





## The Gift of Local Food

Morning frost glitters across the mesa, days grow short and the once-fierce sun has lost its potency. The arrival of winter in southwestern Colorado means that most of us have consumed or preserved the summer bounty of local food. We've canned the last of the pickles, baked peaches into pies, eaten our share of zucchini and savored the final delectable bites of summer tomatoes. And, thanks to local fruit presses and a bumper crop of apples, many of us have even been able to enjoy gallons of freshly pressed juice — the ultimate expression of the fall harvest.

Now, we usher in the season of winter squash, root vegetables and hearty stews. The season of holiday feasts and decadent treats, of crockpots and warming curries. Winter brings challenges to the seasonal cook — it's the toughest time of year to find local food. But it's not impossible. Greenhouses,

preserves, locally raised meat and winter CSAs all conspire to make it easier each season to select fresh, nutritious food for your table. And Norwood's Fresh Food Hub will carry as many local products as it can stock during these cold months.

But it won't be without its challenges. It'll probably entail eating a lot of the same ingredients for awhile — think root veggies and winter greens. Luckily though, winter is also the best time of year to hunker down in the kitchen, crack open those cookbooks that have been collecting dust all summer, tackle more involved projects and experiment with new ways of cooking familiar ingredients. We hope this edition of the Fresh Pub. gives you the inspiration to do just that.

*-The Local Food Initiative*

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## Season of Squash

Among the foods that are best conditioned for winter storage, squash is the jack-of-all-trades. This versatile ingredient comes in a rainbow of colors and spectrum of shapes, stores for months and can be used as the foundation for dishes that range from sweet desserts to hearty entrees.

Unlike the tender zucchini or patty-pan varieties of summer, winter squash is harvested and eaten when the seeds have fully matured and the skin has toughened into a hard rind. This means that winter squash generally needs to be cooked to be enjoyed, but also enables long storage periods and makes for ideal winter produce.

Winter squash falls under the *cucurbita* family, which encompasses a wild array of specimens. There are nutty acorns, fiber-rich spaghetti squash, subtly sweet butternuts and torpedo-shaped delicatas. Coral-colored pie pumpkins, rotund green kabochas or the elaborately stacked turban squashes round out the larger varieties.

This family of fruits packs a nutritional punch, offering fiber, vitamins A and C, potassium, manganese and B vitamins. They are a good source of iron and beta-carotene, particularly the darker skinned varieties. And they are low in calories.

And because they vary in color, texture and flavor — from sweet,

firm hubbards to the stringy and mild spaghettis — the culinary possibilities are endless. The butternut makes an excellent base for soup, spiced with sage or ginger and pureed to a silky consistency. The acorn is fabulous stuffed with ingredients like onions, rice, sausage and slivered almonds. Spaghetti squash is the perfect no-carb alternative to pasta; when roasted, the flesh resembles its namesake and is delicious topped with meaty marinara. And because you can eat the rind, delicatas are delicious cut into crescents and roasted until slightly charred. Squash can be scattered over salads, baked into lasagnes, added to soups or tucked into tarts.

But this being the holidays, most people's minds are on desserts. And pumpkins are the base of what is arguably the most iconic of the season's treats: pumpkin pie. Spiced with warm fall flavors, this custardy delicacy is easy to make and incredibly delicious. Plus, compared to many other desserts, it doesn't contain loads of sugar.

## Miriam's Pumpkin Pie

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|---|--|
| 1 pie crust shell (made fresh for best results; store-bought if pinched for time)             | 1 tsp. ground cinnamon                           |
| 2 eggs  | 1/2 tsp. salt                                    |
| 1 1/2 cup fresh pureed pie pumpkin* (made fresh for best results; canned if pinched for time) | 1/3 tsp. ground ginger                           |
| 1 1/2 cup half and half   | 1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg                           |
| 2 T. flour  | 1/2 tsp. ground cloves                           |
| 3/4 cup sugar   | 1/2 tsp. ground allspice, plus extra for serving |
|   | Whipping cream, for serving                      |

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Line a large pie pan with your pie crust dough of choice.

In a bowl, beat the eggs. Mix in pumpkin, half and half, sugar and dry ingredients. Beat until sugar is dissolved.

Pour into pie shell.\*\*

Bake for 10 minutes at 450 degrees. Reduce the oven temperature to 350 degrees and continue to bake for 50-60 minutes. The pie is done when the center is set, and bake time varies with moisture content in the pumpkin. It should no longer look wet on the surface and small bubbles will appear on the surface. A knife or toothpick inserted into the filling should come out clean.

Cool completely. Serve with cold whipped cream.

\*To process pumpkin: Cut pumpkin into quarters or halves. Scrape out seeds and loose material. Arrange chunks in a 9X13 inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees until outside of pumpkin is fork tender. Remove from oven and cool. Scrape pumpkin flesh from shell and puree in food processor or blender. The puree can be frozen and used for up to a year.

\*\*When the filling is ready to pour into shell, open the oven, slide the rack out and place the empty pie shell on it. Using a spatula or spoon to guide the filling without splashing, pour into the shell, filling it to 1/2 inch short of the top. Carefully slide the rack into the oven (I use the door), avoiding sloshing the filling out of shell.



## Winter Stews to Warm You

Whether spent skiing, snowmobiling or hunkered down inside reading a book, winter's coldest days call for warming stews. There's nothing quite like a steaming bowl of broth packed with stewed morsels to heat you up from the inside. Since they rely heavily on root vegetables, stews are a great way to eat in season during the winter. They pack a ton of nutrition into a one-dish meal. And because they are best made in large batches (think crockpot!), stews are ideal, cost-saving options to keep busy families fed all week long.

The basic formula for stew goes something like this: brown meat in dutch oven, add aromatics and veggies, pour in broth and herbs, and then cook low and slow until the flavors have melded and the result is a rich, filling meal. The variations on that formula are endless. There is classic beef stew, simmered with carrots, onions and potatoes. Venison stew with mushrooms, potatoes and corn. Irish stew with lamb, peas and potatoes. Chicken stew with Swiss chard and white beans. Peanut and sweet potato stew with kale and chickpeas. And vegetarian stew loaded with beans, parsnips, carrots, celery, potatoes and mushrooms.

Here on Wright's Mesa, it's pretty easy to make stew with local and fresh ingredients. The Hub carries organic onions, potatoes, onions and mushrooms, many of which are grown by farms like Montrose's Buckhorn Gardens. Local producers like Birdhouse Botanicals and the Garvey Brothers offer great cuts of meat. And for hunters out there, stew is a fantastic way to enjoy your harvest.

Here is a recipe for beef and barley stew, a meal that's a one-stop source of protein, fiber and a host of vitamins, minerals and other healthful ingredients. It's deeply satisfying — and guaranteed to warm you from the coldest conditions that winter can conjure.

### Winter Beef and Barley Stew

- 2 lb. beef stew meat, cubed
- 2 T. flour, mixed with salt and pepper
- 3 T. olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 3 carrots, chopped
- 2 potatoes, cut into 1-inch cubes
- ½ lb. mushrooms, quartered
- ½ cup frozen peas
- 8 cups beef or vegetable stock
- ½ cup barley (hulled barley is preferable because it's more nutritious, but pearly barley is fine and cooks faster)
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tsp. dried thyme

**Add beef to flour mixture and toss until coated. Heat oil over medium heat in large dutch oven. Add beef and brown on all sides, remove and set aside. Add onions, celery and garlic, saute until soft and translucent. Mix in carrots and mushrooms and saute 3-5 more minutes. Add beef, then stock, bay leaves, thyme and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer on low heat for 45 minutes. Add barley and potatoes, turn heat up slightly and cook for another hour or until the barley is chewy. When soup is nearly done, add peas and cook another 5-10 minutes.**



## This Season, Give the Gift of Food

The holidays are upon us: The time of year packed with turkey carving, tree decorating, party hopping, menorah lighting, Santa visiting, holiday card mailing, gift wrapping, treat baking and snow angel making. It's a wonderful time of year. It can also be frenetic and frankly, stressful. So many events to attend and loved ones to attend to. And on top of it, there's the challenge of finding a gift for each person in your life that checks all the boxes of being meaningful, one-of-a-kind and not too pricey. It's daunting.

Here's a suggestion that could make your holiday season less stressful and more enjoyable: Give the gift of food. Edible gifts are a fantastic way to lavish your loved ones with unique flavors, homey treats and practical goodies. They offer a way to spoil recipients with high-quality ingredients they may otherwise not buy for themselves. Plus, handmade treats are true expressions of love.

Here are some suggestions for the foodies on your holiday gift list.

### Living food

To give a gift that truly keeps on giving, consider gifting living food such as sourdough starter, kombucha SCOBY or Kefir grains. Think about the endless batches of pancakes, pizzas, breads, healthy drinks and glasses of gut-benefitting kefir that can result! And these gifts can last — people tend to sourdough mothers or kombucha SCOBYs for decades. Plus it's a gift that will give the recipient a fun kitchen project, engaging them in an activity that will benefit their health.

### Whimsical condiments

Forget those expensive gourmet condiments that'll collect dust in the back of the cupboard — make your own! They'll be fresher, more personalized and healthier. Some ideas for homemade condiments include preserved lemons, candied orange peels, spiced nuts, vanilla extract, onion jams, chile-infused oil and fruit chutneys. Just pack them in jars and tie ribbons around the lids. Instant gifts.

### Sweet treats

Whether elaborately decorated gingerbread men, heavy loaves of port-soaked fruitcake or sugared chocolate crinkle cookies, sweet treats are a hallmark of the holidays. But you don't have to stick to the classics if you want to give the gift of treats. Think batches of healthy granola, jars of citrus curd, loaves of spiced pumpkin bread, pre-made pie filling, local honey or preserves made with this season's abundant apple or pear crop.

### The meat of the matter

High-quality, responsibly raised meat can be the pinnacle of a dining experience. But the good stuff is not cheap. So this season, consider gifting someone a fine cut of meat. Out here on Wright's Mesa, the options include half or whole lambs, whole pastured chickens, heritage turkeys, cuts of locally raised beef and choice pieces of pork. For seafood lovers, you can order sustainably harvested Alaska salmon by the box.

### A fasket, a tasket

Have you ever received a care package with all your favorite foods? Few things make a person feel so loved. Replicate the feeling by putting together a gift basket full of goodies. Include items like healthy teas, roasted nuts, homemade jams, loaves of organic bread, gourmet crackers, hand crafted granola and local cheeses. And as you are putting together your edible gifts, don't forget to save some of the goodies for yourself!



## Winter Greens

The salad days of early summer are long in the rearview, but that doesn't mean you have to discard fresh greens. Instead, now's the time to swap those tender lettuces with the hardy greens that are in season from late fall through early winter. Winter greens, characterized by dark and sturdy leaves, are delicious, versatile and a great way to incorporate fresh, nutrient-dense ingredients to the heavy meals that so often mark wintertime.

Winter greens encompass a range of robust vegetables that tolerate cold weather; often have spicy, peppery or slightly bitter flavors; and are marked by rougher leaves than many summer varieties. Think cabbage, collards, bok choy, spinach, mustard greens, arugula and the ever ubiquitous kale. Winter greens are nutritional heavyweights, superfoods of the vegetable kingdom. They are packed with vitamins A, C and K, are loaded with potassium and fiber and are low in calories. Cruciferous veggies (think kale and cabbages) have been widely touted for their ability to prevent cancer. In fact, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends consuming at least one and a half cups of dark green veggies per week.

Luckily, winter greens are so tasty and versatile that it's easy to eat that much per day. Think linguini with bacon and braised mustard greens, frittata with chard and potatoes, collard greens stewed with onions, stir-fried bok choy with ground pork, pizza topped with sausage and arugula, or creamed spinach. Kale is great roasted into "chips" or sauteed with broth and served with a fried egg and creamy polenta. A handful of greens can brighten up a soup, and varieties like spinach, arugula or lacinato kale make an excellent foundation for a holiday salad. (Arugula dressed simply in lemon juice and olive oil and topped with parmesan is a fantastic bright side for a heavy main.)

This kale and grain salad is unbeatable as a potluck dish, substantial main or side to a warm winter entree.

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## Storage Tips

**Purchase greens that are firm and crisp; avoid wilted ones. Wrap greens in dry towel or paper towel before storing in plastic bag, and wash thoroughly to remove dirt before consumption. For longer storage, blanch the greens and freeze them.**

### Harvest Kale Salad

- 1 delicata squash, seeds scraped out and sliced into crescents
- 1 tsp. chile powder, such as ancho (optional)
- 2 T. olive oil
- 1 cup quinoa
- 2 cups water
- 1 bunch curly or red kale, stems discarded, chopped and massaged with coarse salt
- 1 avocado, diced
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- ¼ cup toasted pumpkin seeds (optional)
- Juice of 1 orange
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 T. balsamic vinegar
- 2 T. maple syrup
- 2 T. soy sauce
- salt and pepper to taste

**Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Toss squash with olive oil and chile powder in roasting pan. Roast, stirring occasionally, until browned on both sides, 30-40 minutes. Bring 2 cups of water to boil; add quinoa and stir, then reduce heat to medium. Simmer until water is absorbed, about 20 minutes. Set aside to cool. Combine the orange juice, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, maple syrup and soy sauce in a jar. Shake vigorously and add salt and pepper to taste. Place kale in large salad bowl. Top with quinoa, cranberries, avocado, pumpkin seeds and squash. Add dressing, toss and serve.**



## Roast with the Most

The holiday season is busy, but everything slows down when you gather around the table with friends, family or new acquaintances to enjoy a holiday feast. Light some candles, pile on the sides and take your time: the need to rush vanishes, replaced by the exchange of stories and the opportunity to relish the repast.

Some people go crazy for sides — think mashed potatoes, vegetable gratins, roasted brussels sprouts and bright salads studded with pomegranates. Others save room for seconds of that pecan pie or pumpkin cheesecake. But the centerpiece of the traditional holiday meal is the roast. Everyone has their favorite. There is the regal crown roast of pork. The straightforward turkey and gravy. The simple but delicious beef chuck roast, the high-end beef prime rib, or the satisfying leg of lamb. Some people go small with a roasted chicken or pork tenderloin. Others get fancy with a duck or goose roast. And vegetarians out there like their stuffed mushrooms, whole heads of cauliflower crusted with nuts or spinach pies.

For many families, the holidays aren't complete without a Christmas ham. This savory sweet roast makes a dig-in-worthy main dish, feeds people for days and offers all sorts of options for leftovers. And since most people choose cured ham, all you have to do is whip up a glaze and bake it until it's heated through, creating a festive and low-stress showstopper. (For non-cured ham, a great route is to brine and roast.)

For locally raised, pastured ham, check with the Norwood Fresh Food Hub.

Here's a recipe for a holiday ham that will have everyone at the table asking for thirds.

### Maple-Bourbon Glazed Ham

- 1 8-10 lb. cured, spiral cut, bone-in ham
- ⅓ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup brown mustard
- 1 tsp. ground cloves
- ½ cup maple syrup
- ¼ cup bourbon
- Zest of one orange
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Set ham in roasting pan fitted with a rack.

Combining the sugar, mustard, cloves, maple syrup, bourbon and zest in small saucepan. Bring to low boil and whisk until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat.

Brush half of the mixture over the ham. Cover loosely with foil and bake for one hour.

Remove, brush the remaining mixture on the meat and return to the oven for another 30 minutes or until a meat thermometer reads 160 degrees at the center of the ham.

Let rest 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and serve.



## How Do You Like Them Apples?

2018 was a fantastic season for apples on Wright's Mesa. In backyards and orchards, abandoned fields and alleyways, the region's apple trees grew heavy with the tart, crisp, all-American fruit. Some blushing red as a Disney princess's cheeks, others speckled yellow, others with ombre patterns of green and pink. Varieties ranged from snow apples to yellow delicious, from tiny sweet summer harvest apples to large crisp specimens best eaten after a frost.

And if you live in the area, odds are you found yourself with an excess of apples. Maybe you picked a box from your neighbor's yard, or a friend dropped off a half-bushel on your doorstep. Perhaps you enjoyed some at Nucla's Heritage Harvest Festival, gleaned your own tree or picked some up at the Fresh Food Hub in Norwood.

Luckily, apples keep for a long time if stored properly. The ideal storage temperature is about 30 degrees, so they'll keep well in the basement, garage, fruit cellar or refrigerator. If storing them in bulk, make sure to remove any bruised or buggy specimens because they can spoil the entire batch (applesauce is a great fate for these flawed ones), and check regularly for signs of spoilage. If storing in a cool basement or cellar, wrap apples individually in newspaper and stack in a box or basket.

If you did find yourself with a glut of apples, you have probably been busy in the kitchen. But there are only so many apple pies, crisps, cobblers, cakes, batches of applesauce and crumbles you can make. At some point, making sweets with apples grows wearisome and sugar-saturated. That's why it's great to have a few savory or non-dessert apple recipes on hand as well.

The good news is, apples are versatile ingredients that make great snacks and can be added into breakfast, lunch and dinners. They can be cooked with cinnamon and mixed with oatmeal or scattered on pancakes.

Quartered and eaten as a snack with peanut butter or slices of cheese. Chopped up and added to a Waldorf salad or tossed with fennel or spinach. Braised with red cabbage for a savory side dish that feels very wintery. Chopped and incorporated into stuffing for a holiday feast. Or cut into chunks and roasted with pork for a warming dinner main topped with a cider-mustard sauce.

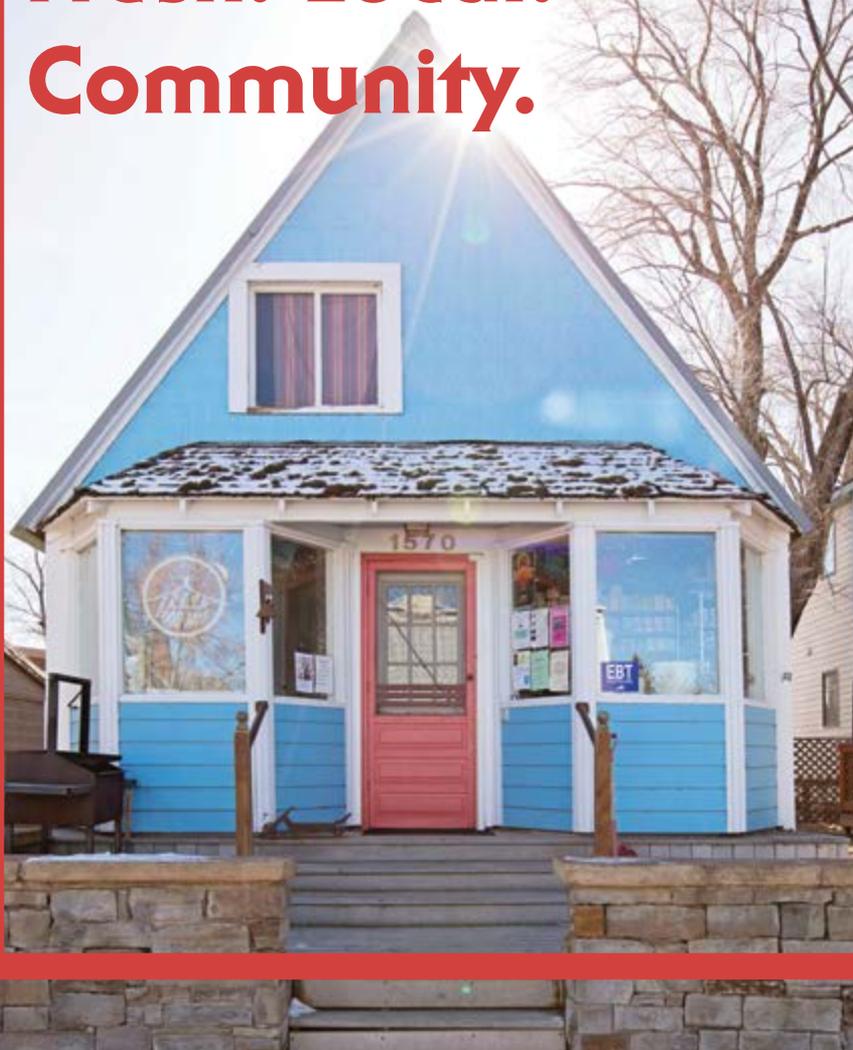
For a dish that will highlight the apple harvest, keep well in the fridge or freezer and complement many a meat mains, try making chutney. It's great with everything from pork chops to baked chicken and slices of sharp cheddar cheese. And it makes a fantastic holiday gift to boot!

### Apple Chutney (recipe adapted from Epicurious)

2 cups apple cider vinegar  
1 cup sugar  
1½ lb. apples, peeled, cored and chopped into ½-inch pieces  
3 T. lemon juice  
10 garlic cloves  
1 knob ginger, peeled and diced  
2 tsp. salt  
½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes  
1¼ cup golden raisins  
2 T. mustard seeds

In large saucepan, bring sugar and vinegar to boil, whisking until sugar dissolves. Reduce heat and simmer 5-10 minutes or until mixture begins to thicken. Remove from heat. In large bowl, toss apples with lemon juice. Combine ginger, garlic, salt and red pepper flakes in food processor or mortar and pestle. Blend or mash until well incorporated. Add both apple and garlic mixtures to vinegar sauce, along with raisins and mustard seeds. Simmer until apples are soft and chutney is thick, 45 minutes to an hour. Chill before serving.

# Fresh. Local. Community.



Are you interested in volunteering for a local food project?  
Contact us today & we will connect you with a  
non-profit or producer that best suits your goals.  
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