

January 2022

the heart beet

A Pulse on What's Happening at the **Viroqua Food Co-op**



Healthy New Year

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Lively Up Yourself!

Arwyn Wildingway, Wellness Buyer



In this time of reemerging light and new resolutions, we offer you some ideas to keep your energy at its fullest potential!

Breathing fresh air, soaking in some sunshine, drinking clear, clean water, grounding yourself, exercising, singing, laughing, dancing, feeling thankful... All of these things increase our energy by encouraging proper flow through our bodies.

Increasingly, we are discovering that a diverse microbiome in your gut is an important key to good health. We need many types of bacteria, like fungi, protozoa, and viruses, to do their jobs in our bodies so we can stay in balance with ourselves and keep immunity levels high.

When our gut is working well, we can digest life with ease. This allows us to keep our immune system, our endocrine system, and other systems in balance while eliminating toxins – which in return allows us to have more energy!

The Co-op carries prebiotic-rich and probiotic-rich foods, as well as supplements that will add diversity to your belly.

Consider eating prebiotic foods, that help keep your gut bacteria happy and sticking around to do their job, such as: apples, artichokes, dandelion greens, chicory root, jerusalem, seaweed, garlic, onions, asparagus, mushrooms, brassicas, oats, and barley.

We also have many choices of fermented foods throughout the store. Though if you have a histamine intolerance, have had a recent round of antibiotics, or simply want to strengthen your system – we carry a very wide range shelf-stable and refrigerated probiotics in our Wellness Cooler. Though some are shelf stable, keeping them cool does help to preserve them better. Keep in mind that a larger number of strains per bottle will equate to a greater diversity and resilience in your gut microbiome.

A good multivitamin can always help cover all your bases. For more specific energy boosters, consider researching other herbal supplements such as: green tea, ashwagandha, ginseng, rhodiola, licorice, as well as mitochondrial support such as CoQ10 and ubiquinol, alpha-lipoic acid, and B vitamins.

Here's to a healthy new year, and thank you for coming to the Viroqua Food Co+op as a source for health and wellness!

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The Board meets at 6:30pm on the 3rd Monday of each month. Meetings are hosted virtually for now. Changes are posted on the VFC website. To make a presentation or ask questions at a meeting, please contact a Board member 10 days in advance. Contact the Board at: vfcbod@viroquafood.coop

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The Heart Beet is intended as a vehicle for communication among VFC Owners & shoppers. Articles pertaining to health and nutrition are presented for informational purposes only. VFC recommends consulting a healthcare professional for medical problems and advice.

The Heart Beet is printed and available in-store monthly. A digital copy is available online at: viroquafood.coop/vfc-publications

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VFC News

YIHS Community Garden Project grows with help of VFC CCF Grant

We are pleased to announce that the winner of the 2022 VFC Cooperative Community Fund (CCF) Grant is Youth Initiative High School (YIHS) for their Community Garden Project.

This \$1,000 grant is intended to further develop as well as maintain the community garden space behind Thoreau's Garden located on Terhune Street in Viroqua. The Community Garden Project provides a point of interaction between the school, the students, and the larger gardening community. YIHS Science and

Agriculture classes utilize this outdoor, living classroom while community gardeners also enjoy the enhanced garden as they tend their own plots.

As new stewards of this space, the YIHS Students have built an arbor at the entrance and plan to purchase plantable bulbs and garden benches for communal enjoyment. YIHS Students will also purchase tools to maintain a beautiful and welcoming environment that encourages both participating gardeners and visitors to enjoy their time while in the community garden.



Local Farmers & Producers: Apply now for our 2022 VFC Microloan!

We invite any local farm or business who sells food or products at any local farmers market, or who sells directly to the VFC, to apply for a one-year, no-interest loan of up to \$3,500!

The VFC Microloan aims to strengthen small, local farmers and producers that are part of our local food system. Types of projects funded by the VFC Microlending Initiative are the ones that:

- **Help fill a hole in our local food system by expanding production and/or distribution of products.**
- **Purchase equipment to increase efficiency and decrease costs of production.**
- **Help a local producer grow their business.**

Applications are due by midnight on January 31, 2022. The loan is awarded

in early February and then announced in March of 2022.

Download the application on our website at: www.viroquafood.coop/you-own-it/microlending-initiative

Reach out to Marketing & Outreach Manager Jen McCoy with any further inquiries about the loan via email: jennifer.mccoy@viroquafood.coop





Keeping Local Food Cultures Alive

Meet Shawna & Rob Andolsek, the new local producers behind a local brand we know and love – Fizeology Foods!

If you've had the Korean Reuben at the VFC Deli, then you've experienced the delicious flavor of Fizeology Kimchi. Like all of Fizeology's products, the Kickapoo Kimchi is a raw ferment that contains live enzymes and probiotics. The ingredients are sourced from local farms and the production takes place at the Food Enterprise Center in Viroqua.

When Rob Andolsek and his wife Shawna took over Fizeology Foods, they were looking for an opportunity to buy a business that would involve their whole family. Rob is a project engineer in product development at S&S Cycle in Viola, and naturally interested in new projects and processes, while Shawna is an emergency room nurse at Vernon Memorial Hospital. They took over operations in August of 2021 and we checked in

with Rob to learn more about their story and the future of Fizeology Foods.

What inspired you to take over ownership of Fizeology Foods?

When we heard Faith Anacker was selling, we met with her to learn more about the business. The more we learned, the more we felt like it was the right fit for us. We were looking for something to share with our 13-year-old twin daughters and being part of the food culture in the area is an exciting opportunity for all of us. We learned that Fizeology has a solid customer base and great products. But it was the connection to community and established relationships with local farmers and organizations that really resonated.

Tell us more about the fermentation process that make Fizeology products so delicious?

We buy “seconds” from several local Amish and CSA farms – product that is not pretty enough or sized right for market but perfect for fermentation. Buying seconds helps to keep production costs down but also helps to reduce food waste in the region.

The vegetables for all of our ferments are chopped and prepped by us and by staff from *Employment Partners*, a program owned and operated by Daniel Chotzen that provides job coaching to adults who have difficulties finding employment.

Then the raw ingredients are shredded and mixed with salt and left to sit for a day. After drained of excess moisture, the veggies are packed into wood barrels, covered with large cabbage leaves, and weighted with granite stone where it is left to ferment for several weeks before it is packed into jars. This raw fermentation process keeps beneficial enzymes and probiotics alive which adds to the health benefits of the final product.

What have been your biggest challenges so far?

Sourcing glass jars has been a challenge as well as finding the best way to ship product on a regional scale. We have found some solutions to shipping by working with local farms who already have established distribution networks. We are also working on timing. It takes four weeks from the start of a batch until it is ready to ship – so it’s tricky to get it right and have the stock to send when orders are placed. We are looking at ways to streamline operations and will purchase more barrels to enable us to have more ferments in process at one time.

What is your favorite product?

My whole family loves the curtido made with cabbage, cilantro, oregano, and a touch of lime. One of our favorite meals is a grilled egg, ham and cheese sandwich with some *Kickapoo Curtido*.

What are your future plans?

We intend to keep all of the signature recipes and maybe add some new ones to the mix as things progress. We would love to get more local farms involved and build more relationships.

Find all of their signature products including *Ginger Carrots*, *German Style Sauerkraut*, *Kickapoo Kimchi*, *Fermented Chili Sauce*, *Naked Sauerkraut*, *Kickapoo Curtido*, and *Seasonal Sauerkraut* in our refrigerated section here at the Co-op!



Healthy Meals on a Budget

Start this year off right with healthy, budget-friendly meals everyone will love!



Citrus & Arugula Salad with Balsamic Dressing

Serves: 10

Make time: 15 mins active; 5 hrs 15 mins total

Salad

- 1 large red grapefruit
- 1 large Cara Cara or navel orange
- 2 large blood oranges
- 1 small shallot, thinly sliced
- 4 oz. arugula
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts or 4 oz. crumbled feta, optional

Dressing

- 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, pressed or minced
- 1 pinch of dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp salt

Directions

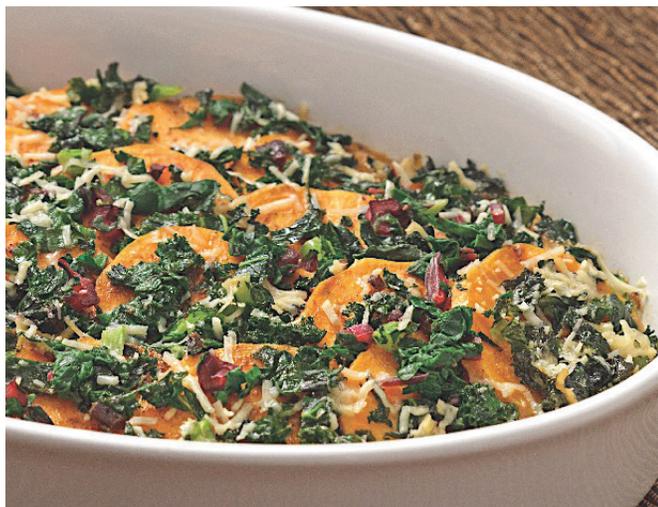
- First, make the dressing. In a jar or small bowl, combine the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, garlic, oregano and salt, then shake or whisk to mix. Reserve.
- Using a sharp knife, cut off both ends of grapefruit and each orange to expose the flesh and make a flat surface. Place on the flat, cut side and use knife to pare away the peel and pith, leaving just the flesh of the citrus exposed. Place each trimmed fruit on its side and slice thinly. Remove any seeds and reserve.
- Spread arugula on large platter or place in individual bowls. Arrange citrus rounds on top of the arugula, with blood oranges on top. Sprinkle with shallots and drizzle with dressing. Add walnuts or feta, if desired. Serve immediately.

Suggestions

Colder weather means salads with a little more heft and substance. Citrus is at its peak and makes a colorful, juicy crown for a bed of deep green arugula. Accented with a simple balsamic vinaigrette and crunchy walnuts or creamy feta, this salad will appeal to everyone at the table.

Recipe used with permission – PLUS – more great tips & tricks from: www.grocery.coop/recipes/citrus-and-arugula-salad-balsamic-dressings





Sweet Potato & Greens Gratin

Serves: 8

Make time: 30 mins active; 1 hr 15 mins total

Ingredients

1/2 lb kale or Swiss chard	Salt & black pepper, to taste
2 lbs sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced ~1/4" thick	1 1/4 cups heavy cream
4 Tbsp butter, melted	1/4 cup shredded Parmesan or smoked Cheddar cheese
1 tsp smoked paprika	
1 tsp chili powder	

Preparation

- Preheat oven to 375°F and butter or oil a 9"x13" casserole dish.
- Wash, shred, then blanch the kale or chard for 3 mins. in boiling water; squeeze out any excess liquid.
- Line bottom of the casserole dish with half of the sweet potato slices – arranged in a single layer with slices overlapping slightly. Sprinkle with half the smoked paprika, half the chili powder and a pinch of salt and black pepper.
- Spread half of the kale or chard evenly over the sweet potatoes. Drizzle with half the melted butter. Repeat with another layer of sweet potatoes, spices, kale or chard, and butter. Pour the heavy cream evenly over the top.
- Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes. Remove the foil, sprinkle the cheese evenly over the gratin, and bake another 10-15 minutes until bubbly and the cheese is just beginning to brown. Serve warm.

Suggestions

A vitamin-rich alternative to scalloped potatoes, this casserole is a hearty dish that could stand on its own or accompany roasted chicken, ham, or baked polenta. If you're serving it with roast beef or turkey, try substituting a smoky shredded Cheddar for the Parmesan.

Recipe used with permission – PLUS – more great tips & tricks from: www.grocery.coop/recipes/sweet-potato-and-greens-gratin



Quick Black Bean Enchiladas

Servings: 8

Make time: 20 mins active; 50 mins total

Ingredients

1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil	1 tsp dried oregano
1 small onion, chopped	24 corn tortillas
24-28 oz enchilada sauce	2 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese
2 15 oz cans black beans, cooked, drained	Chopped avocado, cilantro, sour cream (optional)
1 cup frozen corn	

Directions

- Preheat oven to 375°F and lightly oil 9"x13" baking pan.
- Drizzle olive oil in a large sauté pan and place over medium-high heat. Add onions and stir until they start to sizzle. Reduce heat to low and stir occasionally for about 10 mins.
- Pour enchilada sauce into 1-quart pot. Place over medium-high heat and bring to boil, then reduce heat to a simmer. Stir the beans and corn into the sautéed onions and stir in 1/2 cup of enchilada sauce. Stir in oregano.
- Place pot of sauce next to the prepared pan. Warm the corn tortillas by wrapping in damp paper towels and microwave for 30–40 secs., or steam a few at a time in a steamer basket. Let cool slightly. Dip each corn tortilla in sauce, then measure about 1/4 cup of the bean mixture into each tortilla. Roll up the tortilla and place in prepared pan, tucking the filled rolls tightly alongside each other in two rows.
- Pour remaining sauce evenly over the rolls. Spread gently with the back of a spoon. Sprinkle cheese over the enchiladas.
- Bake for 30 mins., or until the cheese is melted and golden brown.
- Serve hot. If desired, top with avocado, cilantro or a dollop of sour cream.

Suggestions

Serve these easy enchiladas with a side of rice or quinoa, mixed with tomatoes, corn, and olive oil.

Recipe used with permission – PLUS – more great tips & tricks from: www.grocery.coop/recipes/quick-black-bean-enchiladas

Give Where You Live

“Round Up” for Local Nonprofits



Round up this month for Living Faith Food Pantry

The LFFP offers a choice program where each participant makes food selections within categories that best meets their personal needs and tastes. The pantry provides recipes and samples to help participants become familiar with the wide variety of produce that is seasonally available. They also offer many organically-grown foods which substantially increases the variety of food distributed!

Community support for local nonprofits continues to grow!

In Fiscal Year 2021, together the VFC and our shoppers donated over \$39,000 to area nonprofits through our Give Where You Live “round up” initiative. THANK YOU to both our shoppers and local nonprofits for the work you do to make our community stronger!

Give Where You Live (GWYL) nonprofit recipients are decided by VFC Owners voting in November each year. We then raise funds for each organization by asking all shoppers

to round up at the register, by donating 1% of our total sales on the 2nd Wednesday of every month, and by collecting donations at each register.

Congratulations to the newly-elected 2022 Give Where You Live recipients (listed below). We’re excited to see what the next year brings. *Let’s keep rounding up for our community!* Check out www.viroquafood.coop/community-outreach for more details about our GWYL Program.

2022 Give Where You Live Schedule

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
Living Faith Food Pantry	Valley Stewardship Network	Friends of Vernon County Parks & Forest	Vernon Trails
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
WDRT-Driftless Community Radio	Driftless Humane Society	Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School	Youth Initiative High School
SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
McIntosh Memorial Library	VFC Cooperative Community Fund	Community Hunger Solutions	Kickapoo Valley Reserve