



EAT LOCAL SEASONAL HEALTHY

Food that is good for you,
the environment, and the people
producing it.



WE ALL WANT TO LIVE LONG AND HEALTHY LIVES AND THE FOOD WE EAT PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN OUR WELLBEING.

Eating sustainably produced food is not only good for ourselves but also for the environment. Here at **Friends of the Earth Malta** we believe in supporting sustainable agriculture and eating seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables that have been produced by local, small-scale farmers. Sustainable farming supports nature and biodiversity and safeguards our rural land. If we are to be true sovereigns of our food systems, we must work with farmers and demand more from policymakers.

This publication looks into the current food system, the policies shaping it, and what every one of us can do to support better farming practices.



**friends of
the earth
malta**

Friends of the Earth Malta has been active in the environmental field since 1985.

We are an independent organisation that campaigns on some of today's most pressing ecological and social issues. Friends of the Earth Malta fights for a better agricultural model and for people's right to physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food. Maltese citizens have a right to know where their daily food comes from, the agrochemicals used, the influence food production has on the environment, and the impact that imports have on labourers in other countries.

THE CURRENT FOOD SYSTEM & FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Small-scale family farms are crucial to food production. Collectively they are the primary providers of diverse and nutritious food for 70% of the world's population. However, the livelihood of these small-scale producers is being increasingly threatened by the development of our globalised, industrial food system. The narrowing focus on maximising yields and economic profits through high-input methods has brought about a crisis in the food and farming sector. In the face of the challenge of a rising global population, the practices of industrial agribusiness cannot be relied on to provide food security. Their models thrive on the exploitation of natural resources and supply-chains that are only making farmers poorer and ever more vulnerable to market fluctuations.



Agriculture, forestry and land use sectors are one of the highest greenhouse gas contributors globally. The primary causes are changes in land use and forestry (such as the deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon to make space for cattle ranching), and the release of methane from the rearing of ruminant animals such as cows and sheep to quench the thirst of the global demand and over-consumption of meat and dairy.

All these factors are leading to the current environmental and climate crisis and are ultimately impacting our health and wellbeing and that of future generations. You might argue that the situation in Malta is somewhat different. Malta has indeed benefited from having an agricultural sector made almost exclusively of small-scale farmers that produce an abundant array of diverse crops. However, here as well, the agrarian sector is confronted with numerous difficulties—an ageing farming population, the swallowing up of agricultural land and soil capping for road widening and construction, harsh growing conditions, supply-chains that favour the middlemen—that make farming a very precarious sector. The low-income reality of farmers has led many out of the fields and into other forms of employment. This could only mean that Malta will have to rely even more heavily on food imports from both the EU and other countries.

Despite the current situation, it is not that difficult to imagine a better agricultural system where crops are grown in small-scale, low-input farms, with community support, producing crops that are climatically adapted, building an agricultural ecosystem, reviving heirloom seeds, and using sustainable and ethical farming practices. An agricultural system that sees farming not only as a means of producing commodities but also valuing its social and ecological contribution. The reason why the current food system looks very different is that the decision making power has not been in the hands of the small-scale producers and the people eating the food — we have not yet achieved food sovereignty.

The term food sovereignty was coined and developed by our allies, La Via Campesina, an international farmers' rights organisation. Food sovereignty is every person's right to healthy and culturally appropriate food, produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute, and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies, rather than the demands of markets and big corporations. Food sovereignty defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY MEANS:

- prioritising local agricultural production in order to feed people, allowing farmers access to land, water, seeds, and credit.
- the right of farmers and peasants to produce food and the right of consumers to be able to decide what they consume, and how and by whom it is produced.
- the right of countries to protect themselves from too low priced agricultural and food imports.
- agricultural prices linked to production costs—this can be achieved if countries are entitled to impose taxes on excessively cheap imports, commit themselves in favour of sustainable farm production and regulate production to avoid surpluses.
- citizens taking part in the agricultural policy choices.
- the recognition of women farmers' rights, who play a major role in agricultural production

WHAT CHANGES TO THE FOOD SYSTEM DO YOU WANT TO SEE?



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO SUPPORT A BETTER AGRICULTURAL MODEL?

1

BUY LOCAL

Buying local produce has so many benefits. Firstly it is much healthier. Locally grown fruit and vegetables are picked fresh and in season, which is when they have the best flavour and highest nutritional value. Fresh crops grown in Malta will go from farm to table in less than 24hrs and do not need to be treated with preservatives, as is common with crops that have to travel far from where they were grown. Also, locally produced food does not have to be transported across long distances and therefore has a small carbon footprint. By buying close to home, you support local farmers, the local economy, and the preservation of our agricultural landscape with all of its local varieties of fruit and vegetables.

2

EAT SEASONAL

Seasonal produce is full of flavour and tastes better than imported products - the latter are picked before they are ripe and need to be preserved during their travel time. Eating seasonal also means eating food that is geographically and climate appropriate. Some seasonal edibles do not even have to be bought from a producer; they are generously provided by our ecosystems and can be easily picked. There are many wild edibles that can be foraged, such as borage, wild asparagus, wild rucola, figs, dandelion, fennel, capers, prickly pears and many more plants that can supplement our diets. These generally grow in abundance, can be picked on a countryside walk and are free for us to enjoy (read foraging rules if you haven't foraged before).

3

CONNECT & APPRECIATE

If we want to eat good and healthy food, we need to be in dialogue with the people producing it. Farmers deserve recognition for their hard work, the time and energy they put into growing a crop from seed, and tending to it daily to feed us all. Appreciation can be shown by initiating a conversation with a farmer, by buying directly from them, but also by being willing to pay a bit more for better quality, even if there is a cheaper option coming in from abroad. Farmers are not only producing our food but they are also guardians of our rural landscape and of our common agricultural heritage. Starting a dialogue with farmers can also help them grow food which consumers want.

4 SUPPORT GOOD FARMING

There are farming practices that are better for the environment we live in and the food we consume, such as organic farming, permaculture farms and farms focusing on agro-ecology. These are not the only farmers who are doing a good deed. There are various farming practices which can be implemented to the benefit of the environment. If a farmer leaves a pocket of soil untilled or plants herbs, this provides a haven for pollinators, and thus supporting the surrounding ecosystem. Here again, dialogue between consumers and producers can support better farming practices. If you are worried about the use of agro-chemicals, ask your farmers about the practices they employ, most will be very happy and willing to tell you about how they grow their produce and how they manage pests. While we cannot expect all farming practices to be immediately at their best, we can definitely support the transition by incentivising producers, and also by demanding more from policymakers.

5 INNOVATE

Are you a student of agriculture-related subjects, a researcher, a business savvy individual, or good at organising within your community? There are a lot of ways in which you can influence developments in the local farming model. These include: community supported agriculture, tending allotments or community gardens, providing services such as weekly subscription boxes of local produce, agro-tourism, creating vertical gardens, using hydro- or aquaponics, producing another product from rescued food. There are lots of new ways to shake up the way we produce and consume food, and funds in place that can help you to get there. If you have a good idea and want to find a way to make it happen, contact us and we will put you in touch with people that can help.

6 ASK MORE FROM DECISION-MAKERS

Let's be honest, as citizens and also as consumers, we do vote with the food we buy, but these individual choices don't amount to big changes if the regulating policies are not in place to support our needs and the changes we want to see. The National Agricultural Policy for the Maltese Islands (2018 - 2028) highlights national priorities and a set of measures to be implemented within the projected timeline. Of equal importance, and currently undergoing a revision process in European fora, another policy that really affects the farming community and hence the food we consume, is the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

The National Agricultural Policy for the Maltese Islands has a vision with these 4 main targets:

1. Increasing the competitiveness of active farmers and livestock breeders by focusing on quality and embracing diversification;
2. Facilitating the entry of young farmers by creating a cost-effective agri-business sector;
3. Fostering sustainability of farming activities by adapting to the local geo-climatic conditions;
4. Ensuring that farmland is managed by genuine farmers for agricultural purposes and related activities.

THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a European Union (EU) policy dedicated to agriculture and rural development. It was implemented in 1962 and was the first budgetary item of the EU. At that time, it aimed at developing agricultural production to feed the European people after the end of the Second World War, a goal it quickly achieved. The steady increase of European production has now led to overproduction.

Since its inception, the CAP has been reformed multiple times, including a major one in 1992. One fundamental change was in intervention strategy, aligning the CAP to the rules of the World Trade Organisation. The last reform took place in 2014 and the reform negotiation process is in full swing for the next CAP cycle which begins in 2021.

Today the CAP accounts for about 40% of the EU's budget. It remains the EU's most integrated policy, i.e. the one with the most decisions made at EU level.

The CAP is divided in two pillars, each having different goals and operating schemes. The first amounts to 70% of the CAP's budget. It grants direct aids to farmers, namely by providing a basic income based on the amount of land used. There is no link to how the land is used and what is produced. The second pillar is concerned with agri-environmental measures and rural development. It is financed in part by the EU and also by Member States, under what is called co-financing. This part of the CAP provides financial support to new farmers as well as to farmers facing a competitive disadvantage due to their geographical position or their production methods. It also supports the farm's evolution towards greater competitiveness or environmental-friendly practices.

The common market determines how the EU may intervene in markets for agricultural products in cases of crisis. It also serves as a safeguard to imports and exports of agricultural products.

Currently, the CAP encourages practices of intensive agriculture, cutthroat competition on international markets and corresponding farm expansion. This is instead of providing European citizens with healthy food, supporting small-scale farmers and improving the desirability of the farming profession. The CAP does not encourage environmental and biodiversity protection, improved animal welfare, climate change mitigation or the security of farmers in the Global South.

Nonetheless, a common agricultural policy remains crucial. First, European farmers need support to face the severe competition of non-European products, imported from places with sometimes lower production standards and costs. Secondly, farming not only produces our food but many other public goods on which we rely (such as reducing the dependency upon imports, preserving the landscape, creating dynamic rural areas, maintaining a diversity of culinary traditions and fighting against rural land being built up). These services are not reflected in the meager selling price of produce.

Thirdly, a common policy can strengthen a collective voice in light of the need to defend European interests against major global exporting powers and agribusinesses, cultivating food sovereignty, protecting the environment, mitigating climate change and restoring of biodiversity.

We believe that the CAP needs major, in-depth reform to win back its legitimacy as a public budget. It must become a policy aimed at the service of all farmers, Maltese citizens and all Europeans. To get there the current, blind financial support, uncoupled to good farming practice must be abandoned, and replaced by 'public money for public goods' approach. The post-2020 CAP needs more coherent governance, greater transparency, and be easily understood by farmers and citizens alike.



WE WANT A FAIR, GREEN AND HEALTHY CAP

We call on policymakers to build a better food and farming system in solidarity with people and regions across Europe. It is time for governments to put the public interest before big business and to realise that the CAP cannot be one-size-fits-all. We need a fundamental reform of the CAP to create a better and sustainable society, driving change beyond the narrow proposals currently being discussed.

What we need is:

A **fair CAP**, delivering fair revenues to farmers that cover their costs of production and provide them with decent working conditions. The number of full-time farmers locally has decreased and the farming population is currently ageing, with few young

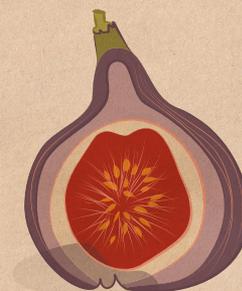
people pursuing this profession. This is mainly due to the unfairly low income that farmers get for the amount of toil they have to endure and the steep entry price of purchasing arable land and machinery. Those who make the transition to sustainable farming must also be rewarded. A fair CAP must promote local producers over global corporations, minimise resource use and prevent the exploitation of people in developing countries. The current per-hectare farm payments must stop and be replaced by targeted funding and support that promotes the transition to a sustainable society. The CAP must not harm food production capacities of small-scale food producers in Malta and Europe and in developing countries. Trade distorting CAP measures that lead to the destabilisation of markets at the local, national, European and international levels must end.

A **green CAP**, halting biodiversity loss, minimising the use of pesticides, fertilisers and antibiotics, ending intensive livestock production, reducing waste and radically cutting greenhouse gas emissions. It must promote a resilient and diverse food and farming system, and provide at least 50 percent of CAP funding for measures that protect and promote nature, the environment and climate.

A **healthy CAP**, prioritising healthy, nutritious, seasonal, local and affordable diets with fresh fruits and vegetables, making these accessible for all citizens. It must support legumes and promote the consumption of less and yet better meat. It must take care of people, animals and our planet.

A CAP for the people, spending public money on public goods. It must serve communities and consumers, and not corporations. We demand that the so-called strategic plans of the CAP are developed in a participatory way, together with local authorities and civil society organisations. They should explicitly seek the participation of farmers that are willing to embrace the transition towards sustainable farming and enable the participation of small-scale farmers and their organisations.

The goals of a fair, green and healthy CAP are universal, which is why we demand that all Member States deliver on the entire set of objectives set by the new CAP. These objectives need to be supported by impact indicators that allow the setting of specific goals and track performance. Funding to Member States and farmers must be conditional upon achieving the objectives.



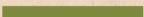
LOCAL AND SEASONAL FRUIT AND VEG

What's the point of supporting the production of good food if you do not take the time to really enjoy eating it?! We have put together a calendar so that you can know what's in season throughout the year. If you would like to obtain a copy of the AgroKatina pocket guide, order it through our website: www.foemalta.org/agrokatina



AGROKATINA FRUIT & VEG CALENDAR



Key Fresh  Greenhouse 

FANCY COOKING SOME YUMMY MEALS OR SWEET DESSERTS? TRY OUT OUR RECIPES.

ARTICHOKES

The globe artichoke, what a curious vegetable. So spiny and prickly on the outside, but when cooked, so soft and buttery inside. Keep your eyes peeled for fields full of these massive plants in March. If you're not sure what to look for, think of a giant thistle. It is no surprise that they resemble this bristly flora, as they are both parts of the same group of plants with prickly stems and leaves, members of the Asteraceae family. Also, part of the same family, but actually not a type of artichoke, is the Jerusalem Artichoke. Although the name would imply otherwise, this root vegetable forms part of a plant that more closely resembles a sunflower than an artichoke. The reference to Jerusalem is also a bit of a mystery, but a theory is that it is a corruption of the Italian word for sunflower: girasole.



Stuffed Artichokes

Stuffed artichokes are a classic Maltese recipe. They are usually stuffed with a variety of Maltese food staples: breadcrumbs, parsley, olives, capers, garlic and olive oil. Anchovies or tuna are also often added into the mix, but for a vegetarian variant we suggest adding some sundried tomatoes, which provide a kick of sour and salty flavour.

INGREDIENTS:

- o 4 large artichokes
- o 4 slices Maltese bread, crumbled
- o 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- o 8 sundried tomatoes, chopped
- o 4 tbsp olives, chopped
- o 2 tbsp capers, chopped
- o A handful fresh parsley, chopped
- o Salt & pepper
- o Olive oil

METHOD:

1. Chop the olives, capers, parsley and sundried tomatoes and toss them together with the bread crumbs, garlic, olive oil and salt and pepper to taste.
2. Prepare the artichokes by trimming the stem and removing the outer leaves at the base of the artichoke. Then trim the top of the artichoke and cut off the prickly points of the leaves.
3. Pry the artichoke leaves open and stuff between the leaves with the mixture.
4. Place the artichokes upright all together in a large pot of water, on a simmering fire. Cover and steam for about 45 minutes, until you can easily pull out a leaf of the artichoke. Serve and enjoy!

ORANGE

When winter is approaching, and so is Christmas, apart from all the merriment that brings, it also means the start of the local citrus season! Savour the delicious taste of local oranges, lemons and tangerines, and ensure you get a daily dose of vitamin C to boost your immune system. Although they are now considered to be typically Maltese, citrus trees are not indigenous to our islands. Lemon trees were brought to the Mediterranean in the first century, but orange trees were only introduced later, during the Arab period in the 9th and 10th century.



Orange & Almond Cake (gluten-free)

This orange and almond cake is deliciously moist and great for people who like a bit of marmalade bitterness. Made with almond meal and whole oranges that are simmered until very tender and then finely chopped, this classic gluten-free cake has a lovely light texture. It will not rise very much, and you may wonder if it will ever bake firm – it will.

INGREDIENTS:

- o 2 oranges, washed (make sure they are pesticide free, as the rind is also used in this recipe)
- o 250 g fair trade demerara sugar
- o 6 eggs (free-range or a vegan alternative)
- o 250 g almond meal
- o 1 tsp baking powder

METHOD:

1. Bring a large pot of water to the boil. Wash the oranges and cook whole in the boiling water for 2 hours. Drain, allow to cool to room temperature, then puree.
2. Preheat the oven to 160°C. Grease and line a 22 cm spring form cake tin with baking paper.
3. Beat the eggs and sugar until well combined.
4. Stir in the orange puree followed by the almond meal and baking powder.
5. Pour the batter into the prepared tin and dust the top with extra caster sugar. Bake for 1hr to 1hr 15mins, until the top is golden and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.
6. Allow to cool in the tin. Dust with icing sugar, cut into slices and serve.

MELON



No fruit is more ubiquitous throughout the Maltese summer than the melon in all its varieties. Locally grown melons start appearing at farmer's markets from the spring months and through the winter months, but it is the most refreshing in the hot summer period. Next time you are buying bettieħ from your farmer, ask if they grow or know about the Maltese variety, which is smaller and sweeter fruit and requires less water to develop. If you have green fingers, you can also get your hands on some of these heirloom seeds by contacting the Diversification and Competitiveness Directorate at Għammieri who are working to collect seeds from Maltese origin that are more adapted to this climate.

Melon & Mint Sorbet

Bettieħ is so delicious that it can be very well eaten on its own, but if you want to add some zesty flavour, follow the recipe on the next page. This is a summer staple since it is so easy to make. It can be prepared in advance and stored in a freezer for whenever you feel like a cooling, sweet treat. The best part of it is that you can make it with local and easily found ingredients—the most important thing is to get your hands on some sun-kissed, sweet melon. You will get around four potions of sorbet with the quantities given, so increase these as you see fit. You will need a food processor for this one.

INGREDIENTS:

- o 500g of melon flesh (buy 1 average sized melon)
- o 3 tablespoons of lemon juice
- o 2 tablespoons of chopped fresh mint leaves
- o 1 tablespoon of local honey (or agave for a vegan option)
- o a drizzle of honey, lemon zest and mint leaves to top

METHOD:

1. Take your melon and cut it into two halves to scoop out all the seeds from the centre. Remove the skin of the melon and cut it up into small pieces of a few cm in size. Lay these pieces into a container and place in the freezer and leave them there until well frozen (this will take around 2 hours).
2. After the melon pieces have become hard, chuck all the pieces into a food processor that has a strong enough motor to turn these frozen cubes into a puree. Add to this mixture the lemon juice (you can also add some lemon zest), the honey or agave, and the chopped mint leaves. Feel free to change the proportions of these ingredients based on how sweet, bitter and minty you would like the sorbet.
3. Place the food processor bowl with the puree back into the freezer and leave for another 1hr. Take it out again and give it a few more pulses to break up any water crystals that have started forming. After this, you can scoop out the content from the food processor bowl, and put it into a container and put it back in the freezer.
4. An hour later you will have a proper ice-cool sorbet. Use an ice-cream scooper to serve. I like to drizzle the sorbet with a bit of honey, add some lemon zest and decorate with fresh mint leaves. If you would like to try variations, add any ingredients that you want to the melon base (maybe some ginger or spices).
5. You can also experiment with the texture by stopping at the second step, to make a melon slushy.

SHARING IS CARING

If you have tried one of our recipes, snap a photo and share it on Facebook or Instagram using the **#AgroKatina** and **#SupportMalteseFarmers**. We will repost your pictures on our page.



TOMATOES



Tomatoes (classified as vegetables in NSO reporting, even though technically a fruit) is the most produced “vegetable”, by weight, in Malta, as reported in 2014. These plump fruits are from the nightshade (*Solanaceae*) family, which includes the next most widely produced crop in Malta, the potato, and also other crops such as eggplant and peppers. The tomato, *Solanum lycopersicum*, has thousands of cultivars which make a beautiful array of shapes, sizes and colours. Only a few of these varieties are grown in Malta—a favourite being the more traditional local cultivars, such as the juicy flat tomatoes (tadam ċatt) and the elongated tomatoes (tadam zenguli).

Gazpacho

What to do when you have over 5 kgs of tomatoes that are going to end up going bad? Sun-drying or making plenty of tomato sauce are the first things that come to mind, but you can also make some refreshing gazpacho—a cold summer soup, best enjoyed with toasted Maltese bread.

INGREDIENTS:

- o 10 ripe tomatoes
- o 1 cucumber
- o 1 bell pepper
- o 1 small spicy pepper
- o 1 small onion (or spring onions)
- o 2 cloves of garlic
- o juice of 1 lemon
- o a bunch of fresh basil
- o 1 tablespoon olive oil
- o pinch of ground pepper
- o pinch of salt
- o Fresh coriander and basil to garnish
- o Olive oil & balsamic vinegar to garnish

METHOD:

1. Remove the skin of the tomatoes. This can be done by either bringing the tomatoes to a boil and then placing in ice cold water, or else if they are very ripe, the skins can be peeled off with a knife. Chop the tomatoes into rough pieces.
2. Peel the cucumber if you prefer, I personally kept the peel on for extra flavour. Chop up the rest of the ingredients into rough pieces, just to make the blending a bit smoother.
3. Place all the ingredients (apart from those to garnish), into a blender a pulse until smooth.
4. Cool the gazpacho in the fridge until it is refreshingly cold.
5. Serve with basil, coriander and a drizzle of olive oil and balsamic.



BROCCOLI

When it's that time of the year that you say bye to summer and welcome the autumn, you know it's the start of the season for vegetables belonging to the Brassica family, such as broccoli, cauliflower, kohlrabi and kale. Brassica vegetables are nutritional powerhouses; they contain high amounts of Vitamin C and dietary fibre. They also contain nutrients with cancer-fighting properties. Broccoli is a good source of folate and sulforaphane, which are linked to reducing the risks of certain cancers.

Steamed Broccoli with Asian Dressing

To preserve the vegetable's nutritional quality, it is best to steam or stir-fry them, as opposed to boiling them. Here is a favourite, simple recipe that stars broccoli, it is delicious served with some noodles or a (free-range) egg!

INGREDIENTS:

- o broccoli, broccolini or broccoli rabe
- o thumb-sized piece of fresh ginger, peeled
- o 1 garlic clove, peeled
- o 1 fresh red chilli
- o 1 T sesame oil
- o 3 T extra-virgin olive oil
- o 1 T soy sauce
- o 1 lime (juice only)
- o 1 tsp balsamic vinegar

METHOD:

1. Put a large pan of water on to boil. Break the broccoli up into little pieces and slice up the stalks. Place the broccoli in your steamer basket or colander placed over the pan of boiling water and cover with a tight-fitting lid or some aluminium foil. Steam for around 6 minutes, until the stalks are tender.
2. Meanwhile, make your dressing — grate the ginger and garlic into a bowl. Halve, seed & finely chop the chilli and add to the bowl. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Whisk the dressing together and have a taste; what you're looking for is a flavour balance between saltiness from the soy sauce, sweetness from the balsamic vinegar, acid from the lime and the heat from the chilli.
3. When the broccoli is cooked, place it on a big serving platter. Mix up the dressing one last time before pouring it over. Absolute heaven!

PUMPKIN

When the weather cools a bit, we love to spend more time cosy indoors, as well as enjoying the beautiful green Maltese countryside on winter walks. Although we refer to the pumpkin as a vegetable, it is by definition a fruit. It is a seed packet encased in flesh and develops from a flower, like apples and berries. The pumpkin is probably the oldest domesticated plant in the Western Hemisphere. Ancient seeds found in Mexico were dated back to around 2,000 years earlier than the oldest corn or bean seeds yet found.



Pumpkin & Ginger Soup

Even though pumpkins store really well throughout the year, this crop is great for soups, autumn and winter treats. Here is a favourite, simple recipe that stars pumpkin! Adding ginger to it gives it that extra kick and also a boost to your immune system for the oncoming cold and flu season.

INGREDIENTS:

- o 1 kg pumpkin
- o 2 shallots
- o 75 g ginger
- o a few sprigs of fresh herbs , such as chives, mint
- o extra virgin olive oil
- o 1 litre organic vegetable stock
- o 125 ml coconut milk, extra to serve
- o half a tablespoon chilli powder
- o 1 lime

METHOD:

1. De-seed and roughly chop the pumpkin, peel and chop the shallots, then peel and finely grate the ginger. Pick and finely chop the herbs.
2. Place the pumpkin, shallots, ginger and some oil in a large saucepan and sauté until soft.
3. Add the stock, coconut milk and chilli powder. Season, then bring to the boil and simmer for 40 minutes.
4. Blitz in a food processor then serve with the fresh herbs, lime juice and a splash of coconut milk.

POMEGRANATE

Punica granatum is not a native species to these Islands, but the tree has been introduced in ancient times. This fruit, native to what is now Iran and northern India, has travelled further east and further west and has luckily ended up being cultivated in the Mediterranean, from which we now enjoy the benefits of having rummien on our plates in Autumn. The fruit is known for being high in antioxidant. It grows with very little input and does not need to be treated with agro-chemicals. The pomegranate arils add a nice punch of taste and colour to a lot of dishes.

Pomegranate Couscous Salad

Since October brings with it rainy weeks, the Maltese islands start looking greener, and seeds of wild plants start sprouting. Wild rucola, known as ġarġir abjad and ġarġir isfar, are wild plants that also have the benefit of being edible. You can easily spot these plants growing in rural areas. They make a delicious addition to the salad, since the wild rocket leaves have a much stronger taste than the cultivated ones. When foraging, make sure that you do not trample through cultivated fields or trespassing in private property. Only consume wild plants if you are absolutely certain that you have identified the plant correctly and that the part of the plant that you intend to consume is edible. Always apply the foraging rule, of taking just a little and leaving plenty for other species to enjoy. If you don't fancy adding foraged leaves to your salad, there are plenty of seasonal leafy greens and herbs that are growing locally—substitute to your preference.

INGREDIENTS:

- o 1 small ripe pomegranate
- o 200g couscous
- o 1 string onion, chopped into small pieces
- o zest and juice of 1 small lemon
- o a handful of fresh spinach or another leafy green (chard, kale, lettuce, beetroot leaves)
- o a handful of wild rucola
- o fresh herbs: a handful of chopped coriander, dill and mint (you can substitute or add to these with parsley and basil)
- o 15 almonds chopped (you can also use walnuts)
- o 2 tablespoon olive oil
- o pinch of salt
- o olive oil and honey to garnish

METHOD:

1. Pour boiling water onto the couscous and add the lemon juice, olive oil and a pinch of salt to the mixture. Cover and let it sit as instructed on the package until all the water is absorbed.
2. Remove the arils from the pomegranate.
3. Chop up all the herbs and leafy greens, spring onion and nuts.
4. Once the couscous has cooled down, air it with a fork so that it becomes fluffy. Add to it more olive oil, all the herbs, leafy greens, nuts and lemon zest. Once the salad is mixed well, add the pomegranate at the very end, so that the arils remain intact. Drizzle olive oil, and honey in the end.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Check out what we are up to at Friends of the Earth Malta and our work related to food and agriculture by visiting www.foemalta.org/goodfood

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