

Shoresh is rooted in environmental sustainability

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Chocolate Tahini Cookies from The Living Kitchen. (Photographer: Daniel Alexander)

Shabbat Shalom! There's nothing like a party, and on Feb. 12, some 350 people gathered at the Eglinton West Gallery to celebrate Tu B'Shvat and to support Shoresh, the Jewish environmental group.

"It felt like a very full house," said Sabrina Malach, director of community engagement for Shoresh. "Taking Root is a party and our annual gathering."

"We take pride in being as inclusive as possible and attracting a "diverse group" of supporters.

Indeed millennial, teenagers, and young children were among the people milling about the hall enjoying a cornucopia of plant-based food – everything from soups and salads, to cookies and low-sugar, health-food treats.

Food and conversation flowed as did kombucha, courtesy of GTs Living Foods. In the foyer, people sampled Berrycello and Dayaa Arak from the White Distillery.

Some 30 vendors donated the food and drinks, Malach said. "I am in awe of all these people in the community who are supporting us. They do it because they believe in our cause. They want to give back."

The food was plentiful and tasty. I sampled vegetable chow mein from In the Manor catering, roasted spaghetti squash, prepared by Chef Jordan Wagman; kale, nappa and brussel sprout slaw from the Delicious Dish Cooking School, and the list goes on.

I tried beet borsht from Sunflower Kitchen, spiced cauliflower from Summer Hill Market, dips from Live Organic Food Bar and Mother Raw, and sushi from Umami Sushi.

There were some really interesting vegan dishes like Jamaican patties from Choose Life Foods, grilled cheese from Culcherd; and chickpea tikka masala from Good Food for Good.

Other contributors included Yoso cultured foods, Gusta Foods Inc, Mighty Fine Brine, Kozlik's Canadian Mustard, Harbord Bakery and Calandria, Il Fornello, BioRaw, NONA Vegan Foods, NuPasta and Plant Trainers.

Of course no vegetarian food event would have been complete without herbal tea and cold pressed juice, which were provided respectively by Lemon Lily Tea and the Greenhouse Juice Co.

Despite all I ate, I could not resist the desserts: cookies from New Moon Kitchen; flourless tahini brownies and chocolate chip cookies from Ellen Jane Desserts; whoopie pie from Sweets from the Earth; chocolate chunk tahini cookies from Living Kitchen, maple birch sponge toffee and protein truffles from Live On Chocolate, and from Nufs – black sesame and coconut 'nufs.'



Chef Jordan Wagman, and Rebecca Shapero, Wagman's culinary director, served roasted spaghetti squash with a tomato sauce at the Shores culinary fundraiser, Taking Root.(photo Larry Nusbaum)

There were even giveaway treats like Kind Bars, midday squares and snack bombs and granola bars from Nature Path, which I sampled in the car as I drove home.

This week's recipes come from three of the presenters at Taking Root: Tamara Green and Sarah Grossman, from the Living Kitchen, and Chef Jordan Wagman. We have Wagman's recipe for **Slow Cooked Chickpeas and Kale, Fresh Tortillas**, as well as the **Chocolate Tahini Cookies** from *The Living Kitchen*, a cookbook by Green and Grossman, which was published in 2018.

SLOW COOKED CHICKPEAS AND KALE (Jordan Wagman)

45 ml (3 tbsp) avocado or olive oil

750 ml (3 cups) roughly chopped leeks, rinsed and dried

3 tbsp (45 ml) ground cumin

3 tbsp (45 ml) ground coriander

2 tbsp (30 ml) chipotle or smoked paprika powder, optional

2 tbsp (30 ml) yellow curry powder

2 tbsp (30 ml) ground hyssop, **see tips below

1 tbsp (15 ml) sea salt

1½ cups (375 ml) dried chickpeas, soaked (see tips)

10 cup (2.5 L) water or vegetable stock

3 cups (750 ml) roughly chopped kale

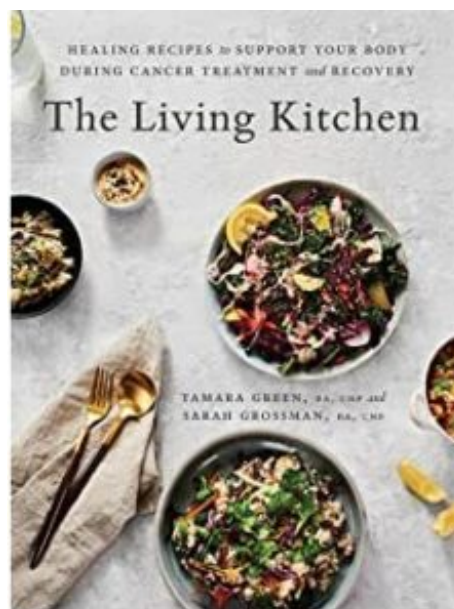
2 tbsp (30 ml) coconut or apple cider vinegar

3 tbsp (45 ml) finely chopped green onions or chives

In a large saucepan, warm the oil over medium heat. Add the leeks, cumin, coriander, chipotle, curry, hyssop and salt. Stirring often, cook until the leeks are soft, about 5 minutes. Add the chickpeas and stir well to combine. Add water or stock, turn the heat to high and bring the mixture to a boil.



Moshe Oziel, of In the Manor Catering served a vegetarian chow mein at Taking Root. (Barbara Silverstein photo)



Turn the heat to low (the liquid should just be bubbling) and simmer slowly until the beans are soft and the liquid has almost fully reduced, about 4 hours.

Add the kale and mix well to combine. Cook until the kale is soft, about 5-10 minutes. Add the vinegar and mix well to combine. Garnish with the green onions or chives and serve immediately.

Chef Jordan's Tips:

Cooking dry beans is quite simple but does require some advanced preparation. The following instructions can be adjusted to suit the quantity of beans (or chickpeas) you wish to cook. A good rule of thumb; 250 ml (1 cup) of dried beans makes about 500 ml (2 cups) cooked.

Long soak – Combine 250 ml (1 cup) dried beans with 750 ml (3 cups) water and set aside for at least 6 hours or overnight. Drain and rinse well with water. The beans are now ready to cook.

Quick soak – In a pot combine the beans and water and bring to a boil for about 3 minutes. Remove from heat and cool for 1 hour. Drain and rinse thoroughly. The beans are now ready to cook.

**Ground hyssop can be found in most Middle Eastern or specialty food shops. Dried and ground thyme can substitute well for hyssop in this recipe.

FRESH TORTILLAS (Jordan Wagman)

What you'll need: 1 tortilla press or two cutting boards (see tip), silicone pad or parchment paper

250 ml (1 cup) Masa Harina (Mexican Corn flour)**See editor's note

2 ml (½ tsp) sea salt

175 ml (¾ cup) warm water

45 ml (3 tbsp) olive oil, divided

In a mixing bowl, combine Masa Harina and water and mix well to combine. With your hands, mix until a firm dough is formed; similar to wet clay. Set aside to rest for 10 minutes.



(l-r) Sarah Grossman and Tamara Green

Divide the dough into 8 equal portions and roll into balls. Set aside.

In a large sauté pan, warm 1 tbsp (15 mL) olive oil over medium heat.

Lay the silicone pad or parchment paper in front of you and spread 1 tsp (5 mL) of olive oil on the surface, covering the entire pad or parchment paper.

Place one ball of dough on the oiled sheet, about 2-3 inches in from the edge. Fold half of the pad over the dough and place the cutting board over top. Gently press down to form a tortilla. Open the silicone pad or parchment paper, revealing the tortilla.

Using your hand, gently pull the tortilla from the oiled pad and place in a preheated sauté pan. Cook the tortilla until the bottom is crisp and golden brown, about 2-3 minutes. Flip the tortilla and repeat.

Remove from heat and set aside. Repeat with the remaining dough until all tortillas are cooked. Add more oil to the pan, silicone pad or parchment paper as needed. Serve immediately

Serve immediately. Makes about 8 tortillas.

Chef Jordan's Tips:

Masa Harina can be found with other cornmeal and Mexican products in your local grocery store.

Keep your tortillas soft

**** Editor's Note: Substitutions for Masa Harina:**

Masa Harina is a flour made from soaked corn. You can make a substitute flour by putting dried corn tortillas in a food processor to make a fine flour.

Left over corn dried tortillas is the optimal substitute for masa harina because corn tortillas are made from masa harina. Ground corn taco shells, corn tostadas or tortilla chips can also be used.

Cornstarch and polenta will also work, but the distinct Mexican corn flavour will be missing.

CHOCOLATE TAHINI COOKIES (Tamara Green & Sarah Grossman)

1 large egg

125 ml (1½ cup) tahini

125 ml (½ cup) blanched almond flour

125 ml (½ cup)coconut sugar

2½ ml (½ tsp) baking powder

One 100 g (3.5 oz) 70% or higher dark chocolate bar, coarsely chopped

1 ml (¼ tsp) coarse sea salt

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a medium-sized bowl, mix together the egg, tahini, almond flour, coconut sugar, and baking powder. It will make a thick, sticky mixture. Fold in the chopped chocolate.

Scoop about 15 ml (1 tbsp) of batter and place it on the baking sheet. Continue to do this, spacing each cookie about 2½ inches apart, until you have used all of the dough. If you prefer a larger cookie, scoop 30 ml (2 tbsp) per cookie.

Sprinkle cookies with the coarse salt. Bake in the oven for 8–9 minutes, watching carefully because they can burn easily. They should be just lightly browned on top. Let cool for 10 minutes on the baking sheet. Then transfer to a plate or container for storage. These can be stored in a cool place in the pantry for 2 days or in the fridge for 1 week. Makes 14 cookies.

You can freeze these cookies for 3–4 months.