



TAILORED TASTE TIDBITS

VOLUME VIII, ISSUE III FALL 2013 FOOD NEWS FROM TAILORED TASTE PERSONAL CHEF SERVICE

You Say “Tomahto”

Oh what crop of tomatoes we’ve had this year! Just three plants but apparently the rain/sunshine ratio was perfect. Best of all, I figured out how to foil the fuzzy-tailed rodents (aka squirrels) so that WE could enjoy the fruits of our labors. The trick was to pick the tomatoes at least three days before they were ripe. If I waited any longer there would be a big chomp missing from the tomato as it hung on the vine, taunting me. Why wouldn’t they eat the whole thing or take the evidence? Evil, I tell you, pure evil.

The photo below shows the line-up on the counter of the little Super Sweet 100s along with some Better Boys (mid-sized ones) and the big winner this year, Park’s Whopper. It’s best to wash them and then store them on their ‘shoulders’ on a counter or window sill, if you are blessed with deep sills, to ripen. NEVER refrigerate tomatoes – they become mealy when chilled.



For at least the last two months beginning in August, my breakfast each day has been one of these beauties sliced and served on top of toast. Once I made some pesto (see back) and I added that to the mix for a few days. I smile a lot at breakfast time. It’s now October and I’m still picking at least six little tomatoes and one big one every morning. I know this can’t last forever, but it sure is amazing to enjoy real tomatoes for this long.

I’ve tossed them (diced) with basil and olive oil onto freshly cooked and drained pasta for a quick dinner. I’ve added them to stir-fry dishes along with chicken, peppers, onions, ginger and soy sauce. I’ve given many away and even let those darned squirrels have a few. Yet still my counter has a long line-up. Life is good!

Like me on Facebook

I’m a tad late to this party but I *finally* have a business Facebook page. I took a class at conference this year and set up the page right then and there. Since August, I’ve been posting pictures of food I’ve cooked and plants I’ve grown and dinners I’ve eaten and articles that might be of interest. Pesto, sausages from scratch, ravioli filled with egg yolks, vegetable napoleons, calamondin chicken salad and more await those who visit the page.

If you’ve got a moment, take a look and if you “Like” the page, it will begin to show up in the News Feed on your Facebook page.

www.facebook.com/TailoredTastePersonalChef

Apple Cider Cocktail

After a recent visit to an orchard (*Distillery Lane Ciderworks* in Jefferson, MD) where I purchased wonderful unpasteurized apple cider, I decided a cocktail for Fall was in order. With a slight variation, here’s what I found on Food52.

- ¾ ounce simple syrup
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 ½ ounces bourbon (I like Jack Daniels)
- 4 ounces unpasteurized apple cider

Mix simple syrup with cinnamon and put in a cocktail shaker. Add bourbon and apple cider. Add ice. Cover and shake. Strain into a chilled glass and garnish with a slice of your favorite apple.

Variations on Pesto

We had a bumper crop of a new (to me) variety of basil this summer called Columnar Basil. Dense, bushy and about 3 feet tall but only about 18 inches wide, this small-leafed basil has a more peppery bite than traditional Genovese (sweet) Basil and makes a wonderful pesto – with or without nuts. Here is my basic nut-free version.



½ cup (packed tightly) fresh basil
½ cup spinach OR arugula
2 tablespoons Parmesan, grated
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

Roughly chop the basil and spinach (or arugula or kale or other green leafy plant). Then place the basil, greens and Parmesan in a food processor.

Spin until the ingredients are minced. With the machine running, drizzle the olive oil through the chute in the lid of the processor until the pesto is formed. Store in the fridge or freezer. The top layer of the pesto will darken but this won't affect the flavor.

Most pesto includes nuts of some sort with pine nuts being the most authentic. I've successfully used pecans and walnuts in place of pine nuts, and as above, I've omitted them entirely with great success.

What I've Been Reading

Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children by Ransom Riggs

What a fun book this is and easily the highlight of my beach reading this summer. The hero is a teen boy who is beginning to doubt the fantastic stories about the unusual children of his grandfather's youth. The grandfather's sudden death sets the boy's world on end and leads him across the ocean to the home where his grandfather lived. There he discovers the truth about his grandfather and himself. The ending leaves room for sequels which made me very happy as I didn't want to leave this world.

Swamplandia by Karen Russell

This book has been on my "To Read" list for a few years and it was a total disappointment. I didn't care for the cast of characters making the entire read a slog.

Bruno, Chief of Police by Martin Walker

Set in southwestern France in the wee town of St. Denis, this book introduces us to Bruno Courreges, the local policeman who carries no gun and lives a peaceful life until, of course, there is a murder. This is a more intelligent and nuanced read than most formulaic mysteries on the market. Sequels follow and are worth reading. The author is a journalist (UPI and The Guardian) and a senior director of the Global Business Policy Council. He has a second home in Perigord, France.

Immoveable Feast: A Paris Christmas by John Baxter

A witty book about an Australian man who impetuously moves to Paris to marry a French woman. (He doesn't speak French!) He discovers her family Christmas dinner is THE meal of the year and he is given the job of preparing it for all 18 of her skeptical relatives. Fun ensues.

A Prayer for Owen Meany by John Irving

I read this book nearly 25 years ago and enjoyed it immensely. I rarely re-read books – there are just too many new ones to read – but I decided to revisit the diminutive Owen Meany and am glad I did. Since I know the plot, I can enjoy the language and the turns of phrases this time around. This truly is one of the best books I've read and clearly John Irving's finest novel.

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