

**Workshop Title: Preserves as Medicine**

**Speakers & their titles:** Roberto Gueli & Anke Kungl, Conscious Catering

**Executive Summary**

Health benefits of whole food preserves were highlighted in this workshop with the two founders of Conscious Catering, Anke Kungl and Roberto Gueli. The workshop began with a quick introduction to preserves as medicine, econutrition and a little background information behind their business and its values. The speakers then went through each different preservation technique from fermenting and sprouting to drying, freezing and canning. Nutritional and health benefits as well as nutrient loss and gains were discussed with the instruction of each technique. This fun and interactive workshop ended with a sampling of each technique, and recommendations on how to identify good, whole, preserved food as well as how we can make your own nutritious bread, vinegar and even soda pop!

**Detailed Notes**

Roberto and Anke are the founders of Conscious Catering. They are focused on offering healthy, plant-based meals and value that “food is thy medicine.”

Econutrition is the action of exploring quality of the soil and how that has a direct impact on the quality of our food.

The workshop leaders discussed three different imbalances in your health that can be supported by food preserves, which are micro-nutrient deficiency, food insecurity and abnormal gut flora.

Different techniques to preserving whole foods were demonstrated and the benefits of each technique discussed. These techniques included sprouting, fermenting, drying, freezing and canning.

- Sprouting:
  - o With sprouting techniques the vitamins, minerals, enzymes, fiber and water, as well as seeds are preserved
  - o Gains of sprouting include bio-availability and food security
  
- Fermenting:
  - o Preserves everything (vitamins, minerals, enzymes, fiber and water, etc) except for the phytonutrients – because it is not fresh food straight from the garden (over time, for instance, 3 months later the food does begin to degrade in some form)
  - o Gains of fermentation include synthesis, digestibility, long shelf life (up to 6 month storage) and food security

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- o Fermentation involves getting vegetables in an anaerobic environment. This is very important because if there is oxygen in the environment in which you are doing the fermenting– you will have mold. In order to get rid of the oxygen, you add water to your culture.
- o Salt is a microbial inhibitor and a key ingredient used in fermenting. They recommended Gracie salt or Himalayan salt for fermenting given that the type of salt will affect how your fermentation comes out.
- o Your refrigerator is a great way to arrest the bacterial development during the fermenting process.
- o They advised us not to ferment in metal or ceramic, and recommended glass jars as one of the best containers for fermenting.
  
- **Drying:**
  - o The temperature needs to be under 115 degrees Fahrenheit – preserves enzymes of the food (only under this temperature anything higher and you begin to cook the food)
  - o Vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, enzymes, fiber are all preserved using the drying technique. However you do lose the water content in the food.
  - o Gains of drying are that you have up to one year storage and food security
  - o Drying allows us to process large amounts of veggies at once and keep them for a long time. They can be used in sauces, soups, as spices/seasoning, etc.
  - o We can also dry leaves for tea, soups, etc.
  
- **Freezing:**
  - o Preserves minerals, phytonutrients, fiber and water
  - o However you lose vitamins, phytonutrients and enzymes given that freezing destroys enzymes in the food
  - o Gains for the freezing technique are up to one year of storage and food security
  
- **Canning:**
  - o High heat method of preservation
  - o Preserves minerals, fiber and water in your food
  - o However with this technique there is a loss of vitamins, phytonutrients and enzymes
  - o You can get up to one year of storage, (unrefrigerated) and food security by canning your food

Anke and Roberto also shared information and nutritional considerations of some other food items:

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Methods of extraction for herbs:

- Commonly done in folk medicine, but can be used to produce herbal remedies for different health issues
  - Alcohol, oil and vinegar are typically produced from this method
  - Fire Cider recipes were discussed and used as an example as a method of extraction for herbs. This is an old method but is also becoming popular again. It is an old, traditional, folk medicine remedy for colds. Recipes can vary, but usually contains cider vinegar, garlic, hot peppers, etc.
- Alcohol:
  - Scale of medicinal value from best (crafted alcohol) to least (mass produced alcohol)
  - In our modern times we bypass steps in mass-producing items. For example in the making of apple cider vinegar, mass-produced products are not made the same way we are used to doing it in the olden days – hindering the nutritious benefits of the vinegar
- Soda pop:
  - Fizzy by culture – not introduced with carbon gas
  - If you put fruit and sugar into the fermentation jars and use the same technique but instead of salt water you use sugar water, then you will get pop
- Bread:
  - Slow rise heritage grain is traditionally how bread was produced
  - Now many steps are skipped and our bread goes through major processing
  - There was discussion around how today's wheat can play a role in celiac disease, and how returning to our ancient roots preparing our foods like our ancestors did, we would be receiving all of the nutritional benefits that we hope to when we consume bread.
- Dairy:
  - Raw aged cheese, yogurt, kefir
    - Although raw milk is illegal in Canada, raw aged cheese is a great way of getting those nutrients closest to the source

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