



GUSTO!

gus·to /'gəstō/ noun: enjoyment or vigor in doing something; zest

SEASONAL EATS: A SLCUSD COOKBOOK



gar·nish /'gärniSH/ verb: decorate or embellish
(something, especially food).



GUSTO!

SEASONAL EATS: A SLCUSD COOKBOOK



Sweet Potato Chimichurri Bowl



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Tastes for all seasons

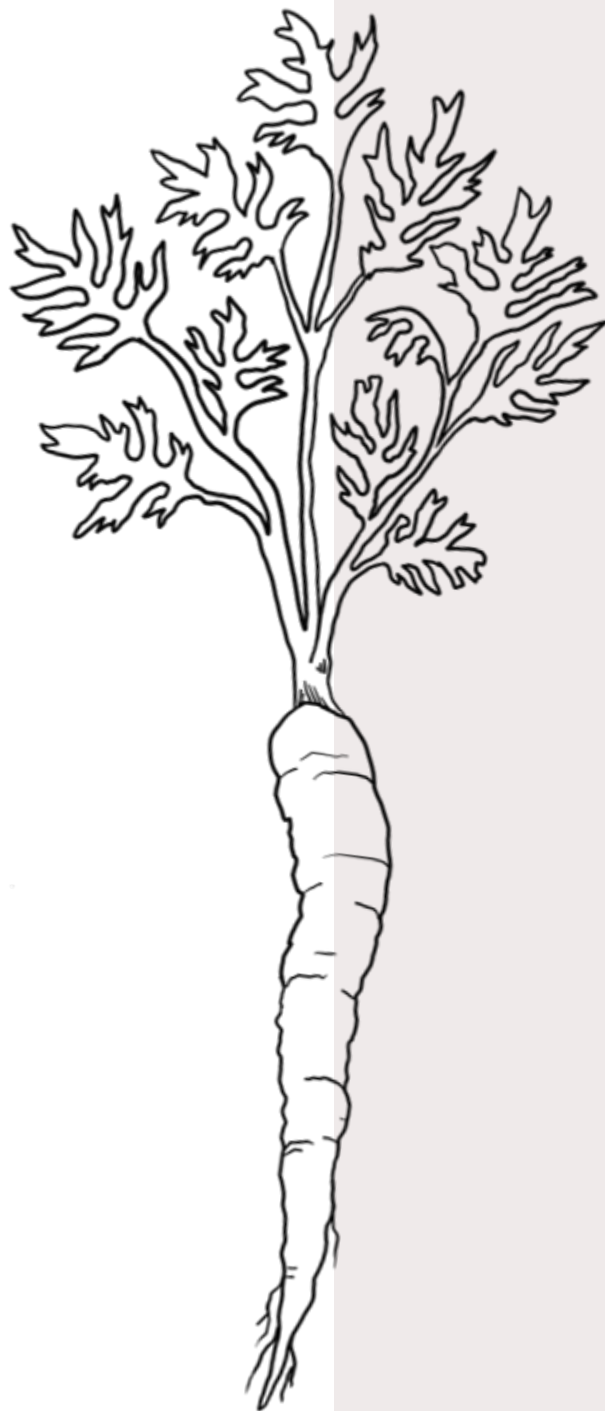
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RECIPES

Fall

Apple Harvest Salad
Lemon Vinaigrette Dressing
Chocolate Hummus
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Chana Masala
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Garlic Rice
Butterfly Pea Flower Rice
Filipino Chicken Adobo
Teriyaki Beef Short Rib & Veggies

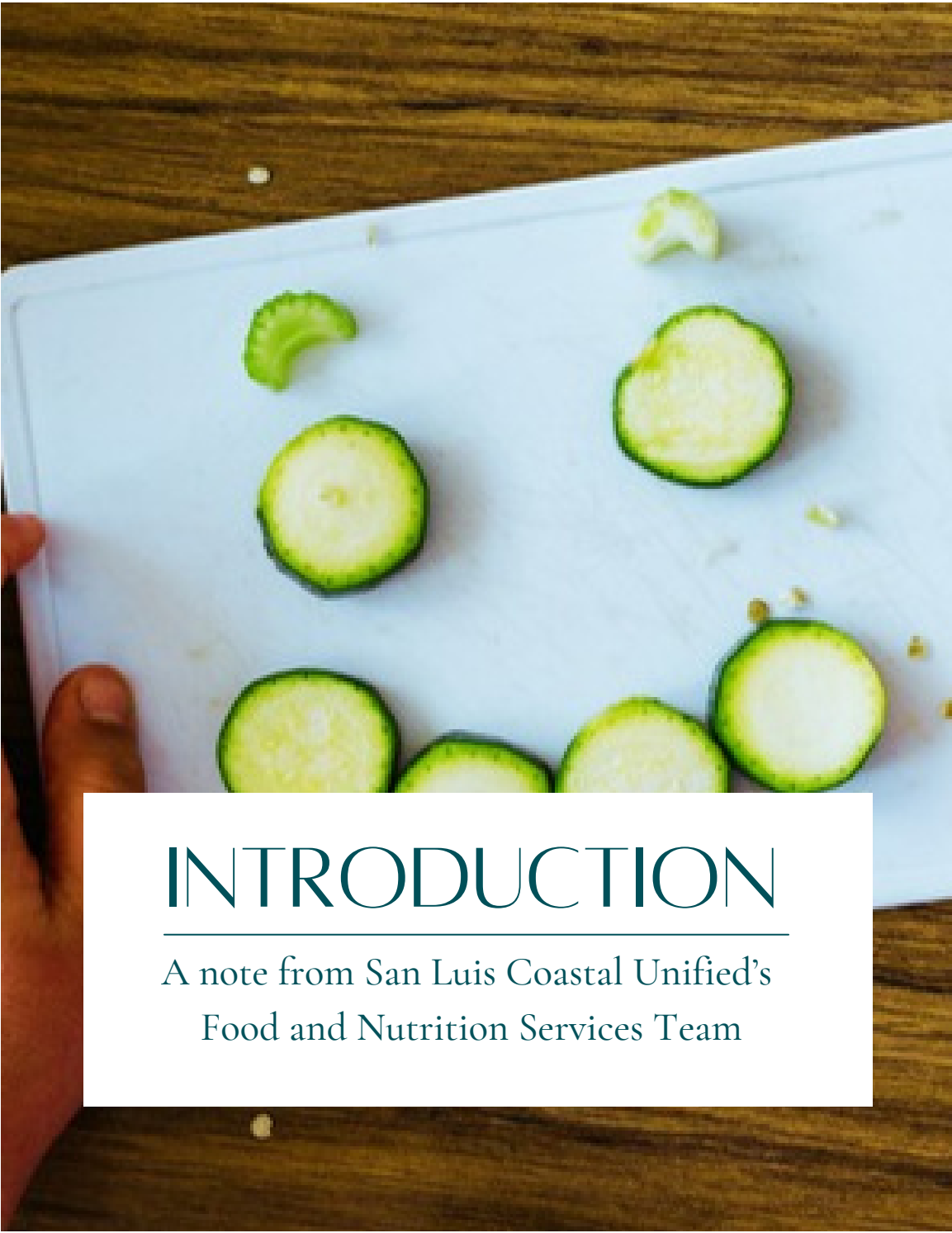
Summer

Strawberry Vinaigrette
Rainbow Summer Berry Salad
Spring Focaccia
Watermelon Granita with Finger Limes
Three Sisters Quesadilla
Whole Grain Cinnamon Rolls
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RECIPES



Watermelon Granita

A hand is holding a white cutting board on a dark wooden surface. On the cutting board, there are several slices of cucumber. One slice is a small wedge, and the others are larger, round slices. There are also some small pieces of cucumber scattered on the board.

INTRODUCTION

A note from San Luis Coastal Unified's
Food and Nutrition Services Team

WELCOME TO *Gusto!*

A note from our director

As the Director of Food & Nutrition Services at San Luis Coastal Unified School District (SLCUSD), it is my pleasure to share this incredible collection of real school meal recipes that are designed not only to fuel our students' bodies but also to inspire their minds. SLCUSD Food & Nutrition Services wants to share our passion for cooking and creating exceptional meals both at school and now at home with this cookbook, made possible in large part by a Farm 2 School Incubator Grant from the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA).

At the heart of our program are incredible people who are committed to providing meals that are nutritious, delicious, and reflective of the diverse tastes and cultures within our school community. Every dish in this cookbook is crafted with care, using wholesome ingredients that support the growth, focus, and energy our students need to thrive in the classroom and beyond.

Food is more than just fuel—it's an opportunity to teach lifelong healthy habits, celebrate curiosity, inspire creativity, and foster connections with loved ones. With this cookbook, we aim to empower students, teachers, and families alike to bring the spirit of school meals into their homes. Whether you're in a school kitchen preparing lunch, creating a family dinner, or simply exploring new flavors, we hope these recipes spark joy and creativity in your kitchen. Enjoy our most flavorful recipes as we honor ingredients found in our local community and celebrate the zest of each season.

Thank you for supporting our mission to nourish the futures of our students. Let's cook, share, and grow together!

Warmly,


Erin Primer

Director of Food & Nutrition Services
San Luis Coastal Unified School District



WHY DID WE MAKE THIS COOKBOOK?

This cookbook was designed to help bring some of the delicious meals we have created with care for our students into your own home kitchen! All of the recipes in this book were created in our SLCUSD Food program and are beloved in our cafeterias. We want to support you to create more time connecting with your loved ones in the kitchen and around the table with both helpful directions for making food and prompts for conversation while enjoying the meal. Whoever you have at home with you, think about how food can connect you and bring you together around the table.



We also want to highlight the abundance we have in our local San Luis Obispo area and help draw attention to all the work, planning and joy that goes into growing our food, here and all over the country! We have spotlighted some specific fruits and vegetables in each season of this book, but the seasonal availability may look different, wherever you are.

We hope this cookbook sparks *curiosity* and *connection* in your home kitchen.

What is your food story?



What matters to you when you prepare a meal and sit down to enjoy it?

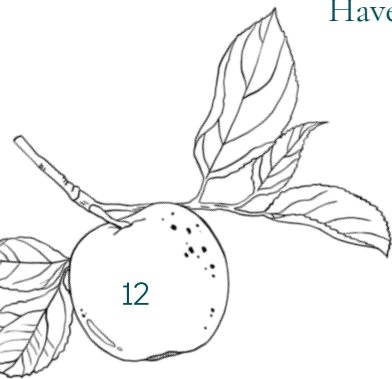
What about the rest of your family members?

What are some of your favorite seasonal flavors?

Have you ever thought about what it takes to get food to your plate?

Who produces the food that you eat?

Do you know your local farmers?



These recipes and specific ingredients are aligned with our *guiding principals* and help to tell our food *stories*

Our guiding principals for our food stories are:

① *sustainability* - /səˌstānəˈbɪlədē/ noun: the quality of causing little or no damage to the environment and therefore able to continue for a long time.

The San Luis Coastal Unified School District (SLCUSD) is located in the heart of the Central Coast of California. In San Luis Obispo, we are so lucky to enjoy a huge variety of fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers, some of whom are able to produce all year long, due to our mild climate! We will talk more about these fruits and vegetables throughout this cookbook. Being able to source directly from our farmers helps to support a sustainable local food economy; supporting our farmers, supporting our students with fresh and delicious produce and supporting the environment by keeping this food transportation local.

② *climate change* - /ˈklīmət/ /CHānj/ noun: significant and long-lasting change in the Earth's climate and weather patterns.

Our sustainability value is deeply intertwined with ensuring that we are addressing climate change through our work in the SLCUSD kitchens and with this cookbook. Cooking food at home, purchasing from local farmers, and being aware of our consumption all help to reduce our carbon footprint that is associated with our food.

③ *food waste reduction* - /fōd/ /wāst/ /rəˈdʌkSH(ə)n/: minimizing the amount of food discarded throughout the entire food system, from production to consumption. Cooking meals at home, being aware of what fresh ingredients you have and how to use them in a timely manner, as well as using different parts of our fresh fruits and vegetables are all important keys to reducing our food waste.

WHO IS THIS COOKBOOK FOR?

We made this cookbook not only for our students and their families, but also for other food service directors and school food staff who may be looking for new ideas or inspiration to bring in more local ingredients, form seasonal menus or find their community of practice! Contact us for larger-scaled recipes for anything in this cookbook: slcusdfood@slcusd.org.

This next section might be most appealing for other school food operators, or for families who want a sneak peek behind the scenes of what it takes to run school meal programs, often the largest restaurant in town!

SLCUSD FOOD'S *Core Values* ARE:



STUDENTS FIRST, ALWAYS

We build supportive, positive relationships with our schools and community, keeping students at the heart of our work.



EXCELLENCE

We strive for the highest quality in everything we do. From fresh ingredients to innovative ideas, excellence in our standard.





ACCOUNTABILITY

Integrity in every action, transparency in every decision. We own our impact, ensure honesty in all we do, and we follow all Federal, State and local regulations.



EDUCATION

Learn through food every day. We integrate food education into daily learning, helping students become savvy, healthy consumers. We also support the growth of our staff through professional development and skill-building opportunities.



EQUITY

meals for all, without stigma. We provide universal free meals, making everyone feel valued and included regardless of socioeconomic background.



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

If it doesn't exist, we create it. We welcome feedback and innovate constantly to improve our programs.

SLCUSD FOOD'S *Core Values*

This cookbook invites you to think about how you might create your own guiding principles and core food values in your local area, always putting the freshest and most nutritious, seasonal ingredients at the front of our plates. Our students deserve it. Our community deserves it. Our planet deserves it.





A VIVID VISION FOR SCHOOL MEALS

San Luis Coastal Unified School District is working towards achieving their

Vivid Vision.

imagining a future where every meal served across their school district is crafted with local foods, seasonal produce and whole, nutritious ingredients, where each new year starts like...

It's the first day of school....

Walking into our school cafeteria feels like entering a vibrant restaurant, where the aromas of fresh-baked bread and roasted vegetables fill the air. Our motto, **Better Lives Today, Better Tomorrow**, embodies our commitment to reshaping how students connect with their food and fostering lifelong healthy habits.

Every meal is crafted with local foods and whole, nutritious ingredients. Students eagerly choose from colorful salad bars brimming with farm-fresh produce, warm dishes cooked to perfection, and fresh baked goods made with seasonal local ingredients. The cafeteria buzzes with laughter and lively conversation as students enjoy delicious and nourishing meals.

This is the power of school meals.

SLCUSD Vivid Vision



BRINGING LOCAL TO OUR TABLE

We introduce just a taste of the many local partnerships that we have here in San Luis Obispo and with the San Luis Coastal Unified School District to provide a model for connecting to your local food system, wherever you are! It's not only about the food, it's about the relationships. Relationships with our planet, relationships with those who grow our food, relationships with those who make our food and relationships with those with whom we eat our food.

Wondering how you can connect with your local food system?

Just ask!

Talk to folks at your local farmers market, food co-op, master gardeners community or other food-based organization! Find out who grows your food, who produces different food products in your community and establish a connection.

In each section of our cookbook, we have included activities that need to happen to grow food, whether you are doing this on a large scale at a farm or in a smaller setting at home in your own garden. Getting familiar with these different needs for growing food throughout the year can help you connect with your local food system and community.



How is “local” defined?

We generally define local food as fruits, vegetables and more that are grown close to where it is eaten and enjoyed, but there are a lot of definitions of what is considered local. The United States Department of Agriculture defines “local” as within 400 miles.

That’s pretty far! What is within 400 miles from you?

Local looks different everywhere!

Because of these different definitions and because of our environment, local in San Luis Obispo is going to look very different from local in Los Angeles, and California local is going to look very different from local in North Carolina, South Dakota or New York City!



That’s part of what is so fun and beautiful about local foods, it’s always about trying something new, fresh and delicious.

You can find local goods in every part of this beautiful country and around the world!



Did you know?

At SLCUSD, we work with about 50 local farms and food businesses that source the best quality for our students!

♡♡ with gratitude ♡♡

HOW WE MADE THIS BOOK

This cookbook would not have been possible without the California Farm to School Incubator Grant from the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Thank you for your enduring support of Farm to Fork programs in California and for prioritizing our students and our local farmers.

Our whole school meal program would not be possible without the support of the National School Lunch Program, CA Healthy School Meals for All, and other key funding programs for public schools in the nation.

Thank you to all the incredible food and nutrition services staff at SLCUSD; to Garden Educator Shannon Bailey, Our Culinary Team lead by Chef Cory and Chef Sarah, in addition to consultant Chef Rebecca, our RD Anne Wilson, sketch artist Kerri Engelder, and our cookbook creator & photographer Becca Lucas Thomas. Special thanks to the team at Eat Real for providing some of our photos and our partners at Culture Stoke for helping create our vivid vision.

Thank you to our school board district administration and school community for your support and making this work possible. Finally, we would like to thank our students for proving that kids love good food!



THANK YOU!



HOW YOU CAN USE THIS COOKBOOK!

In each section, we have recipes for you to follow at home

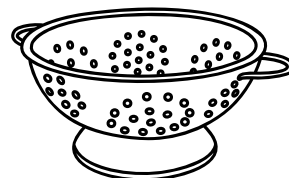
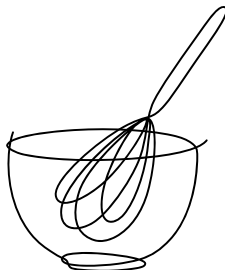
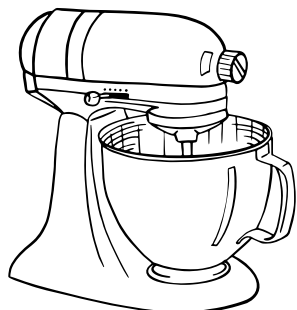
Some of the tools we use throughout the cookbook that you will want to have at home:

1. Cutting board
2. Sharp knife (and support in using the knife, if you need it!) Paring knives are typically smaller and a little easier to control and can be useful for cutting up smaller items, like fruits or vegetables. Chef knives are typically larger and can be useful for cutting bigger produce or meat.
3. Mixing and serving bowls and mixing spoons
4. Immersion blender
5. Blender (or a food processor)
6. Colander for washing produce and draining pasta
7. Different sized saucepans
8. Measuring cups and spoons:



In this book TBSP is the shorthand for Tablespoon and tsp is for teaspoon.

Some of these recipes ask for a stand-mixer; if you don't have one, that's okay! That means you'll just get an arm workout, as you'll have to mix it yourself with a whisk.



IMPORTANT RULES OF THUMB WHEN IN THE KITCHEN!

Always wash your hands before you get started

Using an apron can help you keep your clothes clean and can just be fun to wear, because it can make you feel like even more of a chef!

Be sure to always wash your produce!

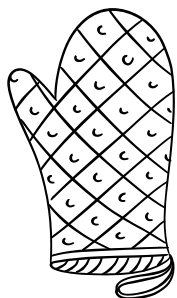
Even if you know your farmer, even if you got it from the farmers market, it is important to start with clean ingredients and a clean workstation.

Ask for help if you need it (or want it)!

Some of these recipes will be easy for you to complete on your own and can be something fun to make for your family, friends or loved ones. Some will require an adult's help, so make sure you look through the full recipe to understand what will be required and where you may need to seek help.

Key Advice!

Throughout this cookbook we have tips to help with some of the stickiest parts of cooking - like easier ways to peel garlic or how to zest a lemon. Be sure to track your own tips and tricks as you develop them in the kitchen! Be sure to check out the back of the cookbook where we have Seasonal Scorecards so you can track what you enjoy each season! We also have key terms identified throughout and a glossary at the end for some of the not-as-well-known kitchen lingo that we will introduce and use.



ENJOY WITH *gusto!*



A SEASONAL APPROACH

We have divided this cookbook into seasons because seasons are such an important part of our lives and especially of our food.



The Importance of Seasons

Why are seasons so important? What are seasons really about? What makes the fall, the fall, besides the return to school and the start of cooler weather? The four seasons of the year are marked by four very important days in the year that tell us how much daylight and how much night time we will have: two equinoxes and two solstices.

Seasons are important markers of the year. They not only help us mark the shifting of daylight and moonlight hours, but also the weather and what we need to plant or harvest, or what other care our food needs while it is growing. We will explore these different markers and seasons throughout this book, starting with Fall.

One of the most special things about making food that is in season is you get to celebrate the special fruits and vegetables that are grown in your region. Another amazing thing about eating what's in season? It always tastes the best. A tomato tastes much different (and so much better!) in the summer, right when it's been harvested, than if you get it in the middle of winter. That's because tomatoes need a lot of daylight to grow well! Each section tells you a little bit more about the start of the season, activities and needs for growing food in that season and features some of the amazing produce we have available locally and recipes for you to highlight these amazing ingredients in your own kitchen.



FALL

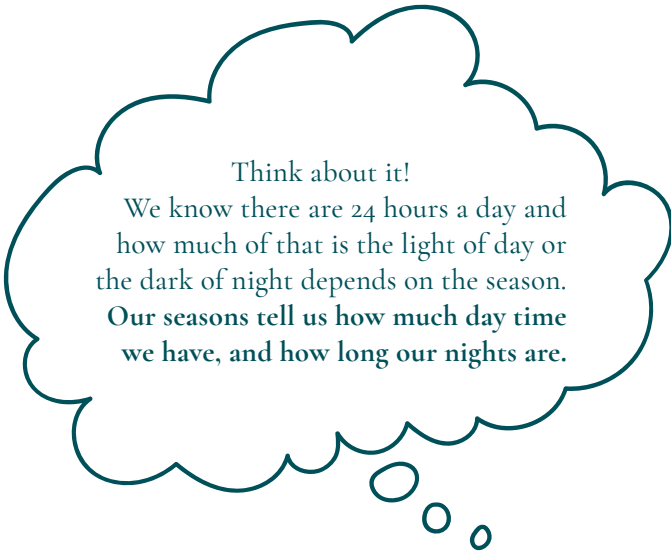
Apple Harvest Salad

AUTUMNAL EQUINOX

The official start of fall!

On September 22 (or the 23rd, it does change!) each year, we have the **autumnal equinox**. Equinox means that means that the length of the day and the length of the night are exactly the same that day, and this one happens in autumn.

This autumnal equinox marks an official transition from summer into fall, meaning that our daylight starts to get shorter than our night time, as we head into winter.



Think about it!

We know there are 24 hours a day and how much of that is the light of day or the dark of night depends on the season. Our seasons tell us how much day time we have, and how long our nights are.

GROWING FOOD IN THE FALL

Fall is known as a time of agricultural bounty: things have been growing all summer and now we are ready to harvest and enjoy all the work we have put in throughout the year. All the preparation work from the last winter, spring and summer prepares us for this abundant season!

During the fall, some of the things you'll need to do to prepare for the coming seasons—in addition to harvesting—include weeding, pruning, and seeding for your winter season. The mild climate of our central coast means that we can grow a lot of different food plants throughout winter as well - something we'll talk about throughout the rest of this cookbook. Some of the things that we have available in this area that are featured in this season's recipes are on the following pages.

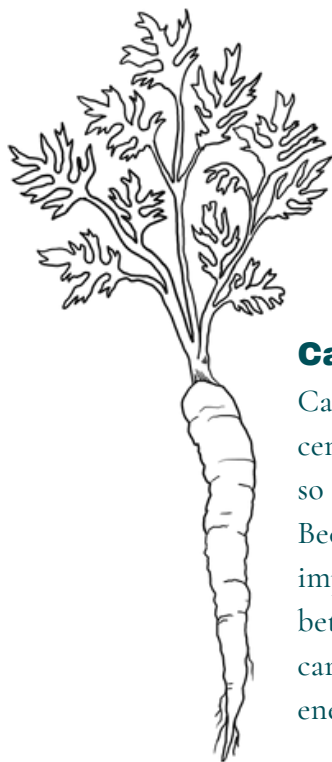
SEASONAL AVAILABILITY

Crops on the Central Coast of California

Did you know?



Did you know that the full moon that happens closest to the autumnal equinox is actually called the harvest moon? The light from this full moon is so bright it can help you continue harvesting into the nighttime - something that may need to happen because of the abundance you may be growing.



Carrots

Carrots grow year round in California in different places. Along the central coast, carrots tend to be planted from December through August so that we can harvest from April through January - that is a long season! Because carrots are a root vegetable, the air and soil temperature are really important for planning when to plant and **cultivate** carrots: when it is between 60-70 degrees outside (a pretty normal day here in SLO County) carrots are very happy! Though if it gets colder, the carrot needs to use energy to protect itself, so it will grow a little slower.

Raisins

California has tons of grapevines throughout the state, but many of these are grown for wine. It takes a special and specific **varietal** to make raisins - and just about all of the raisins grown in the U.S. are grown in California! Raisins are made with a “vitis vinifera” - a natural seedless variety - and are traditionally dried in the sun either by leaving the grapes on the vine to dry out or on paper trays.





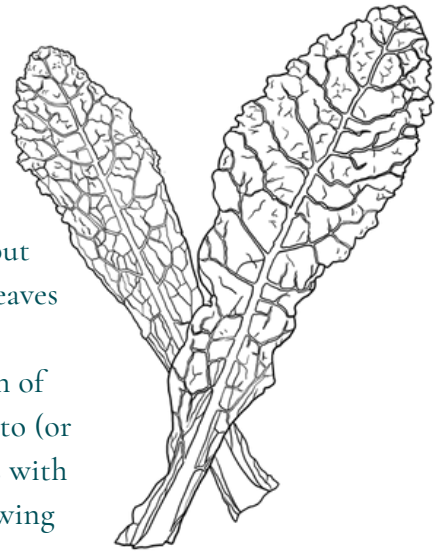
Key Terms!

What does it mean to **cultivate**? When we are talking about cultivating in agriculture, we generally mean the process of preparing the land and growing larger-scale crops at a farm or in your own garden. To cultivate can also mean to develop more generally, so you can cultivate carrots in your home garden and you can also cultivate your ability to grow food!

What's a **varietal**? The term "varietal" refers to a group of food plants within a species – like the grape or carrot species - that has been carefully selected and cultivated over time to meet our needs; we might have a varietal of carrot that is sweeter that has been selected and bred over time to be one we can eat and enjoy raw, or one that is bigger that we might want to use more often in soups. This varietal for raisin-grapes has been selected and cultivated over time so as to make the most delicious raisin.

Kale

While kale is another food plant that can be grown throughout the year, it tends to grow the best in the spring and fall. Its leaves actually taste a little sweeter when it grows while it is colder outside. Kale is a member of the cabbage family and has a ton of different varieties - some you may recognize are called lacinato (or dino), green curly, red russian and so many more! Kale grows with one large major stalk, with all the leaves we pick and eat growing out from the middle. Some kale plants can get really huge if you let them grow for a long time, with the stalk growing so tall and large that more stalks grow out and you get a whole kale-tree that can live for a long time in our mild climate.



SEASONAL AVAILABILITY

Crops on the Central Coast of California

Sunflower Seeds

Sunflowers also have a ton of varieties and range in sizes - some are very small and grow only to be about a foot tall and some, like the Mammoth Sunflower, can grow up to 12 feet tall! Sunflowers, like their name, really love the sun and they are excellent for pollinators. The middle of the sunflower, when it is yellow or brown, provides tons of pollen for bees, butterflies and other pollinators to explore and spread throughout the area. As the season goes on and the sunflower gets as big and beautiful as it's going to be, it's time to start planning to harvest the seeds. The flower petals will start to dry and fall out, the head of the sunflower might also start to droop and the back of the flower will begin to turn from green to yellow or brown, telling you it is time: when all these signs tell you it's ready to harvest, check to see the seeds growing in the middle of the flower. If they look plump and like they are ready to be picked out, have someone help you cut the stem just below the head of the flower and bring it inside your house - let it hang upside down so the seeds can finish drying and also make sure the birds or other critters don't get to it before you do! You should be able to tell when it is dry and ready by brushing your hand along the seeds in the sunflower and they fall out quite easily. Pull all the seeds out and let them spread out on a tray to finish drying. You can either replant these seeds or wash them, let them dry again and roast them on a baking tray at 300°F until golden brown to eat and enjoy.





Slow Roasted Rainbow Carrots

FALL
INSPIRED
RECIPES

APPLE HARVEST SALAD

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 2 TBSP water
- 1 TBSP lime juice
- 1 medium-sized apple, like Gala, Fuji, or Honey Crisp
- 1 cup raw spinach (two big handfuls, no need to squish the spinach!)
- About 1 ½ cups of raw kale (about 3 regular sized handfuls)
- ¼ cup of roasted sunflower seeds
- ¾ cup dried cranberries or raisins
- Lemon vinaigrette (next page!)

Tools

- Paring knife
- Cutting board
- Medium sized bowl
- Large serving bowl
- Colander

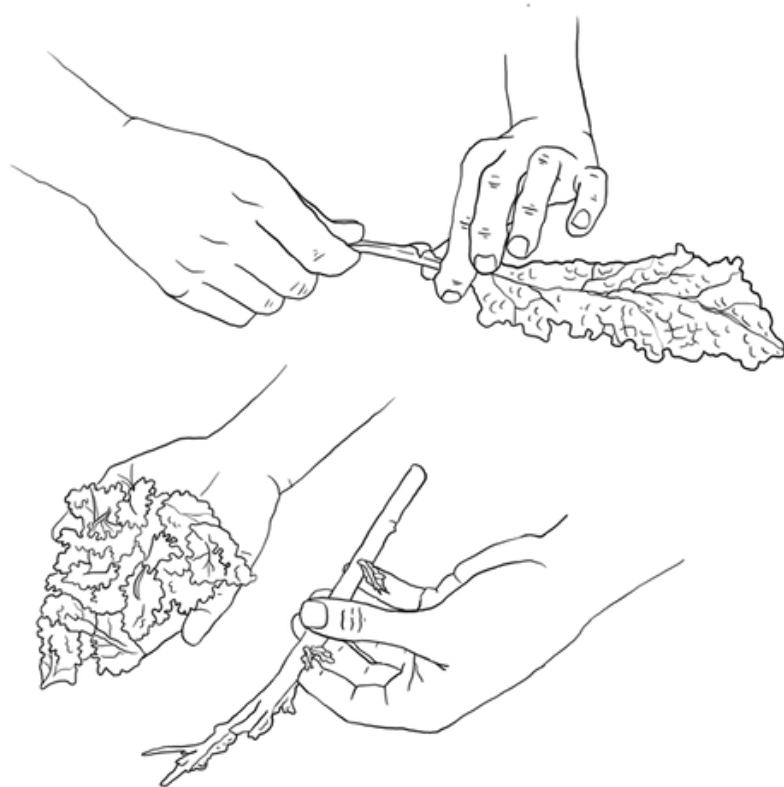


Directions

1. Add the water and the lime juice to a bowl: wash the apple and slice them, then place the slices into the bowl with the limey water
2. While your apple slices are soaking, wash the kale and destem them (check out the next page for instructions):
3. Once these are destemed, you can stack them on top of each other, cut the top of the kale so they are cut in half and chop it across the kale sides
4. Wash your spinach and add to serving bowl as well
5. Strain the apples and add to serving bowl along with the sunflower seeds, and dried fruit
6. Toss with the lemon vinaigrette and serve!

Tip!

Adding citrus will help the apples from turning brown when you serve them



Did you know?



Why do apples brown? When an apple is cut open, enzymes inside the apple are exposed to the air. These enzymes, called polyphenol oxidase, react with oxygen in the air and form melanin - the same melanin that we find in our own bodies!

HOW DO YOU DE-STEM KALE?

- When you are eating raw kale, it helps to destem the kale! This means taking out the middle of the kale because it can be really rough to chew when it isn't cooked.
- You can do this by pulling off the green leaves around the stem. Then chop. You can add this into your serving bowl.
- You can use your hands or a knife for this.
- If using a knife, place the kale on the cutting board, and carefully set the tip of the knife at the top of the stem - drag it down on either side of the stem

LEMON VINAIGRETTE DRESSING

Makes 1 cup, just
enough for the apple
harvest salad

Ingredients

- 2 tsp raw chopped garlic, about 2-3 medium sized cloves
- 1 ½ tsp dijon mustard
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ¾ tsp granulated sugar or honey
- ¼ cup water
- ¾ cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Tools

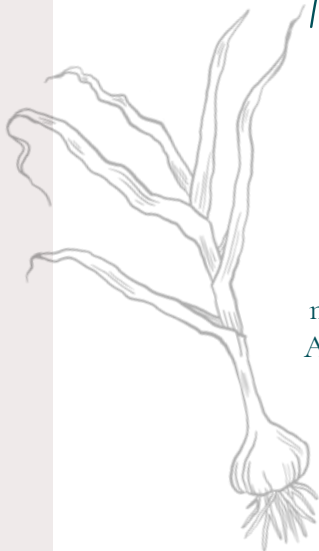
- Knife
- Cutting board
- Large Bowl
- Whisk
- Container for dressing



Directions

1. Peel your garlic and then mince it, meaning chop very small. This will make your hands sticky, and smell like garlic! So make sure you wash your hands afterwards.
2. In your blender - or in a large bowl with an immersion blender - add the dijon mustard, sugar, water, lemon juice, and garlic
3. Once this is all mixed together, take the oil and add it slowly while you continue to blend your original mixture

Tip!



Maybe you've noticed, but garlic skin can be really hard to get off!

Something that you can do to make it easier - with the help of an adult - is to smash the garlic with the side of your knife. This makes it easier to peel the skin off. Another easy way? Cut the base of the garlic off and put into a tupperware with a top and shake it around! This should help get your skin off easier.



CHOCOLATE HUMMUS

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 15 oz can Garbanzo Beans
- ½ cup of honey
- 2/3 cup of unsweetened cocoa powder
- ¼ cup tahini or nut-free butter, like wow butter
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- About ½ cup of tap water

Tools

- Strainer
- Food processor
- Serving bowl

Directions

1. Open the can of chickpeas and dump in the strainer; rinse well with cold water
2. Combine drained chickpeas, honey, cocoa powder, tahini or nut-free butter, and vanilla in the food processor and start blending
3. While the ingredients are blending, add water slowly to the food processor until the hummus looks as smooth as you want it.
4. Serve and enjoy with sliced apples, strawberries or your favorite fresh fruit!

Did you know? 

Have you ever wondered what the liquid is in your can of chickpeas? This is actually called aquafaba and oftentimes is used as a vegan substitute for eggs when it is whipped.

FALL QUINOA SALAD

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 medium-sized yam
- 1 cup dry quinoa
- 2 cups water
- Pinch of salt
- 1 cup of raw kale, chopped rough!
- ¼ cup feta cheese crumbles
- ¼ cup dried/diced fresh nectarines
- ¼ cup dried/diced fresh peaches
- ¼ cup lemon vinaigrette (see page 32)

Tools

- Cutting board
- Knife
- 2 small saucepans
- Large serving bowl

Tip!

Not everyone has access to dried or fresh nectarines or peaches while making this salad. You can go ahead and use a different favorite dried fruit, like dried cranberries or apricots!

Directions

1. Wash and peel your medium-size yam and then dice it into about ½ inch pieces and place into the small saucepan.
2. Fill the saucepan with enough water so that it covers your yam pieces by about an inch of water, and bring the water to a boil by turning on the high heat. Once the water is boiling, visible by the rolling bubbles on the surface, set a timer for 15 minutes. You want the yams to be soft enough that you can press them easily and softly with a fork.
3. Begin cooking the quinoa now: add two cups of water to your saucepan and bring it to a boil on high heat and add a pinch of salt. Once boiling, add your dry quinoa to the boiling water. When this happens, the water will calm down and the bubbles will likely disappear. Make sure to bring the water back up to a boil, then add a cover to the pot, and bring the heat down to low and set a timer for 15 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, wash the kale, destem it and give it a rough chop.
5. Check on your quinoa! Once all the water has disappeared, your quinoa is likely set - take a fork and fluff it!
6. Add the remaining ingredients in your serving bowl and toss with your lemon vinaigrette



Tips!

If you leave the cooking temperature or flame on super high and have a cover on the pot, it is likely you will hear some hissing as the water starts to overflow and sneak out of your pot lid! Make sure you are watching how your pot and water inside reacts to the heat and the steam by keeping a lid on it. This is important for safety reasons.

Ingredients

- 3 medium potatoes
- Olive oil for sautéing
- ½ cup vegetable stock
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1-15 oz can diced tomatoes
- 2 cans of cooked garbanzo beans (14 - 15 oz)
- ¼ tsp salt

Curried potato spice blend:

- 2 tsp yellow curry powder
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- ½ tsp sweet paprika powder
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp coarse ground pepper

Masala Curry Spice blend:

- 2 tsp chili powder
- 2 tsp coriander powder
- 2 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp turmeric powder
- 2 pinches salt to taste
- 2 pinches pepper to taste

Garnish and serving:

- Lavash or Pita bread
- Cilantro

CHANA MASALA

Serves 4-6



Directions

1. Dice the potatoes into bite-sized pieces.
2. In a large saucepan, heat 1 tbsp olive oil over medium heat. Add the diced potatoes and cook for about 5 minutes until they start to soften, stirring occasionally.
3. Stir in the Curried Potato Spice Blend. Cook for another 2 minutes, allowing the spices to toast and coat the potatoes.
4. Add the Masala Curry Spice Blend to the pan, and stir well to coat the potatoes with the spices.
5. Pour in the vegetable stock, coconut milk, and the diced tomatoes (with their juice). Stir to combine.
6. Stir in the drained and rinsed garbanzo beans (chickpeas) and bring the stew to a simmer. Cover the pot and let it cook for about 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes are fully tender and the flavors meld together.
7. Taste and adjust seasoning, adding more salt, pepper, or spices if needed.
8. Once the stew is ready, serve it in bowls, garnished with fresh cilantro.
9. Enjoy with warm lavash or pita bread on the side to soak up all the delicious flavors.

Tools

- Cutting board
- Knife
- Large saucepan
- Colander
- Baking dish
- Baking sheet pan
- Parchment paper
- Aluminum foil
- 2 small bowls



SLOW ROASTED RAINBOW CARROTS

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 3 TBSP olive oil
- 3 TBSP honey
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 1 lb package of baby carrots or about 6 cups of sliced carrots, about 2 inches long and half an inch wide
- Cilantro, for garnish!

Tools

- Large mixing bowl
- Whisk
- Baking sheet pan
- Spatula



Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F
2. Mix olive oil, honey, cinnamon, salt and pepper together with your whisk in a large bowl; add the carrots to bowl and toss.
3. Lay out the carrots on a baking sheet and set into the oven
4. Roast for about 20 minutes, and check in on the carrots at 10 turn them on their side if you want
5. Enjoy!

Tip!  *and Key Term!*

If you add the oil slowly while mixing the rest of the ingredients together it will mix together a little easier. This process is known as to **emulsify**. To emulsify means to mix two things together that don't commonly or easily mix together - slowly and intentionally.



HOMEMADE GRANOLA

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 1/3 cups rolled oats
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup apple juice
- 1 TBSP olive oil
- 2 tbsp honey
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 3/4 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup dried/diced nectarines
- 1/3 cup dried/diced peaches

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 250°F
2. Pour oats into mixing bowl
3. Add sugar, apple juice, oil, honey, salt, cinnamon and vanilla to saucepan, turn the flame to about medium and stir constantly until the sugar dissolves. This should only take about 3 minutes, be careful not to boil this mixture!
4. Pour this over the oats and toss it all together
5. Line the baking sheet with parchment paper
6. Spread the full mixture across the baking sheet and cook for 1 hour and 15 minutes; be sure to check on it and stir the granola about every 15 minutes so it all gets evenly dry and baked
7. Once it looks nicely toasted, pull from the oven and let cool, then mix in your dried fruit!
8. Use to top yogurt with your favorite seasonal fruit!

Tools

- Large mixing bowl
- Small saucepan
- Baking sheet pan
- Parchment paper

TABLE TALK

Sharing a meal together is an important and special part of any day. Sometimes, especially when you've had a long or challenging day, it can feel hard to sit down and talk with your family or friends who you are eating with, but this connection is important and fosters relationship building. This fall, here are some things you may want to talk about:

Did you know?



November is Native American History Month! There are many times to acknowledge and celebrate this heritage all month: California created a Native American Day - which is September 22, right around the time of the autumnal equinox.

Do you know who the original inhabitants of this land are? In San Luis Obispo, this is yak tit^uut^u yak tilhini Northern Chumash Tribe of San Luis Obispo County and Region, whose name means the people of the full moon. yak tit^u yak tilhini Tribe are the original stewards of this land, who have been living here for the last 10,000 years. There are still many Tribal members here, today. Do you know any? Learn more in the next chapter when we talk about the chia in the overnight oat recipe in the Winter chapter.

What does abundance mean to you?
What does abundance mean to your family and friends? How can you celebrate this together this season?

What is the story your family tells about Thanksgiving? What does Thanksgiving mean in your family?



WINTER

Sweet Potato Chimichurri Bowl

For many, winter is a time to be cozy, to reflect on our year, to spend time with friends and family and celebrate all that we have. Winter is normally accompanied by snow in many parts of the U.S. but we are very lucky to have mild winters on the Central Coast of California, something that we associate with Mediterranean climates. What are Mediterranean climates? Read on!

HIBERNAL SOLSTICE – THE OFFICIAL START OF WINTER

The official start of winter is marked by the **winter solstice**, when we have the longest night and the shortest day of the year. Unlike equinoxes, solstices mean that either the night time or day time is significantly longer than the other. After the autumnal equinox when we had equal day and night time, nights start to get longer and longer until this winter solstice. After this day, typically December 21st or 22nd, the days start to get longer again.

We already know that San Luis Obispo county is a very special place to live and one of the coolest things about living in this area is our **climate** and how we are able to grow so much different food for so long throughout the year.



Key Term!

What does **climate** mean? How is it different from weather? If you went outside today, how did it feel?

Was it cold this morning, but warmed up by lunchtime? Is there any fog, normal for us in SLO being so close to the ocean? All of these individual pieces of our days are the weather; the temperature, what the sun is doing and so on.

When you put it all together throughout the days, weeks and months and track patterns of weather, that is what we call climate. In SLO county, it's starting to get even warmer in the summers and even colder in the winters; our climate is changing.

MEDITERRANEAN CLIMATES

Mediterranean climate areas are very special in this world: there are only about 5 regions in the world that are known as mediterranean climates, meaning that they are areas with mild winters, dry and warm summers and a whole lot of plant life!

California is one of these areas and especially in our area by the coast, we are able to grow a lot of foods all year round that is not possible in other areas where temperatures can be freezing for a long time.

The five Mediterranean Climate Areas are:

1. California
2. Central Chile
3. Mediterranean Basin,
4. Cape Region of South Africa
5. Southwestern Australia

Do you know where all these areas are?



GROWING FOOD IN THE WINTER TIME

Some of the produce we feature this season may not normally be considered winter produce, but we are still able to grow harvest many of these fruits and vegetables, even when the days are very short, they typically are warm!

We are fortunate to have many options for growing food the Central Coast, due to our Mediterranean climate and the mild winters. We do not tend to experience freezing temperatures or very cold soil - if we do it might only be for a couple days at most - and this means that we can start planting our seeds to get ready for the spring and summer earlier than other places!

GROWING FOOD IN THE WINTER TIME

During the winter, when it might be a little too chilly outdoors, we can do some indoor growing. Have you ever tried regrowing lettuce or green onions from their stems? It's pretty amazing! When you cut the bottom of a head of romaine lettuce or the bottom of your onions off, hold on to these and cut them into quarters, and put in a shallow dish of water. You should see regrowth in just days! You can either keep growing these indoors, in water and in a sunny spot, or plant them outside once they've sprouted some roots.

SEASONAL AVAILABILITY

Crops on the Central Coast of California

Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes are actually a vine, not a tuber like a potato. They are a tropical vine so they like warmth, sun and definitely no frosty or freezing temperatures! You can start growing sweet potatoes from "slips," which refers to sprouts that start to grow from a sweet potato that gets a little old. Have you ever forgotten about a sweet potato and it got a little soft and started sprouting new little shoots? Next time, go ahead and plant it and see what grows!

Did you know? 

Sometimes we use the word "yam" when we are talking about sweet potatoes, but they are actually different. Yams are actual tubers and come from Africa and Asia originally, different from sweet potatoes. Yams have rougher skins typically and sweet potatoes have more vitamin C.



SEASONAL AVAILABILITY

Crops on the Central Coast of California

Cilantro & Coriander

Cilantro can be grown all year round in California, but it does like a little bit of cooler weather so it keeps growing leaves instead of going straight to flower, a process known as “**bolting**.”



Key Term!

What is **bolting**? Bolting refers to the process of a plant growing very tall, very quickly and a quick shift from growing leaves to flowering to developing seeds. This mostly happens to lettuces, leafy greens and herbs. This means that instead of producing the leaves that we want to eat, energy is sucked out to help create the flower and seeds and as a result, the leaves can turn more bitter.

But! A fun thing about cilantro that we might not know is that the seeds that come from these flowers once it bolts, get dried and crushed up and we call this spice “coriander.”

Cilantro grows really quickly and loves the sun. If you plant it in the soil from seed, make sure your soil is well drained, meaning that water doesn't sit in a pot or something without a drainage hole, and that you are watering it consistently. Once your leaves start to grow make sure you harvest frequently so it continues to grow.

Tips!

Keep your herbs in water in the fridge to keep them fresher, longer!
(except basil - basil wants to be at room temperature)

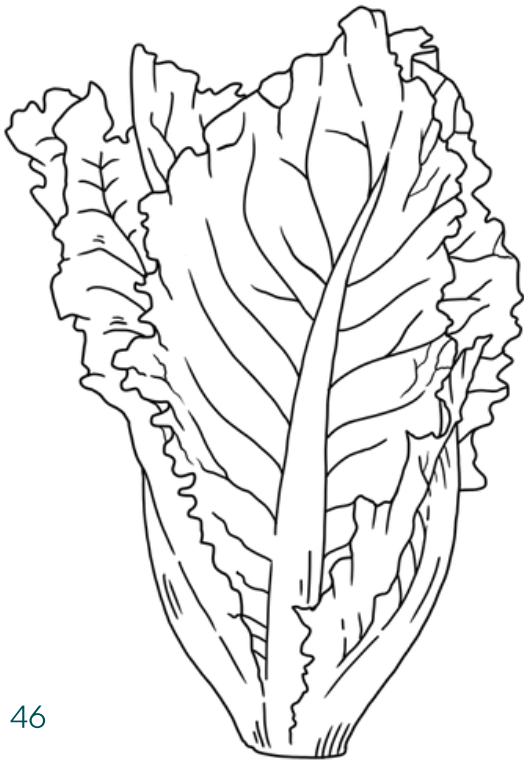
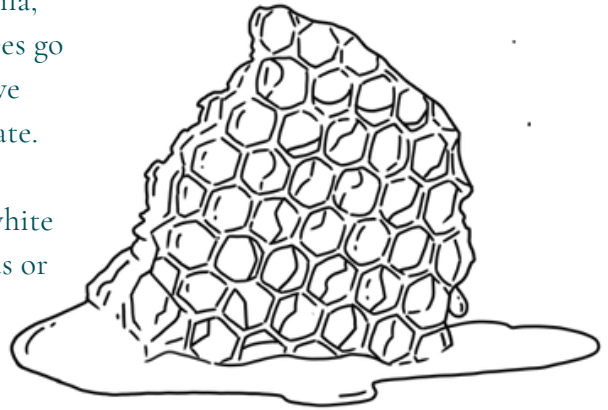
SEASONAL AVAILABILITY

Crops on the Central Coast of California

Honey

Pollinators are such a key part of our food production system as they help to spread pollen and support plant reproduction. Bees are a key part of the pollinator ecosystem, especially in California. Here in California, we have beekeepers who capture the process that bees go through naturally in converting honey into their hive and storing it in honeycomb cells that they also create.

Have you seen beehives? These often look like big white boxes that sometimes people keep in their backyards or on their farms to help with pollinating orchards.



Cabbage

This is another one of those incredible vegetables that, with our long growing season here on the central coast, we can grow year round. Cabbage - green or purple or so many other kinds - is both beautiful and incredibly nutritious. It can be enjoyed in so many ways, from raw in salads, to pickled or sautéed or roasted. Cabbage grows like its cousins, kale and broccoli, from a central larger stalk in the middle of the plant with the leaves branching off. Though these leaves sometimes can be a little tough, they also can be eaten and are very delicious when cooked.

Citrus

Citrus is an incredible staple crop for the Central Coast during the winter time - and even sometimes throughout the year, given our mild climate. This abundance of citrus fruits like oranges, lemons, and even finger limes (see summer chapter!) are packed with vitamin C, which really helps with our immune systems, particularly during these cold season months when colds and flus are more common. These bright fruits can be like bursts of sunshine on grey winter days and the citrus blossoms are both wonderfully fragrant and provide important nectar for our pollinators. Some types of honey - like orange blossom honey - come from bees that pollinate citrus groves.

Did you know? 

All citrus fruits actually come from a few origin species from Southeast Asia, which were gradually **hybridized** and spread around the world.

Key term!



To **hybridize** in the agricultural world means mixing two different plant varieties or species to create a new plant that combines the best parts of the original plants!





Carrot Ginger Soup



Pork Pozole

WINTER
INSPIRED
RECIPES

SWEET POTATO & CHIMICHURRI BOWL

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 medium sized raw sweet potato
- 1/3 cup chopped bell pepper - red, yellow or orange
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 2 TBSP olive oil
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1 15 oz can of black beans
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 2 oz chimichurri sauce (next page)
- Cilantro Lime Rice (next page)

Tools

- Knife
- Cutting board
- Medium bowl
- Baking sheet pan
- Parchment paper
- Small saucepan



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F
2. Wash, peel and dice sweet potatoes into small cubes, about 1/2 inch in size. Wash and dice the bell peppers and chop the onion in about 1/2 inch pieces.
3. Add diced sweet potatoes, diced peppers and onions into a bowl with the olive oil and black pepper and toss to combine
4. Lay out a piece of parchment paper on your sheet pan and lay out the seasoned sweet potatoes, peppers and onions onto the sheet pan. Once the oven is heated, bake for 20 minutes or until the sweet potatoes are crisp and fully cooked
5. While the sweet potatoes are cooking, add the cumin and garlic powder to the black beans in your small sauce pan and simmer until they are heated through.

Cilantro Rice Directions

1. Wash your cilantro and pat dry; pull the leaves off the stem and chop them rough
2. Add your dry ingredients to the small sauce pan: salt, pepper, garlic powder and rice.
3. Add the chopped cilantro, lime juice, and water to the dry ingredients in the sauce pan and turn the heat up high until it is boiling
4. Once everything has come to a boil, turn the flame down and put the lid on; set a timer for 20. If at 20 minutes, you open the lid and there is still visible water surrounding the rice, set the timer for 5 more minutes. Rice is ready when all the water has been absorbed, the rice looks a little puffy, and you can fluff it with a fork.

Chimichurri Sauce Directions

1. Wash your cilantro and parsley and pat dry; for both, pull leaves off the stems; pull out a few stems of cilantro and mince the leaves. With the rest of the cilantro and parsley leaves, chop roughly
2. Add all ingredients to a blender or a food processor, blend until sauce is nearly smooth
3. Add the minced cilantro and salt and pepper to taste and enjoy!

Final Sweet Potato & Chimichurri Bowl

Directions - Serve and enjoy!

Once everything is ready to go, serve up by adding the sweet potato mixture and black beans on top of a bowl of rice, and top with chimichurri sauce.

CILANTRO RICE

Ingredients

- 1 bunch cilantro, leaves chopped
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- 2 TBSP lime juice
- 2 cup water
- 1 cup long grain brown rice

Tools

- Small sauce pan
- Cutting board
- Knife

CHIMICHURRI SAUCE

Ingredients

- 1 bunch parsley
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 2 medium garlic cloves, minced
- 2 TBSP lemon juice
- ½ tsp salt

Tools

- Cutting board
- Knife
- Medium bowl
- Immersion blender

CARROT GINGER SOUP

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1/2 medium yellow onions
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 tsp sea salt
- 3 garlic cloves
- 6 large carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 tsp grated fresh ginger
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- Juice from 1/2 lemon
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Tools

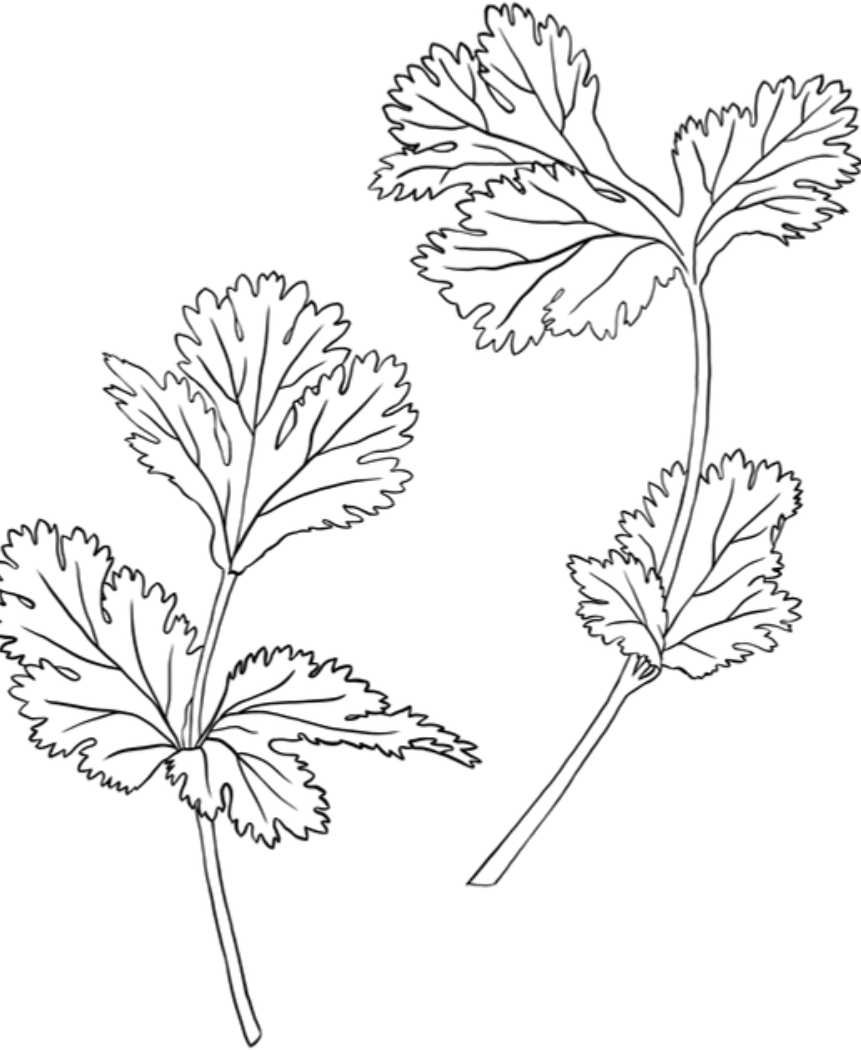
- Chef knife
- Cutting board
- Large pot
- Immersion blender or blender

Optional: garnish with a sour cream swirl and use a toothpick to draw through the swirls and add a design.



Directions

1. Chop your onions into about 1-inch pieces, peel your garlic and smash the cloves by (with the help of an adult), setting the side of the knife on the cloves and smashing it into the cloves with the palm of your hand - or by smashing them with the bottom of a plastic cup.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat.
3. Add the chopped onion and sea salt, cooking until softened (about 5 minutes), then stir in the smashed garlic, carrots, and ginger. Cook for another 5 minutes.
4. Add the vegetable broth and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 20-25 minutes, or until the carrots are tender.
5. Use an immersion blender or transfer the soup to a blender to puree until smooth.
6. Stir in the lemon juice, and adjust seasoning with salt and freshly ground black pepper.



CREAMY CILANTRO VINAIGRETTE

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- About one cup of cilantro
- 3 TBSP of Lime juice
- 2 small garlic cloves, minced
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 2 tsp honey
- 1/3 cup plain greek yogurt
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Make sure you wash well and pat dry your cilantro, then take a large portion of the bunch of cilantro and chop it up roughly until you get 1/3 cup worth.
2. Add the chopped cilantro, lime juice, minced garlic, honey and greek yogurt together and mix in the medium bowl using your immersion blender
3. Very slowly, pour the olive oil into the bowl with the blended ingredients and continue mixing with the immersion blender until it all becomes smooth.
4. Minced - meaning cut up very very small - the rest of the cilantro, add that cilantro and salt and pepper to taste and enjoy!

Tools

- Cutting board
- Knife
- Medium bowl
- Immersion blender

RED LENTIL DAL & COCONUT RICE

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 2 tsp olive oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup raw onions chopped
- 2 medium garlic cloves
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 2 TBSP tomato paste
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup canned diced tomatoes
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup coconut milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground cumin
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup vegetable broth
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp paprika
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp curry powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ground turmeric
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup red lentils
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup raw spinach
- 1 15-ounce can garbanzo beans

Coconut rice:

- 2 cups of dry brown long grain rice
- 3 cups tap water
- 1 cup coconut milk
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp ground allspice

Directions

1. To make the coconut rice, add the dry brown rice, coconut milk, water and allspice to a small saucepan and bring turn on high heat - once the mixture has come to a boil, turn the flame down low and put the lid on; set a timer for 15 minutes
2. While the rice is cooling, you can chop up your onion into about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch pieces until you get to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup, and then peel and mince your 2 garlic cloves
3. Turn on a medium flame/heat on under the large saucepan and let it warm for about thirty seconds before adding 2 teaspoons of olive oil
4. Add the chopped onion to the warmed oil and **sauté** for about 5 minutes until the onions are translucent, then add chopped garlic and ground ginger to the onions, stirring for about 1 minute

Tip!

Garlic cooks faster than onions and can get brown and crispy pretty easy if you aren't paying close attention, so make sure you start cooking onions first to get them softer before adding garlic.



Key terms!

To **sauté** is to cook food very quickly in a small amount of either oil or butter over medium heat. You can think about this like giving your food a little dance in a pan - making it sizzle, start to smell strongly and deliciously, and get ready for the next step in cooking. Lots of recipes start with sautéing onions or garlic to release aromas and flavors.

Directions continued:

5. Add the tomato paste to the onions and cook for about a minute
6. Blend your diced canned tomato with your immersion blender or in a food processor and add to large saucepan once the tomato paste and onion mixture has turned a darker color and cook for another 3-4 minutes.
7. Turn the heat low and add the coconut milk, lemon juice, vegetable broth and spices, and let it simmer for 5 minutes
- 8 Rinse the lentils in a **fine-sieved** colander and add them to the large saucepan; bring this all to a boil by turning the heat up high and waiting for bubbles on the surface. Then turn the heat low and let it simmer for about 10 minutes before adding the spinach and the garbanzo beans and then letting it simmer another 10 minutes.



Tools

- Paring knife
- Cutting board
- Medium sized bowl
- Large serving bowl
- Colander



Key terms!

A **simmer** is like a baby boil. You can achieve a simmer with your pot of water by bringing it up to a boil with high heat and then turning the heat down, so that it is not a roiling boil - meaning that you have big bubbles constantly on the surface of the water and a good amount of heat and steam are coming off - so that you have barely a few small bubbles reaching the surface.

A **fine-sieved** colander refers to the size of holes in the colander that would allow a thicker liquid being pushed through these tiny mesh or strainer to make it super smooth.





PORK POZOLE

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 TBSP olive oil
- ¼ cup onions, chopped
- 1 clove garlic
- ¼ tsp ground coriander seed
- ¼ tsp dried oregano
- Black pepper to taste
- ¼ cup green enchilada sauce
- 1 cup water
- 3 tsp lime juice
- 1 lb pork shredded and cooked, carnitas-style
- ½ cup hominy
- Tortilla chips
- Cilantro, cabbage or shredded radish for garnish

Tools

- Paring knife
- Cutting board
- Large saucepan
- Immersion blender
- Mixing spoons

Directions

1. Half a small onion and chop into about ¼ inch size pieces and then mince your garlic
2. Heat your large saucepan for about half a minute before adding the oil. Sauté chopped onions in the large saucepan until they are translucent, about 3-5 minutes
3. Then add minced garlic, stir and let it mingle for about 30 seconds
4. Add ground coriander seed, oregano and black pepper for another half minute
5. Once everything is mixed and smells good, add enchilada sauce, water, and lime juice - bring all of these together to a boil and then bring your heat down lower and let simmer for about 20 minutes until the onions and garlic are soft
6. Lower the heat and then blend the mixture on high with your immersion blender until it is smooth, about 2-3 minutes
7. Add hominy and simmer until the soup continues to thicken
8. When you are ready to eat, serve over the shredded pork carnitas, garnish with cilantro, shredded cabbage and shredded radish. Enjoy with tortilla chips!

Ingredients

- 1 small garlic clove
- 3 TBSP canned tomato paste
- 1-15 ounce can of canned tomato sauce
- 1 tsp of dried oregano
- ½ tsp ground black pepper
- 1 tsp ground dried basil
- 1 pound ground beef
- ¼ cup ricotta cheese
- ½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- Lasagna sheets; fresh
- ½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- Olive oil for the baking dish

Tools

- Paring knife
- Cutting board
- Large spoon or spatula
- Medium saucepan
- Medium bowl
- Mixing spoons
- Large baking dish (9"x13" or similar)

LASAGNA WITH LOCAL BEEF

Serves 4-6

Directions

Lasagna is fun to make with family and friends - work together to build your lasagna and connections.

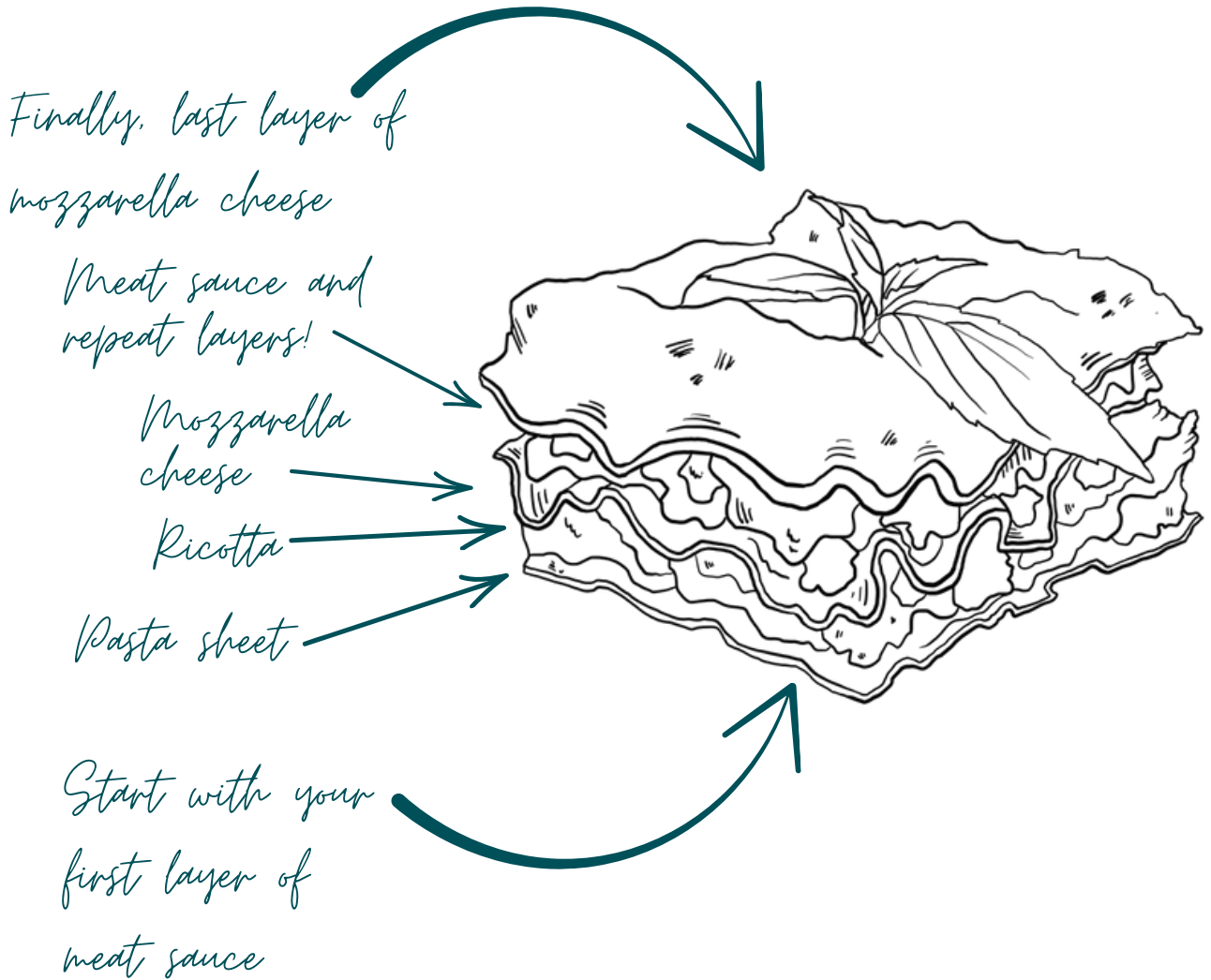
1. Mince your garlic clove and then combine with the tomato paste, tomato sauce, and spices into a medium saucepan, mix well over low heat and add raw ground beef to the saucepan and let it start to brown, gently breaking it up so all pieces meet the heat of the pan.
2. Once beef is all browned - after about 10 minutes - and mixed in with the sauce, turn off the heat and let cool
3. Meanwhile, mix the ricotta and mozzarella cheese together in your medium bowl
4. Preheat your oven to 350°F
5. Oil your baking dish with a little bit of olive oil and add a small portion of the meat sauce to the bottom of the pan; you're going to make 4 layers, so try to portion out about ¼ of what you have of the meat sauce overall.
6. Add a layer of pasta sheets on top of the meat sauce
7. Add about ⅓ of your ricotta and mozzarella cheese mixture and another ¼ portion of the meat sauce on top of the pasta layer

Local highlight

We buy beef from Hearst Ranch and Molnar Cattle Co. - where do you find your ground beef?

Tip!

If you add the ground beef to your pan and let it brown slightly on the side that is on the pan, before starting to break it up with a spatula or spoon, it will be easier to chunk up and start browning all over



9. Repeat the layering of meat sauce, noodles, cheese until you are all done, topping the final layer with your remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of shredded mozzarella cheese, as demonstrated in the image above.
10. Put your lasagna in your oven and bake for an hour.
11. Serve and enjoy!

Local highlight

We have a partnership with local pasta maker Etto Pastificio that specializes not only in organic, fresh pasta, but also works specially with schools and ships all across the nation! Where do you get your pasta?

OVERNIGHT CHAI OATMEAL

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 TBSP chai spice blend (below)
- 2 cups dry quick rolled oats
- 2 TBSP chia seeds
- 2 cups milk
- 1 1/3 cup vanilla yogurt

Chai spice blend:

- 1 TBSP ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp ground allspice
- 1/2 tsp cardamom

Tools

- Small bowl
- Mixing spoon
- Large mixing bowl
- 4 small jars



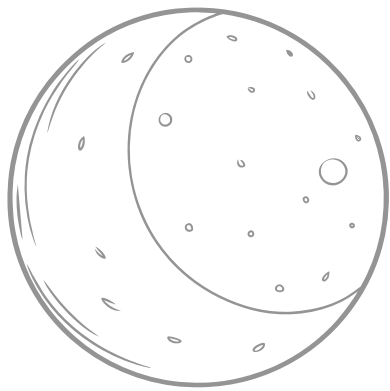
Directions

1. To make the chai spice blend, add all of the spices to the small bowl and combine
2. Take your chai spice blend, add the rest of your ingredients and mix thoroughly in your large bowl
3. Transfer to your jars and refrigerate overnight.
4. The next day, take it out of the fridge and top with whatever you would like - berries if you have them or dried fruit and a dollop of whipped cream and enjoy!

Did you know? 

Why eat **chia**? Chia seeds are highly nutritious! They are packed with antioxidants (we'll talk about what these are later), high in fiber and omega-3 fatty acids, necessary for good heart health!





yak tit^yu yak tit^yu yak tilhini translates to the people of the place of the full moon; some of these characters may be new to you, so here is a helpful way to work on the pronunciation:

yak: yah-k; sounds a little like you are talking about the animal, yak, but a longer “ah” sound. This is an article in this language - like “a” or “the.” In the context of this name, it means “the”

tit^yu: teach-you; like we are going to teach you how to pronounce this! This is the word for people and in this language, when a word is repeated, it either emphasizes the meaning or duplicates it, so together, tit^yu tit^yu means people.

tilhini: till-heeny; almost like tahini we might use in making hummus. This means the place to be full, like the full moon or the full tide: today’s San Luis Obispo, but also is the word for the language.



Key term!

Chia is a plant in the mint family that is actually native to our region in San Luis Obispo County. The seeds are not only delicious, they are incredibly nutritious and are a staple food for yak tit^yu yak tit^yu yak tilhini Northern Chumash of San Luis Obispo County and Region, the people of this area.

Experiment time:

Chia is kind of like a shape-shifter! You will see this happen with the oatmeal; the seeds when they are dry look, taste and feel very different from seeds when they have liquid added. Add a little water to a few seeds before you get this recipe started and see what you think.

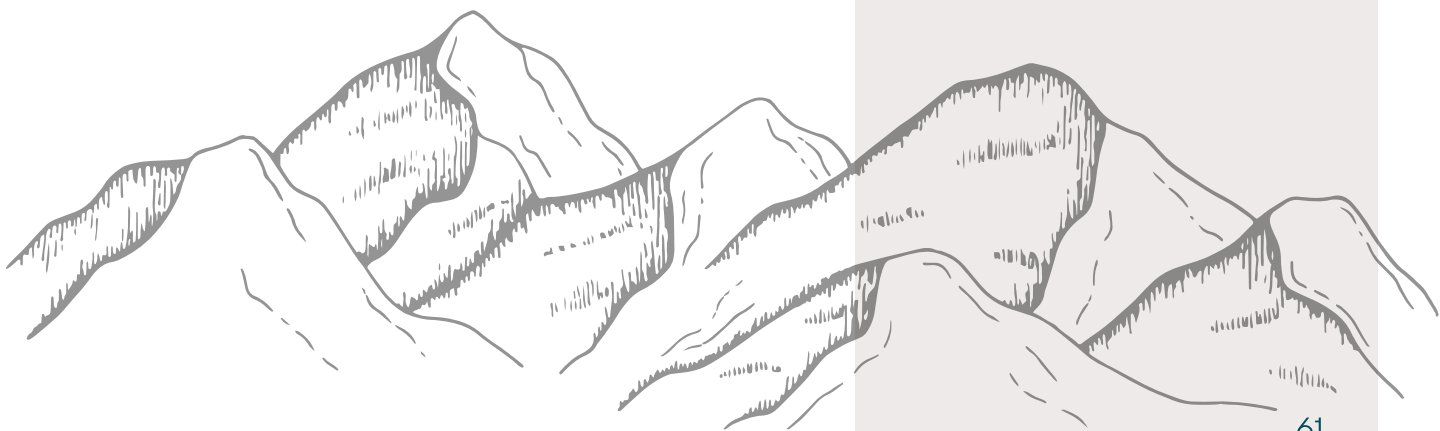




TABLE TALK

Winter time is a time of many different holiday celebrations and the start of a new calendar year! Do you have any particular holiday traditions in your family?

Some things you might want to think about as you get ready for the winter season and new year are your holiday traditions.

In reflecting on your year, you might want to talk about (over a delicious meal, of course!) some of these questions:

What is something this year that you are grateful for?

What is a memory this year that brought you joy?

How have you grown? How have things changed? For you? For the people you love? For the world and environment around you?

What are you looking forward to celebrating next year?

As the seasons shift and our daylight grows shorter, this is an important time to spend with our loved ones, staying warm and dry, and taking extra time to rest and recharge as we gear up for our next season.





SPRING

Focaccia

Though it may seem like the short days of winter go on forever, the time between winter and spring is actually the time in which the days are getting longer again! During this time, you might notice more flowers around you, the birds starting to sing louder and longer, and sweet smells of new plant growth. Spring is a magic time of new beginnings and fresh and bright flavors.

VERNAL EQUINOX – THE OFFICIAL START TO SPRING

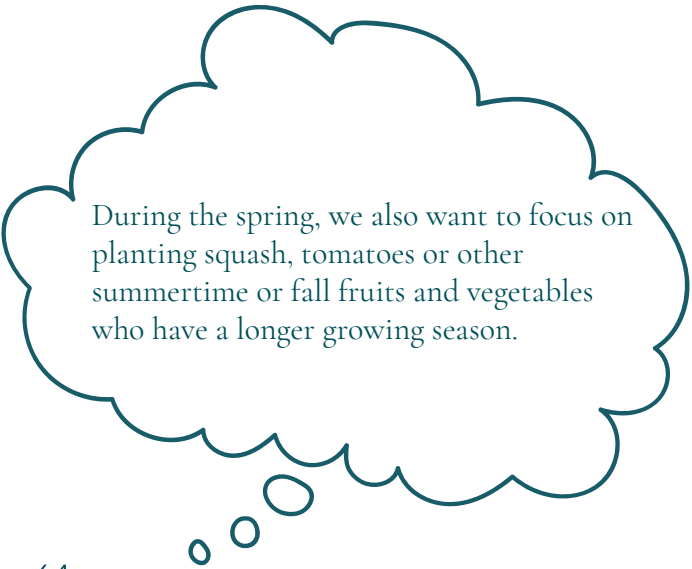
Just like in the fall, there is also a spring equinox, March 20 or 21, when the daylight and nighttime return to the same lengths. After the winter solstice, nights started to get shorter and days started to get longer and after the spring equinox, the daylight starts to get longer than the night time.

This means our days and soil get warmer and we can start harvesting plants we have **sowed** in the winter as well as plants that don't take too long to grow, like radishes or carrots!



Key term!

What does it mean to **sow**? Sowing means planting, particularly relating to seeds. When we sow seeds, we are putting them into the ground, either scattering on top of soil and working it back in or creating individual holes for the individual seeds.



During the spring, we also want to focus on planting squash, tomatoes or other summertime or fall fruits and vegetables who have a longer growing season.

ANNUALS VERSUS PERENNIALS



Key term!

Have you heard of the term **annual** or **perennial**? This refers to how a plant grows: many flowers, fruits and vegetables are annuals, meaning that they need to be planted every year to grow and be successful. Some plants – particularly native plants to California – are perennial, meaning that they grow happily throughout the year or come back every year without needing to be replanted or reseeded.

Other places in the country, or even in the state, can get really cold in the winter, with ground-freezing temperatures lasting for almost 6 months. This means that all produce that is slightly delicate need to be planted every year. This can make it hard to grow food during those winter, snowy months. On the Central Coast, however, lots of fruits and vegetables that are annuals everywhere else can grow every year and keep coming back! Like tomatoes, kale and other hearty, leafy greens. Sometimes these tomatoes even grow in December! Have you had any **volunteer plants** grow in your garden?



Key term!

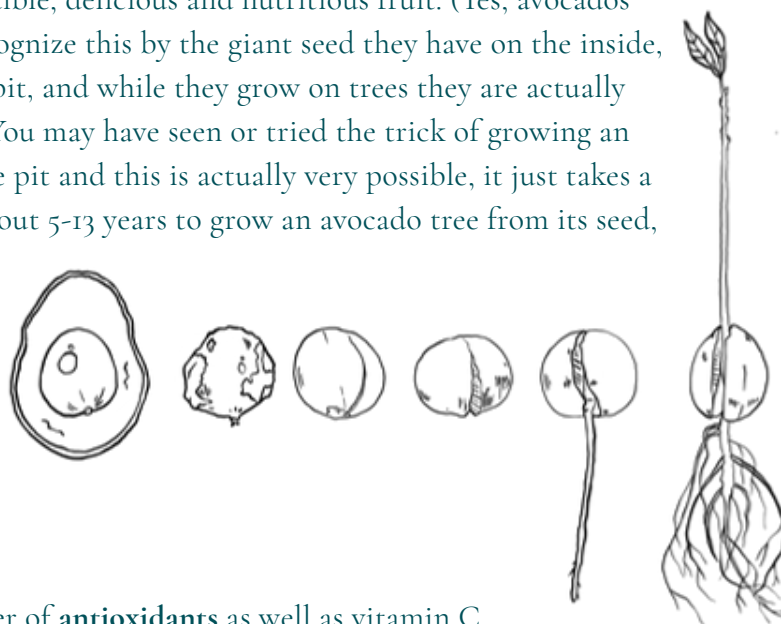
What's a **volunteer plant**? Have you watched a plant, like a tomato plant, have so much fruit that some drop it to the ground before you can pick it? Or your leafy greens grow big flower stalks and start to produce seeds and then drop them to the soil? Plants have an amazing way of propagating themselves - that is, making new plants - by dropping their seeds in places where they can grow again! Tomato plants do this all the time: they drop their tomatoes to the ground and with time, they will start growing new tomato plants.

SEASONAL AVAILABILITY

Crops on the Central Coast of California

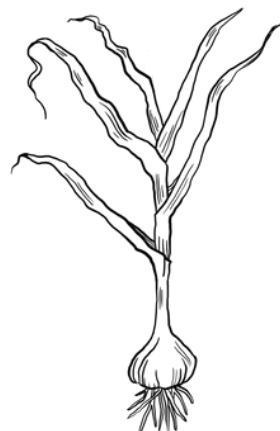
Avocado

California is the main grower of avocados for the entire country - about 90%! We are lucky here on the central coast to have a bunch of growers producing this incredible, delicious and nutritious fruit. (Yes, avocados are fruit! You can recognize this by the giant seed they have on the inside, what we often call a pit, and while they grow on trees they are actually technically a berry.) You may have seen or tried the trick of growing an avocado tree from the pit and this is actually very possible, it just takes a long time. It takes about 5-13 years to grow an avocado tree from its seed, but you sure can!



Garlic

Garlic contains a number of **antioxidants** as well as vitamin C, B6 and so much more. Garlic is grown by taking its “seeds,” what we know as the garlic clove that we often cook with, and planting it in the ground. Once the planted clove creates a healthy root system, it will start to send long, thin green shoots up in the air - and these are actually edible too! One of the ways to tell whether your garlic is ready to grow is after about 9 months, when you’ve got a good amount of green growing on top, to slice open a bulb and count the skins. When you’ve got about 5-6, you are ready to harvest your garlic and start using it while still “green” or dry it.



Broccoli

Broccoli is what we call a heavy feeder (like tomatoes) meaning that it requires a lot of nutrients to grow. Food plants love and need “**NPK**” - the primary macronutrients for growing food, which stands for Nitrogen - crucial for plant growth and development and supports chlorophyll (what makes plants green); Phosphorus - super necessary for seedlings and young plants, as phosphorus support root development; and Potassium (the “**K**”) - which helps the plants digest and create their food (through the process of photosynthesis, turning sunlight into food) and absorb water.



Key terms!

Antioxidants—a naturally occurring substance in some plants that helps keep us healthy.

Macronutrients refer to either types of foods, like fats, proteins or carbohydrates, or chemical elements like those we just listed, that are required in large amounts (the macro-!) for our human diets or for plant growth.

NPK refers to the combination of the nutrients Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P) and Potassium (K) that are vital for healthy plant growth.

You can help broccoli get these nutrients by adding compost or other soil supporters (called soil amendments at the store). Broccoli, looks like a mini tree but is technically a flower, grows at the end of a central middle stalk, like how cabbage or kale grows. Sometimes, if this central area is exposed to too much heat, it can go quicker to its yellow flowers, instead of staying closed as the small green buds we are used to eating. One way to help this is by pulling the leaves that surround the broccoli head closed and gently securing with a rubber band or twine until the head has matured further and stays green.

SEASONAL AVAILABILITY

Crops on the Central Coast of California

Cucumbers

Cucumbers love sun, so they are the perfect thing to start seeding in the spring so that you are ready to harvest in the summer. Cucumbers, like broccoli, are also heavy feeders, so make sure you plant them in an area where you can provide plenty of water as well as any soil amendments that are needed. Cucumbers grow like vines, so they love having something they can grow upwards - this could be a trellis, a tomato cage, or another sturdy food plant, like corn, just make sure you have something to help hold the cucumbers once they start growing, because they can be really heavy!



Bay Leaf

Bay leaves come from California Bay Laurels, a native tree to the Central Coast and very important to the Indigenous peoples of San Luis Obispo. Do you know who they are? yak titʔu titʔu yak tilhini Northern Chumash Tribe of San Luis Obispo Region and County are the Native people to this area and have stewarded this land for over 10,000 years, developing relationships with so many different native plants.

You may be familiar with bay leaves as a dry leaf that you add to chilis or soups and remove before eating. When they are fresh, growing around us here in this area, they have an even stronger smell than when added to foods when dry!

yak titʔu titʔu yak tilhini use bay leaves for a number of purposes, including boiling the leaves when freshly plucked from the tree to help soothe sore throats and stomach aches.



Rainbow Pickles

SPRING *INSPIRED* RECIPES

HOUSE RANCH DRESSING

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup low fat milk
- 1 tsp white vinegar
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1/4 tsp garlic powder
- 1/4 tsp onion powder
- 1/4 tsp dried parsley
- 1/4 tsp dried chives
- Salt and pepper to taste

Tools

- Large bowl
- Mixing spoon

Directions

Mix everything together, refrigerate and serve as needed! Great on a leafy green salad or dip with your favorite veggies!





RAINBOW PICKLES

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cup water
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp cane sugar
- 2 small garlic cloves
- ¼ tsp black peppercorns
- 1 small bay leaf
- 1 medium sized cucumber or do a medley, chopping up a broccoli head, a small onion and 1-2 carrots for a total of 1 cup of chopped veggies

Directions

1. Combine the water with the vinegar, salt and sugar and whisk vigorously until the sugar and salt dissolve into the vinegar-water mixture
2. Peel the garlic and slice in half, add with the black pepper and bay leaf.
3. Slice the cucumber into rounds, or the other vegetables into bit-sized pieces, and put them into your jar, add the vinegar mixture to your jar and close
4. Refrigerate for at least one day and be sure to eat them all in the following 5 days. Enjoy with homemade ranch dressing or by themselves.

Tip!

A couple ways you can take garlic skin off easier: smash the garlic with the side of your knife. This makes it easier to peel the skin off Another easy way? Cut the base of the garlic off and put into a plastic container with a lid and shake it around! Your garlic should come out nice and peeled.

Tools

- Large mixing bowl
- Whisk
- 1 32 oz jar or 2 16 oz jars with lids
- Cutting board
- Knife

BREAKFAST SMOOTHIE BOWL

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 cup frozen mixed fruit (such as pineapple, mango, berries, etc)
- 1 ½ cup frozen strawberries
- 2 ¼ cups lowfat milk
- 3 TBSP honey
- 1 ½ tsp vanilla extract

Toppings:

- ½ cup fresh blueberries
- 5-6 fresh strawberries, sliced
- 2 kiwi fruit, peeled and sliced
- ¾ cup homemade granola (see page 40)
- 2 tsp dried chia seeds
- Honey drizzle

Tools

- Blender
- Knife
- Cutting board



Directions

1. Peel and slice kiwi and strawberries into small pieces and set aside for toppings.
2. Blend frozen strawberries, frozen fruit, milk, honey, and vanilla until smooth.
3. Portion out smoothies into bowls for serving and top with sliced kiwi, sliced strawberries, blueberries, and granola, sprinkle with chia seeds and drizzle with honey.



FRESH SPRING ROLLS

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 2-3 cups of your favorite colorful vegetables - like carrots, bell peppers, purple cabbage, radishes or others!
- 1 package of rice papers
- 1 bunch of mint
- 1 bunch of basil leaves
- 1 bunch cilantro leaves
- 2 cups of mixed greens, like arugula, baby lettuce, spinach

Dipping sauce:

- 2 TBSP hoisin sauce
- 1 TBSP wow butter or other peanut-free spread
- 2 TBSP water

Tools

- Large shallow bowl
- Cutting board
- Knife
- Peeler and cheese grater
- 6-7 medium-sized bowls
- Medium saucepan

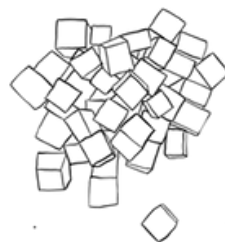
Directions

1. First, prepare your vegetables: make sure you wash all of them well and dry them off - then get ready to make different types of cuts for the different ingredients.
2. For your vegetables, you want long and thin slices, like your herbs. You are going to cut these into matchsticks, so for bell peppers, you just need to cut them very thin and you can keep the length of the bell pepper; with the carrots you can cut them shorter and then slice them into small long pieces and radishes you want to cut carefully into long thin pieces. Shred or grate your cabbage and look for purple to add a pop of color!
3. For your mint and basil leaves, we want thin slices: layer the leaves on top of each other and then very carefully roll them so they become like a long tube. Even more carefully now, you want to slice these very thin, so with a sharp knife and the help of a responsible adult, cut the rolled up leaves so that you have long, thin slices

Mince



Dice



Julienne



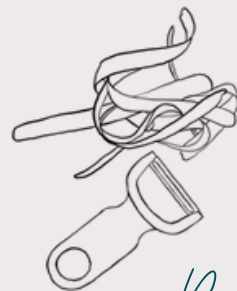
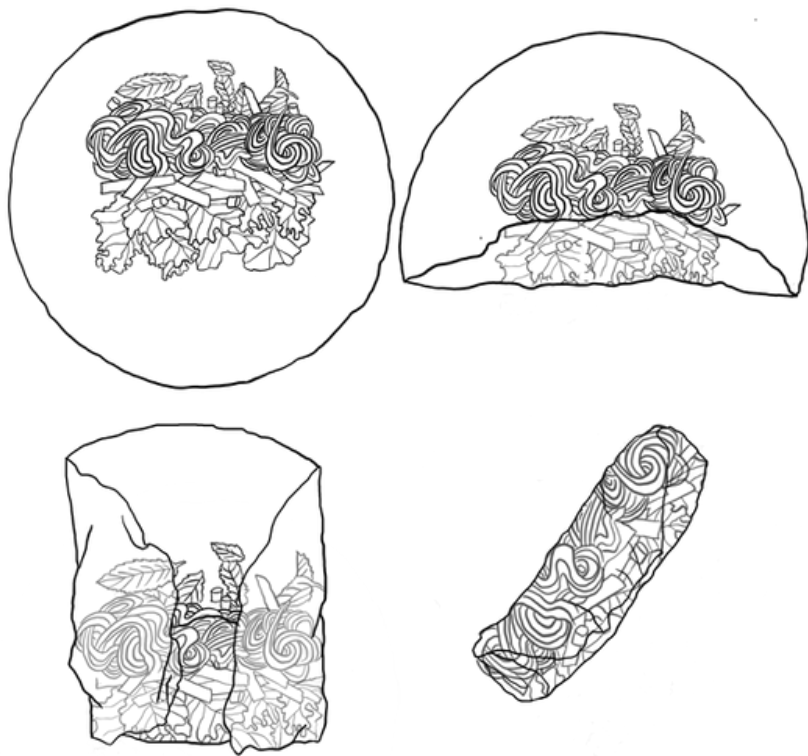
Slice



Directions continued

4. Pluck the leaves from your cilantro and put those aside
5. Wash your greens and put them in one of your serving bowls.
7. Once you have all your vegetables ready, add each of them to their own small bowl. Make sure you have a clean workspace
8. Fill your large shallow bowl with warm water and add one rice paper sheet, turning it in the water until it softens, around 30 seconds or so
9. Remove from your water, place on a paper towel and pat dry
10. Here is where it gets even more fun: now you get to make your spring roll however you want! Pick your vegetables to add, place in the center of the rice wrapper, fold your edges in on either end, roll up tightly and enjoy.

If you want to enjoy with the dipping sauce, mix the water, wow butter and hoisin sauce together until smooth.



Peel



Grate



Key term!

Spring rolls and the nut-free dipping sauce help us access **umami** taste: this is a Japanese word used to describe the fifth taste. You may already be familiar with the common four tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter - umami is savory that describes rich, satisfying flavors, things that may seem “mouth-watering.”

BROWN RICE: MULTIPLE WAYS

GARLIC RICE

Makes about 3 cups

Ingredients:

- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp onion powder
- 2 cup water
- 1 cup long grain brown rice

Directions

Add the dry brown rice, spices and water to a small saucepan and turn on high heat - once the mixture has come to a boil, turn the flame down and put the lid on; set a timer for 20. If at 20 minutes, you open the lid and there is still visible water surrounding the rice, set the timer for 5 more minutes. Rice is ready when all the water has been absorbed, the rice looks a little puffy, and you can fluff it with a fork.

Whole grains are the foundation of school meals and brown rice is the star. That gives us a lot of opportunity to make sure that these staple whole foods are as delicious as possible!

We introduced Cilantro Lime Rice (page 52) and Coconut Rice (page 55) back in the Fall chapter, and here are two more delicious ways to prepare your brown rice.

Just like almost all rice recipes: the foundational tool you'll need is a small saucepan to boil your rice!

Did you know? 

A whole grain includes **all** three parts of the grain: the bran - the outer layer of the grain that is packed with fiber, B vitamins and antioxidants; the germ which has protein, minerals and healthy fats (and what we might consider a seed, as it is what can sprout) and the endosperm, which acts as the germ's food supply, mostly made of starchy carbohydrates.



BUTTERFLY PEA FLOWER RICE

Makes about 6 cups

Ingredients

- ¼ cup butterfly pea flower, dried
- 2 cups of brown rice (long or short grain!)
- 4 cups water

Tools

- Small saucepot
- Colander or strainer

Directions

1. Begin by bringing your water in a small saucepot to boil. Once boiling, turn off the heat add the flowers to the water and place the lid on top of the pot to let the butterfly pea flowers steep for 10 minutes.
2. After 10 minutes is up, strain the flowers out of the water by either (with the help of an adult!) pouring the water into another pot, passing the water through a colander or strainer to make sure you catch the flowers or by pulling out all the flowers. If water has evaporated, add more water so that it is 4 cups.
3. Then add the dry brown rice to the butterfly pea water and bring back to a boil; turn on high heat - once the mixture has come to a boil, turn the flame down and put the lid on; set a timer for 20 minutes. Check one your time goes of to make sure all the water is absorbed.
4. Once all the water is absorbed, turn off heat, keep it covered with your lid, and let sit for 10 minutes. Rice is now ready to eat!

Did you know? 

You can find Butterfly Pea Flower at your local spice or tea store. Butterfly pea flower is extremely special because it can change color! When you mix butterfly pea with a citrus, like lemon juice, it turns purple or pink. Soaking them in water without a citrus or something sour can give water that blue color as well.

FILIPINO CHICKEN ADOBO

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 lb of chicken thighs

Spice mix:

- 1/4 tsp ground cumin
- 2 TBSP dried parsley
- 1 TBSP coriander seeds
- 1/2 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp garlic powder

Adobo sauce:

- 1/4 cup water
- 1/3 cup vinegar
- 1 TBSP peppercorn
- 1 TBSP + 1 tsp soy sauce
- 2 TBSP light brown sugar
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 TBSP raw garlic, minced
- 1 TBSP lemon juice
- 1 TBSP cornstarch



Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Combine spices for dry rub in a bowl (garlic powder, onion powder, dried parsley, ground cumin, and coriander).
3. Separate out the chicken pieces on a lined baking sheet and spread the dry rub over the chicken, with clean hands, and make sure to wash your hands after!
4. Cook chicken for 40-45 minutes, or until internal temperature reaches 180 degrees Fahrenheit.
5. Prepare your adobo sauce by mincing your garlic, then combining the garlic with the rest of the Adobo ingredients (vinegar, lemon juice, soy sauce, brown sugar, peppercorn melange, bay leaf) in a large bowl. Add cornstarch and whisk vigorously.

Directions continued

6. Once your chicken has fully cooked and reached an internal temperature of 180 Fahrenheit, remove from the oven and set to the side to cool. Bring the oven temperature down to 350 degrees. Next we'll work on the rice and then begin to prepare your garlicky green beans.

7. **Choose your rice adventure!** Both garlic rice and butterfly pea rice go nicely with this recipe. Find the recipes for both on the previous page.

8. Wash then chop off the green bean's stem end and mince the garlic clove. Toss in oil and seasonings then add to a sheet pan lined with parchment paper. Roast green beans for 20 min at 350 degrees or until beans are sufficiently browned and tender.

9. While the green beans are in the oven, add the adobo sauce ingredients you had already combined to a saucepan and heat to a boil. Whisk regularly. Sauce should thicken once boiling. Once chicken is cooked, add to a bowl with the adobo sauce and toss to glaze all the chicken pieces

10. We're almost there! Now it is time to plate up and get your garnish ready. Wash green onions then trim off root ends and stem tops. Cut thinly for use as a garnish on the chicken. Enjoy!

Tools

- Small bowl
- 2 baking sheet pans
- Meat thermometer
- 2 large bowls
- Whisk
- Cutting board
- Paring knife

Garlicky green beans

- 1 pounds french cut green beans
- 1 small garlic clove
- 2 TBSP olive oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

Garnish:

- 1 medium green onion



TERIYAKI BEEF SHORT RIB & VEGGIES

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 lb of short ribs - chuck beef
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tsp ground black pepper
- 2 tsp onion powder
- 2 medium sized carrots
- 1 cup raw broccoli, chopped
- 1 medium sized onion
- 2 oz Teriyaki glaze

Tools

- Plate
- Large baking sheet pan or roasting pan
- 3 sheet pans
- Parchment paper
- Small saucepan
- Cheese grater to shred carrots

Directions

1. Take your ribs and put them on a plate - add your salt and pepper and onion powder on all sides and let sit for about 10 minutes. This helps to not only season the meat, but the salt helps to soften the meat a little bit
2. Meanwhile heat oven to 350°F and line your sheet pans with parchment paper and add a drizzle of olive oil to your large baking pan
3. Add the short ribs to the large baking pan and once the oven is preheated, place them in the oven for about 45 minutes
4. Wash your carrots and broccoli, and peel and quarter your onion; chop the broccoli and shred the carrots with your cheese grater
5. Lay out the vegetables on each of your separate sheet pans - add your onions to the oven first, let it roast until the onions are translucent - about 25 minutes
6. While this first round is cooking you can prepare your rice - pick which rice you want to use, check out a few pages ago (page 77)
7. Once you get your rice to a boil and about 25 minutes have passed since you put the onions in the oven, you can add in your broccoli and roast until soft - around 15 minutes
8. Then roast the shredded carrots for only about 8-10 minutes!
9. When all of your vegetables are roasted, combine them all in one large bowl so that you can serve them together
10. When you are ready, scoop your vegetables and short ribs over your bowl of garlic rice, add teriyaki glaze on top and enjoy!



Tips!

What does it mean to quarter an onion? Here are some best practices and tips:

Quartering an onion basically means to cut it into four equal pieces. A chemical reaction happens when you cut onions open, and the gas that gets released can make your eyes water!

To avoid this you can keep your onions in the fridge before working with them. When you are ready to quarter: make sure you first take off the papery skin. Sometimes this is done easier by cutting off the ends first. Then once your ends and skins are removed, place the onion on one of the flat ends and cut it down the middle. Then cut down the middle of each half, and you've got your four pieces!

TABLE TALK



Spring time in California is such a glorious time of year when the days get even longer and the air smells like flowers. How does the arrival of spring make you feel? Share with your family while you make one of these spring-inspired recipes and enjoy at the dinner table.

What are your favorite activities to do in the spring and why does doing it in the spring feel so special?

What is your favorite flower? Have you seen it only during the spring?

What is your favorite spring flavor?

Are you team broccoli or team cucumbers? Do you like either better raw or pickled?





SUMMER

Rainbow Berry Salad

Summer time! An exceptionally special time of year, not only because it means that it is the end of another academic year, but also because so much delicious fruit and vegetables are ready to enjoy! Did you know that the school calendar we use today was created with the summer season off so that kids could help with all the farm activities at this time? With the heat and sunshine, food plants are normally growing a ton in this season and there is a lot of work to do, including weeding, harvest and feeding and watering so many different plants.

ESTIVAL SOLSTICE – BEGINNING OF SUMMER

We do not officially celebrate the start of summer until we reach the summer solstice, sometime between the 21-23 of June, which is the longest day of the year!

This means not only is it the longest day, but from that day forward, the days start to get shorter again, until we get to the fall equinox and the seasonal cycle begins again.

There is so much to do and enjoy in the summer. Weeding and pruning, in particular, are super important activities during this time. So many plants that love the sun and grow so well need a little help with knowing where to focus their energy!



Pruning and weeding can help direct plants to spending their energy on the fruits and leaves that we want to eat!

SEASONAL AVAILABILITY

Crops on the Central Coast of California

Tomato

Talk about a summer plant! Tomatoes need SIX HOURS of sun per day to grow well, sometimes up to 8-10 hours per day in areas like we are, by the coast, as we do get foggy mornings and evenings. It is also important they have warm-ish temperatures at night as well, around 55 and above - so this is where the extra sunlight during the day can help. Tomatoes, like the other plants in spring, are heavy feeders - so they will need some support with nutrients, by using compost, or other available additives. Tomatoes also need a lot of help with pruning! Have you pruned a tomato plant before? There's a trick that helps; you want to prune what's in the crook of the elbows. So tomato plants produce a few different types of foliage - the leaves, a flower stem and then a combination of the two that grows out from the leaves. This combination of leaves/flower grows out from this "elbow crook" in the plant and it is important to prune these, especially when they are small, so that all the energy in the plant goes to creating the leaves that feed the plant through **photosynthesis** and the fruits - the tomatoes!



Key term!

Photosynthesis is the process for how green plants and/or leaves create their own food, mixing carbon dioxide they draw in from the air, water and sunlight. Why green plants? Plants that go through this process are helped creating oxygen from little green molecules called chlorophyll that actually generate the oxygen that we breathe, in addition to food for the plant!

SEASONAL AVAILABILITY

Crops on the Central Coast of California

Strawberries

Strawberries can be planted multiple times throughout the summer. Strawberries, like tomatoes, also love their sun, they need at least 6-8 hours of sunlight and can be planted in late spring or early summer and again in late summer or early fall. Strawberries love mediterranean climates and being close to the coast - with relatively warm winters and dry and moderately hot summers - so our area in SLO County is perfect for growing strawberries.

Strawberries are very remarkable in how they grow - they will grow from their primary plant but then send out runners, little arms to plant in the soil nearby and start new plants. Have you picked a strawberry from its plant, warmed from the sun? There is no other taste like it! Summer brings an abundance of berries in this area, including blueberries - that grow on small bushes, as well as blackberries and raspberries that grow on vines that can get to be enormous.



Lettuce

Lettuce is produced year-round in California and the central coast region is one of the major regions that produces leafy greens and lettuce for the rest of the state and the country. Though lettuce can be grown all year, it does have some particular growing needs: lettuce needs a lot of water and needs temperatures that aren't too hot. Like broccoli and other greens, lettuce can bolt when it gets too hot! Making sure your lettuce plants don't get too much direct sun or heat can help reduce this flowering.



SEASONAL AVAILABILITY

Crops on the Central Coast of California

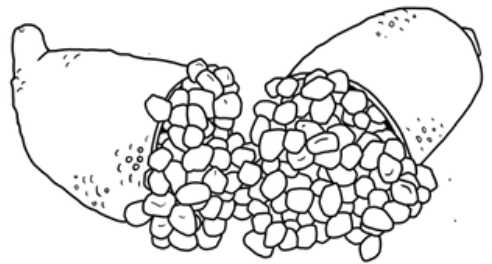


Mustard

We may all be familiar with the time of year when the hills around the central coast turn all yellow or you may see yellow in between grape vines in the winter time: this is due to black mustard, an invasive species—meaning it is not native to this area—that can grow fast and tall (up to 6 feet!). This mustard can be a real pain, as it can take over native plants or the plants you actually want to be growing, and it doesn't even make the mustard we eat! The mustard that we are used to eating as a condiment is actually made from white or yellow or brown mustard, which like black mustard, are actually part of the cabbage family! To make mustard, you take the dried seeds and grind them with water, vinegar and other liquids or spices depending on what kind of mustard you want to make, and voilá, the mustard we enjoy in so many different recipes!

Finger Lime

Have you ever seen a finger lime before? They're not super common but we are so lucky to have the biggest grower of finger limes in the country, right in our backyard! Finger limes are originally from Australia, only about 3 inches long and an incredible source of vitamin C and other antioxidants. There are different ways you can eat them, but most people like to snap them open and squeeze out the little pearls in the middle - they're super fun to add to smoothies or salads in the summer and taste delicious on seafood.



Local highlight

We get our finger limes from Shanley Farms, located here on the Central Coast. They are one of the biggest producers of finger limes in the country. Do you know where you can get finger limes?



Rainbow Pickles



Watermelon Granita

SUMMER *INSPIRED* RECIPES

STRAWBERRY VINAIGRETTE

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup strawberries, tops cut off and sliced in half
- 1 tsp dijon mustard
- 1/2 tsp honey
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp Pepper
- 2 TBSP red wine vinegar
- 1/3 cup olive oil

Tools

- Knife
- Cutting board
- Blender



Directions

1. Wash and cut your strawberries
2. Add all of your ingredients besides the olive oil to your blender and blend on high until fully mixed
3. Once these ingredients are almost smooth, take off the cap on the lid of the blender and slowly add the olive oil while letting the blender mix at the lowest speed, until the mixture is thick and totally combined
4. Pour, mix or top on your favorite seasonal salad, like our summer berry salad - next page!



RAINBOW SUMMER BERRY SALAD

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 2 cups shredded or finely chopped lettuce
- 1/3 cup of sliced strawberries
- 2 TBSP sliced carrots
- 1/3 cup chopped yellow bell pepper
- 1/3 cup blueberries
- 2 TBSP shredded red cabbage
- 2 TBSP chopped cauliflower

Tools

- Cutting board
- Knife
- Large bowl
- Cheese grater, if needed for shredding lettuce

Directions

1. Prepare all your ingredients accordingly - chopping and slicing your clean vegetables and fruit, and shredding your romaine lettuce
2. Toss all your ingredients in one large bowl with the vinaigrette and enjoy!

SPRING FOCACCIA

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

Starter:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
- 7 TBSP warm water (just under $\frac{1}{2}$ cup)
- 2 tsps active dry yeast

Main dough:

- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup whole-wheat flour
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup eater
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp kosher salt
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp olive oil

Toppings:

- 2 TBSP olive oil
- 1 medium sized green onion
- 1 handful cherry tomatoes
- 1 TBSP shredded parmesan cheese

Tools

- 2 mixing bowls - 1 small, 1 large
- Large spoon
- Stand mixer
- Baking sheet pan
- Small sauté pan
- Knife
- Cutting board



Directions

1. Make the starter by mixing the flour, warm water, and yeast in a small bowl; cover, and let it sit in a warm spot for 20–30 minutes until bubbly.
2. After the starter has sat for about 20 minutes, start on the dough by mixing the whole-wheat flour, all-purpose flour, and water until combined in a large bowl or the stand mixer bowl. Let rest for 5–10 minutes, then add the bubbly starter, mix for about 4 minutes, then add salt and mix again. Add oil last and stir or knead with clean hands on a floured surface until smooth.
3. Cover the dough with a towel over the bowl or wrap the ball in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 24 hours (up to 48 for more flavor).
4. Once you are ready to bake your focaccia, prep your baking sheet by drizzling olive oil and spreading it around so the whole pain is greased.
5. Now you are ready to work with the dough! Place the cold dough on the pan and gently stretch it toward the corners. Cover and let rise at room temperature for about 2 hours.
6. Once the dough has risen, preheat your oven to 400°F and begin working on the toppings. Slice your green onion and chop up the tomatoes. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a small pan and sauté the green onions for 1–2 minutes until soft.
7. Back to your dough! Now that the dough has risen, is warmer and taken up a greater amount of the baking sheet, you want to give it the signature dimples of focaccia. With oiled fingers, gently press little dimples all over the dough's surface. Then, sprinkle the onions, tomatoes, and cheese evenly over the dough.
8. Bake at 400°F for 20 minutes. Once golden and slightly crispy, take it out of the oven and let it cool for a few minutes before slicing and enjoying warm!

Tip!

Making dough can be tricky - and sticky! The ratio of dough to water or other wet ingredients depends on the season, the weather, even how humid it is where you are making food! With that in mind, know that these ingredient levels are approximate, meaning it might be more or less, what's more important is the final consistency you are looking for.

Did you know? 

Focaccia is a flat oven-baked bread originating in Italy. It is recognized by its iconic dimples, but these actually have a purpose! Not only does it keep the dough from rising unevenly, but it makes handy pockets for olive oil or other yummy toppings.

WATERMELON GRANITA WITH FINGERLIMES

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- ½ a medium sized watermelon
- Ice
- Finger lime pearls
- Mint leaves for garnish

Tools

- Blender
- Knife
- Cutting board

Directions

1. Cut your watermelon in half and cut off the rind, then cut into chunks
2. Add to your watermelon chunks and ice to your blender and blend until smooth
3. Garnish with mint leaves and finger limes!





THREE SISTERS QUESADILLA

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 medium zucchini
- 1 TBSP olive oil
- 1/2 tsp cumin
- 1/4 tsp paprika
- 1/4 tsp chili powder
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup canned black beans
- 1/2 cup corn
- 1/2 - 3/4 cup shredded local cheese (cheddar, jack, or a mix)
- 4 10 inch whole wheat flour or corn tortillas

Directions

1. Prepare your zucchini by dicing it and prepare your canned black beans by draining and rinsing them
2. Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the diced zucchini, cumin, paprika, chili powder, salt, and pepper. Sauté for 4-5 minutes until the zucchini is tender.
3. Stir in the black beans and cook for an additional 2 minutes, until everything is heated through. Remove from heat and set aside.
4. In a separate pan, drizzle a bit of olive oil and place a tortilla in the pan. Sprinkle with cheese and spoon a generous amount of the veggie mixture on top.
5. Fold the tortilla in half and cook each side until golden brown and crispy.
6. Serve warm and enjoy! For extra flavor, top with guacamole, salsa, cilantro, or green onions.

Tools

- Cutting board
- Knife
- Collander
- 2 skillets or wide sauce-pans
- Cheese grater, if needed

WHOLE GRAIN CINNAMON ROLLS

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

Dough:

- 1 ¼ cup sugar
- 3 tsp salt
- ¾ cup butter
- 2 TBSP yeast
- 2 cups water - slightly warm
- 4 eggs
- ½ tsp lemon zest
- 9 cups (2 lbs 10 oz) bread flour
- Pinch of ground cinnamon
- pinch of ground nutmeg

Filling:

- 2 cups of brown sugar
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 cup golden raisins

Glaze:

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- ½ - 1 cup water to add to the powdered sugar

Directions

1. Combine sugar, salt and butter in your stand mixer and cream together for about 1 minute
2. In your medium sized bowl, add your 2 cups of slightly warm water and the yeast, combine with a fork to make sure it is mixed and add your lemon zest. Once combined, add slowly to your creamed sugar mixture so that it fully incorporates
3. Once your slightly wet mixture is all combined, add pinches of cinnamon and nutmeg, adding the flour slowly while the mixer mixes. This mixture will be very sticky at first but as you continue to add the flour, it will dry out and eventually start coming off the sides of the bowl. When it does that and is no longer totally sticky to the touch, you will know it is time for you to take it out!
4. Let the dough rest for at least 1 hour - or overnight if you have the time!



Tip!

How do you zest a lemon? First, make sure your lemon is washed well and dried. Then take a cheese grater and gently grate the outside of the lemon, making sure you are only getting into the yellow. Once you start to get into the white, spongy layer of the lemon - the pith - move to a different part of the lemon peel and keep zesting!



Directions - continued

5. Make your filling by mixing the brown sugar and cinnamon
6. When your dough has rested, clean, dry and flour the surface you are working on and roll out the dough so that you get a large rectangle, sprinkle the brown sugar mixture all along the inside and start to roll the dough so you make one long tube and you can see the filling swirled on the inside!
7. Put this big roll in your refrigerator and let sit for about 30 minutes, so it is easier to cut.
8. After it has been in the fridge, take out the roll and slice into about 1 ½ inch slices and add the slices to your parchment paper-lined baking dish with about an ½-1 inch space between the pieces and let them rise for about 15 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat your oven to 375°F
9. Once preheated, place in the oven for about 12-15 minutes, until the tops are golden brown
10. While they are baking, mix your glaze ingredients until it is smooth and runny. Once the cinnamon rolls are completely baked, let cool for about 10 minutes before adding the glaze.

Tools

- Stand mixer or bowl and whisk
- Medium sized bowl
- Rolling pin
- Deep baking dish
- Parchment paper



BIRRIA BEEF

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 lb of beef chuck roast
- ½ medium sized onion
- 2 TBSP tomato sauce
- 1 TBSP white vinegar
- ½ tsp paprika
- ½ tsp onion powder
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp chili powder
- About ½ medium-sized dried ancho pepper
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- Water

Tools

- Knife
- Cutting board
- Blender or food processor
- Roasting pan, dutch oven or baking dish with a lid
- Meat thermometer



Directions

1. Preheat your oven to 320 degrees Fahrenheit and lay out your chuck roast on a plate or in your roasting pan
2. Cut your medium onion in half, take off the skins and chop it into about 1 inch pieces. Add the onion, tomato sauce, vinegar and spices to your blender or food processor and mix until somewhat smooth. This should be thick!
3. Make sure your hands are clean and cover the raw roast in the spice paste. Transfer your spiced-roast to your roasting pan if you haven't yet and wash your hands. Fill the pan about halfway with water and cover with an oven-safe lid.
4. Once the oven is preheated, add your roast and set a timer for about 3-4 hours. Roast will be ready when internal temperature reaches at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit and it flakes easily with a fork.
5. Let the meat cool and then shred.



QUESABIRRIA TACOS

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- Cooked birria beef (opposite page)
- 8 small corn or whole wheat flour tortillas
- ½ cup shredded mozzarella or cheddar cheese

Garnish

- ¼ medium sized onion, minced
- 2 tsp cilantro leaves, minced
- 1 radish, thinly sliced
- Pickled jalapeños and/or onions

Tools

- Knife
- Cutting board
- Baking sheet
- Cheese grater, if needed

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit
2. If you haven't already, shred your birria beef, so it is ready for the tacos
3. Assemble your tacos! Lay out the tortillas on a clean surface, sprinkle shredded cheese on each tortilla and then place another tortilla on top
4. Add 2 large spoonfuls of the birria meat onto each mini-quesadillas and fold in half
5. Add these folded quesabirrias to the baking sheet and bake for about 15-20 minutes or until cheese is melted
6. Garnish with your minced onions, cilantro and radishes and serve warm.



TABLE TALK

Summer time is usually such a busy and fun time! We have so many outdoor gatherings with friends and with delicious food and it's important to pause and think about how we got to this fortunate place we are.

While you are enjoying summer time fun, think about your favorite food memory and share with a loved one. Have you gone on a picnic recently? What is your favorite picnic food? What are some other favorite summertime activities?

Summertime is great time to try something new like gardening, cooking, playing a sport like baseball or swimming, or reading a book outside under a tree.

Summer is an incredible time for berries: what's your favorite berry? How do you like to eat them? Raw or in a jam or with ice cream? How many types of berries have you tried before? Strawberries, Blueberries, Blackberries, Raspberries, Boysenberries, Olliberries, Lingonberries, Cranberries, any others?



Enjoy with Gusto!



Local Etto Pasta

Seasonal Scorecard

Recipe name:

Season:

Who I made this with?

Favorite part of this recipe:

One thing I'd change:

Rate each category (circle or color in the stars)

1  = not my favorite

5  = AMAZING!

Category	1 	2 	3 	4 	5 
Tastiness/yumminess		 	 	 	  
Appearance (looks good!)		 	 	 	  
Smell (tasty?)		 	 	 	  
Seasonal produce use? (did you use it?)		 	 	 	  
Would you make this again?		 	 	 	  

Seasonal Scorecard

Recipe name:

Season:

Who I made this with?

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One thing I'd change:

Rate each category (circle or color in the stars)

1 ☆ = not my favorite

5 ☆ = AMAZING!

Category	1 ☆	2 ☆	3 ☆	4 ☆	5 ☆
Tastiness/yumminess	☆	☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Appearance (looks good!)	☆	☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Smell (tasty?)	☆	☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Seasonal produce use? (did you use it?)	☆	☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆
Would you make this again?	☆	☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆	☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

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Smell (tasty?)		 	 	 	  
Seasonal produce use? (did you use it?)		 	 	 	  
Would you make this again?		 	 	 	  



Key terms

- **Annual:** an annual refers to how a plant grows and whether it continues growing throughout the year - many flowers, fruits and vegetables are annuals, meaning that they need to be planted every year to grow and be successful.
- **Antioxidants:** a naturally occurring substance in some plants that helps keep us healthy.
- **Bolting:** Bolting refers to the process of a plant growing very tall, very quickly and a quick shift from flowering to developing seeds.
- **Chia:** chia is a plant in the mint family that is native to our region in San Luis Obispo County
- **Climate:** the general trend of weather in a particular place over a long period of time. So much longer than just the daily weather - but more about what the seasons are like and how hot, cold and rainy it usually is in one area.
- **Cultivate:** to cultivate means a lot of different things! To cultivate in agriculture generally mean the process of preparing the land and growing larger-scale crops at a farm or in your own garden. Cultivate can also mean to develop more generally, so you can cultivate carrots in your home garden and you can also cultivate your ability to grow food!
- **Emulsify:** To emulsify means to mix two things that don't usually blend together very smoothly on their own, like oil and water.
- **Fine-sieve:** pushing a thicker liquid through pushed through a very tiny mesh or strainer to make it super smooth.
- **Hybridize:** hybridize means to cross two different plant varieties or species to create a new plant that combines desirable traits from both "parents."
- **Macronutrients:** these are either types of foods, like fats, proteins or carbohydrates, or chemical elements like those we just listed, that are required in large amounts (the macro-!) for our human diets or for plant growth.
- **NPK:** Nitrogen - crucial for plant growth and development and supports chlorophyll (what makes plants green); Phosphorus - super necessary for seedlings and young plants, as phosphorus support root development; and Potassium (the "K") - which helps the plants digest and create their food (through the process of photosynthesis, turning sunlight into food) and absorb water.

Key terms



- **Perennial:** Some plants – particularly native plants to California – are perennial, meaning that they grow happily throughout the year or come back every year without needing to be replanted or reseeded.
- **Photosynthesis:** The process for how green plants and/or leaves create their own food, mixing carbon dioxide they draw in from the air, water and sunlight.
- **Sauté:** to sauté is to cook food very quickly in a small amount of either oil or butter over medium heat.
- **Simmer:** a simmer is like a baby boil. You can achieve a simmer with your pot of water by bringing it up to a boil with high heat and then turning the heat down, so that it is not a roiling boil - meaning that you have big bubbles constantly on the surface of the water and a good amount of heat and steam are coming off - so that you have barely a few small bubbles reaching the surface.
- **Sow:** to sow is to plant, particularly relating to seeds. When we sow seeds, we are putting them into the ground, either scattering on top of soil and working it back in or creating individual holes for the individual seeds.
- **Umami:** this is a Japanese word used to describe the fifth taste. You may already be familiar with the common four tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter - umami is savory that describes rich, satisfying flavors, things that may seem “mouth-watering.”
- **Varietal:** The term “varietal” refers to a group of food plants within a species – like the grape or carrot species - that has been carefully selected and cultivated over time to meet our needs; we might have a varietal of carrot that is sweeter that has been selected and bred over time to be one we can eat and enjoy raw, or one that is bigger that we might want to use more often in soups.
- **Volunteer plants:** Plants have an amazing way of propagating themselves - that is, making new plants - by dropping their seeds in places where they can grow again

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GUSTO!

SEASONAL EATS: A SLCUSD COOKBOOK

2025