



Santa Cruz River

**FARMERS'  
MARKET**

*where everyone's welcome!*

## *Fennel 101*

**A**lso known as anise, fennel has a somewhat sweet and refreshing flavor. To use fennel, cut off the stalks and reserve for garnish. Unless your fennel bulb is small and delicate, you may want to peel off the outer stringy membrane and the root end with a vegetable peeler. To prevent the sections from falling apart during cooking, keep the core intact.



Used commonly in Italian, French and Mediterranean recipes, fennel can be served raw, braised, roasted, grilled, deep fried and in soups. Fennel pairs well with olive oil, butter, thyme, orange, lemon, tomatoes, potatoes, olives, garlic, Parmesan, feta, goat cheese.

**ROASTED** Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Coat sliced fennel bulb in olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Pour onto preheated baking sheet and roast until tender (15 – 20 minutes). Garnish with lemon slices and chopped fennel fronds.

**ROASTED ON A SALAD** Top salad greens with warm roasted fennel and feta or gorgonzola cheese.

**RAW** Toss raw, sliced fennel bulbs into salads or use on a crudité plate (the French way of saying: appetizers comprising of sliced or whole raw vegetables which are dipped in a sauce).

**ORANGE & ARGULA SALAD** Combine 1 to 2 thinly sliced fennel bulbs with 3 to 4 supremed oranges. Toss with olive oil, fresh lemon juice, salt and pepper. Serve atop argula.

**GRILLED** Half or quarter fennel bulbs (depending on their size), keeping the root intact. Coat with olive oil, salt and pepper and place on a preheated grill pan and grill, turning once, until fennel is tender and browning at the edges.

**FRIED** Slice fennel bulb into ½-inch wedges, keeping them joined at the root. Dip in a whisked egg and then into breadcrumbs or flour. Ease wedges in a single layer of hot oil and fry until golden brown. Season with salt and pepper and garnish with chopped fronds. Serve with lemon wedges and/or garlic/herb mayonnaise (prepared mayo mixed with minced garlic and/or fresh herbs).

**PILAF OR PASTA** Sauté 2 chopped medium onions, 2 chopped fennel bulbs and 2 cloves minced garlic in oil until golden brown. Season with salt and pepper. Stir into cooked bulgur, couscous, quinoa or pasta. Toss in a small handful of raisins and toasted nuts. Garnish with chopped fennel fronds.

**GINGERED** Sauté 2 minced garlic cloves, 2 sliced fennel bulbs in olive oil until golden brown. Add 2 tablespoons of grated or minced fresh ginger, 2 teaspoons of sugar and the juice of 1 orange. Simmer another 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

**MIDDLE EASTERN SALAD** Combine 1 chopped fennel bulb, 1 chopped red bell pepper, ½ chopped red onion, 1 to 2 chopped tomatoes, sliced kalamata olives, 1 seeded and peeled and sliced cucumber. Toss with olive oil, lemon juice or red wine vinegar, salt and pepper. If desired, top with feta cheese. Garnish with chopped fennel fronts.

**FENNEL & SQUASH WHIP** Cook chopped fennel bulbs and peeled, seeded, chopped acorn or butternut squash in boiling water until tender (15 minutes). Drain and cook over medium-low heat in 2 to 4 tablespoons of butter for about 10 minutes. Squeeze in the juice of 1 orange (optional). Puree in a food processor or by hand. Season with salt and pepper. Garnish with chopped fennel fronds.

**CARAMELIZED** Add 4 to 5 thinly sliced fennel bulbs (and 4 to 5 sliced onions if you wish) to melted butter or oil and cook on medium-low heat for 45 minutes to an hour until golden brown. Season with salt. Serve on a pizza, toasted bread for bruchetta, creamy polenta, pasta or as a side to meats.

**BAKED FISH ON A FENNEL BED** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spread caramelized fennel and onions on a baking dish. Place fish fillets on top, brush fish with olive oil, season with salt and pepper. Bake until fish is opaque and flakes easily with a fork. Garnish with fresh parsley, chopped fennel fronds and lemon slices.

**MINTY FENNEL & POTATO SALAD** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix 1 chopped fennel bulb and 1 pound of chopped potatoes with olive oil, salt and pepper. Roast until tender. Toss with 1 minced garlic clove, chopped fresh mint leaves, chopped fennel fronds and olive oil.

**CREAMY FENNEL SOUP** Sauté 3 chopped fennel bulbs, ½ chopped onion and 1 small minced garlic clove in olive oil or butter until soft. Add 4 cups of water or stock and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until fennel is tender about 15 minutes. Puree soup in a blender or with immersion blender. Add ½ cup cream, ½ and ½ or milk. Season with salt and pepper. Garnish with chopped fennel fronds.

*-Compiled by Gretel Hakanson*