

Carefully transfer the hot oil to a large heat-safe bowl. Increase the wok to high, return 1 Tbs. of the oil to the wok and heat until smoking. Add the snow peas and bell pepper and stir-fry until crisp-tender, about 4 minutes. Return the chicken to the wok, add the stir-fry sauce, and toss to combine and heat through, about 1 minute. Sprinkle with the sesame seeds. Serve immediately with steamed rice. Serves 6.

Williams-Sonoma Kitchen

Garden Lasagna

To create this lasagna, we turned to the garden for inspiration, layering the dish with fresh spinach, cremini mushrooms and bell peppers, plus three types of cheeses for richness. No-boil lasagna noodles streamline preparation.

In a blender, combine the basil leaves, raw spinach, ½ tsp. of the garlic and the ½ cup olive oil and process until a thick sauce forms. Add the Parmigiano-Reggiano, salt and pepper. In a bowl, combine the ricotta, egg, salt and pepper. Set aside.

In a saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Add the shallots and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 4 minutes. Add the remaining 1 tsp. garlic and the flour and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Slowly stir in the milk, increase the heat to medium-high and cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened, 8 to 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to a bowl and let cool for 15 minutes. Stir the basil puree into the sauce.

In a large fry pan over medium-high heat, warm the 1 Tbs. olive oil. Add the mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown and the excess moisture has evaporated, 10 to 12 minutes. Transfer to a bowl. Add the bell peppers, blanched spinach, salt and pepper and stir to combine.

Preheat an oven to 375°F. Butter a 3½-quart shallow Dutch oven.

Spread ½ cup of the sauce on the bottom of the pot and arrange a single layer of torn noodles on the sauce. Top with ½ cup of the ricotta mixture, 1 cup of the vegetable mixture, ½ cup of the sauce and 1 cup of the mozzarella. Layer the noodles, ricotta, vegetables, sauce and mozzarella 2 more times, then add a layer of noodles, ricotta, vegetables and noodles. Spread the remaining sauce on top and sprinkle with the remaining 1½ cups mozzarella.

Cover the pot, transfer to the oven and bake until the noodles are nearly tender and the filling is bubbly, about 45 minutes. Uncover the pot and continue baking until the top is browned, about 15 minutes more. Let the lasagna rest for 15 minutes. Sprinkle with the sliced basil, cut into slices and serve immediately. Serves 8 to 10.

Williams-Sonoma Kitchen

July 23, 2011

Tips for the Market

Buy Something New: Shopping at a farmers' market opens your eyes to new varieties of vegetables and fruits. Each time you go, choose one or two produce items that you've never cooked with before.

Be Flexible: While you may head to the market with the outline of a meal and a general list, be ready to change your plan if the items you need are not in season.

Taste Before You Buy: Many vendors offer samples of their products and encourage you to taste. Peaches, for example, can vary from highly acidic to super sweet. Sampling is also a great way to learn more about the different varieties of produce.

Bring Your Own Bags: You can lessen your impact on the environment by bringing your own bags. If you are not returning home right away, bring a small ice chest.

Also at the Market

The farmers' market has far more to offer than just produce.

Meat and Poultry: Ranchers selling locally raised, free-range meats and poultry are also often at the farmers' market. Look for those who feed their animals a well-rounded diet and allow them to roam free, which contributes to great flavor.

Seafood: If you live close to water, you are likely to find a local fishmonger selling fresh fish and shellfish. While no organic standards have been set for seafood, the fish or shellfish will likely have been caught or harvested just before arriving at the farmstand.

Dairy: Cheese is a staple at the farmers' market, and dairy farmers or cheese makers from every region will boast their own type depending on whether sheep, cows or goats are raised in the area. You can often substitute locally made cheeses for the more traditional imported varieties. For example, a locally produced firm (or aged) sheep's milk or dry jack cheese could stand in for an Italian romano or Parmesan cheese.

Other products: Look for other edible items sold by artisans who use local ingredients in their products. You'll often see bread, olive oil, nuts, jams and preserves, honey and confections.

Ingredients for Garden Lasagna

1 cup packed fresh basil leaves

½ cup raw baby spinach leaves

1½ tsp. minced garlic

½ cup plus 1 Tbs. olive oil

¼ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

3 cups ricotta cheese

1 egg

4 Tbs. (½ stick) unsalted butter

¼ cup finely chopped shallots

¼ cup all-purpose flour

3 cups milk

1 lb. cremini mushrooms, sliced ¼ inch thick

1 jar (16 oz.) roasted red bell peppers, drained and sliced ¼ inch thick

1 lb. baby spinach, blanched and squeezed dry

9 oz. no-boil lasagna noodles, torn into rough 2-inch pieces

4½ cups shredded mozzarella cheese

1 Tbs. thinly sliced fresh basil

Visit williams-sonoma.com to search our extensive recipe collection, find menus and tips for entertaining, and browse an expanded selection of products in every category.

WILLIAMS-SONOMA

Technique Class: Farmers' Market Meals

Cooking in concert with the seasons is an age-old idea. Before mass transportation, people ate only what was growing in gardens, nearby farms or orchards. Today, however, produce is transported from all corners of the world. And while these items may appear beautiful, the flavor of out-of-season produce cannot compare with that of fruits and vegetables harvested at their peak.

Seasonality may initially make you feel like you have to deprive yourself, but once you incorporate it into your meal planning, you'll see that it offers abundance. Blueberry season gives way to apricot season, which merges into corn season, and on it goes. Menus are constantly changing as they reflect the time of year. It's an exciting way to eat.

Of the many reasons to eat seasonally, one of the best is that the food simply tastes amazing. As you move toward eating this way, you may rediscover the flavors of your childhood. You'll notice that an in-season tomato is almost a different fruit than a tomato purchased in January and shipped from a distant grower. As you enjoy a pear so juicy that you have to eat it over the sink, you'll understand that buying in-season produce is a gift to yourself and your family.

An added bonus of eating in-season fruits and vegetables is that they often cost less than foods brought in from faraway places. When farmers have a generous supply of a particular item, the price is usually very fair, making it a sensible way to help manage your food budget.

Why Organic?

In the United States, the selling of organic produce is tightly controlled and regulated. Labeling that certifies organic produce is a great asset for consumers. When you see the certified organic label on produce, you can be assured that farmers have followed strict guidelines. For example, they do not use chemical pesticides and they must grow their produce in soil that has been free from chemical input. This means that all you taste in that just-picked carrot is pure, true, carrot flavor. Additionally, by buying organic produce, you can be assured that you and your family are protected from harmful chemicals.

Some certified organic products can be expensive, so if you are watching your wallet, you can prioritize these items by deciding which ones are the best to buy. Vegetables and fruits that have an edible peel or skin—such as bell peppers, strawberries, potatoes or apples—or a lot of surface area—such as celery, lettuces and fresh herbs—should preferably be organic. If you're opting for conventionally grown fruits and vegetables in some cases, choose those with peels that you can remove.

Summer Vegetable Skewers

Ingredients for Summer Vegetable Skewers

½ cup dry white wine

½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. freshly ground pepper

¼ cup olive oil

1 small eggplant, about ½ lb., trimmed and cut into chunks

2 zucchini, trimmed and cut into chunks

2 yellow squashes, trimmed and cut into chunks

1 red onion, quartered lengthwise and separated into double-thick wedges

1 red bell pepper, seeded and cut into large pieces

16 large cremini mushrooms, trimmed

2 Tbs. purchased pesto

*Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Food Made Fast Series, *Grilling*, by Rick Rodgers (Oxmoor House, 2007).*

*Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Weeknight Fresh & Fast*, by Kristine Kidd (Weldon Owen, 2011).*

*Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Weeknight Fresh & Fast*, by Kristine Kidd (Weldon Owen, 2011).*

Herb Pesto and Mozzarella Panini

¼ cup toasted pine nuts

¾ cup packed fresh basil leaves

½ cup packed fresh mint leaves

½ cup chopped fresh chives

1 garlic clove, peeled

1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for brushing

¼ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

8 slices country-style bread, cut on the bias ¼ inch thick

8 oz. fresh mozzarella cheese, sliced ¼ inch thick

1 large tomato, thinly sliced

Summer Vegetable Skewers

Fresh vegetables are a delicious, healthy alternative to meat on grilled kabobs. Lightly marinated and smoky from the grill, these vegetables can also be used as the foundation for subsequent meals (see our website for Vegetable Quesadillas). To store the vegetables, remove them from their skewers and let cool to room temperature, then pack into an airtight container and refrigerate for up to 3 days. They do not freeze well.

Prepare a hot fire in a grill. Soak 8 long bamboo skewers in water to cover while the grill heats, then drain just before using.

In a large bowl, whisk together the wine, salt and pepper. Gradually whisk in the olive oil. Add the eggplant, zucchini, yellow squashes, onion wedges, bell pepper and mushrooms and toss gently to coat evenly. Let stand for 5 minutes. Thread the vegetables onto the skewers, dividing the eggplant, zucchini and yellow squashes, onion, bell pepper and mushrooms evenly between the skewers. Pour any remaining marinade into a small bowl.

Lightly oil the grill rack. Place the skewers on the grill and cover. Grill, turning as needed to cook evenly and basting occasionally with the reserved marinade, until all the vegetables are tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Serve 4 of the kabobs, drizzling them with the pesto. Reserve the remaining 4 kabobs for another meal. Makes 8 kabobs.

*Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Food Made Fast Series, *Grilling*, by Rick Rodgers (Oxmoor House, 2007).*

*Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Weeknight Fresh & Fast*, by Kristine Kidd (Weldon Owen, 2011).*

*Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Weeknight Fresh & Fast*, by Kristine Kidd (Weldon Owen, 2011).*

An immersion blender makes fast work of preparing this pesto, which combines three varieties of fresh herbs: basil, mint and chives.

Put the pine nuts, basil, mint, chives, garlic, lemon juice and the ¼ cup olive oil in a tall bowl or blending container. Using an immersion blender, blend until smooth. Stir in the Parmigiano-Reggiano, and season the pesto with salt and pepper.

Preheat a panini press to 400°F or medium-high heat.

Brush one side of each bread slice with olive oil. Lay the slices oiled side down and spread the top of each slice with 1 Tbs. of the pesto. Arrange 3 or 4 mozzarella slices in a single layer on 4 of the bread slices, then top with a layer of tomato slices, dividing evenly. Season with salt and pepper. Top each with one of the remaining bread slices, oiled side up.

Place 2 sandwiches on the preheated panini press, close the lid, and cook until the bread is toasted and the cheese is melted, 3 to 4 minutes. Transfer the sandwiches to a cutting board and cut in half. Repeat with the remaining sandwiches. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

*Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Weeknight Fresh & Fast*, by Kristine Kidd (Weldon Owen, 2011).*

*Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Weeknight Fresh & Fast*, by Kristine Kidd (Weldon Owen, 2011).*

Tangy Vegetable Salad with Bulgur

Bell peppers, eggplant and zucchini are all at their best in summer. Here they are simply grilled, then tossed with a vibrant mustard vinaigrette. Blue cheese and walnuts add richness, while chickpeas add protein to this plentiful salad.

Prepare a hot fire in a grill.

Put the mustard in a small bowl. Mix in the vinegar and then the shallot. Gradually whisk in the ½ cup olive oil. Add the minced parsley. Season the vinaigrette with salt and pepper. In a large bowl, combine the chickpeas and half of the vinaigrette and stir to coat. Adjust the seasonings with salt and pepper.

In a saucepan, combine the bulgur and water. Season lightly with salt. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to low. Cover and simmer until the bulgur is just tender, 12 to 15 minutes. Remove from the heat and let the bulgur stand, covered, for at least 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, brush the bell peppers, eggplant and zucchini with olive oil, and season with salt and pepper. Arrange the vegetables on the grill rack, cover the grill and cook, turning once, until brown in spots, about 7 minutes per side. Transfer the vegetables to a cutting board, cut crosswise into thirds and then slice lengthwise. Transfer to the bowl with the chickpeas. Add enough vinaigrette as needed and toss to coat.

Fluff the bulgur with a fork and spoon into a large shallow bowl. Top with the vegetables. Sprinkle with the cheese, walnuts and a few torn parsley leaves. Serve hot or at room temperature. Serves 4.

Quick Tips: Choose quick-cooking bulgur to keep the preparation time manageable on a weeknight. Grilling the vegetables keeps the kitchen cool in the summer, but broiling them works just as well. Other good vegetables to use in this salad include poblano chilies, Anaheim chilies and radicchio. The dressing and bulgur can be made 1 day ahead, and leftovers are great just as they are.

*Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Weeknight Fresh & Fast*, by Kristine Kidd (Weldon Owen, 2011).*

Sesame Chicken Stir-Fry

Stir-fries are fast and easy to make—and this one is even easier because it incorporates our sesame stir-fry sauce. Just stir into the wok after cooking the other ingredients and heat through, then dinner is served.

In an electric wok set on medium-high, pour in oil to a depth of 1 inch and heat until shimmering. Line a baking sheet with paper towels. In a bowl, whisk together the egg whites and cornstarch. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Add to the bowl and stir to completely coat the chicken with the egg mixture.

Working in 4 batches, add the chicken to the oil a few pieces at a time. Fry, turning the pieces occasionally and making sure they don’t stick together, until lightly golden, about 4 minutes per batch. Transfer to the paper towel-lined baking sheet.

*Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Weeknight Fresh & Fast*, by Kristine Kidd (Weldon Owen, 2011).*

Ingredients for Tangy Vegetable Salad with Bulgur

1½ Tbs. Dijon mustard

3 Tbs. sherry vinegar

1 large shallot, minced

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more as needed

3 Tbs. minced fresh flat-leaf parsley, plus torn leaves for garnish

Coarse kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

1 can (15 oz.) chickpeas, drained and rinsed

1 cup bulgur wheat

1½ cups water

2 red bell peppers, quartered lengthwise

2 yellow bell peppers, quartered lengthwise

3 Asian eggplant, cut lengthwise into thirds

3 zucchini, cut lengthwise into thirds

½ cup blue cheese, crumbled

Coarsely chopped walnuts for garnish

*Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Weeknight Fresh & Fast*, by Kristine Kidd (Weldon Owen, 2011).*

*Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Weeknight Fresh & Fast*, by Kristine Kidd (Weldon Owen, 2011).*

*Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Weeknight Fresh & Fast*, by Kristine Kidd (Weldon Owen, 2011).*

Sesame Chicken Stir-Fry

Canola oil for frying

2 egg whites

¼ cup cornstarch

1½ lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut crosswise into ¼-inch strips

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

½ lb. snow peas, trimmed and strings removed

1 red bell pepper, cut into ½-inch strips, then halved crosswise

¾ cup sesame stir-fry sauce

2 tsp. toasted sesame seeds

Steamed rice for serving

Continued on next page