



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

May 5, 2011



From PA to WI By Chef Boni

Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Bonita Lampman and I moved from Northern Pennsylvania to Western Wisconsin in early April. I will spend the 2011 harvest season as the Chef at Harmony Valley Farm. My career, if you want to call it that, started when I married a dairy farmer and began a journey that took me from small town girl to farm wife. I helped work, manage and enjoy a 75 cow dairy operation while raising two, always hungry, boys. Needless to say, I learned to cook, bake, raise a vegetable garden, process beef, pork, chicken and venison and preserve the summer's bounty for the long cold winters of North PA.

As the boys grew and I found myself with extra time, I decided to pursue my passion for baking. I opened Bon's Bakery in Ulysses, Pa. and for 12 years I baked to order, pies, cookies, breads, sweet rolls, cakes, and whatever my customers desired. In time I came to realize I was putting in a lot of hours for very little profit.

I began working evenings as a waitress at a local Sporting Club. The Chef introduced me to foods associated with fine dining. He made foods a culinary delight, not just comfort food (which by the way, tastes good and is filling) but now I am seeing foods plated and presented in a whole new way.

I wanted to learn more, so I began a

THIS WEEK'S BOX

PARSNIP: Possibly my favorite root veg! It can be roasted, pan caramelized, mashed, added in with your pot roast veg or try an almost carrot cake. Substitute parsnip for half the carrots in your favorite carrot cake recipe.

BLACK RADISH: Assertive, horseradish like flavor. The black skin and white flesh make for a stunning contrast in salads. Scrub well, slice thin and toss with greens.

RAMPS: See vegetable feature on back of newsletter

OVERWINTERED SPINACH: This spinach was planted last fall and left in the field through the winter. The colder the weather, the sweeter the leaves. It is the best tasting spinach of the season! Great for spring salads or in a sauté.

SUNCHOKES: Native to North America and part of the sunflower family, these can be prepared the same way as potatoes, baked, roasted or boiled. The skins are thin and edible, but aren't always appealing in purees.

CHIVES: This fragrant herb has a mild onion flavor and is great in egg and potato dishes such as quiche, deviled eggs and scalloped potatoes. To store: wrap loosely in a damp paper towel and keep in the fridge in a plastic bag, container or drawer away from fans.

SORREL: A tart, lemony green that is most popular in cream based soups and fish sauces. It also can be mixed with other salad greens. Keeps in the fridge for 3-5 days.

SUPER CHILIS: Hot! Hot! Hot! Use in moderation. Drop one or two into soups, stews or spaghetti sauce. Slice in half, remove seeds and add a half to each jar of pickles as they are canned. You can also grind these chilis to make your own crushed red pepper flakes.

RED RUSSIAN KALE: Delicious paired with sausage in a brothy soup. Or, try in a green smoothie with banana, avocado, berries and milk or orange juice.

search for a Culinary School that would be accepting of an older student. My choice was the Culinary Institute of America at Hyde Park, NY. The school is well known as a premier culinary college and where several people have started second careers. What a wonderful experience, I tasted, learned to recognize, and cook foods I hadn't known existed. I earned my AOS in Culinary Arts and began a journey as a seasonal Chef.

Being a seasonal Chef was not my original plan but sometimes fate takes a hand in things and there you go. My first job was a summer position as a cook at The Sunriver Resort in Oregon. The following summer I took the job of Sous Chef at The Red Lantern in Fairbanks, Alaska, and my journey began. The following summer I returned to Alaska as Kitchen Manager of the Howling Dog saloon (a local tourist attraction in Fox, Alaska). Returning to Pennsylvania the next summer I worked as a cook/baker at The Masonic Village in Sewickley, Pa., where the focus was on fine dining for the

elderly. I received an offer from The Fern Cliff House in East Durham, NY to come spend a summer as the Executive Chef for this totally Irish (bagpipes included) resort. Would have loved to spend another summer there but the resort was sold and became a private estate. So I moved on to Highlands, NC, where I took the job of Chef/Manager for Fressers Eatery. Here the focus was on Southern Cuisine in a fine dining establishment. I stayed two summers. I learned a lot and saw some beautiful country but it was time to move on. The Blue Mingo Grill in Cooperstown, NY needed a Pastry Chef for their seasonal fine dining restaurant on Otsego Lake. I spent that summer baking to my heart's content. The following summer I agreed to be their Executive Chef as well as do the baking. It was a good year but very stressful so I began looking again.

To occupy myself in the winters, I took up the art of Ice Carving. I was taking a 300 pound block of ice that measured 10"x20"x40" and turning it

into sculptures, some of which stood 6' tall. What fun, a girl, a chainsaw, and ice chips flying everywhere. I was hooked. I began carving in 2000 and shortly thereafter I had the opportunity to travel to Bruges, Belgium to work with a team of professional carvers. We created a maze of ice and snow sculptures depicting the start of life to the present. While there I visited Frankfurt, Germany and Paris, France. Back in the states, I assisted Chuck Cooper (president of the National Ice Carving Association) as he carved demonstration ice for Certified Angus Beef to promote the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City. CAB was a sponsor for the Olympics and ice carving was a medaled Cultural Event held at Provo, Utah. We spent all of February 2002 carving demo ice in Utah. I still carve whenever I get the chance and I judge Ice Carving competitions for NICA; which allows me to travel during the winter months. Note: Demo Ice is when you carve sculptures in front of a crowd usually to promote something.

This brings me to 2011 and Harmony Valley Farm, what an opportunity to learn about organic farming. I will be cooking lunch for the farm crew (almost like being back at the dairy farm only larger numbers). I will also do dinners for the owners and their guests. Brigitte, who you will learn more about later, will be assisting me. Together we will cook the bounty of organic vegetables and preserve the excess. I am looking forward to a summer filled with enough experiences to fill a book. I will write for the CSA newsletter and I will blog on the Harmony Valley Website as often as I can. I will also take emails from any CSA members or guests that may have questions. If I don't know the answers I will research it and we will learn together. I am looking forward to a wonderful summer.

Vegetable Feature: Ramps

I can't think of a better way to kick off the season of CSA boxes than with ramps! Ramps are just one of those things that signal the end of winter and the coming of warmer weather, popping up even before the trees have time to leaf out!

If you're not sure what ramps are, don't feel discouraged! These fleeting delicacies are only available 3-5 weeks a year and are almost never found on the shelves of your grocery store. Ramps are wild leeks and have to be foraged. Many attempts have been made to domesticate them, but these stubborn little onions have too much of a free spirit to be told where to grow. All of this adds up to a highly anticipated spring arrival when we can seek them out and enjoy them at their freshest. Because of their very specific growing conditions, not every farm has the ability to provide these seasonal gems! We are lucky enough to find healthy, full patches of them on our north facing hill slopes, under the cover of plenty of wooded shade and in moist soil.

In recent news, questions have arisen about the sustainability of ramp harvests. They have been described as a species that is of 'conservation concern' because of the extended time it takes them to reproduce and because of their overall popularity. We believe that it is important to respect the land and harvest responsibly, leaving plenty of plants behind for next year and the next and the next.

Their flavor is one part garlic, one part onion that makes for a very versatile ingredient. The entire plant can be used in many applications. Ramps love eggs. Ramps love potatoes. Ramps love to stand-alone. My favorite way to enjoy ramps is with a quick toss in olive oil and a short stay on the grill. They can also be sautéed or eaten raw. To preserve that springy flavor long into the balmy winter months, ramps can be made into a pesto or a compound butter; the bulbs work best for pickling!

Springtime Pasta Primavera

Serves 2

Recipe by Chef Bonita

1 tbsp oil

1 tbsp butter

1 bunch ramps, cleaned and rough chopped, both bulbs and greens

¼ cup carrots, small dice

¼ cup black radish, small dice

½ cup mushrooms, medium dice

½ cup vegetable broth

2 tbsp dry sherry

¾ cup heavy cream

2 cups fresh spinach, rough chopped

½ cup fresh kale, rough chopped

1-In sauté pan, heat oil and butter till butter is melted into the oil. Add the chopped ramps, carrots, black radish and mushrooms. Simmer 4-5 minutes to soften the carrots and radish.

2-In same pan, add the vegetable broth and dry sherry. Cook on medium for about 10 minutes.

3-Add the heavy cream and simmer to infuse flavors and to thicken slightly.

4-Add the spinach and kale, stir to wilt the leaves.

Serve hot over cooked pasta of your choice. Penne, elbows, spaghetti, or fettuccine can be used successfully.

Ramp Deviled Eggs

Serves 2

Recipe by Chef Bonita

3 eggs, boiled and cooled

3 tbsp ramp bulbs, finely chopped. Reserve the greens for garnish

¼ cup mayonnaise

1 tsp mustard (yellow or dijon)

salt and pepper to taste

1-Slice the eggs from top to bottom and remove the yolks. Place the yolks in a bowl and place the egg white halves on a plate.

2-To the yolks, add the other five ingredients and mix well with a fork.

3-Spoon the mixture into the egg white halves.

4-To serve, place the finished deviled eggs on a bed of raw ramp greens. Chiffonade a couple ramp greens and sprinkle on top of eggs for garnish.