

Fork & Field News

March 2025

Happy March, PPS! We are finally rounding the corner into spring! This means the sun is out later, birds are starting to wake up, flowers are beginning to grow, and the warm weather is slowly happening. What a wonderful time of year!

To help enrich our food systems community, please feel free to reach out with any recipes your family enjoys or other food & garden related things at shannonbarlow@princetonk12.org!

I look forward to hearing from you!

Women's History Month

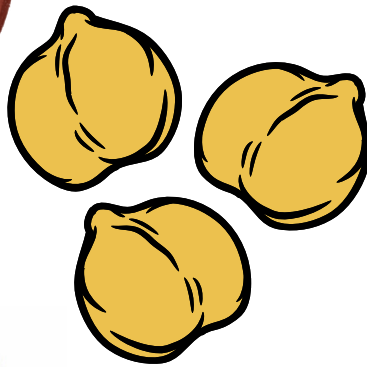
Every year, Women's History Month is celebrated the entire month of March. This celebration originated in the 1970s with the first official observance being in 1987. International Women's Day, however, has been observed since the early 1900s and is also celebrated in the month of March on March 8th. This month we celebrate the achievements of women throughout history and their contributions to our culture and society. This year, the theme for this Women's History Month is "Moving Forward Together: Women Educating & Inspiring Generations".



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Garden State On Your Plate



This month the featured Garden State on Your Plate vegetable is chickpeas. Chickpeas have been around for (literally!) thousands of years with the first chickpea domesticated over 10,000 years ago! From their origin in modern day Syria and Turkey, chickpeas spread all around the world becoming a staple crop in the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and India. Today, chickpeas are used in many popular dishes like hummus, chickpea salad, and Chana Masala.

Nowruz

In March, the traditional celebration of Nowruz occurs. The word Nowruz translates to “new day” in Persian and celebrates the first day of spring, or the vernal equinox, and the beginning of the new year in the Iranian calendar. Today, this holiday is celebrated by millions around the world. This year, Nowruz will begin on March 20th at 5:01 am, the precise moment winter ends and spring begins.



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Women in Food

Most people often think of women who made a significant mark on history through activism, science, the arts, etc. but there are so many women who made the food scene in America what it is today!

Julia Child: most known for her adaptation of French cuisine & recipes. She starred in her own TV show & has a cookbook both of which help to make cooking more approachable.



Edna Lewis: redefined Southern cuisine in America, making food from local & simple ingredients. She draws on inspiration from her grandparents who passed down recipes through the time of slavery.



[Link: Women in Food](#)

Nowruz Food & Science Significance

A great way to highlight the significance of the holiday of Nowruz is to learn about the vernal or spring equinox! This day marks the start of astronomical spring and also is the day where night and day are of equal length! A great video talking about this significant event for kids is linked below.



The holiday of Nowruz is mainly a Persian celebration. Because of this there are many delicious Persian foods we can celebrate on this day! Some of these include Sabzi Polo (Herbed Rice with Saffron) and Kuku Sabzi (Herb and Scallion Frittata). Check below for more recipes!

[Link: Vernal Equinox for Kids](#)

[Link: Nowruz Recipes](#)

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Classroom Connections - Cooking Show



Students in Alexis Custer's Biology class created cooking shows highlighting knowledge around macromolecules combined with their favorite foods! Groups of 2 or 3 students got together to create scripts, plan their meals, submit their recipes, and film their cooking show. Students were so excited (and a bit nervous) to share these videos with the class but everyone had so much fun creating & watching!

The Watershed

The Watershed in Hopewell, NJ has some amazing programs for schools & kids! This spring, we will bring a fun nature & science lesson to students called StreamWatch. Here students will either walk to the stream or have samples called "leaf packs" brought in for them to investigate. Students will be able to see all the macroinvertebrates living in the water and analyze the stream quality based on what they find!

The Watershed has a whole calendar of events that include a summer camp, teacher academy, and high school academy. There are annual festivals, nature trails, butterfly houses and so much more to explore at The Watershed!



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Share My Meals



At the beginning of 2025, PPS partnered with a local Princeton organization called Share My Meals. This organization is based in Princeton and is known as a Meal Recovery Program. This means they are not only diverting food waste, but they are also giving that otherwise wasted food back to the same community where it was recovered from. In January & February, PPS provided 582 meals to those in need!

Community Highlights

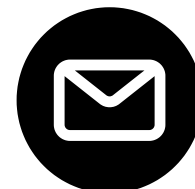
Special thanks to some of the special community partners listed below that helped to enhance the food system of

PPS!



Contact Me!

Please reach out to me with any questions, ideas, suggestions, or comments. I would love to hear from you and would love to incorporate your feedback into my work!



shannonbarlow@princetonk12.org

Chana Masala

Ingredients

2 15 oz. cans chickpeas	1 green chili
2 tbsp. oil	1 tbsp. ginger paste
1 small bay leaf	4 garlic cloves, chopped
1 inch cinnamon stick	1 1/2 c. tomato puree
2 cloves	3/4 tsp. salt
2 green cardamoms	1/4 tsp. turmeric
1 1/2 onions, finely chopped	1 1/2 tsp. red chili powder
1/2 tsp. cumin	1 tsp. garam masala
2 tbsp. cilantro, finely chopped	2 tsp. coriander powder

Instructions

Heat a large pot over medium high heat and add in oil. When the oil is hot add in the whole spices—cinnamon, cloves, cardamoms, bay leaf. When they begin to sizzle add in the onions and green chili until they are golden. Next, add in the ginger and garlic and saute for a minute or so. Pour in the tomato puree and season with salt until thickened. Stir in red chili powder, turmeric, garam masala, coriander powder and cumin. Sauté until the spices are fragrant about 3 to 4 minutes. Next, add in the chickpeas and about 1-1/4 cups of water. Mix well, check for seasoning and simmer covered for 15 minutes or until thickened.



Hummus

Ingredients

3 cups canned chickpeas or cooked from dry

1-2 cloves garlic

2 ice cubes

1/3 cup tahini

1/2 tsp. kosher salt

Juice of 1 lemon

Extra virgin olive oil

Instructions

Add the chickpeas and garlic to the bowl of a food processor. Puree until a smooth, powder-like mixture forms. While the food processor is running add in 2 ice cubes, tahini, salt, and lemon juice. Process for about 4-5 minutes. Check for consistency. If it is too thick, run the food processor and slowly drizzle in 1 tbsp. of water at a time or until it is smooth and silky. Spread in a serving bowl and add a generous amount of olive oil on top.

Enjoy!



Roasted Chickpeas

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed

Extra virgin olive oil

Sea Salt

Any spices you like!

Instructions

Preheat oven to 425 degrees and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Spread the chickpeas on a kitchen towel and pat them dry. Remove any loose skins. Next, transfer the dried chickpeas to the baking sheet and toss them with olive oil and salt. Roast the chickpeas for 20-30 minutes or until golden brown and crisp. Remove from the oven and while they are still warm, toss with your favorite spices. Store in a loosely-covered container at room temperature.



Chickpea Salad

Ingredients

2 cups grape tomatoes, halved
2 cups diced cucumber
15.5 oz. chickpeas drained and rinsed
3/4 c. diced green bell pepper
1/2 c. chopped fresh parsley
1/4 c. finely diced red onion
1 avocado, diced
1/2 lemon, juiced

Dressing

1/4 c. olive oil
2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
1/2 tsp. cumin
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. black pepper

Instructions

In a medium bowl, combine tomatoes, cucumbers, chickpeas, bell pepper, parsley, and red onion. Add in all the ingredients for the dressing and toss well. Mix the avocado in lemon juice then add to the salad. Refrigerate for an hour before serving.