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New Toys for the Kitchen

Just in time for cool summer salads

By Susie Iventosch

It's always great fun to peruse your favorite kitchen shops for the latest in cooking gadgets. There are always wonderful new innovations for doing "this" and "that" in the kitchen. In fact, in no time at all, you can rack up quite a bill! A few weeks ago, I was feeling the urge for just such a looky-loo, and sauntered into Across the Way in Moraga. There I found all sorts of interesting items, a few of which I picked up for gifts. But, you know how that goes ... one for my friend ... and one for me! Soon I was celebrating my own birthday in addition to that of my two good friends, only my birthday was still months away. The very next day, some invisible hand guided me to Sur La Table, where I found a few more intriguing gizmos. Oh my ... trouble again.

Not to worry, because these little adventures produced some very interesting items to share with you, from a collapsible cutting board, to an "Herb

Savor" and a pair of herb scissors. Why, they've even created a serrated plastic lettuce knife that won't turn your green leaves brown!

All of these items seemed to come in handy as I was preparing this week's recipe, a Mediterranean summer salad. Actually, I am not sure how I ever lived without the herb scissors—they are amazing! You can "chiffonade" (finely shred) to your heart's content.

The recipe calls for many items you can pick up at the farmers' market, which is held every Sunday in Moraga and, with last week's season openers in Lafayette and Orinda, you can now visit your favorite farmers on Thursdays and Saturdays, too. You will need some celery, basil, garbanzo beans, tomatoes, green onions, Greek olives and feta cheese, in addition to fresh-squeezed lemon juice and a drizzle of your favorite olive oil. This recipe is a farmers' market bonanza.

Mediterranean Summer Salad

This recipe originally came to me as a Greek vegan salad, but honestly, Greek salad without feta is like pancakes without syrup! I always add a good, tangy feta cheese, which is the perfect complement to the rest of the ingredients. This salad is dressed with a scant amount of olive oil and quite a helping of lemon juice. The seasoning derives from very thinly sliced basil and green onions. You may wish to further season with salt and pepper.

- Ingredients (Makes 6 side salads)**
- 1/16-ounce can chickpeas (garbanzo beans), rinsed and drained
 - 4 ounces cherry tomatoes, halved or quartered
 - 3 celery stalks, finely diced (the darker green the celery, the more flavorful)
 - 2 green onions, finely diced (use your new herb scissors)
 - 1/2 cup Kalamata olives, pitted and chopped
 - 16 basil leaves, chiffonade (again, use your new herb scissors, or roll leaves tightly and thinly slice into strips)
 - 1-2 tablespoon olive oil
 - Juice of 2 lemons
 - 1/4-1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
 - Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste



Mediterranean Summer Salad Photo Susie Iventosch

Directions

Combine the chickpeas in a large bowl with the remaining ingredients. Toss well and taste for seasoning. Serve at room temperature or chilled. Can be made several hours in advance.

This recipe is available on our web site. Go to: www.lamorindaweekly.com Susie can be reached at suziven@gmail.com

Kitchen Gadgets

Chop2Pot (\$15)



Photos Susie Iventosch

The innovative cutting board by Joseph-Joseph comes in a rainbow of colors from hot pink and orange, to lime green, black, red, white and blue. It is designed to lay flat for cutting and then folds along polypropylene hinges to form a chute for sliding diced ingredients into pots, pans or bowls. It is dishwasher safe. The price is approximately \$15 and it can be purchased through Amazon.com or at Sur La Table, among other locations, I am sure. This is a very handy cutting board.

Herb-savor (\$33)



attempt with a beautiful bunch of basil was a disaster. Failing

What do you do with fresh herbs once you've used what the recipe calls for? If you're like me, you either put them in a Ziploc in the refrigerator, or for things like parsley, basil, cilantro or mint, I usually fill a glass with water, plop in the unused part of the bunch, and decorate my windowsill. Still, this only lasts a short time before the leaves start turning moldy or mushy. Though I am still experimenting with the Herb-savor by Prepara, so far it has kept my bunch of cilantro looking as fresh as the day I bought it. My first

to read the directions, (who knew?) I did not pat my herbs dry before storing them. My basil went moldy immediately. The Herb-savor stores the herbs in a vertical position in a cabinet, and the stems dip into a water-filled well below. It only holds one bunch at a time due to limited space. It is available at Across the Way in Moraga and costs about \$33. For more information please visit: http://www.prepara.com/herb_savor.php.

The Onion Saver (\$4.99)



pretty much just like an onion! And, it works very well. I gave my mom and my sister one for stocking gifts this year and they raved about it, so ... you've got it ... I bought myself one! This is available at Across the Way, and just about any good kitchen shop, or online at: <http://www.4thegrill.com/hak7059.html>.

Plastic Serrated Lettuce Knife (\$4.99)

This plastic knife by OXO Good Grips cuts through lettuce without leaving the tell-tale dark stains you see the next day from metal knives. Okay, I found one stain, but for the most part, it seemed to work as promised. It doesn't have the sharpest edge, but it does work its way through a head of Romaine just fine. I like to use Romaine for chopped salads, but often chop more than I need, so it's nice to be able to store it without having it turn brown everywhere. The knife is safe to use on non-stick pans and claims to cut well through cakes and brownies. I have not tried the brownies, but it works perfectly on cake! And, this is one knife you can toss into the dishwasher. I found this one at Across the Way, too.

Herb Scissors (\$11)

This may be the best \$11 I have ever spent. Made by RSVP International, these herb scissors take all of the work out of cutting up herbs, especially the leafy varieties like basil, mint, cilantro and parsley. Simply stack your herbs and snip away. The innovative blade design features a set of five sharp, three-inch stainless steel blades that, when closed together, allow you to cut, chop or mince herbs directly into a pan or over a

plate for garnishing. These scissors create the perfect basil chiffonade for this week's featured recipe—Mediterranean Summer Salad. They also work well on chives, dill, fennel, sage or green onions. I have not tried them yet on the smaller-leaved herbs like tarragon, oregano, savory or marjoram, but the company indicates they do work well on these herbs, too. I cannot thank Susan Marconi of Across the Way enough for recommending these nifty scissors! For more information about RSVP products, please visit: <http://www.rsvp-intl.com>.



Orinda Farmers' Market Saturdays from 9a.m. - 1p.m.
Lafayette Farmers' Market Thursdays from 4 - 8 p.m.
For more information on the Contra Costa Certified Farmers' Markets (Lafayette and Orinda markets) visit: <http://www.cccfm.org/>.
Moraga Farmers' Market runs every week, year-round on Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information on the Farmers California Farmers' Market Association (Moraga market) please visit: <http://www.cafarmersmkt.com>.

LAMORINDA's Restaurants

... updated January 6, 2010 ...

American	The Great Wall Rest., 3500 Golden Gate Way, 284-3500	Hsiangs Mandarin Cuisine, 1 Orinda Way # 1, Ori, 253-9852	Lily's House, 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #A, Laf, 284-7569	Mandarin Flower, 581 Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-7839	Panda Express, 3608 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 962-0288	Szechwan Chinese Restaurant, 79 Orinda Way, Ori, 254-2020	Uncle Yu's Szechuan, 999 Oak Hill Rd, Laf, 283-1688	Yan's Restaurant, 3444 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-2228
BBQ	Bo's Barbecue, 3422 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-7133							
Burger Joint	Flippers, 960 Moraga Rd, Laf, 284-1567	Nation's Giant Hamburgers, 400 Park, Mor, 376-8888	Nation's Giant Hamburgers, 76 Moraga Way, Ori, 254-8888					
Café	Ferrari - Lucca Delicatessens, 23 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 299-8040	Geppetto's cafe, 87 Orinda Way, Ori, 253-9894	Mamounia Express Cafe, 3732 Mt. Diablo Blvd # 179, Laf, 299-1372	Rising Loafer, 3643 Mt. Diablo Blvd Ste B, Laf, 284-8816	Susan Food Catering & Cafe, 965 Mt. View Dr., Laf, 299-2469			
California Cuisine	Artisan Bistro, 1005 Brown St., Laf, 962-0882	Metro Lafayette, 3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-4422	Shelby's, 2 Theatre Sq, Ori, 254-9687					
Chinese	Asia Palace Restaurant, 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-0809	Chef Chao Restaurant, 343 Rheem Blvd, Mor, 376-1740	China Moon Restaurant, 380 Park St, Mor, 376-1828					
Continental	Petra's Restaurant, 32 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 284-7117	Vino Restaurant, 3531 Plaza Way, Laf, 284-1330	Duck Club Restaurant, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-7108					
French	Chevalier Restaurant, 960 Moraga Road, Laf, 385-0793	Fuz, 3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-9930						
Hawaiian Grill	Lava Pit, 2 Theatre Square, St. 142, Ori, 253-1338							
Indian	Swad Indian Cuisine, 3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 962-9575							
Italian	Giardino, 3406 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-3869	La Finestra Ristorante, 100 Lafayette Cir, #101, Laf, 284-5282	La Piazza, 15 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-9191					
Japanese	Mangia Ristorante Pizzeria, 975 Moraga Rd, Laf, 284-3081	Michael's, 1375 Moraga Way, Mor, 376-4300	Mondello's, 337 Rheem Blvd, Mor, 376-2533	Pizza Antica, 3600 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-0500	Pizzeria Amoroma Rest., 65 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-7662	Postino, 3565 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-8700	Ristorante Amaro, 360 Park St, Mor, 377-7662	
Mexican	360 Gourmet Burrito, 3655 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-1270	Casa Gourmet Burrito, 3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-4415	El Charo Mexican Dining, 3339 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-2345	El Jaro Mexican Cafe, 3563 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-6639	La Cocina Mexicana, 23 Orinda Way, Ori, 258-9987	Mucho wraps, 1375-B Moraga Way, Mor, 377-1203	Baja Fresh Mexican Grill, 3596 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-8748	Celia's Restaurant, 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-8280
Mediterranean	Petra Cafe, 2 Theatre Sq # 105, Ori, 254-5290	Oasis Cafe, 3594 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-8822	Turquoise Mediterranean Grill, 70 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-2004					
Pizza	Mountain Mike's Pizza, 3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-6363	Mountain Mike's Pizza, 504 Center St, Mor, 377-6453	Pennini's, 1375 Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-1515	Round Table Pizza, 361 Rheem Blvd, Mor, 376-1411	Round Table Pizza, 3637 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-0404	Village Pizza, 19 Orinda Way # Ab, Ori, 254-1200	Zamboni's Pizzeria, 1 Camino Sobrante # 4, Ori, 254-2800	
Sandwiches/Deli	Bianca's Deli, 1480 Moraga Rd # A, Mor, 376-4400	Europa Hofbrau Deli & Pub, 64 Moraga Way, Ori, 254-7202	Kasper's Hot Dogs, 103 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-0766	Noah's Bagels, 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-0716	Orinda Deli, 19 F Orinda Way, Ori, 254-1990	Subway, 396 Park St., Mor, 376-2959	Subway, 3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf, 284-2627	Subway, Theatre Square, Ori, 258-0470
Seafood	Yankee Pier, 3593 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-4100							
Steak	Casa Orinda, 20 Bryant Way, Ori, 254-2981							
Tea	Patesserie Lafayette, 71 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 283-2226	Tea Party by Appointment, 107 Orinda Way, Ori, 254-2206						
Thai	Amarin Thai Cuisine, 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf, 283-8883	Baan Thai, 99 Orinda Way, Ori, 253-0989	Royal Siam, 512 Center Street, Mor, 377-0420	Siam Orchid, 23 Orinda Way # F, Ori, 253-1975				
Vietnamese	Little Hearty Noodle, Pho & Pasta, 578 Center St., Mor, 376-7600							

download our Restaurant Guide from our web site at www.lamorindaweekly.com

The Lamorinda Weekly (LW) Restaurant Guide is not paid advertising; our intent is to provide a useful reference guide. We hope that we have included all Lamorinda restaurants on this page, except those that told us they did not wish to be listed. LW is not liable for errors or omissions. In the event that we have inadvertently printed misinformation or excluded a restaurant please let us know (info@lamorindaweekly.com) so that we may correct our list for the next issue.

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