

Out of the Earth

Heritage Farm Coast Cookbook

BY

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Introduction

*He causes grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the service of man,
that he may bring forth food out of the earth. — Psalm 104:14*

Welcome to the Heritage Farm Coast of southeastern New England. This bountiful piece of land stretches languidly along the south coast of Massachusetts into southern Rhode Island, and farm and sea come together in a landscape painter's dream. Here, farmers and fishermen have ploughed earth and sea since colonial times, often within view of each other, and this tradition is alive and well today. "Out of the Earth" is our first of a three-volume series featuring recipes from the region. "Out of the Sea" and "In The Neighborhood" will follow.



Chapter One

Herbs, Lettuces & Edible Flowers

The ground is so fertile that questionless it is capable of any grain, fruits, or seeds you will sow or plant...I made a garden on the top of a rolling isle...in May that grew so well it served for sallets (salads) in June and July.

— Captain John Smith, New England's Trials, 1614.

Herbs, lettuces and edible flowers have been used for thousands of years to feed, to enhance and to heal. The explorers who perused this land before its colonization were obviously familiar with many culinary herbs and medicinal plants and found them in plenty here. Native Americans also identified and employed these natural resources for cooking and for use as medicines. For the most part, they were foraging, not farming them.



Chapter Three

Corn, Beans and Tomatoes

“All the inhabitants of this place are much given to agriculture, and lay up a store of Indian Corn for the winter.” — Samuel Champlain, Cape Cod, 1606

The Native American diet brimmed with variety, but the three most important crops to the agriculture-based Native tribes were corn, beans and squash, the “Three Sisters.” All three were planted together, making use of tilled soil with a self-fertilization system. A hole was dug to plant the corn. Before pushing the soil back over the planting, a fish was dropped in on top. Then beans and squash were planted alongside the little corn hills. The beans wound their way up the growing corn stalk and the squash plants filled in the gaps between plants. Beans were harvested first, then corn, then the squash. These Indians demonstrated to the white settlers that their farming techniques were deliberate and polished.



Chapter Five

Berries and More Berries

“This main is the goodliest continent that we ever saw... for it is replenished with fair fields...also meadows hedged in with stately groves.”
Diary of M. John Brereton, a description of Round Hill, 1602, Gosnold’s Discoveries in the North Parts of Virginia.

English explorer Bartholemew Gosnold and his crew skimmed the shores of Buzzards Bay and the islands, then called North Virginia, in 1602 on a fact-finding mission. They kept careful accounts of the terrain, especially the available natural resources of foodstuffs. Much was written about the dizzying array of berries: strawberries (larger than those in England), gooseberries, raspberries, huckleberries, blackberries and blueberries; the latter closely resembled the English bilberry.



Blueberries, along with their flavorful relatives, were well woven into the diet of the native tribes. They were eaten fresh, but were also dried and used whole, or ground into flour to thicken stews, or baked into simple cakes. Early settlers arrived with their own traditional recipes and the berries of their new home were easy replacements for the varieties left behind.

So many kinds of berries thrive in the acidic, sandy soil of New England. The “cranberry,” or cranberry as it has come to be known, is the ruby in the crown of our culinary history.

Cranberries are native to North America and well-suited to our climate. Their particular brand of acidity is best developed in this environment of long, cool summers. The Indians ate the fruit fresh, or dried and brewed in teas, a major ingredient of pemmican. Pemmican was a hard “survival cake” of dried meat, fat and cranberries beaten together into a sausage, formed into a patty and packed into animal skins to sustain a traveler. Pemmican was filled with protein, and the ever-essential vitamin C. Colonists that survived scurvy did so because of the beautiful, blushing cranberries.

The health benefits of the berry became familiar to the settlers, who learned of their medicinal qualities from the Indians. They learned to brew diuretic teas from dried leaves that served to purify the urinary tract. Research today has revealed that the juice from the cranberry, as well as the blueberry, has several health benefits: a compound that inhibits growth in tumors, cleanses the bladder reducing the occurrence of infections, and is an excellent promoter of heart health.

The vines were everywhere in the sandy bogs around the Plymouth Bay Colony. Their bright red color made it easy for the berries to be found by the women and



Chapter Seven

The Westport Macomber

“For laborers, if those that sow...turnips, carrots, cabbage and the like and give...yearly for an acre of land...better or at least as good ground may be had and cost nothing but labor.” Captain John Smith, 1614, presenting the benefits of owning (not renting) land in the new world as part of his case for colonization. NewEngland’s Trials

The story of the Westport Macomber reflects the history of America itself: People of faith packing up their families, their few possessions and boarding ships, hoping to create a new life in a place they have seen only in the imagination. What courage that must have taken! In my life of relative ease and comfort, I have given into moments of ungratefulness and downright complaining, as have we all. I was struck by the foolishness of my behavior as I read William Bradford’s account of his first year here, watching half of his new countrymen die. Yet he held on to his faith in God and never gave up.



Grilled Leg of Lamb with Honey-Lavender Marinade & Grilled Ratatouille with Oregano Oil

Leg of lamb, boned and
butterflied

MARINADE:

1/3 cup olive oil
6 shallots, chopped
4 cloves garlic, chopped
1 sprig Thyme
2 sprigs Lavender
2 tbs. pepper, coarse ground
1/4 cup honey
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1 tsp. salt

RATATOUILLE:

1 eggplant
2 small zucchini
2 tomatoes
2 red onions
2 tbs. garlic, roasted
Olive oil as needed
Salt and pepper to taste

OREGANO OIL:

1/2 cup washed oregano leaves
1 cup olive oil

Sauté over med.-high heat the shallots and garlic in olive oil until soft. Add remaining ingredients off the heat and blend well. Rub into lamb. Keep covered in refrigerator overnight. Heat grill to medium. Place lamb on grill, cook for 10 minutes on each side or until internal temp. is 140°. Remove to platter, let rest at least 10 minutes before slicing.

Slice all vegetables $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick. Drizzle with olive oil, salt and pepper. Place on hot grill and cook on both sides until vegetables are softened slightly. Remove from grill and chop coarsely. Toss in a bowl with the garlic and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Pulse oregano and olive oil in food processor. Remove to a non-reactive bowl and cover. Let sit at room temperature for several hours. Strain through cheesecloth. Store refrigerated. To serve, slice lamb and set on a bed of ratatouille. Drizzle with oregano oil. (The oil can be made a day ahead while the lamb is marinating).

MAKES 10-12 SERVINGS.

Recipe by Mike Melo, M & C Restaurant, New Bedford, MA

Lovage Breads

1 qt. heavy cream
8 sprigs of lovage with hefty
stems
White wine
1 16-oz. can of strained plum
tomatoes roughly chopped or
a small box of Pomi tomatoes
1 cup grated parmesan cheese
Salt and freshly ground pepper
to taste

*We serve this with grilled lamb, artichoke caponata, and minted couscous.
A signature dish.*

Boil cream and lovage with a splash of white wine until cream is reduced more than half and is thick. Use a very heavy pan with a capacity of at least 3 quarts. It will boil over easily while reducing so watch it. Strain through a sieve and whisk in the tomatoes. Stir in the parmesan cheese and season with salt and pepper. Roll out a basic pizza dough thin, long and oval shaped. Spread the lovage mixture on the pizza dough. Sprinkle baking sheet with cornmeal. Bake at 350° until bubbly and crisp. Slice and serve.

MAKES 6 LARGE BREADS.

Purslane and Tarragon with Thick garlicky Yogurt

Let yogurt sit in a coffee filter fit into a strainer over a bowl for 1 hour. All the water should run out and the yogurt should be thick like sour cream. Place chopped garlic in a mixing bowl with the lemon juice and salt. Let stand for about 10 minutes. Stir in yogurt, olive oil and pepper. Wash and dry purslane and tarragon sprigs using a salad spinner. Roughly chop and add to yogurt. Fold in carrot and cucumber and re-season. Serve right away.

MAKES 6 SERVINGS.

Recipe by Ana Sortun, Executive Chef, Casablanca, Cambridge, MA

4 cups packed purslane sprigs
¼ cup packed tarragon leaves
1 carrot, grated
1 English cucumber, peeled and seeded, then grated
2 cups of yogurt

4 small cloves of garlic, chopped fine or through a garlic press
2 tbsp. of very good olive oil
2 tbsp. fresh squeezed lemon juice
¼ tsp. fresh ground black pepper
Kosher or sea salt to taste

Spicy Codfish Cakes with Cilantro Aioli

For the cilantro aioli, coarsely chop the cilantro leaves and put in a food processor. Add the lemon zest and garlic, process until finely chopped. Add the mayonnaise and process until the cilantro is flecked in the mayonnaise. Add the lemon juice and pulse to mix. Transfer the cilantro aioli to a serving bowl and set it on a platter with the lettuce leaves, mango, mint leaves and lime wedges. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.

Cut the fish into 1" pieces and finely chop it in food processor 10-20 seconds. In a bowl, combine the fish, green onions, jalapeño, garlic, ginger, fish sauce and lemon zest and stir until blended. Form the fish mixture into patties of about 2 tablespoons each; you should have 16 patties.

Pour about ½" oil into a large frying pan. Heat over medium-high heat until ripples develop in the oil. Carefully slide patties into pan using a spatula. Cook until golden on the bottom, 2-4 minutes. Turn and cook until golden on the bottom and opaque in the center. Repeat to cook the remaining patties, adding more oil to pan as needed.

Pile the fish cakes onto the serving platter alongside the other ingredients. To eat, put a fish cake, some mango and mint in the center of a lettuce leaf. Sprinkle with a squeeze of lime, then spoon on some of the cilantro aioli. Fold up and eat out of hand.

SERVES 4 (OR 8 FIRST COURSE PORTIONS).

FOR THE CILANTRO AIOLI:

1 bunch cilantro, washed, stems removed
Grated zest and juice from 1 large lemon

4 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
½ cup mayonnaise, preferably reduced fat

1 head green leaf lettuce, washed and dried, tough stems removed
1 large ripe mango or papaya, peeled, pitted/seeded and cut into thin strips
⅓ cup mint leaves
1 lime, cut into wedges
1 lb. boneless/skinless cod fillet
2 green onions, minced
1 jalapeño pepper, cored, seeded and minced

1 tbsp. minced garlic
1 tbsp. minced ginger
1 tbsp. Thai fish sauce or soy sauce
Grated zest of one lemon
Peanut oil, for cooking

Caramel Apple Spoon Bread

1 firm apple such as granny smith, peeled, halved, cored and thinly sliced
1 cup granulated sugar
Water
2 cups half and half
3 tbsp. unsalted butter
2 tsp. honey
2 tsp. salt
1 cup Jonnycake or cornmeal
5 eggs, separated
1 tsp. baking powder
6 turns freshly ground black pepper
¼ tsp. cinnamon
¼ tsp. chopped fresh or ground ginger
Pinch of nutmeg



This very rich and delicious spoon bread can be served with brunch or as a dessert with vanilla ice cream.

FOR THE APPLES:

Pour the sugar in the bottom of a deep-sided sauté pan and moisten with water until it is the consistency of a thick paste. Set the pan over a medium heat and cook until it liquefies, then begins to turn golden. Do not stir or disturb until sugar starts to color. When it is light golden in color, add the apples and cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Butter a 2-quart soufflé dish and set the apples into the bottom of the dish and drizzle a little caramel over them.

FOR THE BREAD:

Preheat oven to 375°. In a saucepan, heat the cream, butter, honey and salt until hot and the butter has melted. Stir in the cornmeal and cook over a low flame, stirring continuously, until thickened. Transfer the cornmeal mush to a large mixing bowl and allow to cool for several minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in the baking powder and pepper, then add the egg yolks and stir until combined thoroughly. In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites briskly until soft peaks form, then fold into the spoon bread base in two additions using large, gentle strokes with a rubber spatula. Transfer to the prepared soufflé dish and bake until golden brown and puffed through the center, about 30-35 minutes. Allow the bread to cool for 10 minutes before serving. It can be spooned from the dish or turned out on a serving plate.

MAKES

Apple Pound Cake

2 tsp. cinnamon
2 cups plus 5 tsp. sugar
3 or 4 apples, peeled and sliced
4 eggs
1 cup oil
½ cup orange juice
2½ tsp. vanilla
3 cups flour
3 tsp. baking powder

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour a tube pan. Mix cinnamon and the 5 teaspoons sugar. Blend together with apples and put to one side. Combine eggs, oil, orange juice and vanilla. Mix together flour, sugar and baking powder in a separate bowl, then make a well in the center. Pour in the egg mixture. Mix well. In tube pan, alternate with apple mixture. Bake 1¼ hours.

MAKES 1 TUBE PAN.

– Sue Smith, Noquochoke Orchards, Westport, MA

Sautéed Chicken with Cranberries & Apple Cider Reduction

Served with roasted potatoes or buttered rice with freshly steamed green beans will make a full plate.

Dust the chicken with flour, one at a time, shaking off any excess. Heat the oil in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat, then sauté the chicken until golden brown on both sides and thoroughly cooked, 3-5 minutes each side. Transfer the chicken to a serving platter and hold warm. Pour off any remaining oil. Put the pan back on the heat and toss in the shallots and cranberries. Cook for 2 minutes. Add stock and wine, bring to a low boil and reduce volume by half. Stir in sugar and cider and reduce by half. Stir in butter and season to taste with salt. Pour over chicken breasts.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS.

Stephen Worden, Chef, Worden's Restaurant, Padanaram, MA

4 6-oz. boneless chicken breasts
¼ cup flour
¼ cup oil
1 tbsp. shallots, peeled and chopped
½ cup cranberries, chopped
½ cup chicken stock
¼ cup white wine
1 tbsp. sugar
¼ cup apple cider
2 tbsp. unsalted butter
Salt

Cranberry Nut Bread

Preheat oven to 350°. Sift all dry ingredients together. Add cranberries and nutmeats. Then add eggs mixed with diluted orange juice and shortening, stir until just combined. Bake in greased and floured loaf pan for 1 hour.

MAKES 1 LOAF PAN

Paradise Meadow Cranberries Promotional Recipe, Wareham, MA

1 cup cranberries, cut into halves
1½ tsp. baking soda
½ cup chopped nutmeats
1 well beaten egg
Juice of 1 orange, plus warm water to make 1 cup
2 cups flour
½ tsp. soda
½ tsp. salt
1 cup sugar
3 tbsp. melted shortening

