

# Hogtown HomeGrown

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## Call it lunch or dinner, it was a feast!

The table, part of a dining suite from the 1948 Sear's catalog, was set with pressed white damask and gold monogrammed china by 11am every day. Polished sterling silver forks nestled into the curves of the folded linen napkins. Knives and spoons pointed the way to a tall cut glass tumbler. Filled with crackling ice and freshly brewed tea, it was snuggled into a finely crocheted cozy designed to soak up the inevitable condensation.

Salt was served in little crystal cellars with tiny silver spoons. Cruets of olive oil and vinegar for salads sat beside the ever-present dish of lemon slices for our iced tea and Granddaddy's hot tea after dessert. Fresh out of the refrigerator, butter oozed into the glass butter dish as the heat softened it to the perfect texture to spread on biscuits.

Biscuits were not the star attraction of the noon meal—that would be fresh produce or dessert, depending on who you ask—but they were spectacular none the less. A meat dish (fried chicken was my favorite) was accompanied by several veggies, some cooked into casseroles with canned soup and Ritz crackers, some served peeled and sliced right out of the garden. And if we were very lucky, Granny would make fried cornbread or fritters.

When she fried just the cornbread batter in small patties, with no additions, we called it fried cornbread. But sometimes she would put in corn kernels or sliced okra and fry those small patties in her cast iron skillet, greased with bacon fat, of course! The fritters were smoky and golden with tender centers, contrasting with the snap of still-crisp veggies.

Summer Fritters have that same blend of textures from crunchy to melty, with smoked tomatoes and cheese to add that old fashioned flavor. Granny would have loved these! (Shout out to Randy at Dorn's—remember that rind of cheese? Here's the recipe!)

## Summer Fritters

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup each finely diced firm avocado, jicama, zucchini, smoked cheese (I used Bruder Basil)  
1/2 cup each minced shallot or red onion and julienned smoked dried tomatoes  
3 eggs, beaten well  
1 cup cornmeal  
olive oil  
1 lime, cut into wedges

### DIRECTIONS

Combine all veggies and cheese with beaten eggs. Stir in cornmeal to make a batter. Heat heavy cast iron skillet, add oil and wait until it almost smokes to add batter. Shape fritter batter with hands into small patties and fry until golden. Flip carefully and cook on second side until done. Place on paper towel lined pan in 200 degree oven. Serve hot with lime wedges and hot sauce.

# What's Fresh Right Now?

**Beans**—green/purple long

**Bitter melon**

**Citrus**—juices

**Corn**—yellow

**Cucumbers**—mini seedless, pickling

**Eggplant**—purple italian, purple asian, fairytale, thai

**Garlic**—chives, elephant

**Greens**—callaloo, sweet potato, arugula, lettuce

**Herbs**—mint, italian/purple/lemon/thai and holy basil, thyme, sage, oregano, rosemary, cilantro, stevia

**Honey**

**Moringa**

**Muscadines**—purple/bronze

**Mushrooms**—shiitake, chanterelle

**Okra**—green, burgundy

**Onions**—green, large white

**Papaya**

**Pears**

**Peas**—pink eye

**Peppers**—red/green/yellow/orange sweet, habanero, jalapeno, poblano, variety sweet and hot

**Persimmon**—astringent, non-astringent

**Pineapple**

**Potatoes**—sweet

**Radish**—daikon

**Roselle**

**Shoots, Sprouts and Microgreens**

**Squash**—zucchini, butternut, calabaza, seminole pumpkin

**Starfruit**

**Tomatoes**—grape, cherry, beefsteak, heirloom, green

# Local and Fresh— Jicama

It is said that jicama is best picked after the autumnal equinox, when the tubers are full and ready. This tropical vine thrives throughout the heat of the summer as the tubers grow underground.

Even though it is not related, jicama is also known as the Mexican turnip. Jicama has juicy, crispy flesh with a slight sweetness and is great served raw. When cooked lightly, it maintains its crunch, making it a great locally-sourced substitute for water chestnuts.

Look for smooth skins and a heavy weight relative to size. Store as you would turnip roots or rutabaga. Remove the brown papery peel before eating or cooking.

# Sweet and Spicy Veggies and Rice

## INGREDIENTS

2 Tablespoons olive oil

1 medium zucchini, halved and thinly sliced

1/2 onion, sliced

1/2 small jicama, cut into small thin slices

8 ounces tofu, diced

2 cups cooked brown rice

2 Tablespoons tamari

1 Tablespoon each honey and hot sauce

## DIRECTIONS

Heat pan, add oil, veggies and tofu. Stir fry over medium heat until veggies are softened.

Add rice and flavorings. Stir continuously until hot. Taste and adjust seasonings.

Serve hot. Refrigerate leftovers.



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# Vegan Zucchini Parmigiana

## INGREDIENTS

6 zucchini, each about 8 inches long  
3 cups marinara, homemade or your favorite commercial sauce  
1 pound extra firm tofu, lightly pressed to remove water  
1/2 cup cashew butter  
1/4 cup olive oil  
1/4 cup nutritional yeast  
1 Tablespoon each granulated garlic and dried oregano  
2 Tablespoons dried basil  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 cup gluten-free panko  
2 Tablespoons olive oil

## DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Cut zucchini lengthwise into long 1/4 inch thick slices. There will be irregular slices—it's just fine. They can hide in the bottom layer!

Grill zucchini on stovetop or outdoor grill until softened, about 8-10 minutes per side. Zucchini should be partly tender but still hold its shape.

While zucchini is grilling, combine tofu, cashew butter, olive oil, nutritional yeast, garlic and herbs in food processor. Pulse until combined, but do not puree. Set aside.

Spread 1 cup of marinara in the bottom of a 9 x 11 casserole. Place half the zucchini slices in one layer to cover the bottom of the prepared baking dish. Remember to use up the irregular slices. Carefully spread creamy herb on top until it completely covers zucchini. Place remaining slices on top to completely cover the cheese. Top with remaining sauce.

Stir together panko and olive oil until thoroughly combined. Spread over top of marinara to form an even coating.

Place in preheated oven and bake 30 minutes until top is golden and sauce is bubbling around the edges of the casserole. Allow casserole to rest about 10 minutes before slicing into squares to serve.

Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

VEGETARIAN ALTERNATIVE Replace tofu, cashew cream, olive oil and nutritional yeast with a container of whole milk ricotta. Mix in garlic, oregano and basil.

Continue recipe as directed or top casserole with shredded parmesan in place of the olive oil and panko.

**Tricks and Tips**  
Cooking for crowds can be intimidating. Menus must factor in food allergies and preferences, as well as cost and even oven space. I like to plan far in advance to be sure I have all my bases covered, like for our upcoming family gathering.

One part of our family is gluten-free and eats mostly vegetarian with a little fish. Another part of the family is dairy-free. Yet another part eats no sugar and few processed foods. How do you plan for everyone, yet make everyone's taste buds happy? I try to focus on what everyone can eat, since that list is always longer than the "don't" list. Decide which meal will be cooked and which will be pre-made or prepped items.

I will cook brunch and make or prep the rest of the meals—simple, mostly vegan and gluten-free, with lots of choices, sort of like a salad bar.



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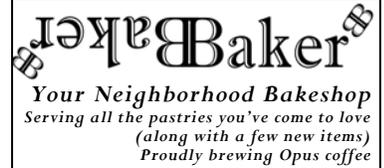
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### Tricks and Tips

Strawberry guavas are very small fruit and a cousin of the guava. Resistant to flood and drought, these plants will grow rapidly in adverse conditions, filling in or taking over areas in your yard. Harvest when fruit are no longer green, but still firm. They turn yellow and then red when ripe, but at that point either the birds or the bugs will have taken over, so don't wait that long! The skin is delicious; the fruit sweet and seedy.

## Lemon Guava Spread

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 gallon strawberry guavas
- juice of one lemon
- 3 1/2 cups demerara sugar, divided
- 1 package low sugar pectin

### DIRECTIONS

Wash guavas and place in deep heavy pot over medium heat. Stir every few minutes until guavas break down. Cook covered for 30-45 minutes until fruit is soft. Use a potato masher to break up any large pieces. Let cool, then sieve.

Place sieved guavas and lemon juice in pot and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cook until thickened.

Mix together 1/2 cup sugar with pectin. Slowly whisk into hot guavas and return to strong simmer. Add remaining sugar and stir to completely incorporate. Bring to a boil and cook for one minute. Remove from heat.

Ladle into hot jars. Seal and process in a hot water bath for 12 minutes.

Allow jars to cool. Check seals and store any unsealed jars in the refrigerator.

**PRESENTATION** Serve as part of a cheese platter. Good with creamy cheeses, like chevre.

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