

[Brandywine Table]

Market Made

TIPS AND RECIPES TO GET THE MOST OUT OF SUMMER FARMERS' MARKETS

Alyssa Thayer

IS THERE ANYTHING MORE WHOLESOME THAN strolling the tents of a farmers' market on a warm summer's day, hand-selecting produce and artisan goods as you go? Short answer, probably not.

While many local farmers' markets officially open in May, they really find their stride in early summer. "We always say strawberries mark the start of the season," says **Growing Roots Partners** owner Christy Campli. She cites strawberries as the sweet lure that brings folks out to their markets. Shoppers might come for the berries, but they stay for the vibrant produce, quality meats and dairy, and scrumptious value-added treats.

Christy, who took over the business from founder Lisa O'Neill this past January, is just getting started with running several farmer's markets, but she's no newbie to local food. Christy served as the manager of farm-to-table mecca, Wyebrook Farm Restaurant in Honey Brook, and helped open Herd Provisions a farm-centric restaurant in Charleston, South Carolina.

Working at these establishments grew her general interest in good food into a full-fledged life's calling. "It opened my eyes and changed my life," she recalls.

As anyone who has ever tended a garden will attest, growing food is no small task. Christy's #1 priority is getting farmers and food



Christy Campli, the new face of Growing Roots Partners

makers the recognition they deserve. "They aren't in the business of getting rich, they are in the business of doing the right thing," she says.

Along with tasting delicious, offering more nourishment, and being better for the earth, buying local is also about supporting the local community and economy. "The best part of the farmers' markets are the farmers," Christy says. And as you'll read in this column, she encourages market-goers to get to know their farmers and take advantage of their depth of knowledge.

As we venture deeper into market season, the culinary inspiration is abundant and ever-changing. Each week there's something new popping up—berries, squash, herbs and more. "For me, as a cook, it's one of the most exciting parts of eating seasonally" she says.

Although asking Christy to pick a favorite season is akin to asking a mother to pick a favorite child, she smiles and says "It has to be when I can find tomatoes, bell peppers and cucumbers all at the same market ... that's heaven."

All you need is an open mind and a few sturdy reusable bags, and you too can have a feel-good culinary adventure every week. Happy shopping friends!



Ask the farmers what's good. Otherwise, you might miss these crunchy and juicy Hakurei turnips.

RECIPES:

There's no better time to celebrate the flavors of the season than summer. We've organized these warm weather recipes by the month when the ingredients are generally available—but this can shift based on the whims of Mother Nature. Christy also likes to point out that almost everything needed in these recipes is available at their markets—right down to the chicken, cheese, bread and vinegar!

JUNE

Summer Berry Salad

Peak-picked berries are a delicacy. And while we're in full support of simply rinsing and devouring, we thought we'd offer one other scrumptious way to enjoy berry season. This version uses strawberries and feta, but we encourage you to use whatever berry and cheese combo is available—blueberries and chevre anyone?



1 lb. fresh strawberries
5 oz. (1 ¾ C.) baby greens (we used a spinach/arugula combination)
⅓ C. pecan pieces, toasted and cooled
4 oz. (½ C.) feta, crumbled
½ C. fresh basil, chiffonade into ribbons
¼ C. Balsamic-Honey reduction (recipe below)
Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
2 Tb. extra virgin olive oil

Rinse and remove stems from berries, chop into bite-size pieces (halves or quarters depending on size). On a platter, arrange greens in a thin layer, then sprinkle over berries, nuts, cheese and basil.

Next, drizzle olive oil and balsamic reduction over the platter, and finish with a sprinkle of coarse salt and fresh ground pepper to taste.

Serves 4–6.

Honey-Balsamic Reduction

This recipe is simple to make (2-ingredients simple), delicious to eat and will make your budget balsamic thick and luxurious. We've used it for a savory dish here, but up the honey-to-vinegar ratio and you'll have the perfect dessert drizzle. Balsamic, stone fruit sundae sound good?

¾ C. balsamic vinegar
¼ C. honey

Shop the Farmers Market Like a Pro

Sourcing ingredients locally admittedly takes more effort than simply walking the aisles of a grocery store, but it can be done and is well worth the effort. Take a look at this list of tips and tricks to shop your local market like a pro.

Early Bird – Early shoppers get the best selection. As the day progresses, you run the risk of missing that first-of-the-season item and may have to settle for whatever is left.

Pre-Order – Until recently what would be available at the market on any given day was always a wild card, making it challenging to depend on for weekly supplies. Thanks to the pandemic, the majority of the vendors now have online pre-order systems, which Christy predicts are here to stay.

Peruse then Choose – It's hard not to purchase the first shiny tomato you see, but do yourself a favor and make a quick lap to see what's available. That way you leave room in your budget and bag for all your top finds.

Plan in Place – Having a general plan of meals for the week will help ensure you can use all your purchases. There's nothing worse than forgetting about or not using something fast enough. Another great part of the market is if you need a certain amount (more or less than how an item is bunched) ask the farmer. They may be able to bunch or split something for you.

Be Flexible – This may seem counter to what we just discussed, but hear us out ... You may be looking for butternut squash, but realize its even sweeter cousin, honeynut squash, is available. The solution is to go in with general categories in mind, rather than specific varieties (leafy greens, root vegetables etc.). That way you can take advantage of what's good and available. If you need help with substitutions, ask a farmer.

Ask the Farmer – See a pattern here? Just like you'd go to a restaurant and ask for chef specials, ask for and use the suggestions of the growers and makers to find the best picks.

Tough Totes – The last thing you need is to be limited by your bag size or have the handles rip and risk bruising or losing your precious cargo. Bring a set of well-constructed totes or baskets. If it's hot, consider having an insulated bag or chilled cooler in your car.

Seek Out Specialty – Many of the specialty vendors (beer, wine, cheese, maple syrup, etc.) rotate markets. Know when they're coming to your neck of the woods so you can stock up.

Serene Routine – Make your visit a joyful part of each week. Add the market as a recurring date on your calendar—to get outside, support the community and of course bring home all the goods.

Add vinegar and honey to a thick-bottomed saucepan. Bring to a high simmer for 20–25 minutes, until you see the mixture begin to thicken, making sure to stir every 5 or so minutes. *Note:* make sure you have a hood fan on, or a window open, vinegar fumes are no joke!

Cool and store in an air-tight container.

TIP: If serving over greens or as a cold dressing, best to make ahead of time.

Makes ¾ C. dressing, approximately 6 servings.



Growing Roots operates farmers' markets in Malvern, Downingtown, Eagleview and Devon.

JULY
Chilled Potato, Green Bean Salad
This is our take on a summer veggie niçoise. Make it with whatever string beans, potatoes and fresh herbs you can get your hands on. The French vinaigrette is what brings the whole thing together as a light but satisfying summer meal.
TIP: Because all the components are served cold, we recommend cooking and chilling your eggs and potatoes ahead of time, if possible.



- 3 large eggs
- 1 lb. new potatoes
- 1 lb. green beans
- Optional: 5 oz. (1¾ C.) baby greens

Dressing:
1–2 lemons, juiced (enough for ¼ C.)
2 Tb. sherry or red wine vinegar
1 shallot, minced finely (can be subbed for another small local allium of your choice)
3 sprigs thyme, leaves removed from stem and chopped finely
2 tsp. fresh oregano, chopped finely
2 Tb. fresh basil, chopped finely
½ tsp. honey
Generous pinch of salt and pepper

Toppings:
⅓ C. Kalamata olives, drained and pitted
2 Tb. capers, drained
1 Tb. fresh parsley or chives, chopped for garnish
Fresh ground pepper to taste

Egg Prep: It’s a hard-boiled egg, how hard can it be? Try these simple steps for a softer, easier-to-peel egg.
Gently set eggs into the bottom of a medium-sized saucepan (large enough to ensure eggs won’t touch/crowd). Fill the pot with cold water until the depth reaches 1 inch above the top of the eggs.
Bring water to a boil. Once at a boil, turn down to a simmer for 8–10 minutes depending on how soft you want the yolk.
Using a slotted spoon, remove eggs one at a time from hot water and submerge directly into an ice bath. Once completely cool, peel and slice in half long-ways and long-ways again to make wedges.

Potato Prep: Boil potatoes in salted water for 15 minutes or until fork tender (time can range dramatically depending on size and type of potato). Remove from heat and allow to cool completely before cutting. Once cooled, chop into bite-sized pieces.
Green Beans: Rinse and trim ends and place into a steaming basket. Bring shallow water to a boil in steamer pot, then lower the basket in and cover. Let them steam on high for about 5–7 minutes (or until desired crunchiness).

Remove from steam carefully, and deposit directly into an ice bath to stop the cooking and to keep that vibrant green color. We like to cut green beans in half to make them a bit shorter and easier to eat, but that’s just personal preference.
Dressing: Add all ingredients to a tight-sealing jar, screw lid on tightly, and shake vigorously to mix. Open up, taste, and add salt and pepper as needed.
Drizzle 3–4 spoonfuls of dressing over potatoes to start soaking in while you begin to assemble the salad.
Create a bed of greens, if using, then layer on green beans and potatoes. Delicately arrange egg slices on the surface of the salad and sprinkle toppings on top (olives, capers, herbs).
Finish by spooning the dressing generously over the top.
Serves 4–6.
TIP: Only dress what you’ll be eating and keep leftover components separate. That way you won’t have any discoloration or sogginess when you enjoy it for a second time.

AUGUST
Bruschetta Chicken

It’s no secret that vine-ripened fresh tomatoes are one of the ultimate treats of summer. This recipe harnesses that sweetness, adds a little smokiness, and throws it all over juicy, flavorful grilled chicken. It’s a Campli family favorite, so timeless, no one even remembers where it came from.

- 4 lbs. chicken breasts, butterflied, cut in half and pounded to around ½-inch thick

Marinade:
2 C. scallions, chopped
¼ C. white wine
2 lemons, juiced (approximately 4 Tb.)
5 cloves garlic, minced
¼ C. extra virgin olive oil
Generous pinches of salt and pepper

Bruschetta:
2.5 lbs. tomatoes, diced
½ C. fresh basil, chiffonade in ribbons
4 cloves garlic, minced finely
½ bunch scallions, chopped (¼ C.)
1 Tb. extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste



Place all marinade ingredients in a large container and whisk together. Add chicken with tongs, gently turning to coat evenly. Marinate for 4 hours or overnight.
Preheat grill. Add all bruschetta ingredients into a tinfoil packet or covered grill pan. Place directly onto grill over medium-high heat for 15–20 minutes, or until tomatoes are blistered and juicy.
Place chicken directly on oiled grill grates and cook over medium-high heat for 3–5 minutes on each side (depending on thickness) or until internal temperature reaches 165°.
Pull chicken off grill and allow to rest for 5–10 minutes.
Top chicken with bruschetta tomatoes, and enjoy!

Farmers Market Panzanella
(Adapted from Serious Eats)

This warm-weather classic pulls together many of our favorite flavors of summer. Plus, it’s the perfect way to use up day-old fresh bread!

- 2.5 lb. tomatoes, cut into wedges
- 2 tsp. salt, plus more to taste
- 3 medium cucumbers, thick-chopped to desired shape
- 1 large red onion, sliced and separated
- ½ C. packed basil leaves, chiffonade into ribbons
- 2 medium eggplants
- 3 large bell peppers
- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 8 oz. (2 C.) fresh feta, large crumbled

Croutons:
4–6 C. (about 1 loaf) rustic bread (Italian or sourdough work well), chopped into 1½-inch cubes
2 Tb. extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Dressing:
1 small shallot, minced (about 2 Tb.)
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ tsp. Dijon mustard
2 Tb. red wine vinegar
½ C. extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste



Preheat oven to 350°.
Place chopped tomatoes into a colander over a bowl (to capture juices) and season with salt. Toss to coat evenly. Let mixture stand for at least 20 minutes, tossing occasionally to help release moisture.
While tomatoes are draining, begin preparing croutons. Toss bread cubes in EVOO and season generously with salt and pepper. Transfer to a cookie sheet and bake for 15–20 minutes, or until crispy and golden brown. Set aside to cool.
Remove the colander of tomatoes from the bowl and set aside. To your bowl of tomato juices, add shallot, garlic, Dijon and red wine vinegar and mix. Whisking constantly, add EVOO and salt and pepper to taste.

Combine tomatoes, cucumbers, red onions, basil, salad dressing and toasted/cooled bread cubes in a large bowl. Toss to mix. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes (up to 2 hours) before serving.
Preheat the grill. Chop off eggplant ends, and slice in half length-wise. With the eggplant half facing down, slice into ⅓-inch strips. Remove stems and seeds from bell peppers and chop into 4–5 large pieces. Toss eggplant and peppers in EVOO and season generously with salt and pepper.

Place vegetables directly on grill over medium-high heat, until desired char is achieved (about 5 minutes per side). Set aside to cool.
Assemble Salad: Mix chickpeas into refrigerated salad mixture and add to a deep platter or serving bowl. Top with grilled vegetables (eggplants, peppers) and crumbled feta.

Buon Appetito! ♦

Alyssa Thayer found her love of food at an early age, frolicking around her mother’s organic farm and eating her weight in berries and snap peas each summer. She is a self-proclaimed urban farm girl, whose mission is to bring inspired ideas to life, passionate people together, and good food to every table.



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