

Introduction

We have written this cookbook to help farmers market customers and CSA subscribers easily enjoy the diverse bounty of local farmers' crops.

Brett worked in restaurants for over 18 years, being the chef, the executive chef, or a hustling line cook in over 14 establishments. Foods as fresh and intensely flavorful as what his farm (Even' Star Organic Farm in Lexington Park, MD) now grows were almost never available. Then, he and his kitchen staff instead had to make do with chemically intensive but flavor-deficient shipped produce. Now his farm customers eat infinitely better. It is glorious to be a seasonally oriented farmer, growing traditional and cutting-edge foods in all twelve months of the year. His family is happy to grow organic and real tomatoes, real strawberries, real everything.

Julia met Brett when they cooked together at Restaurant Nora in Washing-

ton, DC. She learned first-hand about the difference in organic produce and what it means to cook seasonally. She worked as a chef in three restaurants, and as a line cook in many more. As a culinary instructor, she helped countless students really learn the differences between local foods and insipid out-of-season tomatoes. In her backyard, she grows vegetables seven months of the year in her tiny urban garden.

We proudly disregard the absurd dogma that the market only cares about uniform and cheap foods and is concerned not a whit for safety or for flavor. We grow and eat artisanal foods, "slow foods" in European terms, and Even' Star will never farm for distant markets where looks are paramount and where safety and flavor are not even important.

The incredible number of people who buy locally make our farming possible. You actively and tangibly support local growers.

The passion of Even' Star customers for outstanding foods gives us long lines at farmers markets when our ripe heirloom tomatoes—ugly to see but oh, so wonderful to taste—are pouring out of the fields. It is refreshing to so often hear loyal patrons describe our petite but intensely aromatic and sweet strawberries to newcomers: “Yes, they’re small. But these are real berries, and the big ones have no flavor! We only buy small strawberries now!” Your devotion and willingness to spread the word about great local foods empowers farmers to focus on farming. You advertise and market for us by spreading the word about the great flavors and economic benefits of locally grown produce. The gifts that loyal customers bestow on farms are immeasurable, and we deeply thank you.

We also know that you are busy. You don’t often have the time to make complicated meals. We have hence kept the recipes in this book on the fast side, or at least straightforward enough that you are not chained to a stove. We follow the classic Italian tradition: a few outstanding foods simply prepared usually taste much better than a host of mediocre ingredients blended with secret seasonings and complexity.

But our busy schedules also mean that we advocate taking the time, when you have it, to prepare some of farm foods for long-term use and storage. Salad dressings

come to mind: these take only minutes to fix, keep for months in the refrigerator, and let you reach for a convenient, flavor-packed aid to a fast meal in the future. Canning is great, but many of us lack the time for such projects. For a quicker solution, we advise freezing a few containers of stewed tomatoes (see recipe on page 237) or puréed basil for winter use. High summer does not really last very long, but we can store a few treats for the frosty nights of autumn or the howling winds of January.

CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) is an agricultural model built upon the relationship between farmer and consumer. CSA farms are partially or entirely supported by members who pay in advance for weekly distributions of fresh produce. By accepting the possibility that certain crops may do poorly or even fail, members share in the inherent risks of farming. This model demonstrates a commitment to the farmer, and it allows small farms to thrive in otherwise unfavorable market conditions. Given the alarming disappearance of farmland across the nation, more and more people are abandoning the supermarket and joining CSAs.

Farmers markets have become the new best place to find cutting-edge foods. From professional chefs to home cooks to food writers, farmers markets are now the destination to find the most high-quality, diverse, and exciting vegetables, fruits,

meats, and cheeses. By contrast, supermarkets, even the high-end ones, can never offer truly ripe and superbly flavorful produce.

But the amazing diversity of foods from local farms can be confusing. This cookbook is designed to help you navigate through newly discovered foods. We want you to understand what produce is available, how to choose truly ripe vegetables and fruits, and how best to store them. Finally, a larder of great recipes is essential to best appreciate what the farmers have grown for us.

We thank all of our customers for supporting local farms. You are the people that will let progressive American farms thrive in the 21st century. You make possible our stewardship and environmental goals.

We acknowledge that recipes are in the public domain once printed. We encourage you to use and share these recipes most freely. We ask nonetheless that you credit the source, *The Farmers Market Cookbook*, when and if you copy or distribute any recipes from this cookbook.

Thank you for supporting local farmers!

— Julia Shanks and Brett Grohsgal
March 2016

Eating Seasonally

1

No matter where you live, eating seasonally and locally offers a different way of thinking about food. While some regions are relatively blessed to have locally grown fruits and vegetables for longer seasons, such as California and Florida, even these regions still have strong seasonality as to when each type of produce is at its best.

By contrast, other parts have exceedingly short seasons, where summers seem like spring by New England standards—places like Minnesota and the Dakotas, and Newfoundland. In these regions, consumers face much greater challenges when it comes to eating fresh produce seasonally and locally.

Eating seasonally can indeed be a challenge—especially now that we can have anything we want anytime by heading to the supermarket. But making the effort to rise to that challenge can be a source of great satisfaction. Eating locally engages our powers of creativity, learning, and experimentation. Who would have guessed that fresh kohlrabi and okra could please so many grown-ups, that greens and sliced turnips right out of the fields could

so easily draw kids away from packaged snacks?

Perhaps most important for us as food lovers, eating seasonally is glorious. Biting into the first ripe apple of the season, where the flavors perfectly match those of a crisp autumn evening, has made us stare at that apple in awe.

There are few joys greater than incredible tomatoes grown in your backyard or from a nearby farmer, brought to perfection by hot, sweltering sun. No shipped tomato, with their cardboard texture and insipid taste, can ever compare with the summer jewels. Cold-grown salad greens, traditionally the first crop harvested after the bleak winter, have exponentially more flavor, texture, and excitement than shipped generic salad mix.

Of course locally sourced and seasonally raised foods taste better. They spend more time in the fields ripening—developing sweetness and flavor—because they don't need to be picked underripe for shipping thousands of miles away. Picking underripe vegetables also reduces the nutritional value. Farmers can grow more diverse

varieties, bred for quality and flavor rather than long shelf life. And though a region may experience a drought or unusually cold weather for a season, the fruits and vegetables still grow at their optimal time, ensuring the best possible taste. Picking underripe vegetables reduces the nutritional value.

Buying local also benefits the environment and economy. When we reduce our “food miles,” the distance our foods travel from farm to table, we reduce our carbon footprint—the impact of transportation, refrigeration, and packaging needed to

carry produce around the country. With each local food purchase, you ensure that more of your food dollars go to the farmer and local economy in the form of revenue and taxes. Buying local food keeps your dollars circulating in your own community. In Massachusetts alone (where Julia lives), if every household purchased just \$12 worth of farm products for eight weeks (basically the summer season), over \$200 million would be reinvested in our local farmland.

When you buy local, you help to ensure our farms survive for many years to come.

Produce Descriptions

2

These general descriptions are intended to help you understand the flavor profiles and culinary uses of many vegetables and fruits you will find in the farmers markets and CSA boxes. No single farm grows all of these foods, and there are thousands of varieties that, in the interest of space, we cannot list here.

Apples

A favorite fall fruit, ideal for cooking or snacking. They make a bright addition to a salad with dried cranberries, walnuts, and/or cheese. Refrigerator storage helps them maintain their texture, though they can handle a few days on the counter.

Crispin

Good eating apple, first-class cider and sauce. Green fruit ripens to yellow.

Empire

A cross between a Macintosh and Red Delicious, these are perfect eating apples with a crisp texture and white flesh, with a floral scent.

Fuji

Crisp, juicy, and slightly acidic. It has white flesh with outstanding texture.

Gala

A versatile apple, it's good for baking, in pies, and snacking. Gala apples have pinkish stripes on yellow skin. This variety is very sweet.

Ginger Gold

This variety has a sweet-tart flavor, good for pies, sauces, and eating. It is an early apple, available in August or September.

Golden Delicious

Mild sweet flavor, juicy, crisp, light yellow flesh. It's not as tart as other varieties and holds its shape well when baked.

Granny Smith

Tart with the best texture for baking and sauces. Across the globe, it's the #1 all-purpose apple for eating and baking.

Honey Crisp

This is a new variety of apple, which was introduced in the early '90s. The skin color is a combination of red and yellow. It is not well-suited to baking.

Jonagold

Available in September, this variety is perfect for making pies and sauces with its balanced sweet-tart flavor.

Melrose

Firm and quite coarse in texture, this apple's creamy white juicy flesh is slightly acidic in taste and actually improves with age.

Red Delicious

The skin color of this variety of apple is red and has a very sweet taste. Mostly just an eating apple, though you could bake with it.

Stayman/Winesap

Firm texture with a sweet-tart taste. It's a great all-purpose apple—for eating, baking, and sauces. It's available in October.

Asparagus

The woody ends of the asparagus naturally snap at the point where the stem becomes tender. Some people like to peel their asparagus, but if you've snapped off the woody part, this is not necessary. Asparagus can be steamed, boiled, sautéed, grilled,

or roasted. It should only be cooked until it turns bright green to keep its crunch. The longer it cooks, the stringier it becomes. Simply steamed, it can be served with a sauce of mayonnaise and ketchup (see page 265) mixed together. Or toss the spears with olive oil, salt and pepper, lay them in a single layer on a sheet pan and cook it on the floor of a 375°F oven for 8 minutes.

Basil (all types)

One of the treats of high summer cooking and salads, with very unique flavors treasured by cultures around the world—from Italy to Vietnam. It's best not to cut basil until just before serving as the leaves will blacken quickly. If using in a curry or stew, add a few sprigs in the beginning of cooking and a few leaves at the end for a bright pop of flavor and color. On a hot summer day, a Basil Gimlet is a wonderful thing.

Thai Basil

Has a hint of anise and mint underneath the classic basil flavor.

Lemon Basil

Has a lemon scent and flavor. Outstanding for pesto sauces to be used for seafood. Also excellent in cocktails, such as a Basil Gimlet.

Genoa Basil

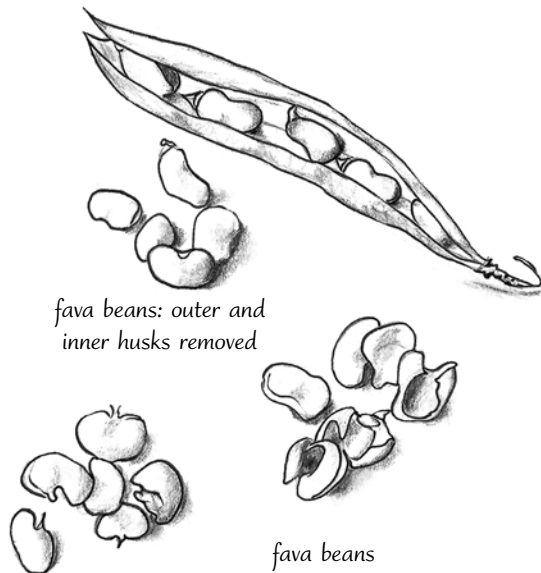
The classic Italian basil. Intense, pure flavor.

Beans (fava)

Unlike other shell beans, favas require a double peeling. First remove the beans from the pod, then the outer husk of the beans. To remove them from their husks, boil the beans for 1 minute, then drain and run under cold water to stop the cooking quickly. The beans will pop out of their husks. You will be rewarded with a firm, creamy bean that's both sweet and earthy.

Beans (pole, snap)

Pole beans are named for the trellises on which they grow. When young and tender, they can be eaten whole. As they grow larger, they should be shelled, and then only the beans eaten. Fresh young beans are so naturally sweet, they need minimal cooking. They can be steamed for a minute or two, just enough to turn them bright green.



Beans (yard-long)

An Asian green bean known for their length, though in reality they are only about ½ yard long. They taste similar to regular green beans, but their texture is best retained through stir-frying, rather than steaming or boiling.

Beets

Beets sadly receive a bad reputation from the olden days when they were always served mushy from a can. Fresh beets evoke a cult-like following because of their sweet, earthy flavors. Both the green tops and the roots are edible. The greens can be cooked similarly to Swiss chard or kale. Beetroots can be served raw if sliced thin like carpaccio. More often they're cooked until tender by roasting, boiling, or sautéing. They can be peeled before or after cooking, but waiting until after they're cooked provides a good indicator of when they are, in fact, cooked as the skins will peel off easily. Once cooked, peel them with a paring knife or peeler and cut. You can add them to salad, or season them simply with vinaigrettes.

Beets stain easily. To clean hands and cutting boards, wash them with baking soda and cold water.

Chioggia

Sometimes called "candy stripe" because of their white and red stripes and sweet flavor, these beets stain less than traditional red

beets. While the stripes fade with cooking, they are tender enough to be eaten raw when sliced thin.

Golden Beets

Milder than red beets with a bright yellow color.

Blackberries

These fragile berries taste best at room temperature, but must be stored in the refrigerator. High in antioxidants, they are great for snacks, or cooked in a cobbler or pie.

Blueberries

They have a sweet taste when mature, though the smaller berries tend to be more tart. Ideal for snacking, for topping cereal, or mixed into pancakes or muffins. Mixed with cinnamon and lemon zest, they make an ideal summer dessert.

Broccoli

Often a favorite vegetable for kids because of the tree-like appearance. Fresh broccoli is sweeter than the commercial varieties. Wonderful steamed, sautéed, stir-fried, or just eaten raw as part of a crudité platter.

Brussels Sprouts

Brussels sprouts look like tiny green cabbages. They are best after the first frost when the flavor sweetens. Our favorite way to prepare them is simply roasted in a

400°F oven until golden brown, seasoned with olive oil and salt.

Cabbage

Green or Red

Often thought of as a low-brow vegetable, cabbage's stature has been elevated as chefs have taken to serving it with more refined ingredients like lobster and truffles. Classically served raw in slaws, green cabbage makes a great addition to Chinese stir-fries or fried rice. Simply braised or stewed in tomato sauce, it also works well as a side to grilled sausages or fish. Red cabbage can be blended with green cabbage for slaw, or even used entirely on its own. Braised red cabbage (with red wine, vinegar, and a little sugar) makes a wonderful accompaniment to hearty winter meat dishes.

Chinese

These varieties (such as Napa, Maruba Santoh, and Tokyo Bekana) require less cooking time by far than Western-style cabbages. They also may be cut up raw in salads. Whole heads can be halved (washed again), briefly marinated and grilled.

Savoy

Large and round like a green cabbage, savoy cabbage leaves have a crinkly texture. The leaves are tender enough to eat raw, but have enough body to use for cooking or as a wrap for stuffed cabbage.

Carrots

With really fine carrots, peeling is not necessary, though some people find the outer layer slightly bitter. Be sure to wash them once more. The large ones are often more tender (best for raw); the smaller perhaps best for gentle simmering or glazing in honey and butter.

Cauliflower

Though the leaves are edible, most people eat just the white florets. The florets tightly grip a tough core in the center. Cut the cauliflower in half to expose and cut out the core. Cooked cauliflower does not last long in the refrigerator but can be easily frozen for longer storage.

Celeriac

Celeriac is a variety of celery with small stalks and is grown for its root. The celery root has a fuzzy skin that needs to be peeled before cooking or eating. It has a mild celery flavor with a hint of turnip, and can be used in place of (or mixed with) potatoes for mashed or gratins. Thinly sliced, it can be served raw, and tossed with mayonnaise for the traditional French *rémoulade*, a variant on coleslaw. See illustration on page 119.

Celery

Though rarely cooked on its own, celery's distinctive flavor enhances French,

Chinese, and Southern cooking. Its crunchy texture makes it a staple in egg, chicken, or tuna salads.

Chervil

A classic French herb with a delicate flavor akin to a blend of nice parsley with sweet fennel. Outstanding in salads, or added late to sautéing chicken breast or white-fleshed fish. Makes a superb Dijon-based salad dressing. Heating past 210°F destroys most of the flavor.

Cilantro

An herb many people adore and a similar number cannot abide. We use it in salads, salsas, marinades for grilled shrimp and rockfish, and, of course, in many Thai dishes, Chinese soups, and vegetarian bean-and-rice burritos. Heating past 190°F kills most of the flavor. See illustration on page 102.

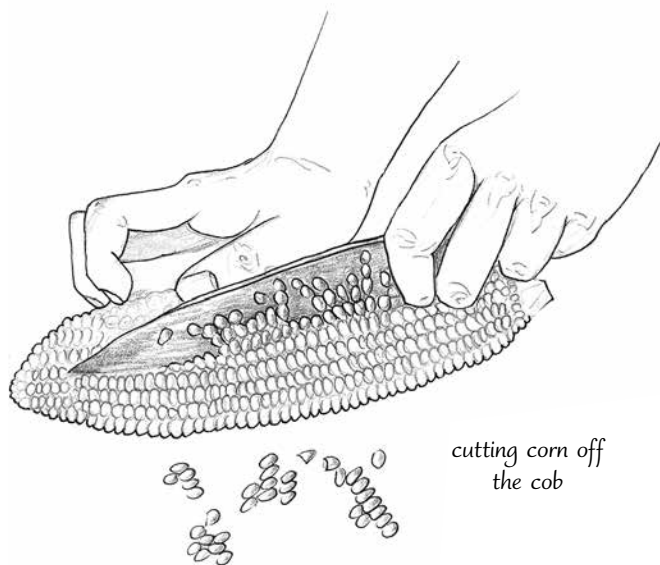
Corn

Popping

Popping corn comes from a starchier variety than the sweet corn. Its tough outer skin traps just enough moisture to pop the corn into a low-fat, highly satisfying snack.

Sweet

Corn is one of the most cherished summertime crops for its sweet and crunchy flavor. Corn's sugar converts quickly to starch, so



it's best to eat the corn as soon as you can. Boiling whole ears is perhaps the easiest way to prepare it: Put corn in a pot of boiling salted water—after the water returns to a boil, cook just for 2–5 minutes. It can also be grilled in or out of the husks, or cut off the cob and sautéed in butter.

To wipe silk off an ear of corn, rub with a wet paper towel. To cut kernels off the cob, lay the ear on its side and run a sharp paring knife straight down the sides. Then scrape with the back of the knife to extract the very sweet “milk.”

Cucumbers

Small cucumbers are more crisp, rarely peeled, and are most convenient for snacking. Cut lengthwise and dipped in

soy sauce, they can tempt even the most stubborn child. Small cukes are traditionally sliced and marinated with onions, sugar, dill, and cider or white wine vinegar. Medium cucumbers are the most versatile but can become bitter in the scorching days of August. Peeling and then soaking in water for about 5 minutes before slicing can obviate bitterness in any size.

We prefer mediums to the other sizes because they need no deseeding and you can do practically anything with them. They are fine for snacks, salads, cold soups, nori-roll sushi, etc., and are the best size for slicing and immersing in yogurt mixed with herbs. Larger cucumbers are usually the sweetest but often need peeling. Their large and juicy seed cavity is often discarded, especially if making gazpacho or other soups. Just peel, cut in half lengthwise, and scoop out the seeds and pulp with a teaspoon or melon-baller.

Dill

Home-grown dill has superior and balanced flavors relative to commercial herbs. Excellent in cold bean salads; in salads of greens, potato, cucumbers, or egg; mixed with sour cream for baked potatoes; in omelets; with dips for vegetables or in lemon-juice salad dressings; or with cooked fish or chicken dishes, added late. Heating past 210°F destroys most of the flavor, except when baked into breads. See illustration on page 99.

Edamame (soy beans)

Traditionally, the whole pod is simmered with salt, beer, and ginger for 10 minutes, or until the pods are bright green. Once chilled, the beans pop out and make a great snack. Once shelled, they can be added to a succotash or other summer salads.

Eggplant

Eggplant is a superbly malleable vegetable. It takes on the flavors of any meat or broth or seasoning you add while cooking, and offers an almost meaty feel to the palate. Different eggplant varieties present an amazing spectrum of firmness, bitterness, and mild flavors versus strong, seediness, and propensity to melt (in contrast with staying firm) upon lengthy cooking. Japanese, Chinese, and Italian varieties are favored for their mildness and tender skins; Thai and Indian varieties have firmer textures and more pronounced flavors. Eggplant should be stored on the counter until ripe, then refrigerated (refrigerating too soon can lead to small brown streaks in the flesh). The sweetest and most mild eggplants are permitted to ripen at room temp until they soften and slightly wrinkle. Like a peach, this softening and wrinkling means you've handled the eggplant perfectly, and you now need to use within a day or refrigerate.

The jury is still out as to whether salting eggplant before cooking reduces any bitterness. Without doubt, however, salting it

for 15 minutes before cooking prevents the eggplant from absorbing oil when sautéing or frying.

Fennel Bulbs

Fennel is another lover of cool and relatively moist conditions. In truth, it really wants to grow in the mild springs of Italy and California. The bulbs ought to be separated into individual petioles (the pale green-white fleshy things that subtend the leafy parts, similar to celery). The petioles and tops should then be washed. Both are very usable, but with slightly different applications. The leaves are outstanding minced and added to bread or pizza dough before cooking, or minced and added to salads or salad dressings. The stems can be cut into ¾-inch pieces and barely simmered, with garlic and butter added late. And the tenderest petioles are really fine served separated and raw but whole, smeared with nice soft cheese or butter. Alternately, use any recipe for the classic Italian dish of braised fennel, which uses the entire thing, cut up. Fennel also pairs beautifully with tomatoes and seafood dishes like paella or bouillabaisse. See illustration on page 163.

Garlic

Garlic can have a strong bite when raw, but mellows with cooking. To roast garlic: toss peeled cloves with 1–2 Tbs olive oil. Wrap in an aluminum foil pouch. Bake at 350°F

for 25 minutes, or until the garlic smells sweet and is a light golden brown. Even though it won't look burnt, garlic tastes bitter when it is cooked to a dark golden brown.

Your hands may pick up the smell of garlic after chopping it. To remove the odor, rub your hands on stainless steel (the bottom of the sink is good) under cold-running water.

Garlic Scapes

Plants want to reproduce. Such is the case with hard-neck garlic. They send up slender stems with a flower bud at the end. Before the flower opens, we nip that urge to procreate in the bud—so to speak—and redirect the plant's efforts to growing downward. The stem and bud are known as the garlic "scape." They are a rare treat. Mild but seductively scented of garlic, they can be cooked any number of ways: served all on their own, or as an aromatic. They are most tender when picked before the stems begin to curl, although many varieties have tender scapes even in the fully curled state. See illustration on page 261.

Ginger

A rhizome: the root we eat grows in the ground and sends up shoots. Ginger is a staple in Chinese cuisine, and is known for its medicinal and digestive properties. To settle an upset stomach with ginger

tea, steep several slices of fresh ginger in hot water for 5 minutes. With all its knobs and curls, ginger can be difficult to peel. Fortunately, with organic ginger, peeling isn't necessary. Sometimes, it can be easier to peel than scrub away all the dirt; if you choose to peel, use a peeler or a teaspoon to scrape away the thin skin. Young ginger has a very thin skin, which thickens and toughens as it ages. See illustration on page 76.

Green Beans/String Beans

Only snip off the stem end; the other is quite tender and creates a lovely presentation. Brief cooking helps to lock in the bright color and crisp texture. Longer cooking changes the flavor drastically to sweet and slightly tangy, which many Southern cooks prefer. The texture is then soft, and the color is, unfortunately, not as vivid.

Greens

Arugula

Pungent and nutty, sometimes as hot as cress, arugula is unique among greens. Use and appreciation of this green has spread wildly across North America, but many remain who do not know it. The peppery leaves can be served on their own in a salad, mixed with other leaves for a lively salad blend, or even sautéed. Outstanding salad uses for arugula are with pears or apples, or