

Enjoying the Peachy (and Veggie) Bounty of Farmers Markets

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Farmers markets have become a staple of life everywhere, in big cities and small towns. If you are lucky to live close to one, you are lucky enough. While many markets operate year-round (here's looking at you, Pike Place Market), most open in the spring and run through fall, giving us all an opportunity to experience the range of fresh produce from early spring vegetables to late summer fruit and those later producing veggies.

Lancaster Town Market in Pennsylvania, established in 1730, is the longest-operating farmers market in the country, while Pike Place Market in Seattle has been operating since 1907. Farmers markets have grown in popularity in recent years, offering people the opportunity to buy fruit and vegetables directly from the growers. We in the Pacific Northwest are fortunate to be able to take advantage of multiple markets in our surrounding communities. You can find them in Gig Harbor, Port Orchard, and the Proctor District in Tacoma, just to name a few.

In addition to fresh produce, you are likely to find people offering hand-crafted items, canned goods, homemade dog treats, salsas, breads, and even a variety of meats from local farms. There is nothing better than reaching across a small table to exchange cash for a handful of sweet carrots, a bag of freshly picked lettuce, or some peaches right from the field.

To celebrate late summer and the abundance of fresh fruit and produce from farmers markets, here are a few recipes featuring both. And yes, I know it's impossible to find several of these fruits at local farmers markets, but we can bend the rules just a tad for a wonderful salad.

Fresh Summer Fruit Salad

Dressing:

- 2/3 cup fresh orange juice
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh grated orange zest
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh grated lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Salad:

- 2 cups cubed fresh pineapple
- 2 cups strawberries, hulled and sliced
- 3 kiwi fruit, peeled and sliced
- 3 bananas, sliced
- 2 oranges, peeled and sliced
- 1 cup seedless grapes
- 2 cups blueberries

Bring orange juice, lemon juice, brown sugar, orange zest and lemon zest to a



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boil in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Reduce to medium-low and simmer until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat, add vanilla and let cool.

Meanwhile, layer fruit in a large, clear glass bowl in this order: pineapple, strawberries, kiwi fruit, bananas, oranges, grapes and blueberries. Pour cooled sauce over fruit; cover and refrigerate for 3 to 4 hours before serving.

Instead of layering, you can also mix up the fruit in a large bowl, pouring the cooled sauce over it all.

Summer Roasted Vegetables

- 2 zucchinis
- 1 yellow squash
- 1 small red onion
- 1 red bell pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (maybe a little more if mixture looks too dry)
- 1 teaspoon dried basil, or a tablespoon of fresh basil, if you have it
- Salt and pepper to taste

1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Wash and chop vegetables into approximately 1-inch cubes. Spread the vegetables out over one large baking sheet, making

sure they are in a single layer. Drizzle the olive oil over the vegetables, then add the basil and a pinch of salt and pepper. Toss the vegetables until they are well coated with olive oil and spices.

Roast the veggies for 30-40 minutes, stirring once or twice, until the vegetables have softened and the edges are browned. Sprinkle fresh parsley over the top and serve.

You can add or substitute vegetables, including grape or cherry tomatoes, fresh corn sliced off the cob; whatever suits your fancy. Just be sure to keep the vegetables in one layer so they roast evenly.

And finally, because I can't end without some kind of dessert, here is a recipe for a perfect peach pie.

Fresh Peach Pie

Start with your favorite 9-inch pie crust recipe (Food 52 has a great one adapted from Julia Child's Pâte Brisée on their website if you don't have a favorite). I use it all the time and can get one two-crust pie out of half the recipe. Dough freezes well and is great to keep on hand.

- 3 pounds fresh peaches, carefully dipped into boiling water for a few minutes, then removed with tongs. Let cool slightly before sliding skins off and slicing into 1/4-inch pieces.
- 2/3 cup granulated sugar

- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
 - 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
 - 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 - 2 tablespoons cold, unsalted butter, diced into small cubes
 - 1 tablespoon cold whole milk (half-and-half is even better)
- Sugar for sprinkling on top of crust
Heat oven to 425 degrees. In a large bowl, combine sliced peaches, sugar, flour, lemon juice and cinnamon together until thoroughly mixed. Refrigerate mixture while you roll out the crust. Place bottom crust in pan, fill with peach mixture and dot with small pieces of butter. Cover pie with top crust, seal edges, and brush top with milk or half-and-half. Sprinkle sugar over the top. Pierce the crust with a fork in several places.

I've learned over the years to place a baking sheet on the oven rack below the one where you will be baking the pie. Put pie on the rack above the baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 375 and continue baking for an additional 35-45 minutes, until juices are bubbling up from the piercing in the crust. If the pie crust edges aren't totally sealed, the filling may bubble up a bit there as well.

Remove from oven when pie is nicely browned. Let cool, slice and enjoy with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. ■