RHUBARB:

Actually a vegetable, we know it best in sweet dishes but try the pickled version

COMPOTE:

Chop the rhubarb stalks into 1 inch chunks and wash well. Turn into an oven proof dish or non aluminium pan (aluminium reacts to rhubarb acids), add the zest of an orange and its juice, plus sugar. Work on a ratio of 100g sugar to 500g rhubarb. Put on a gentle heat and stir occasionally until the rhubarb softens and breaks down. Add a little water if needed. You can eat as is, with a dollop of cream, yogurt or ice cream or add a crumble topping - 100g flour, 50g butter, 50g sugar - rubbed together to make "crumbs" then spoon over the top of the rhubarb and bake at 180/ GM4 for 30 mins. Rhubarb and ginger go very well together, so add a pinch of ground ginger or some finely chopped fresh ginger to add a new flavour.

Try adding hogweed seeds which have a flavour ardamom and orange zest

PICKLES:

Rhubarb makes a great pickle to have with smoked fish, cold meats or cheese.

Take 450ml cider vinegar, 400ml water, 400g sugar, 6 black peppercorns, 35g salt, a piece of orange peel, a sprig of rosemary and a few fennel seeds. Add together and bring to a boil until the sugar and salt is fully dissolved, then let it cool slightly. Meanwhile take around 400g of rhubarb, cut into chunks about 3cm or so. Fill a 2 litre jar (that you have scalded with hot water first to sterilise) with the rhubarb, then pour over the hot brine - easier to use a jug than try to pour direct from the pan. Fill up the jar to the top, if it's not enough liquid, boil the kettle and add some more water to bring to the top. Close jar up tightly and leave to cool, then store in the fridge for a week before using.

EATING THE CANAL RECIPE CARDS

Eating the Canal is a project exploring the edible possibilities of The Super Slow Way Linear Park, a 20 mile stretch of the Leeds & Liverpool canal running from Blackburn to Pendle.

These recipe cards were invented when the tastebuds of a local group met with the luscious vegetables and produce at The Good Life Project, a space where therapeutic horticulture and food-growing are used to help isolated individuals in Nelson. The session was run by food campaigner, writer & cook Lucy Antal, and the cards put together in collaboration with artist & forager Hannah Fincham.

Can you add to our edible body of research by trying out these dishes, or inventing ones of your own using canal inspired ingredients? Share your creations using #eatingthecanal!

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