



the
thymes

First Alternative
NATURAL FOODS CO-OP

Summer 2021

June • July • August
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In this issue:

The Co-op Kitchen is Cooking Again • No Food Left Behind • An Interview with Riverland Family Farms • Take the Mid-Willamette Food Trail • Budget Recipes • and more!



First Alternative
NATURAL FOODS CO-OP

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The Co-op Thymes is a free quarterly magazine published by First Alternative Co-op. Available in our stores and around Corvallis, it can also be viewed online at firstalt.coop.

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Summer Thymes Powered by the People

Adam Payson, *Thymes Editor*

Jt's been a wild journey this past year and a half, but there's a growing sense that the roller coaster ride may finally be nearing its end. Of course, we can never tell what tomorrow will bring—just take a look at the next page—but we do know that whether we get our longed for return to normal or not, the Co-op Community will be here guiding and supporting us every step of the way, keeping the community-at-large healthy, happy, and well fed.

For more than half a century, we've been able to focus on food and fairness with the support of our staff, Owners, shoppers, Board members, and all the local farms, businesses, and organizations we've had the pleasure of working with. We couldn't do it without you.



From humble beginnings in a crowded house to our expansion to two stores, you've helped us weather competition coming to town (multiple times), a pandemic, and most recently a devastating fire. Through it all, we know we're exactly where we want to be, in a community that loves to cooperate and eat great.

After a fire at our South Store annex, the community came together to feed our shoppers and help support our staff. Learn more on the next page!

Shop like you own it!

Become a Co-op Owner Online

Visit firstalt.coop/ownership to join a cooperative family 12,000 people strong and growing!

Benefits include: **Owner Sale Day**, one day per month where you get 10% off on items not already on sale. • **Voting privileges**, allowing you to guide the Co-op's future course by selecting Board members and Beans for Bags recipients. • And a **sense of pride** from knowing you are invested in the local economy, local farms and businesses, and in organic and sustainable food democracy. 🥬



The Co-op Kitchen is Cooking Again

We're excited and grateful to be back to cooking for you

After a year that showed us anything could happen, it still came as a shock when an early morning fire in late January destroyed the Co-op Kitchen and almost everything else in our South Store annex building.

Thankfully, nobody was hurt, brave first responders prevented damage to the store, and the community rallied in support, donating over \$8,000 to a GoFundMe campaign by the Corvallis Chamber and Downtown Association to help fill gaps not covered by insurance.

Meanwhile, local producers helped keep the Co-op community fed. We owe a huge thanks to **Wild Yeast Bakery, Whole Flower Farms, Bodhi Bakery, Mamalia's Baklava, Elegant Elephant, Trazza, Higher Taste, and New Cascadia Bakery**, all of whom stepped up deliveries and production to meet the needs of our hungry shoppers.

You'll continue to find their superb, locally-made foods in the Deli alongside your returning favorites, which are being made fresh in our temporary kitchen space downtown. We're excited and grateful to be bringing you many of your old favorites, with some new twists. Our famous fresh-baked cupcakes are back in new paper 4-packs and with a fresh new look that goes great with the taste you love. (We're also excited to bring this more eco-friendly packaging to other products in the kitchen!)

Grab 'N' Go faves, like seasonal green salads made with organic produce and hummus made from organic garbanzo beans are back in your life—with more options coming all the time—and you can start your day once again with our breakfast wraps, made with local DeCasa Tortillas and cage free eggs. **The Co-op Kitchen is cooking for you again!** 🥬



We're so excited to be in this temporary kitchen space in downtown Corvallis.



Maria puts the finishing touches on new cupcake 4-packs—your old faves have a new look.



Ryan's got your rellenos right here! Look for Chile Rellenos Casserole in the Grab 'N' Go today!

No Food Left Behind Gets Ahead of Wasted Food

Keep good food from going to waste while saving money

So, you're a conscientious consumer and shopper at First Alternative Co-op who cares about the health of the planet while wrangling a monthly food budget. But there's still a good chance that some portion of your monthly groceries will end up in the compost bin or garbage cart. In fact, the average American family of four wastes \$1,600/year worth of food—the equivalent of trashing one out of every four bags of groceries purchased!

Not just a food insecurity issue, wasted food is also the third largest contributor to global climate change. According to Paul Hawken and Project Drawdown, wasting less food is also the third best method to reverse it, becoming number one when combined with eating a plant-based diet.

Wasted food *at home* is actually the U.S.'s largest contributor to the problem, followed by restaurants, caterers, then grocers (NRDC, 2017 report). That's where No Food Left Behind, a project of the Waste Prevention Action Team of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition, comes in.

The program was established in 2018 through a grant from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. No Food Left Behind Founder and Director Jeanette Hardison explains, "Our goal is to keep good food from going to waste, helping you save money by preventing wasteful habits."

No Food Left Behind's website and "Kitchen Confessions" blog offer a variety of resources, in both English and Spanish, to help you waste less every day and at every meal. These Smart Strategies include:

- **"Eat First!"**

Signs to place in fridge leftovers area or on specific items to help you reach for those foods first!



- **A-Z Fruit & Veggie Storage Guide** to keep food fresh until you can prepare and eat it, and demystify food "expiration" dates.
- **Freezer Inventory Form** to track what's buried in there, avoid waste from freezer burn, and prevent overbuying.
- **D.I.Y. Wasted Food Discovery Form** to track which foods you're wasting and why, and calculate how much money that cost you!

Outreach Specialist Karen Kos occasionally **hosts an informational table at local Farmers' Markets**, giving visitors the opportunity to check their "Food Storage IQ" and pick up one of the Smart Strategies above, as well as a free countertop compost collection pail. Some even pledge publicly to waste less food in their households!



The average American family of four throws away 25% of their food, wasting \$1,600 per year! Learn how to keep food from going to waste at nofoodleftbehindcorvallis.org.



Picking up Smart Strategies at the Farmers' Market



The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic forced No Food Left Behind to shift its outreach online, but thankfully, a new Kitchen Confessions blog was in the works, taking an upbeat, conversational approach to discuss preventing wasted food at home.

Personal confessions and “lessons learned” by the No Food Left Behind staff are a recurring feature, along with tips, strategies and tools, reinforcing key No Food Left Behind messages such as “Buy What You Can Eat/ Eat What You Buy” and “Prep Now/Eat Later.”

Other Kitchen Confessions topics have included: home food preservation; using the freezer and keeping it happy; conducting your own home wasted food audit; decoding those “Best By/Use By” labels on food packaging; and “zero waste” recipes.

In March 2021, No Food Left Behind also launched its first-ever Leftovers Recipe Contest to encourage creative cookery with food that might otherwise get wasted. A drawing for three \$30 Co-op gift cards was conducted from the resulting 25 recipes, which incorporated everything from veggie peels and onion skins to carrot tops and leftover spaghetti.



Tabling at Corvallis Southtown Farm Stand & Market

All recipes from the contest will appear in a new section on No Food Left Behind's website.

No Food Left Behind is also increasing its Spanish language outreach, distributing translated Smart Strategies to key spots in town and on its website. This focus on equity and inclusion will extend into Corvallis schools

in the fall, when a newly-digitized classroom presentation in both English and Spanish will be available to local 4th and 5th grade teachers.

EcoEduTainer, Kjersten Hallin, is excited to share her musical and educational message. As Kjersten explains, “I want students to feel empowered by knowing that their choices matter and that every small action helps our food go the distance!”

Find out how you can reduce your carbon footprint and slow global climate change by wasting less food in your home, saving money in the process. Subscribe to No Food Left Behind's blog, “like” their Facebook page (facebook.com/NFLBCorvallis), look for its tables at local markets, and visit the website for Smart Strategies, apps and more at nofoodleftbehindcorvallis.org.

Visit & bookmark: nofoodleftbehindcorvallis.org/kitchen-confessions



NO FOOD LEFT BEHIND
- CORVALLIS -



CORVALLIS sustainability COALITION

No Food Left Behind is a project of the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition's Waste Prevention Action Team

What's In Your Pack?

Co-op staff share their outdoor adventure essentials



The Three Sisters, viewed from Lowder Mountain

We are lucky to live in a part of the world with so many amazing places to hit the trails, explore the forest, climb the mountains, relax by a lake, or sleep under the stars. When you pack your bag for your favorite outdoor activity, what do you always bring with you? How do you make sure you're prepared and have what you need to keep yourself fueled for the fun? Here are responses from just a few of our adventuresome Co-op staff members.



Lisa

Grocery Stocker, North Store

Hiking & Backpacking

are favorite ways for Lisa to nurture her mental, emotional, and physical health. In her own words, "Connecting with nature

is healing. I experience a clearing away of toxicity and a bringing forth of what is essential. Whether it is hiking to a climbing crag, alpine trekking for a summit push, or a meditative walk on Dave's Trail in McDonald Forest, I always bring my backpack filled with necessary items. Colin King, a former Produce manager, once told me that my backpack was surgically attached to my back because he never saw me without it."



Emily

Brand Manager

Hiking & Trail Running

are favorite forms of exercise and adventure for Emily. She loves getting outside, exploring new places, and

challenging herself. She explains, "the sense of joy and accomplishment you get when you make it to the top of a mountain on a run is a special feeling and the freedom of flying back down the trail really gets those endorphins flowing!" This summer she hopes to explore new running trails, train for a 30k, and hike to the top of the South Sister for the first time. She'll need to keep her pantry stocked with plenty of healthy foods to fuel summer adventures that ambitious!

What's in Lisa's Pack?



GoMacro Sweet Awakening & Everlasting Joy, 40 oz. water in a Hydroflask, C2O Coconut Water, Suzi's Botanical Bug-off Spray

What's in Emily's Pack?



Bulk Dried Mango, Hummingbird Pacific Coast Blend, Nuun Hydration Tabs, Justin's Almond Butter Packet, Pro Bar Meal Bars



Rikky
Front End Assistant Manager,
South Store

Hiking is an activity that Rikky enjoys each summer. As a good former boy scout, he knows how to be prepared on his outings

into the wilderness. In particular, he likes to bring travel-sized products like hand sanitizer and sunscreen such as those you can find in the Co-op's Wellness Department.

What's in Rikky's Pack?



Ultima Electrolyte Drink Mix, Dr. Bronner's Organic Hand Sanitizer Spray, RX Bar Protein Bar, Bulk Spicy Nut Mix



Traeger
Customer Service, North Store

Mountain Biking is one of Traeger's passions. When he's not ringing up groceries with a ready smile, you might find him heading up or down a mountain

on two wheels. Nutrition plays a key role in successfully competing in endurance mountain bike races. Traeger finds that after a grueling competition, he needs to recharge his body with a nice big bowl of oatmeal and fresh fruit. He also enjoys mountaineering and backpacking and likes to make his own trail mix using various foods from the Co-op Bulk Department.

What's in Traeger's Pack?



Bulk Sesame Sticks, Clif Bar, Cosmic Crisp Apple, Rebbl Reishi Chocolate Elixir, Patagonia Provisions Soup Mix



Melanie
Proxy Order Lead, South Store

Camping is just one of the many things Melanie likes to do in the great outdoors with her partner and her busy little 18-month-old daughter. The

entire family loves to bird watch, and little Josie can spot and name a handful of birds now too, including the Spotted Towhee! These days "inside is boring" and the family is always finding excuses to get outside, including camping, hiking, and tending a community garden plot. Experience has taught Melanie to never leave home without plenty of healthy snacks from the Co-op!

What's in Melanie's Pack?



La Mancha Hazelnuts, Annie's Cheddar Bunnies, Bulk Fig Bars, Mandarin, Mamma Chia Chia Squeeze, Badger Baby Sunscreen



John
Produce Stocker, South Store

Bicycling isn't just how John gets to work most days, it's also something he enjoys as a way to experience the beauty of

the Northwest landscape. He toured Eastern Oregon and the Olympic Peninsula with the Mid-Valley Bicycle Club and also took a trip using a number of rails-to-trails routes from Eastern Washington to Montana, near where he grew up in St. Ignatius. 🍌

What's in John's Pack?



Delreal Medjool Dates, Seasonal Organic Fresh Fruit, Bulk Walnuts and Bulk Raisins

Know Your Farmer: Riverland Family Farm

A conversation with two of Corvallis' newest farmers

Jt's always exciting to meet new neighbors, especially when they're keen to give you a tour of their amazing backyard—twenty acres of splendid organic farm north of Corvallis overlooking the Jackson-Frazier Wetlands.

If the locale sounds familiar, it's because we've taken you there before, when it was called Denison Farms.

You already know (and love) the produce, now we'd like to introduce you to the new stewards who will continue bringing it to the Co-op, the Farmers' Market, and your kitchen table—Riverland Family Farms.

Here are excerpts from Produce Assistant Manager and Owner Relations Committee member Patrick's recent interview with brothers-in-law, friends, and farmers Tal and Inder about the farm and their belief that good soil, good seed, and good sustainable farming practices make the best food. *(Edited for brevity and clarity.)*

Patrick: Tell us about your background and your previous experiences with farming.

Tal: We are from India originally. I migrated to the U.S. when I was twenty years old, and our families have been farming for many generations back in India. We are from a state called Punjab, which is mostly agricultural.

My dad, grandfather, my great grandfather—all of them were farmers. While growing up, I was fairly involved with farming while going to school.

Inder: We're from the same state, Punjab, but didn't know each other. Like Tal said, it's primarily an agricultural state. The lifestyle, the food, and the music—everything is agriculture-based.

He and my sister met here, in California when we were living there. I came to the US when I was twelve to thirteen years old. I didn't have much hands-on experience with farming back home—I was pretty young—but I was on the tractor with my dad and in the fields. He grew wheat, corn, and sugar cane.

Before coming to Corvallis, I worked in tech in Dallas, Texas. I did that for about six years and sitting in the office wasn't my thing. Every time I drove by an open field, I was like that's where I want to be, like the blood calling back, I guess.

We were looking for an opportunity to farm when we came across this place. We started talking to Tom and he was pretty picky about who he wanted to hand the farm off to. We met him three times. One thing led to another and here we are.

Patrick: How did you end up here in Corvallis?

Tal: Originally when we landed in the U.S., we were in the San Francisco Bay Area. We had to move to Texas, and I spent a year on the East Coast, but we always wanted to get back to the West Coast. My sister-in-law, his sister, had been visiting Oregon for quite some time and narrowed it down to Corvallis.



Tal (left) and Inder in their cherry orchard



We were planning to move here in 3-4 years, but this opportunity came, and it just worked out very quickly—more quickly than we anticipated.

Inder: We have family in Seattle and Vancouver, BC, so Corvallis was a good idea. Small, but not too small with lots of activities—even though we found out we don't have time for anything. I guess it's good for the kids!

Patrick: Where did the name come from?

Inder: I think we spent more time than anything else debating the name. It has a significant meaning to us. Punjab, where we're from, means "five rivers." They flow from the foothills of the Himalayas through Punjab. That's one reason and the other is the Willamette River, right here. We combined them both and liked the way it sounded.

Tal: It's a part of our history, where we are from originally.

Patrick: What are you most proud of so far with the farm?

Tal: We're pretty new to this, so just weathering the last year was an achievement.

Inder: One thing which will continue to challenge us is tapping into our creativity to manage the farm. Initially we had forty acres but now we have twenty [Riverland is now sharing the Denison land with Commonplace Farm – See Spring 2021 Thymes] and we're trying to have the same variety and volume of produce.

Patrick: Is there anything you're interested in growing or excited as a farmer to bring to the community?

Tal: We'd like to add a little more of the Indian flavor. We started that last year with eggplant and this year we're growing more. We're considering growing okra, which is very popular in India.

Inder: Pretty much everything like that can grow in this climate, we're growing. Other things would be pretty challenging, like guava—that's way outside the box. Maybe sugar cane. I don't know if anyone will buy that.

Patrick: What advice would you give newer farmers coming in to replace the older generation, like you are?

Tal: Experience helps. We don't have a lot of experience ourselves but can rely on our parents back home who have farmed for thirty to forty years. We got lucky, too, because Tom had a crew with years of experience, and they're still with us.

Inder: And Tom himself.

Tal: We know we can rely on his advice, which is nice.

Inder: Really, it depends on the individual. What their knowledge base, capacity, and risk-taking ability is. Take risks, be confident, and have patience. You're only going to learn by making mistakes and talking to someone who's done it before. Learning from someone's experience is a very good way to get ahead of where you are in life.

continued on next page



Thanks to Riverland Family Farms, we can count on local salad greens almost all year!

continued from previous page

Patrick: What's been your favorite part about being in the community?

Tal: We look forward to going to the Farmers' Market and interacting with the local community. Honestly, we were a little skeptical at the beginning, being outsiders, but we are amazed at the response we've received from our community. People are so nice and supportive. We really enjoy interacting and answering questions.

Inder: It's been great. Like Tal said, it was definitely in the back of our head, "how will we be received in the community?" But it's been amazing. People are nice, accepting, supportive. We don't get to go out much—except Farmers' Market—but we get plenty of interaction there.

Patrick: What do you think about local partnerships, like the one between the Co-op and Riverland?

Inder: It's a relationship that benefits us tremendously. And also, community members, who can shop for local produce every day of the week from plenty of different farms, including ours. It gives us another venue for sales, allowing us to diversify—another tip for young farmers. The Co-op is really a partner and a priority. After markets and our CSA, we think about the Co-op. It's great to have a local store that helps farmers provide a venue to sell their produce.

Patrick: What's your favorite item on the farm—what are you pulling up for yourselves at the end of the day?

Tal: [laughing and gesturing to Inder] He's the chef. I mostly eat raw.

Inder: We'll walk around the farm and pull up a carrot or some broccoli and just eat it raw. Peas are good for that too. This time of year, I like making a cherry tomato salad. Just chop up some cherry tomatoes and add a little bit of olive oil and seasoning if you'd like. Our tomatoes have plenty of flavor. You can top it with some feta cheese and some balsamic vinegar, if you like.

Patrick: Any tips you can pass from the farm to our local gardeners?

Inder: Composting definitely keeps the soil healthy, and it'll pay dividends for years to come.

Tal: It takes a lot to grow, so pay close attention to the needs of the plants. Water on time and spot diseases and pests early on. 🥒



Tal, Patrick, and Inder (left to right) talk fresh, local, organic produce.

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 Quarterly

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- 12 pm - Think Out Loud
- 1 pm - Fresh Air
- 2 pm - The World
- 3 pm - The Daily
- 3:30 pm - All Things Considered

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Synergy Cheddar

A delicious new cheese made for and by cooperatives

Being a successful cooperative is all about synergy. It's why our little community-owned grocery store can compete with national chains. Fifty-plus years of cooperation between staff, Owners, shoppers, farmers, and food-makers (to name a few) has helped build First Alternative into an important social center and a resilient thread in our local food web. Maybe it's a little hokey, but it's never been cheesy—until now.

Introducing Synergy Cheddar

This sweet, nutty cheese cooperatively made by two award-winning Vermont cheese makers, Cabot Creamery and Jasper Hill Farm, Synergy cheddar supports co-op to co-op trade and is available exclusively at co-ops like First Alternative.

Synergy starts with a recipe jointly produced by Cabot and Jasper Hill. Cabot produces the cheese and does the initial aging before select vats—handpicked by Jasper Hill and Cabot's expert graders—are transferred to Jasper Hill's underground aging vaults.

Upon arrival to "Vault 5," a temperature and humidity controlled cave, blocks are coated with lard, brushed, and turned in order to cultivate a living natural rind, traditional methods that impart unique complexity to the cheese. That's cooperation! 🌱

syn·er·gy /'sɪnərjē/ *noun*

The interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects.



A  Exclusive!

**Synergy Cheese with Apple Hill Farms
Apple Butter and La Panzanella Mini
Croccantini Artisan Crackers**



Hot Grill Summer: Going to the Grill Beyond

Beyond burgers and steaks, an endless summer of options

Grilling hot dogs and brats all summer is fine—in fact, it's delicious, especially with the local, grass-fed meats we carry at the Co-op—but a trip to the Produce department, the Deli, and even the freezer section will really fire up your grill this summer.

Built to Grill: Fresh corn on the cob comes in its own grill-friendly natural packaging. Before you grill, peel back the husks, remove the silks and, with the husk back in place, soak the ears in cold water for 30 minutes. Grill the corn for 15-20 minutes,



turning every few minutes. Sliced zukes, quartered bell peppers, mushrooms, whole carrots, Walla Walla sweet onions, asparagus, and cauliflower sliced into steaks—they're all great on the grill! To prevent sticking, cook at a medium heat and coat the grill and veggies with oil. You can also use a barrier of foil.

Sweets and Spectacular: Juicy, sweet peaches, apricots, and nectarines are all great on the grill. Just halve them, remove the stone, and coat with oil before grilling. Or try the real peach of a recipe for peach & pork kabobs we've got below.

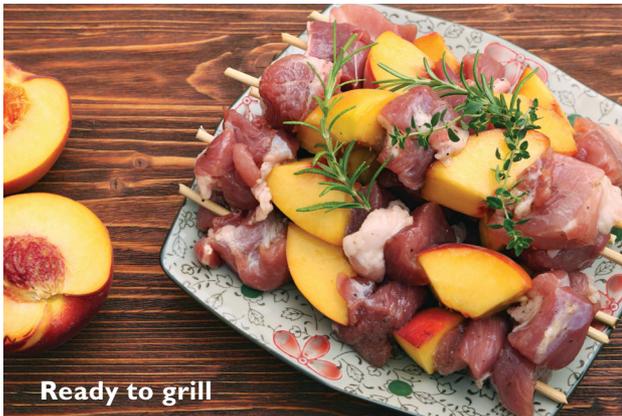
For a dessert that's as cool as it is delicious, grill up some pineapple and ice cream, an old favorite from Donna's Kitchen that we always like to bring out in the summer. Feel free to substitute your favorite non-dairy ice cream, or get adventurous with the flavors.

Pork & Peach Kabobs

1 package Lonely Lane Pork Kabob Cuts
2-4 peaches

Cut peaches into pieces about the size of the pork kabobs. If using wood skewers, soak them in water for 30 minutes. Place pieces on skewers, alternating between peach and pork. Place loaded skewers on the grill. Turning skewers regularly, cook until pork has reached an internal temperature of at least 145° F.

This recipe comes to us courtesy of North Store Produce Manager, Kyle. He promises, "delicious sweet and savory craziness in yo mouth!"



Ready to grill

Grilled Pineapple & Ice Cream

1 pineapple, peeled, eyes removed,
and sliced into ¾" rounds
2 Tbsp. butter, melted
1 Pint of your favorite vanilla ice cream

Place pineapple slices on grill. Brush with melted butter. Turn slices over and brush second side with butter. Grill over medium heat, 3-4 minutes until grill marks form. Turn fruit to make perpendicular marks, grilling 3-4 minutes more. Let cool. Cut core out of each slice. Scoop vanilla ice cream on top of each slice. Serve immediately. 



Ready to eat

Donna's Kitchen



Donna Tarasawa
Outreach Specialist



BUDGET RECIPES

Keep cooking at firstalt.coop/recipes
& firstalt.coop/budget-bites.

We love helping you cook just about as much as we love saving you money and with Budget Recipes, we get it all! You get simple, healthful recipes packed with natural ingredients that won't break the bank. Here are four more for summer-ready dishes we hope you and your families will love. Find everything you need at the Co-op, where everyone can shop and anyone saves.

One Pot Greek Pasta Simple to make, a delight to eat, and easy to clean up! Enjoy the aromatic pasta with the mild flavor of fennel bulb in a simple tomato-based sauce. Feel free to skimp or omit the olives and feta if you want to lower the price tag a bit. If you're in the mood for meat, sausage or chicken would make a tasty addition.

Chicken Ensalada You can't miss with corn and cumin! That delicious flavor combo takes this salad to the next level. It's a healthy and a satisfying meal that's easy to make and easy to customize. If you like it spicy, spice it to your liking with your favorite chili powder, red pepper, chili flakes, or hot sauce.

Tempeh Banh Mi Quick to make, low-cost, and healthy, you can whip these simple vegetarian sandwiches up in a flash and their perfect for a tasty lunch or dinner any day of the week. Like the Ensalada, feel free to spice it up to your liking.

BBQ Beef Potatoes A simple veggie side like a salad or some steamed broccoli is the perfect complement to this hearty meat and potatoes main dish. (You can easily substitute your favorite vegetarian beef too, and make it an entirely vegetarian meal!)



BUDGET BITES

A budget-minded meal plan

6 dinners for 2 adults. Menu on back page.

PLANT-BASED BITES *SPRING 2021 VOL. 12*



Budget Bites is our free quarterly booklet featuring six dinners for two adults. Grab a free copy in the store or read current and back issues at firstalt.coop/budget-bites!

In the latest edition: Black-eyed Pea Burgers with Avocado Mustard, Jackfruit Tacos with Mango Salsa, Creamy Cannellini Soup, and more.



One Pot Greek Pasta



\$3.79
per serving

Note: prices may vary, estimate only.



Chicken Ensalada



\$2.84
per serving

Note: prices may vary, estimate only.



Tempeh Banh Mi



\$4.05
per serving

Note: prices may vary, estimate only.



BBQ Beef Potatoes



\$3.86
per serving

Note: prices may vary, estimate only.

One Pot Greek Pasta

Ingredients:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2 cups vegetable broth | 2 cloves garlic, minced |
| 1 (8 oz) can tomato sauce | 1 tsp ea. oregano and basil |
| 1 tsp olive oil | 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar |
| 2 oz (about 1.5 cups) pasta | salt & pepper to taste |
| ½ fennel bulb, sliced | ¼ cup kalamata olives |
| ½ onion, chopped | ¼ cup feta |

Instructions: Mix all ingredients except feta and olive in a pot. Cover and bring to a boil. Remove lid and simmer over medium heat until pasta is finished cooking. Top with kalamata olives and feta and serve.

Estimated price per serving: \$3.79

Chicken Ensalada

Ingredients:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 chicken breast | 2 cups shredded lettuce |
| ¾ tsp sea salt, divided | ½ cup sliced black olives |
| Pepper to taste | ¼ cup sour cream |
| 1 Tbsp olive oil | ¼ cup grated |
| ½ onion, chopped | Parmesan cheese |
| 1 cup frozen corn | ½ cup salsa, optional |
| 1 tsp ground cumin | |

Instructions: Boil chicken in water with ½ tsp sea salt, until cooked through, 15-20 minutes. Drain and chop into small bite-sized pieces. Heat a skillet and add oil. Sauté onion in oil until tender. Add corn and cumin; sauté 2 minutes. Add chicken and heat through. Add ¼ tsp salt, and pepper to taste; stir. Serve chicken mixture over a bed of lettuce, topped with olives, sour cream, Parmesan cheese and salsa.

Estimated price per serving: \$2.84

BBQ Beef Potatoes

Ingredients:

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 large russet potatoes | 1 ½ tsp white vinegar |
| ½# ground beef | ⅛ tsp garlic powder |
| 1 clove garlic, minced | ¼ tsp smoked salt |
| ¼ onion, diced | 1 ½ tsp tamari |
| ¼ cup ketchup | 1 ½ tsp lemon juice |
| 1 ½ tsp brown sugar | |

Instructions: Wash and prick potatoes. Bake at 350°F about 75 minutes or until tender. Cook ground beef, onion and garlic, breaking beef up, until beef is browned. Add remaining ingredients, simmer 20-30 minutes. Serve over split potatoes.

Estimated price per serving: \$3.86

Tempeh Banh Mi

Ingredients:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ½ Breadstop French baguette | 2 Tbsp tamari |
| 1 block tempeh, cut to ¼ inch slices | Pinch of chili flakes |
| ½ tsp garlic powder | ½ cup shredded cabbage |
| ½ tsp onion powder | ½ cup chopped cilantro |
| 1 Tbsp sesame oil | Mayonnaise, to taste |
| | ½ cucumber, sliced thin |

Instructions: Sprinkle tempeh with onion and garlic powder and sauté in oil until crispy and golden. Flip and cook the other side. Sprinkle with tamari and chili flakes. Reserve ½ of tempeh for salad. Assemble on baguette with mayo, cilantro, cucumber, and cabbage

Estimated price per serving: \$4.05

Melons Sweeten the Summer

A look at some of summer's tastiest organic treats

Thousands of years before the reusable water bottle was even a glimmer in a thirsty eye, melons were carrying water. Bred from bitter, hard shelled wild melons that would be smashed open for their liquid, they first appear in the historical records of Africa and Southwest Asia. Pharaohs were buried with early seeds, presumably to help keep them hydrated in the afterlife. They traveled with living adventurers too. Like nature's own canteen, watermelons helped fuel trading expeditions from Egypt to the Mediterranean, and eventually to Europe.

Over the centuries, selective breeding of watermelon turned the bitter flesh sweet and, at the same time, introduced the rich red color we associate with it. The gene in the fruit that determines sugar content is paired with gene that creates the color red, so the higher the sugar content in a watermelon, the richer its the red flesh will appear.

Seedless Science

Red seedless watermelon are one of our top selling melons year after year, but how do they work anyway? Buckle up, it's science time: It starts with chromosomes, the building blocks of living things that impart characteristics. A seedless watermelon is a sterile hybrid, created by crossing the male pollen from a standard "diploid" plant,

which has two copies of the same chromosomes with a "tetraploid" female watermelon flower packing four sets of chromosomes, the resulting watermelon will be a "triploid" with three sets of chromosomes. The odd number of chromosomes haywires the seed production, making them sterile and leaving the seeds as edible husks.

In addition to regular red seedless, look for mini seedless watermelons this summer at the Co-op. This single-serving fruit treat has a thin rind, so they're actually packed with hydrating goodness.

Yes We Cantaloupe

Even the ever-popular seedless watermelon can't beat the cantaloupe, America's most eaten melon. A more accurate name for it is "reticulated musk melon," which is fun. Reticulated refers to its net-like outer skin, musk to its deeply sweet aroma. The European cantaloupe, original bearer of the name, lacks that fun reticulation and has a harder rind.

A ripe cantaloupe will be firm but not hard and feel heavier than it looks, due in part to all those delicious sugars that developed as it ripened.

Melon and On...

As summer wears on, the fresh, local, organic melons will keep rolling in. Some of our favorites

include the **casaba**, a uniquely textured melon with a ridged rind and a vaguely pumpkin-like shape. It's named for Kasaba, Turkey where it was first exported to the states from.

Can't decide between a honeydew or the cantaloupe? Go with a **Galia**, it's a hybrid of the two and every bit as delicious as both, if not more!

You'll leap for joy after you try a delicious **Piel del Sapo**. Its name means "skin of the toad," and it sure looks it. No worries, though, it's all melon, with a syrupy sweet interior. Look for a hint of yellow in the skin to tell its ripe, then hop to it.

Like its feline namesake, the **snow leopard** melon is elusive in the wild. Look for it at the Co-op instead. Basically a single-serving honeydew, it has firm white flesh that matches its snowy exterior. You can tell it's ripe by giving it a shake and listening for rattling seeds, the roar of the snow leopard.

Take a taster's trip to Italy with a delightful **Tuscan** melon. They're loaded with vitamins A and C in addition to lots of helpful folate and lycopene. Those distinctive green grooves on its skin will turn gold as it ripens, so watch your melon for optimal enjoyment!

Look for these organic melons (and others) this summer at the Co-op. 

Left to right: seedless watermelon, cantaloupe, casaba, Galia, Piel del Sapo, snow leopard, Tuscan

Get on the Mid-Willamette Food Trail

Eat, drink, and explore your way through the mid-Valley (with a stop at the Co-op)

With Oregon's bounty of beautiful farms, locally-focused creators, and handcrafted food and drink, our state is ripe with opportunity for exploration. To help locals and visitors discover all the treasures, Travel Oregon and local visitors associations partnered together to create the Oregon Food Trails.

These self-guided food trails, available for eight designated regions in Oregon, showcase farms and ranches, lodging, craft beverages, eateries, artisan products, and experiences throughout the state.

In our very own backyard, you will find the Mid-Willamette Valley Food Trail. From historic farms to scenic wineries, this food trail focuses on the food, drink, and agriculture offerings that make this area of the Willamette Valley special.

First Alternative Co-op is a proud member of the Mid-Willamette Valley Food Trail, offering locally-sourced groceries and products that help support your favorite local businesses and make the perfect addition to your picnic basket as you journey along the trail. Whether you're looking for the perfect summer vacation activity or a memorable long-weekend, the food trail offers curated itinerary recommendations to help make your trip-planning easy and stress free.



*Expect to run into lots of your Co-op friends out on the trail... Block 15 Brewing
Gathering Together Farm • Corvallis Environmental Center, Starker Arts Garden
for Education (SAGE) • 2 Towns Ciderhouse • The Thyme Garden & many more!*

Each self-guided journey on the Mid-Willamette Valley Food Trail features bountiful lands, historic farms, trailblazing spirits, and local businesses like these that are committed to sustainable practices meant to last through the next century and beyond. Take a sample tour on the next page...

Take a Trip Down the Trail: A Taster's Tour from Monroe to Albany

Start the day above a misty vineyard at **Bluebird Hill Cellars** farm and B&B north of Monroe, where breakfast comes with homemade jams. Then let your designated driver steer you toward **Tyee Wine Cellars** for vintage blends made on a 130-year-old family farm. If you visit in the summer, pick northern highbush blueberries at **Kiger Island Blues**; or enjoy apples and sweet cider, if you make the trip in the fall.

Afterward visit bike-friendly **First Alternative Co-op**, a Corvallis staple since 1970, to pack a picnic of local organic foods. Consider a sip trip with Oregon Travel Tours or for some pedal-powered fun, cycle the Kings Valley Loop to the next stops. Venture west to Philomath, where **Pheasant Court Winery** is known for distinctive big reds and dry whites.

Neighboring **Compton Family Wines** produces fruit-forward, earthy wines using French cooperage. At **Lumos Wine Company**, organic wine is poured in a former dude ranch barn—and you can stay in an original guest cabin. Nearby, a historic covered bridge acts as gatekeeper to **Harris Bridge Vineyard** and its specialty pinot gris and pinot noir vermouths.

Linger along the hillside of Monmouth's **Airlie Winery**, owned and operated by women, with nine signature varietals to enjoy. Then visit **Emerson Vineyards**, a multigenerational labor of love, for happy sips and fun conversations with the winemakers.

Your farm-to-table dinner is served at local favorite **Frankie's Restaurant** in Albany, a fine dining experience with casual ambiance. For a night cap and games, treat yourself to Albany's "brewstillery," **Deluxe Brewing** and **Sinister Distilling**. After all, you have a lot to cheers to.



Admire the vines at Tyee Wine Cellars



Take in a sunset at Lumos Wine Company



Dine in style at Frankie's Restaurant

More information, maps, and additional itinerary recommendations are available at MidWillametteValleyFoodTrail.com. Information about the other seven food trails throughout Oregon is available at OregonFoodTrails.com. The food trails encourage you to check ahead with all local businesses for seasonal information, hours of operation, and COVID-19 guidelines. 🍷

Wellness thyme Well into Summer

This summer, when you get back to the outdoors, keep the outdoors from getting you with a trip to the Co-op. More than just groceries, we've got everything you need to stay **well into summer**.

Glare Beware: with a stylish pair of **Blue Gem Sunglasses** you can keep your eyes wide open on the brightest of days and know they're safe from the sun's dangerous UV rays. Frames fit for every face!

Protect and Repel: Protect your skin and the planet with organic, reef-friendly **Badger sunscreens**. These mineral sunscreens offer organic broad-spectrum protection that blocks burn causing UVB rays, like traditional sunscreens, as well as harmful UVA rays. When the sun goes down and the bugs come out, send them packing with **Pranarom Bug Repellent Concentrate**. This blend of certified organic essential oils like eucalyptus and tea tree will take a night from mosquito to no-squito.

Stay Hydrated: With **Klean Kanteen Reusable Water Bottles**, hydration is always at your side. A variety of sizes and lids means there's something for every hike. Take that hydration to the next level with **Ener-C Multivitamin Drink Mix Packets**. With a sprinkle and a shake, you can put those electrolytes and vitamins right where they belong—in you! 🥤



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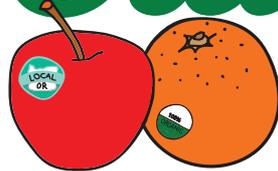
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Side ^{by} Side



At first such a basic ingredient (and by basic, I'm not referring to the pH level) might not inspire much excitement to the average shopper. Not to worry friends, you're in good company. Vinegar is one of those under celebrated, oft left to gather dust ingredients but I'm here to make the case for expanding your vinegar universe. **Vinegar deniers, you might find yourself thinking...**

I don't like sourtart flavors, vinegar just isn't my thing. That's okay! With many if not most foods, you're not supposed to be able to taste the vinegar over the other ingredients. Vinegar is meant to enhance and balance out other flavors. If this is the reason you stay away from exploring the vast vinegar universe, keep reading!

Acidic ingredients come in all shapes and sizes, the same person who hates cream cheese frosting might still love buttermilk frosting...let me repeat that, BUTTERMILK frosting, as in, it contains sour tasting milk and somehow is incredibly delicious, what is this, dark magic? Nah, it's just science and nature doing what they do best. A person who loves chocolate might hate coffee, but guess what? Both are acidic. Vinegar can be just as varied in flavor and effect. Intrigued? Good, keep going...

Vinegar is a one trick pony, not the most exciting thing to play with in the kitchen. Many of us first noticed vinegar as children in a condiment we didn't love. Mustard is often under appreciated by kids because the spice is accentuated or overstated (to young palates) because of the vinegar. What most kids don't realize is that their beloved ketchup wouldn't be the same without that same ingredient that makes mustard unpalatable to them. The point being, vinegar has very different effects depending on what it's mixed with. If you were one of those kids that hated both mustard and ketchup, you might be surprised to know that vinegar can enhance sweeter flavors. The first

time I saw strawberry balsamic vinegar preserves I thought someone was playing a dirty trick on me...until I tasted it. It wasn't sour, the balsamic vinegar wasn't noticeable. What was noticeable was the delicious extra strawberry-ness. Jams and preserves are basically fruit, sugar, and pectin so they can end up tasting a little flat if you crave more than just sweetness, leaving room for acidic ingredients like vinegar and citrus to make them shine.

I don't make my own salad dressing, so I don't need vinegar. While dressings are certainly one of the most common ways to use vinegar, it's not the only thing you can do with it. Here's some ideas to get your mouth watering: Homemade BBQ sauce • Delicious dipping sauces, think peanut sauce, sweet chili sauce, sweet and sour sauce • Marinades for all kinds of proteins, like adobo, teriyaki, or chimichurri • Tenderizing meats and keeping starchy potatoes from falling apart when you boil them • Pickling and preserving • Making reductions and pan sauces • Finishing soups and stir fries • Making shrubs (alcoholic beverages featuring flavored vinegars.)

If you've tasted one vinegar, you've tasted them all. Why should I have more than one kind? Vinegars come in a variety of pH levels and from diverse sources, both have a big role in the final product. Some are made from grapes (wine vinegars), and yet others come from rice, grains, sugar cane, fruit, and even coconuts! They are also processed differently, some are aged in wood, some have sugar added, each step in the fermentation process can add a distinct difference in the final product.

I prefer to use fresh citrus for acid in my cooking. Many times, I do too! The thing is that I don't always have fresh limes and lemons handy. While I won't claim that vinegar is the perfect substitute for citrus, I will say that it lasts a really long time in the cupboard, and it comes in handy in many a pinch!

Add a Splash of Brightness to Summer Dishes With Vinegar



Intensity Scale: some vinegars taste more or less mild than you'd expect based on their acidic rating. That's where the **Intensity Scale** comes in. This rates the overall intensity, with 1 being mild and 5 strong.

| Brand | Acidity | What makes it worth a try? | Intensity Scale |
|--|---------|--|-----------------|
| Marukan Organic Seasoned Rice Vinegar | 3.4% | This is the best place to start if you're hesitant about vinegar. I like it with sliced cucumbers, it's a winning combo. | 1 |
| Napa Valley Naturals Oak Wood Aged Grand Reserve Balsamic Vinegar* | 4% | You might mistake this for syrup, it's so thick. It's excellent for dipping bread, on salads, and as a finish for grilled onions, mushrooms, and red meats. | 1 |
| Hoskins Berry Farm Blackberry Vinegar† | 4% | Just the right amount of tart and berry flavor with a hint of funk in the best way possible. | 2 |
| Braggs Apple Cider Vinegar | 5% | All purpose, can be used for just about anything. | 2 |
| Coconut Secret Coconut Vinegar † | 5% | This one has a sting so I don't recommend it for beginners. The good news is that when cooked, all vinegars mellow out. Try this one in your stir fry. | 5+ |
| Field Day Organic Balsamic Vinegar | 6% | An affordably priced balsamic with a good balance of funkiness and sweetness. | 3 |
| Napa Valley Naturals White Wine Vinegar* | 6% | Not as sharp as plain white vinegar and has a tangy but neutral flavor. | 3 |
| Napa Valley Naturals Red Wine Vinegar* | 6% | Slightly sharper than the white wine version, but still mild enough to use in dressings or as a finish for cooked vegetables. | 3.5 |
| Napa Valley Naturals Champagne Vinegar* | 7% | I like this one for fancy vinaigrettes, French potato salad, and a few splashes in marinade for chicken. | 4 |
| Napa Valley Naturals Sherry Vinegar* | 7% | Try this one in dipping sauces, marinades, and homemade BBQ sauce. It's punchier than the others because it's fermented in casks once used to make alcohol but that's also what gives it its distinctive flavor. | 4 |

*Allergy warning: made in a facility that processes peanuts, tree nuts seeds and soybeans † North Store only 



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