



# Ramps -- (Wild Leeks)

**Ramps** appear early in the spring in the maple woods of western Wisconsin. We gather them judiciously from hillsides thick with their lily-like leaves. Their mild garlic-leek flavor emboldens as they mature through their short 2 – 3 week harvest season. Then their leaves die back and disappear amongst the increasingly lush forest floor. The entire plant is edible: bulbs, leaves and purple stems. Pair them with spinach, eggs, potatoes, cheese. A light saute of the bulb and the barest wilting of the leaves brings out their flavor. Ramps -- also known as wild leeks -- are not a cultivated crop, except on a small or experimental basis. Therefore, as all wild-gathered foods, they must be harvested with care to not reduce the population below a sustainable number. They are not protected at this time. Perhaps it is fortunate that the period of harvest is extremely short. We at Harmony Valley Farm have been harvesting our patch for nearly 10 years, and are pleased to say their numbers are increasing or stable.

## **SPINACH, RAMPS AND PROVOLONE**

contributed by Terese Allen, Madison Foodwriter

1 T. butter	1 4 oz. bunch of ramps
salt and pepper	3 eggs
2 oz. grated provolone (1 Cup)	3 T. parmesan, grated
1/2 lb. fresh spinach, coarsely chopped	1 C. milk
1 unbaked pie crust	

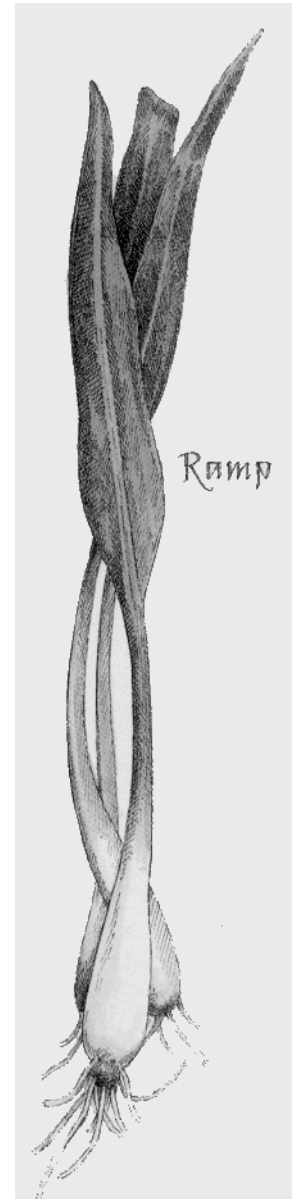
Heat butter in a large skillet. Clean and chop ramp stems and bulbs. Add to butter and Saute until tender. Chop ramp leaves. Add to skillet with spinach. Cook until wilted. Season with salt and pepper. Cool. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Beat eggs and milk in bowl. Stir in the spinach and cheese. Season again to taste. Sprinkle cheese over bottom of crust. Gently pour in egg/cheese/spinach mix. Bake until custard is just set in the middle -- 45 - 55 min. Let stand for 5 - 10 min. before slicing. Serves 6 - 8.

## **SPRING GREEN RISOTTO**

contributed by Chef Jordan Lichman

6 cups	low sodium Chicken or Vegetable stock
1 Tablespoon	Butter
1 Tablespoon	Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1 bunch	Ramps, sliced thinly
2 cups	Arborio Rice
1 ½ cups	White wine (I use a California Sauvignon Blanc)
¼ cup	Parsley, chopped finely
2 cups	Saute mix, sliced into very thin strips
1 cup	Grated Parmesan style cheese,
to taste	salt and pepper

Preparation method continued on back.



*Recipes and information provided by Harmony Valley Farm; its farmers and staff.  
For more information go to [www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com](http://www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com)*

# A Midwestern Palette - Eating With the Seasons

Though many fresh foods are available year round, our regional agricultural community, and the urban communities surrounded by them, benefit when we choose to eat seasonally from local producers. Knowing the seasonality of our favorite produce allows us to make informed choices.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
				Ramp Season							

The ramp season is SHORT, don't put off buying them when you see them offered. You'll miss the peak of the season.

## Preparation and Storage Tips

The whole plant can be used, bulb, stem and leaf. Leaves should be used only when firm and green. The leaves are past their prime when wilted or turning yellow. To use the bulb, trim off the root end and rub off any thin membrane clinging to the bulb while washing under running water. Ramps can be used raw or cooked. The flavor mellows when cooked.

Store ramps carefully, they are delicate. Wrap the whole plant in a barely moist paper towel and place in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator. They should keep for 5 days. If the leaves have turned yellow before you use the ramps, you can continue to store the bulb for another week by removing the leaves and keeping the bulbs in a plastic bag in your crisper drawer.

If you just can't get enough of ramps and want to enjoy their flavor out of season, process them with a small amount of olive oil or butter to make a paste. Press the paste into ice cube trays, freeze. Remove from tray and store in freezer bag.

### SPAGHETTI WITH RAMPS

2 bunches (1/2 lb.) ramps  
 1 t. finely grated lemon zest  
 1/4 C. extra virgin Olive oil  
 1 lb. spaghetti  
 2 T freshly grated parmesan  
 Accompaniment: toasted bread crumbs

Blanch whole ramps in boiling, salted water 2 - 3 seconds. Transfer to cutting board with tongs. Coarsely chop and put in a blender with zest. Add spaghetti to boiling water and cook a few minutes. Then ladle out 1/2 C. pasta water and add to blender. Puree ramps until smooth and season with salt. Continue to cook spaghetti until al dente, then ladle out an additional 1/2 C. pasta water before draining in a colander. Return pasta to pot with ramp puree and toss with parmesan over moderate heat 1 - 2 minutes. Thin sauce with a little pasta water as needed to coat pasta.

1. Heat the broth in a stockpot until it begins to steam.
2. In a deep sided pot or thick bottomed Dutch oven, heat the butter, olive oil, and ramps. When the ramps are soft and translucent add the Arborio rice and saute until you can see the white "pearl" in the center of the translucent grain of Arborio.
3. Add the white wine to the rice and stir until almost all of the wine is absorbed. Begin to add small ladles of the hot broth to the rice, stirring occasionally. The rice should be at a steady but not vigorous boil. Add more broth when each grain of rice is just coated with liquid. You don't need to stir constantly but be attentive and don't let the rice scorch.
4. After about 15 minutes taste the rice for doneness, it should be tender but not mushy, and most of the broth will be gone. If you run out of broth simply add water until done. Stir in the parsley and sauté mix and cook for one minute more.
5. Add the Parmesan, stir once and serve in a deep bowl.  
Serves 4 as an entree.

**Harmony Valley Farm** is a family owned farm in western Wisconsin, dedicated to producing high quality, beautifully clean, and deliciously fresh certified organic produce. Our farming methods protect the environment and enhance diversity.