

Guest Blog Recipe

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Bitter Melon, Watermelon & Crab Salad

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Bitter melon is... well, a challenging ingredient to be sure. Its astringent flavor is similar in profile to broccoli rabe or dandelion greens. So, for a little inspiration, we consulted the bitter melon cultivator and master curator of organic Chinese produce himself: Ed Yin of Queens Farm in West Chester, Pa.



According to Ed, bitter melon is favored in China for its health and medicinal properties. It's great for digestive track health and often eaten to detoxify one's system. Known to promote prostate health in men, its even been shown to reduce the risk of prostate cancer. Additionally, studies suggest eating bitter melon can help control blood sugar levels in diabetics.

So there you have it. While its bitterness maybe off-putting to some Westerners, its health effects can surely make it more palatable. Ed recommended stir-frying, sautéing in omelettes or juicing it with other fruits and vegetables for a health tonic. We've been **juicing** about 1/4 of a melon with with apples, carrots, kale, lemon, and celery for morning breakfast, and it works great.

For this recipe, we decided to incorporate bitter melon into a crab salad with watermelon. We used a generous amount of mayonnaise and lemon juice to compete with the melon's intense bitterness. But what really completes the dish, is the addition of watermelon which counters and highlights the bitter

melon perfectly. We also shaved in some of this week's red cabbage from Leola Produce Auction for some bright color and crunchy texture. This salad works well as a side dish or thrown atop a fresh bed of greens.

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 bitter melon
- 2 cups cubed watermelon
- 1 red onion
- 2 jalapeños
- 1 cup (about 1/8 head) shredded red cabbage
- 8 oz. jumbo lump crab meat
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 lemons, juiced
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- salt to taste

Directions:

Begin by cutting the bitter melon in half lengthwise. Use a spoon to scoop out the seeds and soft inner flesh. Next, cut the outer rind into even 1/4 inch cubes. Sprinkle salt on the cubes and let stand for 15 or so minutes to allow the salt to draw moisture from the melon and begin breaking it down.

Sauté the salted cubes in olive oil on medium heat for about 10 minutes to soften them up. Add 2 tsp of sugar and a splash of water to the pan and reduce until all the liquid cooks away. A little sugar will balance bitter notes and bring out the flavors in all of the ingredients (similar to salting). Transfer to a medium mixing bowl and allow to cool.

Meanwhile, mince the onion and jalapeño and combine all the ingredients together with the bitter melon cubes. Mix thoroughly and let sit for 1 hour before serving.





This post comes to us from **Adam Eshleman** and **Naomi Huober**. Adam is Greensgrow's own produce peddler with a background in fine-dining culinary arts. Naomi holds down a 9-5 in marketing, but comes alive by night and on the weekends behind the lens of her 5D. Together they love to spend time in the kitchen, crafting new recipes and experimenting with local produce. Their contributions to the Greensgrow blog are a representation of their deep love for gastronomy across all cultures and seasons.