

Week of Wild Food - Day One

Contributed by Becky Lerner
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The temptation of free pizza is no match for curiosity

I was so excited for the wild food project that I could not relax enough to go to sleep last night until 8 am this morning! Unfortunately this means I only ate one meal today since I woke up at 4 pm. I am typing this at a cafe that has free gourmet pizza sitting outside. How often does that even happen? Must...resist...siren's call of the cheese!

Actually, pizza is no match for the strength of my curiosity. Jan Lundberg has assured me that I will probably begin a purifying detox brought about by the restricted calories I'll be taking in and the medicinal properties of eating all those raw, fresh, wild greens. I have never fasted before, and Jan thinks this will be similar, so I have no idea what I'm in for. I like adventures. I once heard a story about a girl who started communicating with plant spirits after eating a ton of chickweed, a plant that makes cell boundaries more porous -- and apparently spiritual boundaries, too. It would be really cool if trees started talking to me. Anything is possible. Once, when I meditated after imbibing a dandelion tincture, I met the dandelion spirit. It took the form of a very joyful, playful, light-hearted elf. More experiences like that are always welcome.

Today I walked three blocks from my apartment and saw my neighbor, the artist Micki Skudlarczyk, weed whacking her overgrown yard (by order of her landlord). She generously agreed to let me pluck some food first. We found big juicy-lookin' dandelion leaves, plantain leaves, which are high in vitamins a, c, and k, and can be used as a laxative, sweet red clover flowers, and some sheep sorrel, which has leaves that tastes tangy and lemon-flavored. I made a salad out of the clover flowers and added the sorrel leaves to give the flavor a kick. The sweet and tangy combination gets a thumbs up. I bet it would taste great with a raspberry vinaigrette dressing. I steamed the dandelion and plantain leaves as a main course, and sadly, I give that a thumbs down. It sounded like a good idea, since the field guides say plantain is reminiscent of swiss chard. I had a hard time eating it. Maybe next time I can try boiling the plantain and removing the tough fibers, which is supposed to increase palatability. Plus the dandelion leaves were bitter. I think if you added some agave or some other kind of sweetener to it, it would be better. I did like eating the raw plantain leaves.

I'm drinking lots of water to stay hydrated and feel full. A guy named Paz from Mt Shasta wrote me an e-mail (RebeccaELerner@gmail.com) advising me to put a pebble under my tongue to avoid hunger. I'll let you know what happens if I try that.

Tomorrow I want to eat some roots to roast because I hear they offer carbohydrates. Chickory root is purportedly a coffee substitute, which appeals to me as the smell of the real thing wafts by. I am also going to call up some friends and see if they want to go fishing, or roadkill-eating, or some other kind of protein-getting.

Stay tuned! And e-mail me if you have any advice or feedback -- I'd love to hear it!