

Hogtown HomeGrown

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Inside this issue:

I'm so Hogtown... 1

What's Fresh Right Now? 2

Local and Fresh—Corn 2

Quick-Roasted Corn and Toppings 2

Tomato Almond Pesto 2

Roasted Corn Salad with Tomatoes 3

Two Squash Pie 3

Almond-Crusted Poundcake 4

I'm so Hogtown...

Lately, a few of us have been trading memories of Gainesville by leaving snippets on Facebook—and we always start with “I’m so Gainesville.” With the recent closing of Central Florida Office Plus, the razing of Dub’s and the reorganization of The Jones, I have been a little nostalgic. I fondly remember Hogtown when we moved here 35 years ago—August 1979—just after the Peanut Butter Cookie incident recounted in last month’s issue.

I’m so Hogtown...when we moved here from South Florida, there were department and clothing stores downtown, the Gainesville Sun was located behind what is now the Hippodrome Theatre and you could count on Mike’s Book Store for a book, a cigar or a hat!

I’m so Hogtown...I worked at The Emporium, ate grilled cheese at Woolworth’s Lunch Counter, bought cards from Chestnut’s, tires from Sears, shoes from Bakers, then had dinner at Maas Brothers’ Suncoast restaurant—all without leaving the Gainesville Mall.

I’m so Hogtown...I served big biscuits at Skeeter’s and listened to Tammy Murray play banjo during the breakfast shift.

I’m so Hogtown...we shopped at Mother Earth when it was in the brick building attached to the Original Pizza Palace. I helped carry products across the street as they moved into their new building, now Earth Origins.

I’m so Hogtown...we watched plays at the Hippodrome when it was in the warehouse off 441. When it stormed, the actors had to stop because the audience couldn’t hear over the rain on the metal roof. As the Hipp raised money for their new home in the federal building downtown, the slogan was “Let’s Play Post Office” and I have that t-shirt, somewhere!

I’m so Hogtown...I shopped at Hogtown Granary, Health Horizons, Ward’s and Norman’s.

I’m so Hogtown...I took the train from the Waldo station—once north and once south.

I’m so Hogtown...when visiting the old library downtown, we brought stale bread so we could walk on the rocks and feed the fish. To help the library move into their new building, we checked out dozens of books at the old location and returned them to the new one.

I’m so Hogtown...our first home’s rent was \$200 and our landlord was John Dampier, owner of the local chain drugstore, Dampier’s Pharmacy.

I’m so Hogtown...I sang along with the Grateful Dead in the Florida Gym, laughed with Robin Williams at Gator Growl and listened to Bob Whalen on The Underground Pipeline.

I’m so Hogtown...I strolled the raised walkways at the livestock market on north 441 with our sons as we watched the cows and other animals for sale.

I’m so Hogtown...I bought seasonal veggies and fruit at the Alachua County Farmers Market when it was located in the Oaks Mall parking lot.

Hogtown HomeGrown Public Demo Schedule

CANNING PEAR JELLY AND PEAR BUTTER Saturday, August 16, 930am 441 Farmers Market

COOKING: BETTER THAN THE BLUE BOX County Library August 2, 3pm Tower Road Branch

What's Fresh Right Now?

Beans—purple/green long

Celery

Citrus—juices

Corn

Cucumbers—mini seedless, slicers

Eggplant

Fennel

Fig

Garlic—chives

Greens—arugula, malabar spinach, mustards, moringa

Herbs—italian/opal basil, lemongrass

Honey

Melons—watermelon

Muscadines

Okra—green/purple

Onions—white, yellow, red, heritage

Peanuts—green in-shell

Pears

Peas—crowder, white acre, creamer

Peppers—red/green/yellow/orange sweet bell, cubanelle, poblano, jalapeno

Potatoes—small red/white

Shoots, Sprouts and Microgreens

Squash—zucchini, acorn, butternut, kabocha, pumpkin

Tomatoes—grape, plum, beefsteak

Tomato Almond Pesto

INGREDIENTS

12 plum tomatoes, peeled and seeded

1/2 cup roasted almonds

3-5 garlic cloves, smashed and chopped

1/2 cup fresh basil leaves, thai or italian

4 Tablespoons olive oil

pinch kosher salt

DIRECTIONS

Puree in a food processor to create a textured sauce. Serve at room temperature.

Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

Local and Fresh—

Corn

Corn, classified as a grain, is the fruit of the maize plant. It is a fun, filling food loaded with soluble and insoluble fiber, plus several antioxidants, depending on the color of the kernels. Corn can be many colors from bright white to a dark purple, but the colors seen most often in North Central Florida are yellow, white and bi-colored.

When buying fresh corn, look for moist green husks. Peel back just the top of the husks to check the kernel size and to look for worms up near the top of the silks. Worms don't mean the ear is bad – just cut off the affected part. If you ever get a chance to pick organic corn from the field, try it raw. Sweet as sugar, raw corn is tender with a wonderful fresh taste.

Quick-Roasted Corn and Toppings

INGREDIENTS

1-2 ears of corn per person

DIRECTIONS

Shuck corn and remove silk.

Use long tongs to place the corn on an open flame gas burner, a very hot stovetop grill or heavy cast iron skillet without oil.

Rotate every 60-90 seconds. Cook 5-7 minutes, until some of the kernels are lightly charred and the rest are tender.

Serve hot, warm or cold. Full cobs are best hot—try one of the suggested toppings.

Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

TOPPINGS

Unsalted butter, kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Olive oil flavored with garlic or herbs, chopped fresh herbs

Mayonnaise or salted butter, chile powder, lime juice, crumbled firm cheese (cotija or feta)

Roasted Corn Salad with Tomatoes

INGREDIENTS

3 ears of roasted corn (see Quick Roasted Corn in this issue or Roasted Corn, July, 2010)
3-4 medium-sized tomatoes, preferably various colors
1 Tablespoon olive oil
2 Tablespoon lemon juice
2 Tablespoons fresh herbs, chopped (basil and mint are a great combination)
pinch kosher salt and freshly-ground black pepper, if desired

DIRECTIONS

Lightly roast corn until charred in spots. Set aside to cool.
Peel and seed tomatoes if skin is tough and seeds excessive. Cut into 1/2 inch dice.
Cut corn from cob and combine kernels with diced tomatoes. Add olive oil, lemon juice and herbs. Stir well and taste for seasoning. Add salt and pepper if desired.
Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate.

Two Squash Pie

INGREDIENTS

2 cups acorn squash, roasted
1 cup water
1 Tablespoon unsalted butter
2 cups grated yellow squash
1 cup grated carrots
1 large leek, halved length-wise and sliced into 1/8 inch slices
2 cups cooked brown rice
2 Tablespoons each chopped fresh parsley and another fresh herb (basil or sage are good choices)
3 eggs
1/2 cup milk
4 ounces cheese, grated and divided (I used Cypress Point Creamery's Gouda)

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a deep-dish pie plate.
Puree cooled acorn squash and set aside.
In a large flat skillet over medium heat, heat water and butter. When butter melts, add yellow squash, carrots and leeks. Stir just to combine, and cook until water has evaporated and carrots are tender. Combine with pureed acorn squash and brown rice. Stir in chopped herbs.
Beat eggs with milk and add to veggie-rice mixture. Stir in half the cheese.
Pour mixture into prepared pan. Smooth the top. Sprinkle with remaining cheese.
Bake 40-45 minutes until middle is firm, edges are brown and cheese melted.
Let cool 10 minutes before cutting into wedges.
Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

Tricks and Tips

Cooking extra food to create leftovers can save you time and money. Time because you can use the cooked ingredients to quickly make other dishes. Money is saved by using up produce or other items that might go bad before you can cook them. My mom calls these items "planned-overs" because she would always work them into our weekly menus. So the next time you roast corn, make a couple of extras. Have the hot corn on the cob for dinner one night, but let the extras cool and make them into Roasted Corn Salad for another night. Acorn squash for dinner tonight? Cook an extra to puree so that Two Squash Pie can be made in a flash. And of course, whenever you make grains or pasta, always cook up a little bit more to have on hand as "planned-overs!"

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Tricks and Tips
Kestl's Coney Island was a restaurant and gathering spot in downtown Gainesville for many years. While famous for innovative vegetarian items, like Carrot Dogs (Hogtown HomeGrown, April, 2007), one of my favorites was the pound cake crusted with almonds. This whole wheat version is my homage to that wonderful dessert.

Almond-Crusted Poundcake

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound unsalted butter, room temperature, divided
- 1 pound demerara, turbinado or raw sugar, scant 1 3/4 cups, divided
- 1/2 cup roasted almonds, coarsely chopped
- 1 pound eggs, about 9 large, room temperature
- 1 pound whole wheat flour, scant 3 1/2 cups
- 1/2 teaspoon each salt and baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon each vanilla and almond extracts
- 2-4 Tablespoons sour cream or milk (if needed to make smooth batter)

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Use 2 Tablespoons butter to generously grease tube pan and 2-4 Tablespoons sugar to coat entire greased area. Spread almonds evenly in bottom of pan. Using a mixer, cream remaining butter and sugar in a large bowl until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating 1 minute after each egg. In a separate bowl, mix flour, salt and baking powder. Fold half the flour mixture into the butter mixture, mix well and repeat. Add extracts and stir in sour cream or milk as needed. Carefully spoon batter into prepared pan. Place in preheated oven, reduce heat to 325 degrees and bake 60-75 minutes until firm to touch and pulling away from pan sides. Cool in pan for 10 minutes before inverting onto serving platter. Cool completely before cutting.