

Hogweed recipes by Eleonora Matarrese

Hogweed Bread

Ingredients:

- For the *roux* (pre-dough): 100 ml almond milk and 20 g type 1 flour.

- For the dough: 120 blanched hogweed leaves and stalks, 120 ml almond milk, 380 g type one flour, 4 g of dehydrated brewer's yeast (or 14 g fresh yeast), 20 g granulated sugar, 1 egg or a coffee cup of *aquafaba*, 60 g melted almond butter, and 10 g sea salt.

Preparation:

Prepare the *roux* by mixing the flour in a saucepan with milk a little at a time. Heat, stirring often with a spatula until it thickens (a sort of polenta will form). Transfer the *roux* to a bowl to cool.

Blanch the hogweed's leaves and stalks in water for 5 minutes, then drain and squeeze out the excess water. Blend the hogweed with the almond milk to obtain a homogeneous purée.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, mix the flour, baking powder, and sugar. Pour in the hogweed purée, the egg or lightly whipped *aquafaba*, the melted almond butter, and the *roux*. Activate the planetary mixer with the hook inserted at medium speed and work for eight minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic. Add the salt and knead for one minute.

Place the dough out onto a lightly greased work surface and form into a ball. Leave it to rise in a lightly greased bowl, covered with a dish or wrap, for one hour in a warm place.

Sprinkle the work surface with a little flour and turn the dough over. Spread the dough into a horizontally stretched oval, fold the sides towards the centre, and roll into a cylinder, starting from the top.

Seal the dough well at the points where it joins and place it in a well-buttered 30x10 cm loaf pan; close with the lid and leave to rise for one and a half hours in a warm place.

Bake the hogweed bread in a preheated static oven with a fan at 200° C/190° C for forty minutes.

Remove the mould from the oven, leave it to cool for five minutes, then unmould the bread and let it cool completely on a wire rack.

It can be cut into slices and stuffed as desired, for example, as a club sandwich, but also eaten at breakfast with compote or sliced fresh fruit.

Hogweed and Burdock 'Fake Artichokes'

Ingredients: hogweed and burdock stalks, hogweed leaves, dechlorinated water, raw sea salt, wild garlic bulbs, and wild oregano and thyme.

Preparation:

Place all the cleaned stalks of hogweed in a very clean jar, together with a wild garlic bulb, some wild oregano, and thyme to taste.

Prepare in another jar the brine, with dechlorinated water and 5% raw sea salt. Let the salt dissolve, and then pour this water on the hogweed in the other jar.

Let it stay for at least three days on a surface away from heat sources, with the lid on and without closing it, to release excess carbon dioxide.

After three days, it is ready, and you can close the lid and store it in a cool and dark place. Use burdock stalks just as you would use artichokes. You may also want to let them dry for half a day to release excess water and then place them in a jar, cover them with extra virgin olive oil, and eat them as if they were artichokes in oil. Hogweed stalks will be like citrusy artichokes.

Amaretti with *Heracleum sphondylium*

Ingredients: 500 g sweet almonds, 50/80 g bitter almonds, 500 g sugar or another sweetener, sugar for covering, zest of 2-3 organic lemons, 6-7 egg whites or 3 full cups of *aquafaba*, two tbsp *Heracleum sphondylium*'s seeds, and a pinch of sea salt.

Preparation:

To peel the almonds, immerse them in boiling water for about a minute and a half. Then let them cool and peel them with your fingers or a tea towel; it is very important to let the almonds dry well before using them. Or, if you cannot wait, let them dry in the oven at a temperature of 150° for 2-3 minutes.

Grind the sugar and salt with half a tbsp of hogweed seeds until it becomes like powdered sugar.

Grind the sweet and bitter almonds with one tbsp of seeds, and then add the flavoured sugar to obtain a homogeneous mixture.

Beat the egg whites or *aquafaba* separately without whipping them, add the powdered lemon zest, and then gradually add to the almond and sugar mixture. Mix well and let it rest for half an hour.

From the obtained dough, make balls a little larger than a walnut. For this operation, it is better if you moisten your palms with water so it does not stick.

Grind the remaining hogweed seeds, add this powder to granulated sugar, then roll the small balls in this flavoured sugar to sprinkle them well.

Put the balls on a non-stick pan or one lined with parchment paper and flatten them slightly.

You may want to decorate them with single almonds.

Bake in the preheated oven at 160° for about twenty minutes until the bottom of the amaretti is lightly browned.

Remove from the oven, leave to cool, and serve; you can keep them in airtight containers for up to a week.

Useful tips: Almonds can be germinated before the peeling process; just leave them in water for 12-24 hours. Sprouted almonds are more easily digestible (specifically, sprouts eliminate toxic enzyme inhibitors allowing the body's enzymes to work during digestion).

Hogweed *Gelo* with *Percoca*¹ and Wild Strawberries in Syrup

Ingredients:

- For *gelo*: one litre of almond milk, 100 g type 1 flour or rice flour, 80 g almond butter, 10 g sugar or other sweetener, hogweed leaves and seeds powdered to please, a pinch of salt

- For plating: fermented *percoca*, wild strawberries in syrup, herb bennet rhizome powder, *Schinus molle* drupes

Preparation:

The day before, slice the *percoca* and put the slices in a jar with some hogweed powder and one tsp of granulated sugar. Close the lid and shake to mix the hogweed powder, sugar, and *percoca* juice, and let it rest for at least 24 hours.

The day before, take some wild strawberries and put them in a jar covered with half their weight in powdered sugar. Let them rest for at least 24 hours until all their juice has come out as syrup. You may want to mash some of the false fruits before adding the sugar.

Prepare a bechamel sauce with the ingredients for *gelo*. Heat the milk. Separately, melt the butter in a saucepan over low heat. Remove the saucepan from heat and stir in the flour with a whisk. Put the saucepan on the stove again and add the boiling milk a little at a time. Add salt and hogweed powder, and cook over a low flame, turning continuously, until it thickens.

Place in single cups and let them cool. Then put them in a freezer for at least 8 hours.

Before serving, decorate with *percoca* slices sprinkled with hogweed powder, wild strawberries and their syrup, herb bennet rhizome powder, and wild pink pepper drupes to taste.

¹ Some varieties of peaches with compact, yellow, or white and sometimes diffused red flesh; non-spicy, i.e., with the stone firmly adhering to the flesh, grown in various Italian regions.