

# Tisanes

Written by: Dr. Theresa Ann Kenney

Are you tired of spending half your paycheck for that very small tin of tea? The price of tea includes the shipping and handling, packaging and other costs that are often not eco-friendly. This month, in an effort to help both save money and save the planet, I will share with you my adventures in making my own tisanes.

I have come to realize, with great delight, that here in Wisconsin we have the perfect environment for making herbal infusions. We have a long enough growing season in the summer to produce most of the ingredients, we can dry anything to last us long into the winter and, usually, we can find plenty of old canning jars to save the wonderful blends we come up with.

Herbal infusions have been popular for thousands of years in many cultures, so the varieties can seem endless. I encourage you to experiment to find flavors that suit your taste buds. Let's start with tea ingredients you might consider for your herbal infusions.

Common herbs used for infusions are dandelion, rose hips, chamomile, peppermint, lemongrass, yarrow, ginger and hibiscus, among others. Each of these assorted ingredients has various medicinal properties.

Chamomile has long been heralded for its ability to calm the nerves and is the

perfect nighttime tea, but it also has other beneficial properties as well. It is known to relax the stomach muscles and help to soothe ulcers. Chamomile enhances digestion and helps to eradicate harmful micro-organisms. It has a mild flavor and can be enhanced by other flavors like lemon or mint.

Dandelion is easy to access and the whole plant can be used, including leaves, stems, flowers and roots. All parts of the dandelion seem to have medicinal qualities. Dandelion roots are used to brew tea for those with urinary problems. Dandelion leaves contain magnesium and are good for your bones.

You can mix the dandelion leaves with the leaves of carrots, turnips and radishes for a great tasting tonic. The flower buds and leaves make a wonderful tasting tea, especially when infused with sweet dried cranberries or raisins. Dandelion is even good for warts. Cut the stem and you will find that the plant's white milky fluid, when put directly on the wart two to three times a day, will help you get rid of it.

Ginger can be dried and, when infused in a tea, helps to relieve stomach distress, lower cholesterol, improve circulation and facilitate the lowering of blood pressure. Fresh ginger contains higher levels of [6]-gingerol, an anti-inflammatory and a compound belonging to the same family as capsaicin. Ginger brewed as a tea helps to induce sweating and is great for colds and fevers. It is also known to enhance

the immune system.

Just like those little red berries left behind on your rose bushes after the blooms fall off, organic orange, tangerine, lemon and lime rinds should not be thrown away. Rather, they should be dried to add flavor to your tea blends. Rose hips, like the citrus rinds, are high in vitamin c and anti-oxidants. See the recipe card below for some tisane blends that I really enjoy.

Michelle Jones (continued from page 2)

Before working at the co-op, Jones, who got a degree in social welfare from UWM in 2005, worked at Pathfinders, a shelter for runaway and troubled youth. Her last year at Pathfinders, she also worked with Americorps and, with Jan Christensen and Lyssa Spencer, tied Pathfinders to the co-op and other places in Riverwest. Teens from Pathfinders, paid through the Mayor's Youth Initiative program, worked in the cafe and in gardens around Riverwest, and participated in neighborhood cleanups.

When not working at the co-op or cooking up tamales, Jones, who has lived in Riverwest since 2005, said that she likes to spend time outside, especially riding her bike. She also said that she loves to see live music, citing folk and bluegrass as her favorites.

## Homeade Teas

Contributed by: Dr. Theresa Ann Kenney

Blend and store teas in a glass jar, out of the sun and in a dry place. Be sure to mix the blend up before measuring for tea. The licorice root tends to fall to the bottom of the jar. Steep for 3 to 5 minutes. I use the term "parts" to equal whatever measuring utensils you choose. It could be ounces, cups, pounds, etc. Experiment to get the flavor you like best. Also, Gibson suggests adding ½ ounce Irish whiskey to his cold remedy tea, though resists doing this while working at the co-op.

### CHAMOMILE TANG

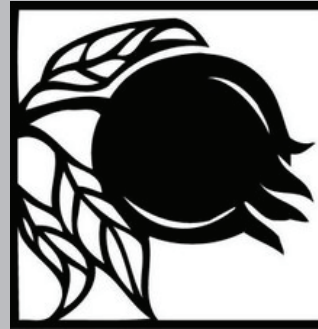
3 parts chamomile  
1 part dried citrus (lemon, lime, tangerine, orange or all of the above)

### FAT RED

2 parts red hibiscus flowers (no pistils; just flower petals)  
2 parts dried orange and tangerine rinds  
½ part dried licorice root (grated)  
½ part dried rose hips  
2 parts dried ginger root

### GIBSON'S COLD REMEDY

1 knuckle ginger (measure the tip of your forefinger to the first knuckle)  
1 pinch cayenne pepper  
Juice of ½ lemon  
Honey to taste (I use agave)  
Hot water to steep



# The Interdependent

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**FOOD FOR PEOPLE, NOT FOR PROFIT!**

## Just Coffee Cooperative

Written by: Lisa Knapp

So you may have seen Just Coffee around, or you may already be an avid fan of their deliciously roasted beans. But, do you know how amazing the Just Coffee Cooperative really is? With an aim to change social and economic inequality on a global level through true fair trade and sustainable business practices, it is hard to disagree. The co-op also has complete transparency in its business practices. The Madison-based roasting cooperative produces

some of the finest coffee available—it is tasty and ethical.

Being a real 100 percent fair trade roaster, Just Coffee maintains close relationships with all of its growers across the world while focusing on the ideologies of what fair trade was originally meant to be. Just Coffee goes above and beyond the Fair Trade regulations, and has actually made the decision to drop that certification, stating that "Fair Trade is more than just a brand name."

To be Fair Trade certified it takes a minimum buying price of \$1.61 per pound, no matter where the coffee is grown, and no matter how much work is put into growing the beans. Just Coffee has set a minimum per pound price at \$1.91 for the growers, although in many cases that price is exceeded depending on various factors.

The analogy was used by the folks at Just Coffee that, for example, minimum wage in Wisconsin would not be enough to live on in California. The same would go for coffee prices in two completely different parts of the world.

With respect to cooperative business ethics, Just Coffee strives to support like-minded, small-scale coffee growing co-ops. By supporting these smaller farms, it helps coffee communities to support themselves and to stay far away from the plantations, or "sweat shop" coffee farms. Better yet, the folks at Just Coffee can tell you exactly who the farmers are and where each bean comes from, as they make a point to visit each community a few times each year.

Once the green coffee beans make it to Madison in their recycled packaging, our friends at Just Coffee carefully air-roast each bean to perfection. Compared to the traditional drum-roasted coffee, air-

## Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities:

**Locust St Festival: June 14th**  
Help prepare food the night before, or volunteer at the Co-op's booth during the festival.

**Weekly volunteering:** If interested in volunteering, contact Gibson Caldwell by either stopping in to the Co-op or emailing: gibsonc@riverwestcoop.org

roasted beans provide a naturally delicious cup o' joe, free of carcinogens. Air roasting is said to bring out the unique qualities and flavors of each bean, as the beans are evenly cooked without adding any smoke.

Just Coffee works to keep the air clean during deliveries by using their biodiesel van to bring our favorite roasts to the Riverwest Co-op and all other regional locations. But for their stops a little closer to home in Madison, bicycle deliveries only! (Well, it is actually a sweet shiny red tri-cycle.)

And when you think it doesn't get much better than supporting an amazing cooperative because of their sustainable and insanely ethical business practices, you can know that you are actually supporting an entire line of cooperatives. From the farmers to the importer to Just Coffee for the roasting, it is all cooperatives, all the way.

Plus, when you take a sip from a freshly brewed cup of Bike Fuel or your other favorite roast you realize that they just may be right when they say it is "the finest green coffee on earth!" If you are not yet convinced, you simply must taste it for yourself.





## Michelle Jones

Written by: Melanie Hupfer

Patrons of the Riverwest Co-op Cafe may be surprised to learn that Michelle Jones, responsible for many a delicious meal in the cafe, and part of the duo that started Subrosa Rogue Restaurant and Mamasita's Tamales, started learning to cook just three years ago when she started working in the cafe.

Jones, a member of the Riverwest Co-op workers' collective who co-manages the cafe, started volunteering in the store three and a half years ago. When a position opened up in the cafe, she nervously applied.

"I'd never had a cooking job," she said, but really wanted the job. Food lovers in Riverwest and beyond can be thankful that she got the job.

Subrosa Rogue Restaurant was the first outside-of-the-co-op dining experience to come out of the collaboration between Jones and Michelle Detloff, who was cafe manager at the time Jones started in the cafe.

The rogue restaurant periodically treats Milwaukee diners to delicious themed vegan dinners at locales around the neighborhood. Keep a look out for flyers for the next Subrosa, tentatively scheduled for May or June.

The second collaboration, Mamasita's Tamales, grew out of a very successful Subrosa last summer featuring several kinds of delectable tamales. Jones and Detloff made the tamales again at a garage sale in August, and the venture grew to the point where they now try to make them each week, using the certified kitchen at Amaranath Bakery.

"It's fun to sit around a table with a bunch of people (assembling the tamales)," Jones said. She cites tamales as her favorite food to cook, due to the various satisfying functions involved, such as whipping the Masa and "rolling these cute little things in corn husks," she said.

Mamasita's Tamales were introduced to the co-op a month ago. They sell out fast, so if you see them in the freezer, be sure to get them while they last. Jones and Detloff also plan to expand the operation, including hiring staff, to bring the tamales to farmers markets and other area grocers.

Michelle Jones (continued on page 4)

## The 7th co-operative principle: Concern for Community

Written by: Peyton Covey

Food for People, Not for Profit. This simple statement illustrates our beloved co-op's embrace of the seventh co-operative principle. Our ongoing mission and commitment to the community is the offering of quality food at the best price we can, working toward lowering the price when fiscally possible. Whenever possible we purchase food directly from our immediate community, as demonstrated by selling vegetables canned on Booth Street, tofu made in Milwaukee, tamales made in Riverwest, and herbs from our roof top garden (coming this summer!).

*Our ongoing mission and commitment to the community is the offering of quality food at the best price we can, working toward lowering the price when fiscally possible.*

The Riverwest Co-op is rooted in our community. Even prior to the opening of our doors in 2001, it has been a positive influence, most notably on the corner of Clarke and Fratney streets. The first spaghetti dinner brought together many a person young and old to the Falcon Bowl and continues to be loved by many. Holding block parties with games for kids and May poles, selling food at local festivals and partnering with the Riverwest Currents for the Riverwest Follies are part of our chaotic dance for the community. Many of our members also volunteer at the co-op. Through volunteering with the co-op, relationships and feelings of community are grown.

This concern for community extends also to the communities supplying the co-op. Organic farming has been shown to have a better impact upon the soil. Ethical producers are given preference to others. We are currently debating how far to take this. A member advocated the boycott of Israeli products and many of our products are subsidiaries of conglomerates like Coca-Cola, Kraft, and Cargill. There is a balance to our ethics and our bottom line. The co-op could stop carrying all of the above, but then many people's favorites would be gone and the shelves partially empty.

These attributes of the co-op create an immeasurable value. This value makes the co-op more than just a grocery store and cafe—it is a community center. With your help, the Riverwest Co-op functions as a beacon of how an ethical, principled and people-centered business can succeed.

## Spring 2009 Issue

**Editors:** Melanie Hupfer, Shea Schachameyer

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**Submissions:** Peyton Covey, Jake Herro, Melanie Hupfer, Dr. Theresa Ann Kenney, Lisa Knapp

**To contribute to the Interdependent, please contact the Communications Committee of the Riverwest Co-Op Board or email article ideas to:**  
[peytonc@riverwestcoop.org](mailto:peytonc@riverwestcoop.org)

## Across the Board

Written by: Jake Herro

The Across the Board column discusses issues that the Riverwest Co-op board has deliberated and decided on in recent months. In the previous column, Peyton Covey covered some topics that are deeply connected with one another, including what kind of employer our Co-op strives to be for its 15 paid workers and the importance of maintaining a welcoming, healthy atmosphere for all.

One critical topic the board is now considering is a profit sharing plan as a benefit to our 15 paid staff. Profit share plans directly reward staff for their routine work. A well-built plan demonstrates to the workers that their employer honors their contributions. It can be an incentive to greater productivity. Profit sharing is proof that management considers the working staff equal in business ownership.

We are questioning some drawbacks: is it better to increase the modest pay of our workers, or return profit to all members in the form of reduced costs or owner rebates?

Though we don't usually speak of it in these words, I think it is accurate to say that the board's decision-making work goes towards hitting the best point between maximizing profit and just breaking even. The break-even point is that point at which all operating costs are covered with \$0.00 in reserve.

The Riverwest Co-op is not a profit-seeking business, but we subsist on the profit that we make. Our business applies its profit to cover all of these operating costs: maintenance of our inventory for the grocery store and cafe; payment of staff wages and operation costs for the building and equipment; securing our loan payments; and building some reserves for our ever-changing financial climate. Another factor that might be critical is our future growth-related capital expense.

Our management style is a good one for profit sharing. The workers' collective has active and continuous roles in policy development and the bookkeeping is completely transparent. Therefore, a frequent drawback to profit sharing plans – a "bait and switch" on employees, something that breeds suspicion more than cooperation – is absent at Riverwest.

Profit sharing plans take many forms. The plan might be a simple percentage of the total profit (the first 10 or 20 percent for instance) and distributing it evenly among workers by annual hours. Another formula might require the co-op to hit a certain dollar mark in profit before any percentage is distributed. A merit-based plan essentially measures workers against each other for efficiency or expertise, then reward workers unequally depending on performance.

The co-op's volunteers are invaluable and so are our paid workers. Their contribution of continuity, cohesion and that essential, intangible welcoming atmosphere, are undeniable. All members are welcome to comment on the board's deliberation regarding profit sharing with the paid workers.

The picture to the right was taken during the Riverwest Co-op's annual Board of Director's retreat. This year the retreat was hosted by Wellspring in West Bend, WI.

## Become A Member!

**MEMBERSHIP IS OWNERSHIP IN THE RIVERWEST CO-OP**

### The Fair Share Account

To become a Fair Share Account Member/Owner, you agree to pay a minimum of \$20 per year toward the \$100 Lifetime Membership.

### Partner Program Fee for Lifetime Members

One additional member card with your partner's name is optional for an additional \$10 per year (waived for lifetime members). This allows your partner to share the discount.

### By becoming a member you will receive:

- A 5% store discount
- An additional discount if you volunteer
- The option to pay with personal checks
- The ability to place special orders at 20% above wholesale

### By supporting the Riverwest Co-op and Cafe, you will be supporting:

- Organic farming
- Local agriculture
- Labor-friendly business
- Environmental sustainability
- The City of Milwaukee and the Riverwest neighborhood
- Minimal packaging
- Bulk items
- Community strength

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