

Fennel

This plant makes an edible bulb, leaves, and seeds. It's aroma is very distinctive. The bulb is used like a vegetable, leaves as salad ingredients, and seeds as spices and breath freshener.



TIPS:

Short-term Storage: Store, ferns and bulbs separate in plastic in the refrigerator.

Long-term Storage: Freeze in a cooked or blanched form.

General Cooking Info: Fennel has an almost licorice flavor to it and can provide great aromas to your dishes. Use the ferns chopped into salad or chopped into soup. Use the bulbs to sauté with butter and add to meat and mushroom dishes. Chop bulbs into soups and stews. Often braised or in gratin. Goes well in fish and meat dishes also.

Growing info: We grow fennel in the spring and late summer.

Common Problems: In really hot weather, the ferns can get burned, and the plants can get stunted if they aren't watered well. Some insects eat their way into the bulbs at times also.

Roasted Fennel

2 fennel bulbs (thick base of stalk), stalks cut off, bulbs halved lengthwise, then cut lengthwise in 1-inch thick pieces

Olive oil

Balsamic vinegar

1 Preheat oven to 400°F.

2 Rub just enough olive oil over the fennel to coat.

Sprinkle on some balsamic vinegar, also to coat. Line baking dish with Silpat or aluminum foil. Lay out the pieces of fennel and roast for 30-40 minutes, or until the fennel is cooked through and beginning to caramelize.

from Simplyrecipes.com

Fennel Cucumber Salsa

1 English cucumber, diced
1 large fennel bulb, diced
1 avocado - peeled, pitted, and diced

1/2 red onion, chopped

1/2 cup pickled banana peppers, diced

1 bunch cilantro, chopped

2 tablespoons honey

3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

salt and pepper to taste

1. Combine the cucumber, fennel, avocado, red onion, banana peppers, cilantro, honey, lemon juice, salt, and pepper in a bowl. Allow mixture to sit 20 minutes

before serving.

Allrecipes.com

Fennel au Gratin

2 small fennel bulbs

1 yellow onion, thinly sliced

2 tablespoons good olive oil

1 tablespoon unsalted butter

2 pounds russet potatoes (4 large potatoes)

2 cups plus 2 tablespoons heavy cream

2 1/2 cups grated Gruyere cheese (1/2 pound)

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black peppercorns

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Butter the inside of a 10-by-15-by-2-inch (10-cup) baking dish.

Remove the stalks from the fennel and cut the bulbs in half lengthwise. Remove the

cores and thinly slice the bulbs crosswise, making approximately 4 cups of sliced fennel. Saute the fennel and onions in the olive oil and butter on medium-low heat for 15 minutes, until tender.

Peel the potatoes, then thinly slice them by hand or with a mandoline. Mix the sliced potatoes in a large bowl with 2 cups of cream, 2 cups of Gruyère, salt, and pepper. Add the sauteed fennel and onion and mix well.

Pour the potatoes into the baking dish. Press down to smooth the potatoes.

Combine the remaining 2 tablespoons of cream and 1/2 cup of Gruyère and sprinkle on the top. Bake for 1 1/2 hours, until the potatoes are very tender and the top is browned and bubbly. Allow to set for 10 minutes and serve.

from Food Network