

Brandywine Table

Market Series: West Chester Growers Market

LOCAL LOVE EMANATES FROM THE 28-YEAR-OLD MARKET

Courtney H. Diener-Stokes

A TOPPING FOR AN ARUGULA SALAD WAS ON LIZ Bradley's mind when she recently picked up some rosemary lemon chèvre at Amazing Acres Goat Dairy's stand at the West Chester Growers Market.

A married mom of two children from East Goshen, Bradley likes supporting local artisans by shopping at the market. She also values that it gives her kids a chance to see who grows or makes the food they eat, which gives them a better understanding of where it comes from. "They can ask questions and take their time," Bradley says. "It's way more fun than the grocery store."

Amazing Acres, owned by Lynne and Will Reid, is one of 30 vendors currently making up West Chester's 28-year-old market held on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at North Church and West Chestnut Sts. In what will be their first full year at the market, the Reid's are one of the newer additions to the lineup that includes a range of offerings from locally grown fruits and vegetables to honey and flavored oils along with coffee, cheese, plants, meats, baked goods and hard spirits.

Sky Breads Bakery from Wilmington is one of the longtime vendors at the market, currently in their 25th season. Andy O'Neill, whose father, Patrick, founded the business, sells their hard-crust European breads, soft-crust sandwich bread, cookies, granolas and pastries. Their seven-grain



sourdough and three-seeded whole wheat breads are their biggest sellers. O'Neill was happy to report that business has been steady, if not better, at the market these days. "I think Covid improved business a lot, because a lot of the new customers stayed," O'Neill says.

A few stands down, Adam Lauer, owner of Forgedale Fungi in Fleetwood, Berks County, was selling his farmed and foraged specialty mushrooms. Dan Miksiewicz, a fan of Forgedale's mushrooms, enjoys the versatility of cooking with fungi. "You can throw them in anything from stir-fries and cheesesteaks to pasta dishes," Miksiewicz says.

The cooperative market is overseen by a board of 10 members that includes vendor Don Irvine, the founder and president of Tally Ho craft roasted coffee based in West Chester. He says the community loves the market because of its easy access given its central location downtown. The quality of the food products and good prices are other draws. Irvine shared some of the keys to the market's longevity. "We have really great vendors, and it's a great town to be in," Irvine says. "The town support is really important."

In this month's column, vendors from the market shared favorite summertime recipes for you to try. They will serve as a wonderful opportunity to feature your market finds. Read on!



Lynne Reid of Amazing Acres



Andy O'Neill of Sky Breads Bakery



Adam Lauer of Forgedale Fungi

Forgedale Fungi's Eggplant Mushroom Burgers

This recipe offers a wonderful plant-based burger option that features shiitake and oyster mushrooms. Liquid smoke is among the ingredients to add a smoky profile. Pairs perfectly with a topping of your favorite melted cheese and other burger toppings for dinner on the deck.

Makes 8-10 patties



- 1 lb. eggplant, peeled and sliced into ½-inch disks
- 3 tsp. olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ½ lb. oyster mushrooms
- ½ lb. shiitake mushrooms
- 2 tsp. fresh parsley
- 2 cloves garlic
- ½ C. grated Pecorino Romano
- 1 C. standard breadcrumbs
- 1 C. Panko bread crumbs
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 T. soy sauce
- 1 tsp. liquid smoke
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard

Preheat the oven to 400°. Brush eggplant disks with olive oil on both sides and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place in a single layer on a foil-lined pan. Bake for 30 minutes or until eggplant becomes soft.

While the eggplant bakes, finely chop the mushrooms, parsley and garlic. If you use a food processor, avoid processing so finely that the mixture becomes a paste.

Remove eggplant from the oven and reduce heat to 350°. Let eggplant cool for a few minutes and then transfer to a large bowl.

Add mushroom mixture, cheese, bread crumbs, eggs and seasonings to the bowl. Stir until eggplant flesh breaks apart and everything is well combined.

Use your hands to scoop and form 8 to 10 palm-sized patties. Place patties on a greased baking sheet and bake for 15-20 minutes, flipping halfway through.

Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to two days.

Artisan Exchange Weekly Market

If you get an early start at the West Chester Growers Market, you'll have time to make your way over to the Artisan Exchange outdoor market afterward, open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. After you stock up on seasonal produce at the Growers Market, Artisan Exchange's market is a great destination to pick up more specialty food items.

Almost every vendor produces at the Artisan Exchange in their own rental space or in the commercial kitchen that's rented by the hour. You can find an array of hand-crafted foods from cheese, nut butters and baked goods, to coffee, craft spirits and teas.

Visiting the market offers a neat opportunity to see many of the newest food offerings coming out of West Chester. Check the weekly Facebook event that lists the featured lunch menu and vendor list for each market day. Mezzaluna Pizza served up wood-fired pizza this summer as one of the market's feature lunches.

One thing that makes the market unique is their wide selection of international cuisine, including empanadas from Buenos Aires Empanadas, hand-cut tortilla chips, salsa and guacamole from Cocina Dorada, West African cuisines from Sallamin Foods International, Irish cakes from MacDougall's Irish Victory Cakes and Thai food from Uban Thai.

Located at 208 Carter Drive in West Chester. You can find out more at: ArtisanExchange.com.

Amazing Acres' Bacon-Wrapped Goat Cheese-Stuffed Jalapeños

All you need are three ingredients for this tasty appetizer, and they can all be found at the West Chester Growers' Market. Featuring Fromagina, the mild flavor of this fresh goat cheese offsets the heat of the jalapeño. These wraps, also known as poppers, make a perfect backyard party snack or can serve as a hearty lead-up to dinner. Pairs well with cocktail hour.

Makes 16 poppers



8 jalapeño peppers
6 oz. Amazing Acres fromagina
8 slices bacon
Soaked toothpicks (optional)

Preheat the oven to 400°, unless you plan to cook them on the grill. If cooking in the oven, place a wire rack on top of a large-rimmed baking sheet and set aside.

Slice each jalapeño in half, lengthwise. Use a spoon to scrape out the seeds and membranes. Stuff each jalapeño half with an equal amount of the Fromagina.

Cut the slices of bacon in half and tightly wrap one half around each cheese-stuffed jalapeño half. Secure with a toothpick if needed.

Place the bacon-wrapped jalapeños on the wire rack you previously placed on the baking sheet and put in the oven. Bake for 20–25 minutes, until the bacon reaches desired crispness. Or, you can cook on the grill over high heat until the bacon is crispy, turning often, about 10 minutes.

Refrigerate in a sealed container for up to three days.

Oatmeal Cookies by Sky Bread Bakery

You have a choice of featuring chocolate chips or raisins in this hearty oat-based cookie that's soft on the inside and slightly crispy on the outside. Pair with vanilla ice cream at your backyard cookout for a casual dessert.

Makes about 2 dozen standard or 8 monster-sized cookies



1¼ sticks of lightly salted butter, softened
1¼ C. brown sugar
½ tsp. molasses
1 large egg
¼ C. water
2 C. organic whole wheat flour
1⅔ C. rolled oats
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. baking powder
1½ C. chocolate chips or raisins (your choice)

Local Growers and Makers You Can Find

Founded in 1995, the West Chester Growers Market is still going strong in the heart of downtown. You can find ingredients for all of your summer cooking needs, whether crafting a menu for dinner in the backyard or a picnic in the park. The market has a diverse selection of fresh, seasonal and locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs, bread and baked goods, honey and maple products, meats, cheese and more.

The vibe at the market is a friendly and welcoming one, where growers and makers are eager and open to talking about the food or products they offer. As a cooperative market, every vendor has a say in the direction of the market and vendors who participate. The result is a close-knit family of vendors, some of whom have been there for over two decades.

The year-round market is open on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. through December at the corner of North Church and West Chestnut Streets. From January through April, you can visit the market on 1st, 3rd and 5th Saturdays of the month. To learn more visit WestChester-GrowersMarket.com.

Preheat oven to 325°

In a large bowl, cream together the butter, brown sugar and molasses. Beat the mixture until smooth.

In a separate bowl, combine the egg and water. Gradually add to the butter mixture and beat to incorporate. Continue to beat until the mixture is fluffy and is noticeably lighter in color.

In another separate bowl, combine the flour, oats, salt and baking powder.

Fold dry ingredients into butter mixture, being careful not to overmix. Fold in the raisins or chocolate chips.

Roll into balls (large or small depending on size of cookie you prefer) and flatten into either one-inch or three-inch disks on parchment paper.

Bake for about 15–17 minutes for a standard cookie and 18–20 minutes for a monster cookie (until the edges are firm and the bottom is lightly browned). Do not remove the cookies from the baking sheet until completely cooled to avoid breaking.

Store in an airtight container for up to three days unrefrigerated.

Avocado Toast with Chèvre

Gwendolyn Smith, founder of *The Wandering Hearth* food blog, is a regular customer of Amazing Acres, and she's particularly fond of their chèvre. She concocted this avocado toast recipe that lets you put the arugula or baby greens in your garden to good use. The peppery arugula and radish

add a crunch, the avocado adds a creaminess, and the sourdough bread adds a chewiness that all comes together in this perfect summer lunch to enjoy outdoors on the patio. Pair with a glass of your favored iced tea.

Serves 1



1 oz. Amazing Acres chèvre (savory or plain)
1 slice fresh sourdough bread
½ ripe avocado, sliced

Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
Pinch of crushed red chili flakes
Extra virgin olive oil
½ C. arugula or baby greens
1 radish, sliced

Spread the chèvre on the sourdough bread (toast first if desired).

Evenly add the avocado slices on top of the chèvre. Sprinkle with kosher salt, freshly ground black pepper and a pinch of chili flakes. Drizzle lightly with extra virgin olive oil.

Toss the arugula or greens and radish with a light drizzle of olive oil. Add to the top of the toast. Storage not recommended. ♦

Courtney Diener-Stokes is an award-winning journalist, author, food writer, photographer and food stylist. Most recently she co-authored the *Kimberton Whole Foods Cookbook* and *Farmhouse Manna: Nourishing Recipes and Rituals for Head, Heart, Hands & Soul*. She lives in the Oley Valley countryside with her husband, three children, two Babydoll Southdown sheep, a flock of bantam chickens and a Bernedoodle named Daisy.



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