

# Hogtown HomeGrown

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## Baking bread isn't really scary or hard!

There was a time, when our oldest and youngest were infants, that I baked all the bread our family ate. With our first son, since he didn't really eat much, this was a once-a-week endeavor, but after our youngest son was born, there were a total of five hungry eaters in the house and I had to bake three times a week just to keep up.

Recently I spent a Saturday afternoon making a couple of loaves of bread for the week. You see, with the recession and some continuing medical bills, we find ourselves pinching pennies. While we enjoy our artisan breads, I know that I can produce a decent loaf or two for a fraction of the cost. I just have to invest a little of my time.

I learned all about bread making from the cookbook *Laurel's Kitchen*. It might be easier to learn from watching someone, but the book's explanations made my first loaves a wonderful experience, although experimentation sometimes produced bread in the form of brick doorstops. When I tried baking again recently, I consulted the recipe just to be sure I had the proportions correct and then put the cookbook away and had fun.

Kneading dough is better than a session with a therapist—in therapy you leave issues hanging from week to week, but with bread, all your focus and energy is concentrated on that lump of dough for a good 10 minutes while you work out your frustrations. By the time you're tired of kneading (and your frustrations) you look down and there is a silky smooth ball of dough, smelling good and responding to your touch.

There are no hanging issues after this "therapy" session—let it rise, shape it, bake it—you're done and so is the bread. The pride of producing something beautiful and nourishing makes all your frustrations flee with the first taste. Start to finish—four hours, but only 20-30 minutes of hands-on activity, including washing up the dishes.

My recipe recommendation? Start with *Laurel's Kitchen*, by Laurel Robertson, or *The Tassajara Bread Book*, by Edward Espe Brown, but really all you need is a basic recipe and some time to spend in the kitchen.

## Eat Local Challenge Kickoff - April 29

Speaking of spending time in the kitchen—it's time to start thinking about this year's Eat Local Challenge! This May is the fifth annual Challenge in North Central Florida. Participants are encouraged to eat something local at every meal, but many of us try to eat almost everything local at every meal. Eating out will be easier than ever this year with more than 35 restaurants highlighting local items on their menus and creating specials with locally produced food. Register online at [www.hogtownhomegrown.com](http://www.hogtownhomegrown.com).

The 2012 Eat Local Challenge Kickoff will be in the Citizen's Co-op Courtyard on Sunday April 29th, from 2-5pm. Activities for all ages - cooking demos - local food and gardening information - food and craft artisans. Bring friends and family - join us!



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**What's Fresh Right Now?**

- Beets
- Blueberries
- Bok Choy—pak choy, toy choi
- Broccoli—green
- Cabbage—head, savoy, red, chinese
- Carrots—orange, yellow, red
- Cauliflower—white
- Chard—rainbow
- Citrus—juices, grapefruit, oranges
- Cucumbers—mini seedless, slicers
- Fennel
- Garlic—chives, gar-leeks
- Greens—rappini, sorrel, frisee, dandelion, arugula, collards, mustards, escarole, turnips, green/red spinach, endive
- Herbs—oregano, rosemary, dill, parsley, lime leaf, spearmint, cilantro, chives
- Honey—orange blossom, gallberry, tupelo, palmetto, wildflower
- Kale—red/white russian, tuscan, curly
- Kohlrabi
- Lettuce—mix, romaine, boston, green leaf
- Microgreens—arugula, radish, buckwheat
- Mushrooms—shiitake, oyster
- Onions—green scallions, dry yellow
- Peas—sugarsnaps
- Peppers—green/red sweet bell, banana, jalapeno, poblano, hot banana
- Potatoes—red, sweet
- Radish—globe, breakfast, daikon, black
- Rutabaga
- Shoots—pea, sunflower, corn, spring mix
- Sprouts—alfalfa, clover, quinoa, wheat, sunflower, garbanzo, mung bean, french lentil, green lentil, radish
- Squash—pumpkin, zucchini, yellow
- Starfruit
- Strawberries
- Tomatoes—red beefsteak, grape, plum, cherokee purple, german stripe
- Turnips
- Wheatgrass

**Local and Fresh—**

**Beets**

Crimson red, creamy white, pale pink, muted orange and a red and white stripe—beets come in a number of varieties, each with similar flavors, yet subtle differences.

Roasting is the easiest way to cook beets, but they can be eaten raw, boiled, sautéed or steamed in everything from elegant salads to ethnic soups to earthy casseroles.

Beets greens are good torn into salads, cooked in a stirfry or steamed and topped with a poached egg.

Look for firm, moist beets and fresh greens without brown or yellow edges.

**Roasted Beet Salad  
and Lemon Dressing**

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup each olive oil and lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon honey
- a pinch each salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 head bibb lettuce
- 4 roasted beets, peeled and cut into pieces
- 3-4 ounces Chevre (soft goat cheese)
- 1/4 cup walnuts, chopped and toasted

DIRECTIONS

Whisk together oil, juice, mustard, honey, salt and pepper. Set dressing aside.

Wash and dry lettuce leaves. Arrange lettuce on 4 plates. Place beets on lettuce. Drizzle each salad with 1 Tablespoon of dressing. Sprinkle salads with Chevre and walnuts.

Serve immediately. Pass remaining dressing for each person to add to taste.

NOTE: If using Meyer Lemons for juice, you may want to reduce the amount of honey since Meyer lemons have a less acidic taste.

# Double Roasted Root Veggies

## INGREDIENTS

8 medium sized red skinned potatoes  
4 medium sized carrots  
2-4 parsnips  
8 medium sized, light colored beets (dark red beets will stain everything they touch)  
1 large sweet onion  
1 head garlic (optional)  
1 Tablespoon olive oil  
8 ounces Cypress Point Creamery Farmers Cheese or other mild melting cheese

## DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Wrap each washed and trimmed veggie in a foil packet. Place all packets directly on oven rack and roast until veggie "gives" a little when squeezed. Remove from oven and allow to cool just until they can be handled. Veggies may be roasted in advance and refrigerated in packets.

Unwrap veggies, peel if desired and cut everything but garlic into bite-sized chunks. Place in a large oven-proof casserole. Drizzle with olive oil and squeeze garlic over everything. Top with cheese and bake in oven until veggies are hot and cheese is melted. Serve immediately or at room temperature. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

# Leek and Cauliflower Pasta

## INGREDIENTS

2 Tablespoons olive oil  
2-3 leeks or gar-leeks, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced  
1 large head cauliflower, florets broken into bite-sized pieces and stems chopped  
1 teaspoon dried thyme or two stems fresh thyme  
1/2 cup each water and pinot grigio or dry white wine  
1/2 pound whole wheat rotelle pasta, cooked al dente  
1 Tablespoon butter or olive oil

## DIRECTIONS

In a large lidded pan, sauté leeks in olive oil until softened. Add cauliflower and thyme, sauté for 5 minutes. Add liquid, bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Mix in pasta and butter. Toss until combined. Serve hot. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

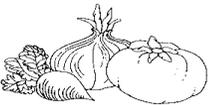
## SERVING SUGGESTION

Top with a grated or crumbled strong cheese and freshly ground black pepper.

**Tricks and Tips**  
I usually roast veggies by cutting them, drizzling with olive oil and cooking in an open pan. That works if you serve them immediately, but sometimes I like to roast extra veggies and serve them later. Wrapping veggies in foil retains more moisture and allows for easy storage in the refrigerator for later use. The foil also makes it easy to remove the skin from beets, since you can just use the foil to rub the skin away.

**Tricks and Tips**  
Although I dislike washing cut veggies, I must admit that to clean leeks thoroughly, it is easiest to cut them in half lengthwise and then sliced as needed. Place them in a colander and run water freely over them until no sand remains.

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# Hogtown HomeGrown

Local and Seasonal Recipes, Menus and More

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## Tricks and Tips

While I am not an advocate of hiding veggies in food, sometimes a veggie puree can add flavor and moisture. In this recipe the sweet potato replaces 1/2 cup of butter. These bars could be made with any winter squash—try pumpkin, acorn or butternut. Best results are obtained from roasted squash, because it is thicker and has less water.

## Sweet Potato Date Bars

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1 cup brown sugar, lightly packed
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1/2 cup cooked sweet potato, mashed
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon each ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg
- 2 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup chopped dates
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly butter a 9 x 13 baking dish.

Mix together butter, sugar, molasses and sweet potato until smooth. Beat in eggs.

In a separate bowl, combine all dry ingredients. Stir into wet ingredients. Add dates and vanilla. Push into prepared pan. Bake 30 minutes. Cool before cutting. Store covered.