



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

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Winter Cookbook Review: *Scratch*

by Farmer - Chef Andrea

Happy New Year! I hope your year is off to a good start and you are experiencing and looking forward to all the good things 2017 has in store for you and your family. In between shoveling snow, and more recently scraping ice, we've been working on seed orders, laying out crop plans, washing the last of our storage vegetables and processing 2017 CSA orders! In the midst of all the hustle and bustle of the winter rhythm, I've managed to find some time to sit by the fire and do one of the things I like to do most....read cookbooks. Every time I tell myself I'm not going to buy any more new cookbooks.....then another good one comes out! In the process of Christmas shopping for others, I managed to find a few new books that were published within the last year, as well as a few that I've pre-ordered and look forward to thumbing through in the upcoming months. So I thought we'd kick the year off with a review of one of these new finds.

The book up for review is called *Scratch* and was written by Maria Rodale. The purpose of this book is outlined nicely in the subtitle which reads, "Home cooking for everyone made simple, fun, and totally delicious." This book is an easy and interesting read that starts out with a nice introduction in which Maria shares a bit of her background as well as philosophy on cooking at home. Throughout the book she has taken the time to introduce each recipe and provide a little background about where the recipe came from, how it was developed and how it fits into this collection of favorites.

Before we go any further, I'd like to give you a little background about Maria and her family. Maria is the granddaughter of J.I. Rodale who

is considered to be the founding father of the organic movement in America. As a result of some of his own health issues in the earlier part of his life, J.I. Rodale developed an interest in promoting health and wellness as well as exploring ways of preventing disease through lifestyle. In 1942 he began publishing *Organic Farming and Gardening Magazine* which was one of the first forums for discussing principles of organic horticulture, compost, soil health and pesticides. Our own Farmer Richard's grandfather was an early subscriber of this magazine. This is the grandfather Richard credits as a major inspiration for him choosing to implement organic practices when he first started farming. J.I. Rodale went on to found the Rodale

Institute in 1947, an organization that still exists today. The purpose of this institute was and still is to investigate the connection between healthy soil, food and human health. They do so on their certified organic farm located in Pennsylvania where they produce vegetables, small grains, apples, livestock and more while studying different facets of organic agriculture.

Maria's father, Robert Rodale, was also interested in health, wellness and organic farming. He followed in his father's footsteps, eventually took over the Rodale Institute farm and continued to develop the work being done there. As a result, Maria had the unique opportunity to grow up on the country's first organic farm! Maria is now the chairwoman

What's in Store for the 2017 CSA Season!

Pricing: While our share offerings and delivery schedule have not changed, our new sign-up form reflects a small increase in the price of our Vegetable & Coffee shares. Our fruit share prices remain the same as in 2016.

Early Bird Sign-Up Offer: Place your order for the 2017 season before February 14th and, for qualifying purchases, receive a coupon with your receipt/invoice, good towards a future purchase with Harmony Valley Farm. Please refer to our Sign-Up Form for more details.

New Site Locations: We have new site locations in both the Twin Cities and Madison areas. For our **Twin Cities** members, we now have a site located in St. Louis Park. This site is located on Yosemite Avenue South between Cambridge St and W 39th St. In the **Madison** area we have a new site located on Robin Circle, north of Mineral Point and near Robin Greenway Park.

In Partnership with Lunds & Byerlys: If you reside in the greater Twin Cities area, you may be interested in taking advantage of our recent partnership with Lunds & Byerlys. We are pleased to offer you the opportunity to pick up your Vegetable and Fruit shares at one of the 27 Lunds & Byerlys store locations in the greater Twin Cities area. Please note there is an additional delivery fee of \$2.50 per box for pickup at Lunds & Byerlys. Please refer to our **Lunds & Byerlys Sign-Up Form** for a complete list of locations and pricing.

and CEO of Rodale Inc., the publishing company that grew out of her grandfather's own early publications and still strives to promote health and wellness through their publications as well as other forms of media.

As you can see, Maria has a long history related to organic food, farming and cooking. She starts off in the introduction of her book with the following statement: "I believe anyone can cook. I believe that a home-cooked meal made from scratch—preferably with organic ingredients (and maybe even homegrown)—is one of the greatest pleasures in life. I believe that when you cut through all the confusion about food and cooking—the fears and insecurities, social pressures, false ideals, or just plain not knowing where to begin—this is where you can begin, right here. I will help you." The recipes contained in Maria's cookbook are simple, both in the ingredients they use as well as their methods. Anyone, regardless of culinary skill level or experience can cook from her collection of recipes. The recipes are easy to read and prepare, but still interesting.

I would describe Maria's approach to cooking and sharing these recipes to be very informal, honest and transparent. In her book she openly shares personal experiences from her own family related to food and cooking. Her three daughters, Maya, Eve and Lucia, are an important part of her story and are active participants in cooking. In the book Maria states, "I don't cook because I have to, I cook because I want to and because it's the most intimate, nourishing, and primal pleasure I can give to my family and myself." She also shares this message: "I want everyone to feel safe in their kitchens. Safe to experiment and learn. Safe to express their differences and creativity. Safe to try new things. And most important, safe to make a big damned mess and laugh about it, and serve the food we've made even if it's not perfect or "blog-worthy."

As I read through Maria's cookbook I appreciated her real life approach. Despite a busy and full work life, she strives to come back to the simple pleasures of life which include simple, homemade meals based on wholesome ingredients. I look forward to preparing more recipes from this book. I have my eye on her recipe for Asparagus and Lemon Cream Pasta, BLT Salad, Broccoli Cheese Bites, Sweet-And-Sour Tomato and Pepper Salad, Kale Salad with Zesty Lemon Dressing and her recipe for Glazed Strawberry Pie.

Maria also has a blog called "*Maria's Farm Country Kitchen*" where she blogs on a variety of topics and also shares recipes, some of which she has included in her book. The recipe in this newsletter features carrots and was originally featured on her blog. If you're looking for some culinary exploration this winter, consider taking a look at this book. It's not too early to plot out your seasonal culinary adventures for 2017!

Carrot, Feta, and Almond Salad

"You know those times when your fridge is either empty or pathetically filled with shriveled produce? (Yes, even my fridge can look like that!) Usually, all that's left standing at that point are the carrots. Especially in the dead of winter. That's exactly when you should make carrot salad".—Maria Rodale

Yield: 4 servings

Herb Dressing

- 1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp chopped fresh Italian or curly parsley leaves
- 1 Tbsp chopped fresh mint leaves
- 1 Tbsp chopped fresh dill leaves
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Salad

- 6 to 8 large carrots, shredded or grated
- ¼ cup crumbled feta cheese
- ½ cup sliced almonds, toasted

1. To make the dressing: In a small bowl, combine the vinegar, oil, herbs, and salt and pepper to taste and mix with a fork to combine.
2. For the salad: Place the carrots in a large bowl, pour over the dressing and toss to combine. Before serving, sprinkle the salad with the feta and almonds.

TIP: If I make this in the warmer months, I like using a mixture of fresh herbs straight from the garden, but you can use all mint or all cilantro—whatever is your favorite and in season.....Maria Rodale

This recipe may be found on page 64 of Maria Rodale's cookbook, *Scratch*.

