

Art of Olive Green

Towards Art, an Ethics & a Laugh

Archives

All posts for the month April, 2012

BUNKER MENTALITY, or, How Migrant Workers Carry Fruit

Posted by *getraer* on *April 20, 2012*

Posted in: Recycling, Self-Sufficiencies, Upcycling. Tagged: olive green, plastic. Leave a comment



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/imag1510.jpg>)

Fruitcase (by NutcaseOM), open at a rakish angle, with avocado

The first time I saw a [Banana Bunker](http://bananabunker.com/) (<http://bananabunker.com/>), I thought it was the invention of the year. I wasn't producing very much of art or utility at the time, so I missed its rather obvious design flaws—until the first time I tried to use it. That, I'm sure, was the idea once the Banana Bunker got out of prototype.

Bananas are not standardized, because Monsanto hasn't bought the Banana Bunker patent yet: bananas are bendy or straight, and vary somewhat in dimensions. The Banana Bunker is too rigid to hold most bananas, and is instead a

Banana Chastity Belt, causing as much harm to its contents as did that hoary puritanical garment.

To the chagrin of all urban bedouins, I still haven't found an olive green solution for the banana transport quandary, but am closing on one. (Don't look for it in stores because, as usual, it will be opensource and crappy-looking by the Factory-Fresh standards we're drilled to venerate. It's also not a trademark, but an OpenMark^{OM}, which is like Creative Commons with more indifference.) Anyway, an easier nut to crack has been an even more delicate comestible: the avocado.

(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/imag1508.jpg>) Now that everyone in the Occident is concerned with "probiotics"—for millennia known elsewhere as "food"—it couldn't be easier to find the materials for the **Fruitcase (by Nutcase^{OM})**: Two matching yogurt cups and four standard rubber bands. Interloop bands as shown to form a figure 8, then loop them around the bases of both yogurt cups, with one inverted. The mouths of the cups will meet to provide a protective rib of plastic lip at the widest part of your avocado, the part most likely to be bruised. Given all the brands of yogurt vying for our guts and all the variations in their packaging shapes, you can surely design a **Fruitcase (by Nutcase^{OM})** for anything smaller than a grapefruit. See photos.



This solves two intractable problems: bruised fruit and the difficulty of recycling #5 (polypropylene) plastic, of which all yogurt cups I've seen are made. The only way to get rid of the damn things is at Whole Foods, where the [Preserve Gimme 5 program](http://www.preserveproducts.com/recycling/gimme5.html) (<http://www.preserveproducts.com/recycling/gimme5.html>) will pick them up and make them into toothbrushes and razors. Splendid!—if you like to shop at national chains that throttle market diversity. Besides, I'm not driving 5 miles to drop off 550 yogurt cups. I'll wait until they're in the four-figure range.

Heart of Snarkness

Posted by [getraer](#) on [April 12, 2012](#)

Posted in: Culture crit, Engaged art. Tagged: Belgium, China Miéville, colonialism, free speech, postcolonialism, Sergei Udaltsov, Tintin. Leave a comment



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com>

[/2012/04/chinaudaltsov1.jpg](#))

While you're here, doesn't China Miéville (right) bear an astonishing resemblance to fellow leftist Sergei Udaltsov, outspoken Putin critic of the Russian Left Front?

I almost missed this [February piece from the inimitable China Miéville](#) (<http://chinamievville.net/post/18314521552/stand-down-literature-has-defeated-the-thought>), but for the blog *Who Makes the Nazis?* reposting it as "[China Miéville: When Did Bigotry Get So Needy?](http://www.whomakesthenazis.com/2012/03/china-mievville-when-did-bigotry-get-so.html)" (<http://www.whomakesthenazis.com/2012/03/china-mievville-when-did-bigotry-get-so.html>) London School of Economics doctorate and literary polymath Miéville demolishes the logic behind the Belgian Supreme Court's decision to allow the publication of *Tintin au Congo* without any label warning against its acrid racism; he responds with a tour de force of arguments encompassing very *au courant* tropes of free speech, political correctness, and libertarian saber-rattling. I should have mentioned him here sooner, as possibly my favorite polemicist and fiction writer.

[...]To claim that everyone talked like Tintin about the Congo back in the day is (whatever other serious political arguments we may have with them) to slander, say, Felicien Challaye, Albert Londres, the French Socialist movement that [declared](http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=KA0fiL4ea5AC&pg=PA41&lpg=PA41&dq=%22relies+on+violent+conquest+and+institutionalises+the+subjection+of+asiatic+and+african+peoples%22&source=bl&ots=Cqerkje3N1&sig=ZrieDB2VZf3oX6qWiB22cAZdsME&hl=en&sa=X&ei=ZOtDT9jfGo-srAflu-TkBw&ved=0CDEQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22relies%20on%20violent%20conquest%20and%20institutionalises%20the%20subjection%20of%20asiatic%20and%20african%20peoples%20at%20its%201907%20conference%20that%20colonialism%20relies%20on%20violent%20conquest%20and%20institutionalises%20the%20subjection%20of%20asiatic%20and%20african%20peoples%20) (<http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=KA0fiL4ea5AC&pg=PA41&lpg=PA41&dq=%22relies+on+violent+conquest+and+institutionalises+the+subjection+of+asiatic+and+african+peoples%22&source=bl&ots=Cqerkje3N1&sig=ZrieDB2VZf3oX6qWiB22cAZdsME&hl=en&sa=X&ei=ZOtDT9jfGo-srAflu-TkBw&ved=0CDEQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22relies%20on%20violent%20conquest%20and%20institutionalises%20the%20subjection%20of%20asiatic%20and%20african%20peoples%20at%20its%201907%20conference%20that%20colonialism%20relies%20on%20violent%20conquest%20and%20institutionalises%20the%20subjection%20of%20asiatic%20and%20african%20peoples%20>) at its 1907 conference that colonialism 'relies on violent conquest and institutionalises the subjection of Asiatic and African peoples'. [...]

[...]There is the absurd hyperbole, to turn a victimiser's culture into a victim. In his effort to derail the issue, Staggs insists that the 'trump' of racism is 'used to blot out any part of our cultural heritage that might cause embarrassment.' 'Blot out'. Right. Who, after all, could forget the monstrous erasure performed by Stalin on Trotsky, by putting a warning sticker on him & refusing to shelve him alongside *The Gruffalo*? *The Tintin Vanishes* (http://www.newseum.org/berlinwall/commissar_vanishes/). Quick, [conjure images](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/belgium/7793767/Tintin-ban-is-like-book-burning.html) (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/belgium/7793767/Tintin-ban-is-like-book-burning.html>) of book burning! First they came for the Boy Reporter & shelved him alongside *Persepolis* & *Sandman*, & I did not speak out, because I was not a Boy Reporter, &c.[...]

Again, read the entire essay [here](http://chinamievillage.net/post/18314521552/stand-down-literature-has-defeated-the-thought) (<http://chinamievillage.net/post/18314521552/stand-down-literature-has-defeated-the-thought>).

La Galette Nouvelle: only 1-3 ingredients!

Posted by [getraer](#) on *April 6, 2012*

Posted in: Self-Sufficiencies. Tagged: buckwheat, DIY, fermenting, nutrition, recipe, sprouting. Leave a comment



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/imag1476.jpg>)

Please attempt this at home.

In the past month I changed my diet almost completely. The largely-vegan fare of my college days has been tougher to digest as I age: variations on Caribbean and Indian recipes, meaning a lot of beans, lentils and brown rice. When dining out, I often eat fish or dairy, because I have an enormous appetite and burn energy beyond what refined carbs and vegetables can provide. But my staple pulses, grains and seeds have been troubling enough to occasion a break with my orthodoxy.

I'm still working on a post about what I've learned from research papers and a biochemist/nutrition researcher Stephan Guyenet's blog, but I want to share a recipe that has illuminated my grain-less days.

Buckwheat is not wheat or even a grain; it's actually a cousin of rhubarb that became unpopular with the advent of modern agroindustrial practices. Once a U.S. frontier food, it's still widely consumed in Russia and Eastern Europe and is [said to have originated in China](http://www.rferl.org/content/In_Eurasia_Millions_Worry_About_Beloved_Buckwheat/2161615.html) (http://www.rferl.org/content/In_Eurasia_Millions_Worry_About_Beloved_Buckwheat/2161615.html), cradle of so much early civilization. But having a distinctive taste and texture that makes it less versatile than wheat, it was crowded out when technology permitted wholesale modification of the land ([it actually hates fertile soil](http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/afcm/buckwheat.html) (<http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/afcm/buckwheat.html>)).

I've been learning more about its uses: porridge in Russia, soba noodles in Japan, galettes in France. But it was Guyenet offhandedly mentioning that he grinds and ferments soaked buckwheat groats (hulled seeds) to make a versatile batter for griddle cakes that made me want to try it. Since it's not a grain, I figured I'd feel fine after eating it.

And how! As a child I loved pancakes, but in adulthood have hated the abrupt unconsciousness attendant on their consumption. Even in my youth they knocked me out. (I have an unscientific theory about the vagus nerve, omitted here.) But although light, this buckwheat griddlecake is incredibly filling without the bloating from grains and glutens, and easy to digest because of the sprouting and fermentation.

It's fair to call it this recipe a galette, since it's adapted from a [traditional Bretagne recipe](http://www.globalgourmet.com/food/cookbook/2007/country-cooking-france/galettes.html#axzz1qxR0hQK1) (<http://www.globalgourmet.com/food/cookbook/2007/country-cooking-france/galettes.html#axzz1qxR0hQK1>), informed by Guyenet (<http://wholehealthsource.blogspot.com/2010/07/real-food-xi-sourdough-buckwheat-crepes.html>) and given the key fillip of sprouting. Sprouting and fermentation both improve digestibility and nutrient absorption, making this a great recipe to try if you suspect grains are aggravating you. Plus the recipe is bunker-simple...it doesn't even require the egg but that greatly helps the consistency and airiness. If your system's anything like mine, you'll be amazed at your Olympic energy after eating only three 18" diameter crispy discs of paper with a thin skim of tanginess just under their crusts.

La Galette Blanqui

Makes five 18" galettes

1.5 c organic raw (*not* roasted) buckwheat groats

1 egg

1 tsp kosher salt

Virgin olive oil (not extra virgin, it will smoke) or another high smoke-point oil

Iron skillet: not Teflon, which ruins the texture and air channels

Filtered water to thin and rinse



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com>

[/2012/04/imag1434.jpg](https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/imag1434.jpg))

Teflon vs. iron skillet. Same batter, worse heat distribution & aeration.

Soak the groats in enough water to cover for 20 min. Throw out water and rinse well, until most of the gel they produce when wet is gone. **Then put them in a jar, tray, or sprouter and keep them moist, rinsing every 6-10 hours, until most of them show tiny rootlets.** You want a rootlet no longer than a gnat; anything longer will work but not ferment as well. This takes 12-18 hours. Do not rinse them with chlorinated water within eight hours of grinding because it will retard the wild yeasts and enzymes needed for fermentation. You can still do use them if you do but the fermentation won't be as robust, and that's what makes them so light.

Don't worry if they're still a bit slimy, it's difficult to rinse all that off and the fermentation will break it down anyway. **Throw them in a blender or Cuisinart (works best) and puree them into a smooth batter.** Add filtered water to keep it very thin, just a bit thicker than water. (Thin batter allows yeast to distribute more thoroughly and ferment faster.) **Pour batter in a clear glass bowl and cover with a wet paper towel.** If you put it on a heating pad on its lowest setting or in a sunny nook it will accelerate the fermentation. **Leave it for 12-16 hours** depending on how well the fermenting's going; smell for a sour, mineral odor and look for air bubbles trapped along the sides (in a clear glass bowl) or puffiness and cracks near the top of the batter where air is escaping as the yeasts break down the starches and sugars.



(<https://artofolivegreen.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/imag1480.jpg>)

A well-fermented batter. Rose about 3/4" in 12 hours.

When the batter is aerated and soured, you'll have about 3 cups of it. **Heat and oil an iron skillet** to just under the smoke point of golden virgin olive oil: gas mark 6 for me. Use a separate bowl and **mix 1.5 cups of batter with**

one egg, thin with water (or milk, which I've never tried), and add the teaspoon of salt. Use a whisk to **beat as many air bubbles into it as you can for about 20 seconds** before pouring. **Pour in a circular motion**, allowing batter to run into the middle from the outside... this is crucial for even crisping. The batter should be thin and flat and full of trapped air bubbles.

The only downside to this recipe is the wait. The longer you wait, the better they'll be: **it's a pancake at 8 minutes (still a bit wet in the middle), but a galette at 15-20** (just a hint of moisture between two thin crispy layers). Flip only when the top is firm and dry, and the

edges have begun to curl away from the griddle a bit, about 7 minutes. It's stiff enough to lift an 18" disc with one spatula.

...

It'll take a little practice but by my third run I was making delectable ones. Even a friend who'd thought my bizarre 25-lb bag of buckwheat and olde-tyme preparation rituals were goofy had to admit this was damn tasty. And she agreed: no carb-crash drowsiness and very satisfying.

UPDATE: When I ran out of sprouted buckwheat and needed breakfast for the next day, I had no choice but to soak them only. I then prepared them according to Guyenet's instructions and there was very little fermentation compared to when I used sprouted buckwheat (tiny bubbles of visible aeration, nothing like the above picture). I thought they would be indigestible and gross but was astonished that they were *more delicious*: the extra sugars not used up by the groats while sprouting caramelized on the griddle, making the galettes crisper, and the flavor was lighter and less aggressive. Despite the lack of air in the fermented batter, they whipped up and retained plenty of air with an egg. I ate four and felt just as fit as with my sprouted ones.

My favorite way to eat these so far is with a bit of butter, some honey and wrapped around chunks of a creamy Turkish goat feta. GAZOW.

We're still too excited with them just with butter and syrup or honey, but they can just as easily be made savory with goat cheese and chives, Jarlsberg and olives, what have you. Today I was too full after three to eat a fourth, so I left it on the griddle to cool and it dried into a delightful cracker that went great with both sprouted chickpea hummus and chocolate-hazelnut spread.

Too bad the Chinese character for "crisis" doesn't also mean "opportunity." (The interpretation is untrue/imprecise; thank the president who gave us the famous "I am a jelly donut" translation for its first introduction to English.) But the failure of my lifelong diet has given me a chance to discover things I'd never otherwise have left my studio to try.