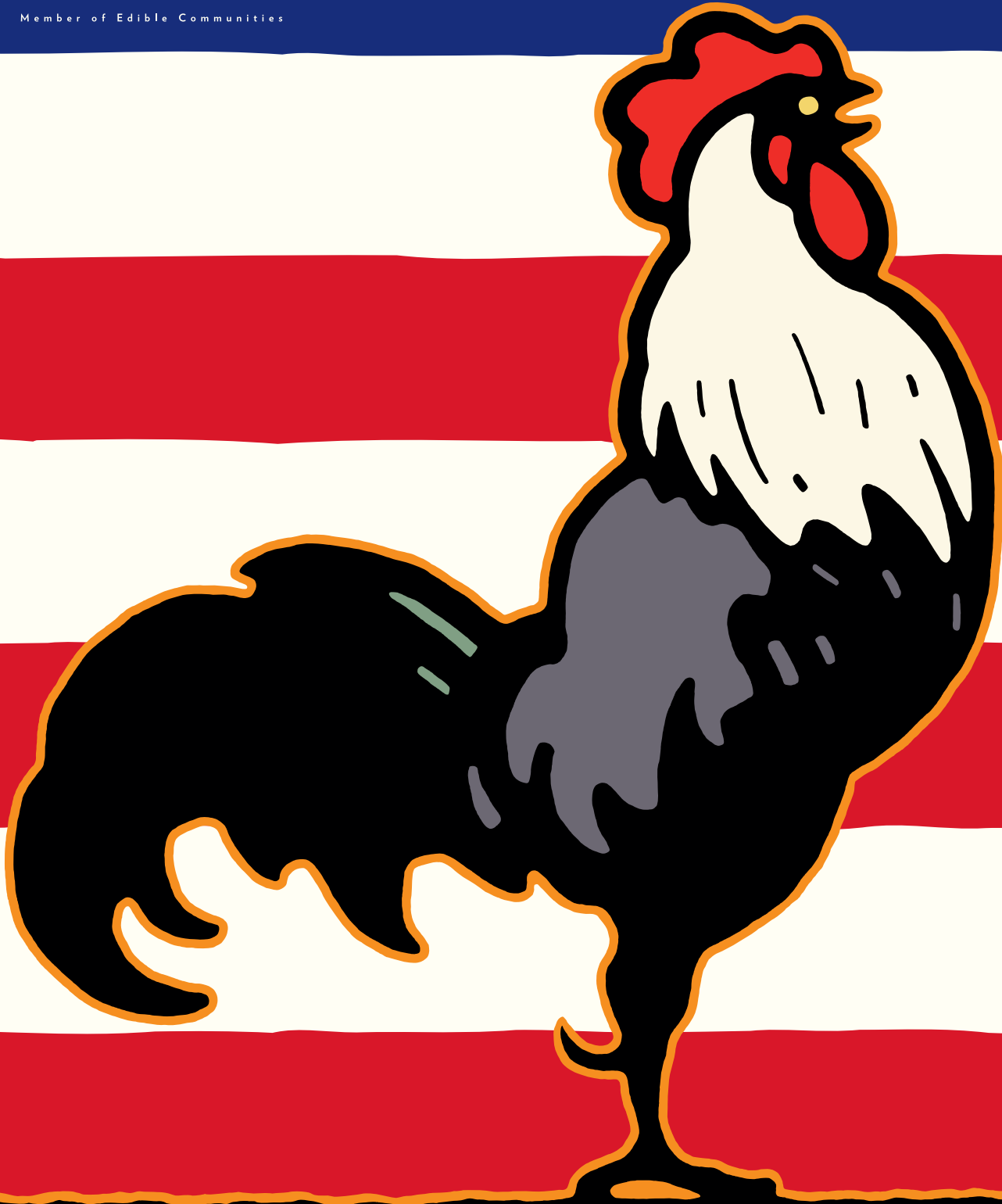


edible MARIN & WINE COUNTRY

Issue Five
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Celebrating the harvest of Marin, Napa and Sonoma counties, season by season

Member of Edible Communities



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FIRST ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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FARM-TO-TABLE RESTAURANTS

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LOCAL GOAT CHEESES

SUMMER MARKETS OFFER SWEET INSPIRATION

BY JENNIE SCHACHT



When I step into a farmers' market, I see a lot more than tables piled high with irresistible fruits and vegetables. I see farmers with dirt etched into their fingers sharing, quite literally, the fruits of their labors. I see customers sharing with perfect strangers their preference for the Flavor Grenade versus the Dapple Fire pluot, or inquiring of vendors about when the two-week window for sour cherries will begin, or discussing whether the nearly extinct Blenheim apricot tree might thrive in their backyard. I see families and friends sharing a fresh berry scone or a strawberry sorbet, enjoying food and sunshine beside neighbors with whom, until now, they had never spoken. I see children munching carrots and corn on the cob as they play in a parking lot or street that is transformed, one day a week, into this vibrant cornucopia. But more than anything, I see the promise of dessert.

While others are grabbing nettles by the glove-protected handful and inhaling the sun-warmed scent of vine-ripened tomatoes, I am perusing peaches and plums, or hovering my nose over baskets of berries to gauge their ripeness. My tote overflowing with the goods, I rush back to the kitchen, eager to create desserts that are certain to shine, thanks to this dazzling produce.

I am a home baker who, like many market shoppers, eyes produce with the delight of a child who sees sand and visualizes a castle. To write my latest book, *Farmers Market Desserts* (Chronicle Books, 2010), which has just been released, I wandered markets from coast to coast, then brought home produce—sometimes gorgeous, other times homely—and dreamed up pies, tarts, crisps, cupcakes, cookies, parfaits, puddings and more to make with it. The whole process put me in touch not only with the community of growers and shoppers at those markets, but also with the changing seasons and a

world of possibilities for market-inspired desserts.

It's no secret that you can find some of the freshest, most flavorful ingredients at local farmers' markets. Even in winter, when pickings are slim in Northern California, there's the prospect of Meyer lemon pudding or orange cupcakes with white chocolate-orange buttercream. And the sweet possibilities don't stop with fruit—think about baking carrots into a beautiful carrot cake, or a favorite of mine—using finely grated beets and zucchini to make a super-moist chocolate bundt cake that brings out chocolate's alluring, earthy side without revealing its hidden sources. And then there are dried fruits and nuts, local honeys and dairy products, and a host of other treasures to provide inspiration.

So, as the summer sun begins to shine, head out to your farmers' market, but don't think only of salads and pastas brimming with vegetables. Think about what you might transform into fresh-tasting desserts as vibrant as the produce with which you made them. Grab some locally produced goat's milk yogurt, a basket of ripe strawberries, perhaps a bottle of locally made balsamic vinegar, and head into the kitchen to whip up sweet-tangy Goat Yogurt Panna Cotta with Balsamic Strawberries, a perfect invitation to summer.



fan page for Farmers' Market Desserts on Facebook.

*Jennie Schacht is the author of *Farmers' Markets Desserts* and several other cookbooks. She is founder and principal of Schacht & Associates, a consulting firm working with public and not-for-profit health organizations. Jennie also helps authors to develop and strengthen their book proposals. Follow Jennie on Twitter (twitter.com/ckbks) or join the*

GOAT YOGURT PANNA COTTA WITH BALSAMIC STRAWBERRIES

Makes 4 servings

Panna cotta sounds and tastes exotic, but the cook's secret is that it's quick and easy to make. (It needs several hours to chill, however.) The Italian translation is simply "cooked cream," which is thickened into a creamy pudding with a small amount of gelatin. Use broad, shallow molds—about four inches across—for the prettiest presentation.

Yogurt made from goat's milk gives this dessert a rich, complex favor without a whisper of its goat-y source. Balsamic and black pepper are natural companions of the strawberry, and fitting for this Italian dessert. Look for cream and yogurt that have no gums or additives. If goat's milk yogurt isn't available in your area, substitute plain whole-milk cow's milk yogurt. It is worth splurging on top-quality aged balsamic.

INGREDIENTS FOR PANNA COTTA

1 1/4 tsp unflavored gelatin
2 Tbs water
1 1/4 cups heavy cream
1 cup plain goat's milk yogurt
1 tsp pure vanilla extract
Small pinch of sea salt or kosher salt
1/3 cup granulated sugar

INGREDIENTS FOR TOPPING

1 1/2 pints (about 3 cups) strawberries, hulled
1 Tbs granulated sugar
2 tsp fresh lemon juice
1 to 3 Tbs best-quality balsamic vinegar
1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper
Small pinch of sea salt or kosher salt

TO PREPARE THE PANNA COTTA

Sprinkle the gelatin evenly over the water in a small bowl, without stirring. Let stand until softened, about 10 minutes.

Whisk together 1/2 cup of the cream and the yogurt, vanilla and salt

in a bowl, preferably one with a pour spout. Gently heat the remaining 3/4 cup cream with the sugar in a small saucepan over medium-low heat, stirring until the sugar is dissolved and bubbles begin to form along the edge of the pan. It should be very warm but not so hot that you can't touch it.

Remove from the heat and, using a heat-proof spatula, scrape in the softened gelatin, then stir for a full minute to dissolve the gelatin completely. (Don't rush this step; it's important.) Stir the cream-gelatin mixture into the yogurt mixture.

Pour the mixture into four 6-ounce ramekins or custard cups, dividing it evenly. Refrigerate until set (they should be slightly jiggly but each will move as a whole), about 4 hours or up to 3 days. To avoid condensation, cover tightly with plastic film only after they are completely cold.

TO PREPARE THE TOPPING

30 to 60 minutes before serving, cut 2 1/2 cups of the berries into 1/4-inch-thick slices from top to tip and place them in a bowl. Quarter the remaining berries and puree them with the sugar and lemon juice in a blender or food processor until smooth. Stir the puree into the sliced berries, then stir in 1 tablespoon of the balsamic vinegar and the pepper and salt. Taste and add more sugar, balsamic or pepper, if desired, keeping in mind that the seasonings are meant to complement the berries, not overwhelm them. Set aside at room temperature for at least 30 minutes.

TO SERVE

Run a thin, sharp knife around the inside of each ramekin, then invert onto a broad-rimmed, shallow soup bowl or dessert plate, tapping gently on the bottom of the ramekin to encourage the panna cotta's release. If it is stubborn, carefully insert the knife between the inverted panna cotta and the ramekin to coax it; it should slip right out. Gently stir the balsamic strawberries, then spoon the berries and their juices over and around each panna cotta.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN THE FARMERS' MARKETS OF EDIBLE MARIN & WINE COUNTRY!

If you're not sure where to start, you can't go wrong with Marshall's Farm Natural Honey. Since 1992, Helene and Spencer Marshall have prided themselves on honey so local "the bees can fly to the markets." Their honeys are made from nectar gathered by their buzzing collaborators in Marin, Alameda, Napa, Sonoma, San Francisco and Contra Costa counties. The array of varieties is dazzling, each with a distinct flavor profile. Taste and let your imagination run wild with dreams of the desserts to be sweetened and flavored with it. www.marshallshoney.com.

Russ Sartori grows organic strawberries bursting with sweet, berry flavor at Sartori Farms in beautiful Tomales. Known to locals as "Russellberries," these summertime treats can be found at farmers' markets and other specialty grocery stores (like Mill Valley Market in Mill Valley and United Market in San Rafael) throughout Marin. www.sartorifarms.com.

Swanton Berry Farm grows intensely flavorful strawberries on twenty acres in Davenport, near Santa Cruz. Before the farm got started in 1983, there were no commercially successful organic strawberry growers. And that is not the only ground the people at Swanton have broken: Swanton is the first U.S. organic farm to sign a contract with the United Farmworkers of America AFL-CIO and they operate with 100 percent union labor. They also make the truest-flavored strawberry jam I have ever tasted. www.swantonberryfarm.com.

One of my favorite yogurts is made by Redwood Hill in Sebastopol, where the Bice family and their farm crew call each of their happy 350 or so Nubian, Alpine, Saanen, Toggenburg, Oberhasli, and LaMancha goats by name! Redwood Hill's strawberry goat yogurt is ribboned with a simple jam made from fresh berries, fruit juice, and honey. www.redwoodhill.com.

Bellwether Farms makes sheep's and cow's milk cheeses, as well as rich, creamy sheep's milk yogurt. I hadn't thought to try the panna cotta with sheep's milk yogurt, but I think I will. www.bellwetherfarms.com.

Blossom Bluff Orchards is a fourth generation family farm growing apricots, navel and Valencia oranges, mandarins, tangelos, specialty citrus, grapefruit, pomelos, figs, nectarines, peaches, persimmons, plums, and pluots on their 80 acre farm in the San Joaquin Valley. Look for their dried fruits in winter. www.blossombluff.com.

Devoto Gardens in Sebastopol has been growing over 50 varieties of heirloom apples in Sonoma County for the past 30 years. They also grow pumpkins, lemons, Asian pears, flowers and persimmons. www.devotogardens.com.

And don't forget the olive oil! McEvoy Ranch organic extra virgin olive oil is a great complement to chocolate desserts, and also to vanilla. McEvoy Ranch has over 18,000 trees on their 80-plus acres in Marin County. www.mcevoyranch.com.