

Hogtown HomeGrown™

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A full season of local on the road

Yes, it's only August, but Gator football is back this month, kicking off the season with a game on the road in Orlando. I know you will keep it local when the game's at home, but if you are driving there anyway, why not stop by the Winter Park Farmers Market before the game? And just like Jacksonville's Riverside Arts Market, you may see some familiar farmers and vendors, since some of our locals have expanded to those markets too.

As for our out-of-state games, from Kentucky to Missouri, every away-game town has a thriving farmers market scene, although by the time we play Missouri in November, they'll be observing Winter Hours. Take advantage of these community gatherings of farmers and producers to stock up on fresh food for your tailgate or bring food souvenirs home.

When you are out of town, support local foods and producers just the same way you want visitors to do in Gainesville. No matter what town you are in this fall, spend your money with the people, instead of the chains and big box stores. There's a full season of local out there on the road, from August in Orlando to November in Columbia.

I'll give y'all the info on Atlanta when we get there in December.

August 24	Miami	Orlando, Florida
Saturday	7am-1pm	Winter Park Farmer's Market
Sunday	10am-4pm	OFM—Lake Eola Park
September 14	Kentucky	Lexington, Kentucky
Saturday	7am-2pm	LFM—Downtown
Sunday	10am-2pm	LFM—Southland Drive
October 12	LSU	Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Saturday	8am-12pm	Main Street Market
October 19	South Carolina	Columbia, South Carolina
Saturday	9am-1pm	Soda City Market
November 2	Georgia	Jacksonville, Florida
Saturday	10am-3pm	Riverside Arts Market
November 16	Missouri	Columbia, Missouri
Saturday	9am-12pm	Columbia Farmers Market

What's Fresh Right Now?

Beans—green/purple long

Corn—silver queen

Cucumbers—slicers, kirby

Eggplant—fairytale, graffiti, purple italian, asian

Fennel

Garlic—chives

Greens—rutabaga

Herbs—parsley, dill, cilantro, curry leaf, italian/lemon/thai basil, mint, thyme

Honey—orange blossom, gallberry, wildflower, tupelo

Moringa

Mushrooms—shiitake, white/blue/yellow oyster, lion's mane, trumpet, dried shiitake

Okra

Onions—green, red/yellow

Papaya—green, ripe

Peaches

Peanuts—green, boiled

Peas—shelled and unshelled, white acre, pink eye, black eye, creamer

Peppers—green/red/purple bell, shishito, jalapeno, cherry bomb, serrano, poblano, anaheim, banana

Potatoes—red/white

Radishes—globe

Rutabaga

Shoots and Sprouts

Squash—long/italian/golden zucchini, yellow crookneck, summer, white/yellow pattypan, kabocha, acorn, hubbard, spaghetti, butternut, calabaza, seminole pumpkin

Tomatoes—cluster, heirloom, grape, sun gold, plum

Turmeric

Time to put food by!

Look around for seasonal foods you want to eat year-round.

I oven-dry tomatoes, pack them in olive oil and store the jars in the fridge until I need some summer flavor deep in the winter.

Pickling is a great way to put up not only cucumbers, but beans, peppers and okra. Follow USDA guidelines for safe canning.

Freezing food is easy and popular. I love to throw a bag or two of creamer peas in the freezer to serve on my holiday table.

I freeze sliced mangoes and peaches every year—my trick is a little drizzle of maple syrup to keep the slices from sticking together.

Don't freeze too much though—we have to consider power outages due to hurricanes as we put food by.

Local and Fresh— Peanuts

Peanuts are so versatile. They are found in recipes and kitchens around the world. We grow our share in North Central Florida, although we don't erect statues to the famous legume like they do in South Georgia.

Raw or green peanuts are often boiled in salted water with or without spices. Since they grow underground, be sure to wash them well before cooking. Do not store for more than a day or two after purchase. Once dried, peanuts store well, but take longer to cook. Use dried raw peanuts, boiled without their shell, as you would beans.

Boiled Peanuts

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds raw peanuts, in shell

8 cups water, warm

1/2 cup salt (Kosher sea salt preferred)

DIRECTIONS

Wash peanuts thoroughly in fresh water. Stir salt into warm water until dissolved. Place peanuts in pot and cover with salted water. Save any extra salted water.

Cook freshly harvested green (raw) peanuts for 90 minutes or to desired softness.

Cook dried in shell (raw, not roasted) peanuts for 8-10 hours or to desired doneness.

Taste for salt halfway through cooking time. Keep peanuts covered by adding salted or fresh water, depending on desired taste.

Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

Pan Roasted Peanuts

INGREDIENTS

3 cups Kosher sea salt

1 cup dried raw peanuts, shelled

DIRECTIONS

Place salt and peanuts in a deep skillet over medium heat. Cook for 30 minutes, stirring constantly, until nuts are golden and fragrant.

Remove from salt with a slotted spoon and cool before eating. Salt may be cooled, stored and reused for roasting another batch.

Smoky Vegetable Peanut Stew

INGREDIENTS

- 2 Tablespoon olive oil, divided
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, smashed and chopped
- 2 cups each tomatoes, chopped, and eggplant, peeled and chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 Tablespoons each tomato paste and harissa, mild or spicy as desired
- 1 Tablespoon smoked sweet paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper or more as desired
- 1 cup Boiled Peanuts without Shells, with cooking liquid

DIRECTIONS

Heat oil in a large covered pot. Sauté onion until translucent. Add garlic, tomatoes and eggplant. Stir well and cook 10 minutes over medium heat, stirring occasionally.

Stir in salt, tomato paste, harissa, smoked paprika and cayenne. Cook until mixture begins to stick to bottom of pot.

Add cooked peanuts with liquid, stir well and scrape bottom of pot. Bring to a simmer, cover and reduce heat. Simmer 30 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning.

Serve hot or at room temperature. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

Potato Scallop with Caramelized Onions

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 3 Tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 2 large onions, thinly sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, divided
- 2 cups whole milk
- 2 pounds potatoes, very thinly sliced
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

Add oil and 1 Tablespoon butter to a large covered pot over medium heat. Stir in onions until completely coated and sauté about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until golden.

Add a pinch of salt and cook an additional 15-30 minutes until fully caramelized.

Add milk to onions and bring to a boil.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees and grease a large flat casserole.

Add remaining salt, potatoes and black pepper. Return to a boil, cover, lower heat and cook until just tender. Pour cooked potato slices, onions and all liquid into casserole. Push potato slices into an even layer and top with dots of the remaining 2 Tablespoons of butter.

Bake 45 minutes or until liquid is thickened and potatoes are browned.

Let sit 15 minutes before serving. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

Boiled Peanuts without Shells

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup dried raw peanuts, shelled
- Water to cover

DIRECTIONS

Combine ingredients in covered pot. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer 3-4 hours, until peanuts are tender. Add water as needed to keep the peanuts covered.

Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

Tricks and Tips


Most scalloped potato recipes use flour to thicken the sauce surrounding the sliced potatoes. This recipe makes use of the naturally occurring starch found in potatoes.

Boiling the potatoes in the milk releases the potato starch. Baking the potatoes in the starch-enhanced milk results in a silky creamy sauce without the use of wheat or other thickeners.



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Local and Seasonal Recipes, Menus and More

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Tricks and Tips

As I was growing up, we often ate custards, puddings and gelatin for dessert. Mom would make skim milk egg custard, coconut custard, rice pudding or bread pudding. We also ate the many variations Jello offered, but our family standard was orange or cherry flavor generously studded with fruit cocktail or sliced bananas, topped with a portioned dollop of Cool Whip. I made a lot of bread pudding when our boys were young and my version of custard was usually a flan swimming in caramel syrup. I really enjoy the light sweetness of Jeff's simple custard, with or without nutmeg.

Jeff's Egg Custard

INGREDIENTS

2 cups milk
6 eggs, room temperature
1/3 cup granulated sugar
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
Freshly grated nutmeg, optional

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
Beat eggs with milk and strain.
Beat sugar into egg-milk mixture until dissolved (rub a drop between your thumb and finger to test for graininess).
Stir vanilla extract into custard mixture.
Pour custard mixture into a round oven-proof glass bowl.
Top with nutmeg as desired.
Place cake pan with 1/2 inch of water on middle oven rack and place bowl of custard in pan of water.
Bake 45-60 minutes, until a silver knife tests clean.
Serve warm or chilled.
Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

VARIATION

Instead of one large bowl, make individual portions.
Use oven-proof custard cups or, my favorite, canning jars. Four ounce jam jars or wide-mouth eight ounce jars are perfect.
Baking time varies with size, from 20-25 minutes for the smallest to 30-35 minutes for the larger jars and custard cups.
The canning jar advantage is easy storage and transportation—screw on the lid and go!