

FARMER IN THE FIELD

Romanesco Verdure Saporite! (Flavorful Vegetable)

by Bonnie Swank
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Each year Dick and I get off the farm for a couple of weeks and travel to the North America

Direct Farm Market Association conference. We have been lucky enough to visit farms all across the United States and Canada and learn from our peers. Five years ago we visited Austin, Texas and stopped at Boggy Creek, an organic farm located in the center of town. It was there we were first introduced to romanesco, an odd shaped vegetable that looks as if it were covered with tiny spaceships, light green in color with a nutty flavor. We decided to add

romanesco to our crop list and we've never had trouble selling it, in fact this may be the first year we've planted enough to keep up with the demand.

Originating in Rome, romanesco didn't appear in the international markets until the 1990s. Romanesco has had a definite identity crisis though being called romanesco broccoli or romanesco cauliflower in North America, romanesco cabbage in France and broccoli

romanesco in Italy. Well, I can tell you in my opinion it's not a cabbage or broccoli but is a close cousin to a cauliflower

with tight heads and flowerets that break off. So I think any recipe you would use cauliflower in you could substitute with romanesco for a change of pace and its fun! Cut some up the next time you make a veggie platter and get ready for some fun conversation.



~ Bonnie and her husband Dick Swank are owners of Swank Farms in Hollister. To learn more visit SwankFarms.com or contact them at: 851-637-4704.

ROMANESCO BROCCOLI & RIGATONI

Recipe courtesy of Rachael Ray

Ingredients

- Salt and black pepper
- 1 lb rigatoni pasta
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1 cup chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 head romanesco broccoli/broccolini, cut into florets
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 2 sprigs rosemary, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- ½ cup grated pecorino-romano cheese (a couple of generous handfuls), plus more to pass around the table
- ½ cup chopped walnuts, toasted



Directions

Bring a large pot of water to a boil, salt it, add the pasta and cook until al dente. Drain, reserving a couple of ladlefuls of the pasta cooking water.

While the pasta is working, in a large, heavy saucepan or Dutch oven, melt the butter over medium-high heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook until golden, 6 to 7 minutes. Stir in the wine for 1 minute, then the chicken stock. Add the broccoli, lemon peel, rosemary and crushed red pepper; season with salt and black pepper. Cover and cook for 10 minutes.

In a serving bowl, toss the pasta, reserved pasta cooking water, cooked vegetables, cheese and nuts for a minute. Season with salt and black pepper and serve, passing extra cheese at the table.

ROMANESCO WITH GREEN OLIVES AND CAPERS

Recipe courtesy of
the Santa Monica
Farmers' Market
Cookbook



Ingredients

- 1 large or 2 medium heads romanesco (2lbs.)
- ¾ cup brine-cured green olives, pitted
- 2 tablespoons capers
- 4 tablespoons fresh Italian parsley leaves
- Grated zest of 1 lemon
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- Kosher or sea salt
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 4 large cloves garlic, peeled

Directions

Cut the romanesco into small florets and soak in ice water to cover for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, chop together the olives, capers, three tablespoons of the parsley, and the lemon zest. In a small pot, heat the oil and red pepper flakes over medium-low heat until hot. Remove from the heat and stir in the olive mixture, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and the lemon juice. Set aside.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Drain the romanesco, drop it into the boiling water with the garlic cloves, and cook the florets until just tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Drain well. Chop the cooked garlic with the remaining one tablespoon parsley, place in a large bowl, add the florets and olive-caper dressing, and toss well. Taste and adjust with salt, red pepper flakes, and lemon juice. If serving at room temperature, adjust seasoning again before serving.