

Our friends are still talking about the great evening they all had (12 of us) at our house. We were all very impressed with all the wonderful food you created for our sit down dinner. You made us all feel very special, you were very informative and professional, and will not hesitate to recommend your services to anyone. We will definitely be doing this again ! Thank you again Jason for being so patient with us in organizing the menu, from all the appetizers to the dessert, it was truly a wonderful evening that we will never forget.
— **Ken & Christine,**
Orangeville

“Local” is the new “Organic”

You probably started hearing people refer to food as “organic” about 10 years ago. The word is used to refer to food that was produced without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides/herbicides. That word “organic” is now used on many products as a way of saying it is better for you than the conventional version.

Have you heard much about “local” food? The idea behind promoting local food is to support our local economy while helping the environment by not shipping food away from where it is grown. As much as we all love the look of strawberries in February, we are almost always disappointed when we get them home.

Locally grown food tastes better than imported counterparts because it is harvested at the peak of ripeness and spared a cross country trip in a truck.

I am a big fan of farmers markets, which are popping up all over, even

during the week in many locations. Buying directly from the farmers give you a chance to save money and meet the people who grow your food. As well as you help them make a better profit by cutting out the middle man.

Alternately, many grocery stores are labelling which items are locally grown to help you make informed decisions.

Something our society has moved away from is preserving food for the winter. You can save money and savour the freshest local produce all winter long by learning how to preserve food. You can pickle, can, and freeze many vegetables and fruit for later consumption. [Here](#) is a website that shows you what vegetables are ready and when so you can keep your eyes peeled for the freshest of local produce.

Ask for local products when shopping and support our local farmers whenever possible.

HoneyCrisp, Empire, and Mutsu... Oh My!

Apple season is upon us and here are some of my favourites:

Honeycrisp: A cross between Macoun and a Honeygold apple developed at the University of Minnesota. The macoun is similar to a Macintosh apple but smaller with richer coloured skin and a sweet tartness. The Honeygold is similar to a golden delicious with a sweeter but less complex flavour. The two apples produce a fabulous apple for hand eating as it is extra crisp with a sweet, tart, floral smelling flesh with hints of spice. I love them!

Empire apples are from New York, the empire state. Developed in 1966 they are similar to Macintosh with a much crunchier texture, a little sweeter, and subtle tartness ideal for hand eating.

Mutsu apples are a cross between Golden delicious apples and Indo apples from Japan. They are very large with a sweet, creamy texture which makes for a great all purpose apple. I prefer them for cooking/baking along with Cortland or Northern Spy apples.

Find an orchard [here](#) for local apples.

Coconut Cream Power Porridge

With the season turning cold quickly it's nice to wake up to a delicious, filling, and healthy breakfast. The following recipe features the only grain that provides a complete protein, Quinoa, along with a high fiber, low glycemic index grain, oats, which makes it an ideal combination for anyone trying to eat healthier.

- 1 Cup Steel cut/Irish Oats
- 1/2 Cup Quinoa
- 1 can Organic Coconut milk
- 1/2 Cup unsweetened coconut, shredded
- 1/4 Cup brown sugar
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground Cardamom
- 1/2 tsp ground Nutmeg
- 5 cups water
- 1/2 tsp salt

1. Combine all ingredients in saucepan over medium heat.
2. Bring to boil stirring occasionally
3. Once mixture is boiling, cover and turn heat off
4. Let sit overnight
5. In morning divide into 6-8 containers.

NOTE: You can use a slow cooker by adding all ingredients and leaving overnight on high.

To re-heat:

1. Place porridge in microwave safe bowl.
2. Heat on high for 2-3 min
3. Add milk, maple syrup, walnuts, or brown sugar and enjoy!

Tasty & Simple Dinners are a Braise!

So you are trying to save a little money and you see some meat on sale but have no idea how to cook it. The answer most likely is: braise. Braising something means to cook a food at a low temperature for a long time with enough liquid to almost cover the food item 80%.

If you use a slow cooker, then you have a braising machine; hooray for you! Feel free to skip to the recipe link.

Slow cookers develop a low heat and can keep it there for a long time. You might notice slow cooker recipes all have liquid too. The reason is because that cheap piece of meat probably has a lot of connective tissue that needs to cook for a long time to become soft. In fact, that tough connective tissue will eventually break down and melt into gelatine which will leave the meat tender and moist feeling.

The best part is that cheap cut of meat has much more flavour than

an expensive, tender cut because the tough meat was used more, thus imparting more flavour. So you get to save money and have tasty food at the same time.

To braise you need a large pot with a lid that can hold the meat you want to cook. You also need some liquid and here is a chance to add more flavour with wine, beer, stock/broth, juice, or even coffee or tea. Onions, carrots, and celery will add flavour to the sauce/gravy but you can use whatever you have on hand.

First you will want to brown the outside of the meat over medium high heat, then add vegetables and liquid. Bring to boil and cover with lid. Now you can either turn the heat down to low/medium-low on the stovetop or put the whole pot into a 350 degree oven for 2-3 hours until tender. Serve with your favourite side dishes or crusty bread.

[Here](#) is a great seasonal recipe for beef stew to try. Enjoy!



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