berebere, curry, tomato paste, and a couple pinches of salt and stir together for about a minute, being careful not to burn the mixture.

Add water and a can of coconut milk, bring to a boil, and then stir in the lentils. Return it to a boil, then cover and reduce the heat to low. Simmer on low heat for about 20 minutes until lentils are completely tender, then complete salting to taste.

Ladle into bowls and cover with chopped tomato and parsley. This is also good with a dollop of yogurt, cashew “cheese,” crema, feta cheese, or other creamy goodness.

Nourishing the Collective



Fannie Lou Hamer was a food justice activist, too! She reminds us of the importance of feeding the movement through tending to one's own health, wellness and sovereignty at home *as well as* tending to our siblings in the journey toward justice and change. Other historical movements also point us to ways that folks have looked to feeding various communities in action. (Like the Black Panther Party and Young Lords in the 1970s, who started and maintained the first free food programs for the community, including a nationwide free breakfast program for children as well as larger-scale food redistribution efforts!)

Today, we are reminded that we are the seeds that couldn't be buried. Organizations and individuals all over are creating ingenious ways to feed and nourish one another by cooking for loved ones who are ill, selling tacos to raise funds for displaced trans siblings, saving and redistributing seeds and plants to ensure future nourishment. We are also continuing to cook and eat together in the all-important effort of simply being in community.

This groundnut stew recipe reminds me of the many potlucks and community celebrations of my childhood. Brilliantly reinterpreted by Chef Carla Hall, this recipe is vegan, inexpensive to prepare, and can be adapted to include meat or other vegetables. (Note: Cashew and almond butter makes a good substitute for those with peanut allergies. activist/academics in a Pan-African community. is my favorite way to feed lots of people..)



GROUNDNUT STEW

(serves 4-6)

Inspired by Chef Carla Hall, from *Cooking with Love: Comfort Food that Hugs You*

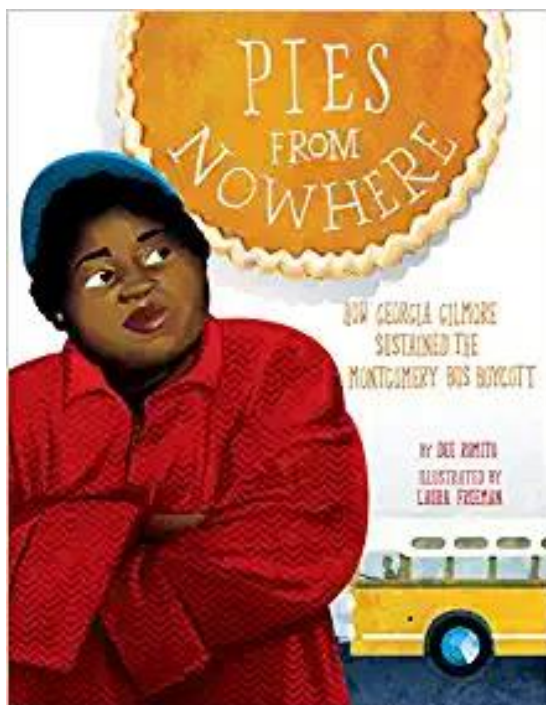
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 large red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- 1 jalapeño chile, stemmed, seeded, and finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 1/2 teaspoons grated peeled fresh ginger
- 1 14.5-ounce can diced fire-roasted tomatoes
- 1 quart chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 fresh or dried bay leaf
- 1/4 habanero chile, stemmed, seeded, and minced (protect your fingers!)
- 1 large sweet potato, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 15-ounce can small red beans, rinsed and drained
- 3 tablespoons creamy natural peanut butter
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup roasted, salted peanuts, chopped

2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint leaves
1 lime, cut into wedges

Heat a large, deep skillet over medium heat. Add the oil and swirl to coat the bottom of the pan. Add the onion, cumin, and 1 teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion has lightly browned and caramelized a little, about 3 minutes. Add the bell pepper, jalapeño, garlic, and ginger. Cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Don't let the mix burn!

Pie for the People

Georgia Gilmore (1920-1990) organized black women in Montgomery, AL who sold meals—fried fish, stewed greens and rice, pound cakes, sweet potato pies—at local businesses and churches to raise money to support local civil rights activism, including the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Gilmore's leadership and expert cooking helped pay for the insurance, gas, vehicle repairs and other expenses to kept the boycott going.



Georgia Gilmore's work also reminds us that there is space for sweetness, joy and creativity in our struggle.

SWEET POTATO PIE

Dough for single-crust pie
2 medium sweet potatoes (about 1-1/2 pounds), peeled and cubed
1/3 cup salted butter, softened
1/2 cup light brown sugar
2 large eggs at room temperature, lightly beaten
3/4 cup evaporated milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
Pinch of allspice
Pinch of salt



Bake sweet potatoes at 350° for 45 minutes or until thoroughly baked and gooey. Cool to room temperature, then mash with a fork or potato masher. Preheat the oven to 425° and prepare the pie filling: cream together butter and brown sugar with a hand or stand mixer, then add eggs and blend one at a time until smooth.

Add milk, vanilla extract, and spices and salt and blend for a couple of minutes. Stir in mashed sweet potatoes and blend until smooth, then pour into pie crust.

Bake at 425° for 15 minutes, then reduce heat to 350° and bake 35-40 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack and serve immediately.