

# Dr. Preston Maring's Farmers' Market Update & Recipe of the Week Newsletters Volume 8

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1/4/07

On August 8th of this year, Northern California Kaiser Permanente's 19 hospitals began sourcing some of the fresh fruits and vegetables on the 6,000 meal trays a day prepared for the inpatients from small, organic family farmers. Since then, about 40 tons of produce has come from these farmers who earn their livelihoods from 50 acres or less. The news of our local sourcing program spread. Starting in January, the Stanford University Food Service will join us in working with the Community Alliance with Family Farmers, the critical link between Kaiser Permanente and the farmers. Jim Churchill's organic satsuma tangerines and other magical citrus from his farm in Ventura will come to our hospitals and also to the 15,000 students at Stanford. It has been said that his fruits have healing powers. We are hoping that this program can continue to expand.

For the first recipe of the New Year, I chose a basic Italian chicken stew. I cooked it in a tagine (a really cool Moroccan ceramic flat bottom pan with a tent like lid) but a heavy covered Dutch oven or other large covered sauté pan would work just fine. From your local farmers' market, pick up a pound of white, red, or yellow potatoes and some parsley. You will need to visit the grocery store for the rest of the ingredients. It will be months before fresh tomatoes are grown locally so I resort to the canned variety rather than passing on tomatoes for the whole winter.

## Italian Chicken Stew

Serves 6

2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs (b and s breasts are good, too)  
2 Tbsp flour  
1 1/2 tsp salt and black pepper  
2 Tbsp olive oil  
4 garlic cloves, minced  
1 Tbsp capers, rinsed, and drained  
1/4 to 3/4 tsp crushed red chilies  
28 oz can diced tomatoes  
1 3/4 cup chicken broth  
1 pound potatoes cut into 1" chunks  
2 8oz jars artichoke hearts, rinsed, and drained  
1/2 cup chopped parsley  
8 - 12 green or black olives, pitted and cut in half

Mix the flour, salt, and pepper in a Ziploc bag. Add the chicken and shake to coat. Heat the oil over medium high heat until the oil is shimmering. Shake off excess flour and brown the chicken on both sides in two batches. Remove the chicken and reduce the heat to low. Sauté the garlic, chilies, and capers for about thirty seconds until fragrant. Add the tomatoes and their juices. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the juices are reduced a bit. Add the broth, chicken and potatoes. Cover and simmer for about 10 minutes. Add the artichokes, cover, and simmer another 10 minutes or until the potatoes are tender. Stir in the parsley and olives. Season to taste. This dish is great for a cold winter evening. It freezes well making an excellent, quick dinner another night.

1/11/07

In gathering ingredients for this week's recipe, I am again blessed by having really good friends who have a Meyer lemon tree. This tree truly keeps on giving. I know lemons are supposed to be seasonal, but this tree seems to have bountiful numbers of lemons all year. Lemon zest mixed with flat leaf parsley and garlic from your local farmers' market, some herbs then tossed with oven-fried potatoes, made an excellent side dish for a New Year's Eve feast.

## Oven-fried Potatoes with Gremolata

Four russet potatoes or 1 1/2 pounds of waxy potatoes like Yukon Gold cut lengthwise into 6 wedges each  
4 Tbsp EVOO (extra virgin olive oil)  
1/2 cup chopped flat leaf parsley  
2 cloves garlic minced  
Zest from two Meyer lemons  
1 tsp minced fresh thyme leaves (or 1/2 tsp dried-it's usually a ratio of three times as much fresh as dried herbs, but who has a 1/3 tsp measure?)  
1 tsp minced fresh rosemary  
Big pinch crushed red chilies  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Toss the potato wedges with 2 Tbsp of the olive oil, salt and pepper. Arrange on a baking sheet. Bake, turning occasionally with a spatula until brown and crispy on all sides, about 20-30 minutes. While the potatoes are cooking, toss the remaining 2 Tbsp of olive oil with the rest of the ingredients in a bowl large enough to hold the potatoes. Toss the finished potatoes with the gremolata and serve while hot. You may never order fast food fries again even if cooked in non-trans fat oil.

1/25/07

In the near future, Kaiser Permanente will be partnering with the Golden State Warriors basketball organization to bring some new healthy food options to the Oakland Coliseum. Next to the nachos and the double chili cheese dogs will be a turkey, guacamole, and provolone sandwich on a whole wheat oatmeal roll and a tasty Asian chicken salad.

Served in colorful boxes with our Kaiser Permanente logo, the offerings will meet Kaiser Permanente's Healthy Picks guidelines such as having less than 30% of calories from fat.

At some events up to 20,000 meals are served. Just maybe a significant number of those someday will be healthy choices.

Having just offered a lentil soup recently, I thought twice about sharing another one. But it was so good, I had no further doubts. Summer stonefruit vendors often offer dried fruits in the lean winter months. The sweetness of dried apricots balanced by the seasonal lemons (again from my friends' bountiful tree) made this lentil soup good when made and even better the next day. The same basic soup instructions previously described apply.

## **Lentil Soup with Dried Apricots**

Serves 8

- 1 1/2 cups brown or green lentils
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup dried apricots, chopped
- 28 oz can diced tomatoes
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- 5 cups chicken broth
- 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice — this takes a few lemons
- Chopped cilantro for garnish

Recipes always say to rinse and pick over the lentils. I don't bother because I don't know what I am supposed look for. It doesn't seem to matter. In a soup pot,

heat the oil and sauté the onion, garlic, and apricots until soft. Stir in the cumin, thyme, salt and pepper. Add the tomatoes. Cover and simmer for about 10 minutes. Add the lentils and broth. Bring to a boil then cover and simmer until the lentils are soft, about 30 - 35 minutes. Puree part of the soup in a blender and add back to the pot or use a handheld wand blender. Stir in the lemon juice. Taste and adjust seasonings. Garnish each bowl of soup with cilantro. This soup can be frozen for a quick dinner another night. I hope you enjoy this low fat healthy soup.

Sometimes a film, a book, a person, a song or an idea comes along that touches you somewhere deep inside. If you ever get the chance, see the documentary "Ripe for Change" which chronicles the various forces at play in our California food system for the past thirty years. This segment is one of a four part series that was first shown on PBS. Go to <http://www.californiadreamseries.org>. A "sneak preview" of the film can be seen by clicking on the icon at the top right of the homepage. In it you will see David Mas Masumoto, the Central Valley peach farmer referenced before in a previous Farmers' Market Update after I read his book, "Epitaph for a Peach", and Will Scott, the president of the African American Small Farmers Association. The film can change the way you think about protecting our land for our children and their children.

Meanwhile, back in the seasonal kitchen I was faced with a large bunch of kale. I had never even heard of it growing up in Detroit well more than a half century ago. Combined with Fuji apples and a sweet onion from our local farmers' market, it was a sweet yet hearty side dish all the more satisfying because it was a brand new discovery (for me). Try it. It's easy and full of flavor.

## **Kale with Sautéed Apples and Onion**

1 bunch of kale, about 1 pound  
2 Tbsp olive oil  
2 apples, any kind  
1 large onion, sweet or not  
1 tsp curry powder  
1/2 cup water  
Salt to taste

Trim the kale leaves from the stems and the main central ribs. Slice the leaves into strips. Peel the onion and slice it into 1/4 inch wedges. Do the same with the apples. Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Sauté the onions for a while until they begin to soften, but not brown, about 5 minutes. Add the apple wedges and curry powder. Sauté another 2 minutes. Add the sliced kale and water. Cover, bring to a boil, then simmer for about 5 minutes or until the kale is tender. Season with salt and enjoy.

2/1/07

Dale Simmons, a fourth generation farmer who owns Lone Oak Ranch in Reedley, CA or one of his extended farm "family", have been coming to the Oakland Kaiser Permanente Friday Fresh Farmers' Market every week since it opened in May 2003. From them I have learned the genetics of apriums (75% apricot and 25% plums) and pluots (you can do the math). I also learned that asparagus doesn't sprout until the ground temperature hits 65 degrees in Fresno. At last Friday's market we discussed the freeze and the vast impact on many farmers. He talked about the value of crop diversity in the use of his land. While he lost a significant portion of his citrus crop, a substantial part of his farm is devoted to other crops thus the smile from him when he talked about the freeze's beneficial impact on his stonefruit trees. Evidently peach and nectarine trees really like cold weather. They need 800 hours of temperatures below 45 degrees to prosper. It may be a great year for peach pie.

In response to a recent recipe, a number of you wrote to explain why lentils should be "picked over". Many told stories of finding little lentil sized pebbles which are hard on your teeth and harder to digest.

This week's recipe is just right for anyone who has self doubts about their culinary skills. Find a number of winter vegetables. Simmer, purée, sauté, season and eat. I didn't have any broccoli, but it would be good to add the florets from 1/2 of a head. This is a low fat and easy way to enjoy the flavors of the winter market.

## Real Simple Vegetable Soup

Serves 3-4

- 6 cups chicken stock or broth
- 1 yellow onion thickly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
- 1 baking potato or the equivalent in smaller potatoes, cut into large chunks.  
Leave the skin on.
- 2 carrots, thickly sliced
- 1 stalk celery, thickly sliced
- 2 heaping tsp dried herb mix (I used Italian)
- 1 tsp salt or to taste
- 1/2 tsp white pepper

1 bunch spinach, tough stems removed or the equivalent amount of baby spinach leaves  
1/2 pound cremini mushrooms, sliced  
1 Tbsp butter or low fat butter substitute  
Chopped parsley

Bring the stock to a boil in a soup pot. Add the onion, garlic, potato, carrots, celery, salt, and herbs. Simmer until the potatoes are tender, 15-20 minutes. Stir in the white pepper and spinach. Cook some more until the spinach has wilted. Purée in batches in a blender or use a hand held immersion blender (much easier — a worthwhile invention). Sauté the mushrooms in butter over medium-high heat and stir into the soup. Garnish with chopped parsley. You can adjust the consistency of the soup by adding more stock if you wish. Served with a salad you probably get your five servings of vegetables for the day at one meal.

Most of us believe that global warming exists as a result of carbon dioxide emissions from various human activities. Many look to hybrid cars and other "green" products to be part of the solution. You can also make a difference with your fork and spoon. A significant amount of petroleum energy is used to grow the grains that are used in processed foods, fertilizers, and to feed the animals we eventually eat. The animals use energy to stand up much of their lives and to maintain their warm blooded temperatures. Fish, on the other hand, are cold-blooded and don't need to work to stand up. Wild fish are one of the ecologically best protein sources. Some farmed fish also meet high environmental standards. Check out [www.lochduart.com](http://www.lochduart.com) to learn about good farmed salmon.

It should be no surprise that this week's recipe features farmed Loch Duart salmon and spinach from our hospital's farmers' market. It is simple and delicious.

## Salmon with Spinach, Shallots and Tarragon

Serves 2

- 2 salmon fillets
- 1 bunch spinach, de-stemmed or the equivalent in baby spinach leaves, washed, and drained (it's amazing that such a large pile of spinach makes so few servings)
- 1 shallot
- 1 Tbsp dried tarragon (or 3 Tbsp fresh, chopped)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 Tbsp canola oil
- 1/2 cup dry white wine

Salt and pepper the salmon. Heat the canola oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat. Cook the salmon about 4 minutes per side or until cooked through (10 minutes of almost any cooking method per inch of fish). Open the windows in your kitchen and turn on the kitchen fan or the next morning you will be reminded you ate salmon the night before. Set the salmon aside and keep warm. Add a tiny extra bit of canola. Sauté one half of the shallots for about a minute. Stir in the tarragon. Add half the spinach leaves and cook until partially wilted. Add the rest of the spinach and cook, stirring in the underlying shallots and tarragon. Season to taste. Mound the spinach on warmed plates and top with a salmon fillet. Sauté the remaining

shallots, add white wine, and reduce a little. Pour this over the salmon and spinach. This makes a really good dinner. Other fish would work also.

Michael Pollan's recent contribution in the New York Times magazine gives great advice. Eat food. Not too much. Mostly fruits and vegetables. Maybe he will write an essay on exercise. Get some most days of the week. Some is better than none. Walk faster than strolling. Check out [www.kaiserpermanente.org](http://www.kaiserpermanente.org) for good advice. Go to the tab that says "Get Health Advice", click on "Featured Health Topics", and then click on "Fitness".

I call this week's recipe "Birthday Pasta" because I first made it to celebrate a special day for someone very important to me. It can be made with chicken, salmon, fresh tuna or canned tuna to suit your tastes. While I like to get as many ingredients as possible from the local farmers' markets, some items I like to use occasionally are globally sourced. Ninety percent of the garlic used in the US comes from China. The Kalamata olives and capers are imported. But the beautiful sweet and sour Meyer lemons are local from a great friend's tree that just keeps on giving. Pick up some fresh salad greens from the market to toss with red wine vinaigrette and you have a wonderful, quick, and simple dinner.

## Birthday Pasta

Serves 2

- 1/4 pound linguini or another one of the skinny pastas, regular or whole wheat
- 1 half boneless, skinless chicken breast (or the equivalent amount of salmon, tuna or a can of tuna) sliced into thin strips
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Meyer lemon, peeled with a paring knife then cut into thin slices and quartered, seeds removed
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 12 kalamata olives, pitted, and cut in half
- 1 Tbsp capers, rinsed and drained
- Handful flat leaf parsley, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Boil the pasta as long as the instructions say. While the pasta is cooking, heat the olive oil in a large non-stick skillet. Sauté the chicken just until it is no longer pink. Season it with a little salt and pepper. Remember the olives and capers can add saltiness to the dish. Drain the pasta

when your timer goes off. Add the lemon, olives, capers, and garlic to the chicken and toss briefly until warm. Add the pasta and the parsley. Mix well. Eat this with a really big salad to make up for the fact there aren't many vegetables in the pasta dish.

02/22/2007

It has been almost four years since the first hospital-based organic farmers' market at a Kaiser Permanente medical center was launched. There are now over 30 markets at Kaiser Permanente facilities in Hawaii, Oregon, California, Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. At each of these locations are people committed to making their market successful. I hear back from KP employees, members, and others who shop at these markets. The challenge for all of us is to make sure new and more mature markets are viable for the long term. The best way to insure that the markets continue is for the farmers to see our KP markets as a great outlet for their locally grown products. However you can do it, try to encourage everyone at your medical centers and your friends to spend 10% of your family food budgets at farmers' markets or on CSA (Consumer Supported Agriculture — more on this another time) programs. Research is in progress that will show, I hypothesize, that shopping at farmers' markets is actually less expensive than shopping at grocery store chains. Stay tuned.

In all the recipes shared since the summer of 2003, I haven't done much with carrots. Try this Carrot and Ginger Soup which depends on the flavor of the carrots. Buy those with bright green tops still attached, not those that have been in a plastic bag for a couple of months.

## Carrot and Ginger Soup

Serves 4

- 2 Tbsp Smart Balance or butter
- 2 Medium onions, diced
- 2 Tbsp finely chopped fresh ginger (peel it with the bowl of a spoon)
- 1 Tsp ground cumin
- 3 Cloves garlic, minced
- 8 Medium sized carrots, chopped (I don't peel them — it's easier and no one notices)
- 2 Tomatoes, seeded and chopped or 1 1/2 cups canned diced tomatoes
- Peel of one lemon, finely minced
- 5 Cups chicken broth, maybe more
- 1 Tsp salt
- 1/2 Tsp white pepper

Heat the butter in a large soup pot. Sauté the onion for about 4 minutes. Add the ginger, garlic, cumin, salt, and pepper and sauté about one minute. Add the carrots, tomato, and lemon and sauté another minute. Add the chicken broth, bring to a boil and simmer until the carrots are tender — 20-25 minutes? Purée in batches in a blender. An immersion blender doesn't make this soup smooth enough. Add more ginger, cumin, salt, pepper, or lemon juice to taste after blending. This can be good topped with a dollop of non-fat sour cream and grated carrot.

The California Center for Public Health Advocacy is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that recently released results of a study called "Searching for Healthy Food: The Food Landscape in California Cities and Counties". The report analyzed the number of fast food restaurants and convenience stores and compared those numbers to the numbers of grocery stores and farm stands. Throughout California there are 4.18 times as many fast food establishments than places to find good fresh produce. In some areas the ratio was 6:1. It may take a little work to find fresh greens for a big salad to go with this week's roast chicken, but it's worth it. If you want more detail, click on this link.

There are many ways to roast a chicken. Some require drying the bird out in the refrigerator overnight, starting with high heat then reducing it, flipping the chicken over, and basting it with various things, and finally covering parts of it with cheesecloth. The recipe below is much easier. Turn the oven on high and cook it.

## **Roast Chicken with Lemon and Ginger**

- 1 Roasting chicken, 4 1/2 pounds (Maybe cook two so you have plenty of leftovers for chicken soup, chicken salad, etc)
- 1 Large Meyer lemon (I just had to make another trip to my friend's backyard while these are still in season)
- 2 Tbsp ground ginger
- 2 Tbsp dry yellow mustard
- 2 Tsp salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Wash and pat the chicken dry. Squeeze lemon juice all over the chicken including the cavity. Rub the whole chicken with the dry mixture rubbing some of it under the skin. Put the squeezed lemon halves into the cavity. Place the chicken supine (back down) in a roasting pan. As an option, I added some quartered onions and red potatoes. Roast for about an hour. I think you will like this even if you don't eat the skin.

Surfacing as an issue at the national level is the every-five-year renewal of the Farm Bill when it expires in September of this year. It has the potential to directly affect local food systems in the future. The current Farm Bill provides billions of dollars of subsidies for commodity crops like corn, soybeans, and rice. It provides almost no incentives for local and sustainable agricultural systems. The subsidies keep all foods that rely on these commodity crops falsely cheap. Cheap corn feeds cows and helps keep Quarter Pounders on white-bread buns cheap.

The potential of using corn and soybeans to produce ethanol and biodiesel fuel has made the price go up for these commodities. In the new bill, they may get fewer subsidies. Many people around the country are working hard to influence lawmakers and asking them to redirect substantial amounts of our taxpayer dollars to the support of conservation and local sustainable food systems. These policy changes may ultimately translate into encouragement for people to keep small family farms.

Meanwhile, back at a personal level, find some fresh greens at your local market to use in a salad to accompany this week's recipe. Mussels are relatively inexpensive per serving. By checking [seafoodwatch.org](http://seafoodwatch.org) you will learn that farmed mussels are a good choice. As mussels are vegetarians and filter feeders, they may actually help cleanse the water in which they are grown.

## Mussels, Tomatoes, and Oregano with Linguine

2 servings

- 8 ounces whole wheat linguine
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 6-inch long squiggles of anchovy paste or six anchovy fillets, chopped
- 3 large garlic cloves, minced
- 1 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano or 1 heaping teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1 pound mussels, scrubbed and debearded

Cook the linguine per the instructions. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet. Add the anchovies, garlic, oregano, and tomato paste. Stir for about a minute. Add the tomatoes with juice and bring to a boil. Stir in the mussels. Cover and simmer until

the mussels open, about 5 minutes. Discard any mussels that don't open. Season to taste. Divide the mussels and sauce over servings of linguine.

3/15/07

Recently I had the privilege to join the board of directors for the Community Alliance with Family Farmers. This non-profit organization has been active in California for almost 30 years in advocacy and on-the-ground programs related to resource conservation, sustainable farming, community food systems and other issues of public interest.

The board, half of which are farmers from all different sectors of our agricultural economy, supports innovative programs that ultimately affect many. Because of help and technical expertise from CAFF, we will continue to bring fruits and vegetables from new and beginning small family farmers into our inpatient food services at our 19 Northern California hospitals. Other organizations are joining us in the movement to encourage the consumption of more locally grown foods.

Meanwhile, your local farmers' market has most of the ingredients for an excellent, seasonal spinach salad. This is light and fresh.

## **Spinach Salad with Blood Oranges, Almonds, and Tarragon**

Serves 4

6 Tablespoons canola oil  
1/4 cup fresh orange juice  
3 green onions, white and light green parts coarsely chopped  
3 Tablespoons unseasoned rice vinegar  
1 Tablespoon honey  
1 Tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon  
1 Teaspoon grated orange peel  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
2 blood oranges  
1/2 cup almonds, sliced and toasted in a skillet  
Spinach for four — I have no idea how much that weighs

Whisk the first seven ingredients together. Season the dressing with salt and freshly ground pepper. Peel the oranges and cut some of the white part off. I don't get real picky about this because I eat oranges with the white part on all the time anyway. Cut them up into segments. Wash and dry the spinach well. Toss the

leaves with about half of the dressing. You may not need more and have leftover dressing for another salad. Mix in the orange pieces and top with toasted almonds.

A colleague who specializes in geriatric medicine once gave me a simple way to look at being your own cause. Half of who you are is a result of your heredity. The other half is up to you. Those who move more throughout their life are still moving more in their 80's. She said it even helps to stand up from sitting throughout your life just using your big thigh muscles rather than pushing up with your arms off the arms on a chair. Motion combined with good food can make a big difference in your health.

The advent of early daylight savings time may give you even more opportunity to get 10,000 steps per day. That's about 5 miles but it depends on how long your legs are. I wore a pedometer for several months and found I only got 3500 steps after a day at work in the medical office and elsewhere which necessitated making it up before and after work.

This week's recipe makes enough for three meals - it works well for a basic salad, a fancier salad with pears, candied pecans, and blue cheese, and a pan-roasted chicken breast and mixed greens salad.

## **All Purpose Pomegranate Vinaigrette**

- 1 tsp Dijon
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 1 Tbsp minced shallots
- 1 Tbsp rice wine vinegar
- 1 Tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup pomegranate juice
- 6 Tbsp canola oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Add all ingredients except the canola oil to a blender. Blend then add the canola slowly with the blender running. Season to taste.

Al Gore isn't the only person anymore who's talking about global warming and the impact of fossil fuel consumption on our planet. We are constantly being encouraged to drive less, buy a hybrid car if you can, use smarter light bulbs, and keep our air conditioners set at higher temperatures than we used to.

Now it's becoming clear that you can make a real difference by changing the source of the foods you eat. It's simple. Food in grocery stores travels an average of 1,500 to 2,500 miles to get to you, usually by truck or plane. This requires fossil fuels. By the time a bag of salad mix is grown, washed, packaged, chilled, and shipped across country to the East Coast from a farm in California, 4,600 calories of fossil fuels are spent. Because salad mix is low in calories, that's 57 petroleum calories spent for every calorie of food energy consumed. Higher calorie content foods bring the overall average down to 7 calories of fossil fuel burned per calorie of energy in food.

So what can you do? While we are likely to buy many foods shipped to us in certain seasons of the year, buying fresh fruits and vegetables from local sources whenever available can reduce the use of fossil fuels by reducing the miles the food traveled and eliminating packaging. Also, freshly picked local food is more nutritious and tastes better. Head to your local farmers' market and pick up a half pound of fresh carrots with the bright green tops still attached for this week's recipe.

## **Grated Carrot Salad with Lemon, Garlic, and Chives**

- 1/2 pound fresh carrots, grated with a box grater or food processor
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice (that local Meyer lemon tree comes through again)
- 1 small clove garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon chives, minced coarsely
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

Mix everything in a bowl and season to taste.

If you can't get to a local farmers' market on a regular basis, consider signing up for a consumer supported agriculture food box/bag. Local small farms with a wide array of crops bring the very freshest, most nutritious, and tastiest fruits and vegetables directly to your neighborhood and sometimes even to your home by subscription. You get the best food there is for you and your children, and the farmers get a regular income—everyone wins. Most local CSAs in Northern California offer organic produce, so they are caring for the planet also by avoiding pesticides and pollution.

Check out the Web sites [fullbellyfarm.com](http://fullbellyfarm.com), [riverdogfarm.com](http://riverdogfarm.com), and [terrafirmafarm.com](http://terrafirmafarm.com) to get an idea how CSAs work and what they have to offer.

Meanwhile, back at the market you will find all kinds of interesting little things with bulbous ends. In addition to the usual scallions and leeks, you will find spring onions and spring garlic. These tender, mild, yet-to-be-fully-differentiated-into-their-adult-version vegetables were the stars in tasty pasta.

## Chicken and Spring Vegetable pasta

Serves 2-4

- 1 boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into small, bite-size pieces
- 1 bunch spring onions, light red, white, and light green parts thinly sliced
- 1 bunch spring garlic, white and light green parts thinly sliced
- 2 regular cloves garlic, minced
- 3 small leeks, white parts thinly sliced
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup chicken broth or white wine
- 8 ounces whole wheat linguine
- Small handful fresh parsley, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Cook the pasta per instructions and drain. Meanwhile, sauté the onions, garlic, and leeks in the olive oil until fragrant and soft. Remove from pan and set aside. Sauté the chicken until cooked through. Add the vegetables back to the pan with some chicken broth. Toss in the pasta and warm through. Season to taste and toss in the parsley for flavor and color. This makes a very simple, quick meal with flavors unique to this season.

When hospital food is mentioned, many have a response influenced by what they have heard and read but not by their own personal experience. Our hospital food is changing.

Kaiser Permanente in Northern California serves about 6,000 meals per day to its inpatients at 19 hospitals. All types of special diets have to be accommodated. In addition to the regular diet, there are soft diets, liquid diets, cardiac diets, and diabetic diets. Our nutritionists and food service managers have to meet rigorous dietary guidelines while trying to make the food appetizing and tasty. Just getting it served nice and hot on a busy medical floor is a challenge.

Recently I had the privilege to meet with the food service managers from each of our facilities and the managers of Food Service Partners who prepare all the meals. FSP or their predecessors have provided meals for our members for 31 years, 365 days a year, except for four facilities on one day after the Loma Prieta earthquake, when the Bay Bridge was down. A woman at FSP has sliced over 20,000,000 pounds of meat for our patients in those 31 years. Another worker has made salads with care for 27 years. I have met these workers, if only briefly. They and many others are doing their best for our members. Remember, also, that since last August, they can include sustainably farmed fruits and vegetables from small family farmers in some of the dishes they create. You still may not choose to eat at the hospital for a night out, but there are new and good things happening.

Fresh asparagus has been in the markets now for several weeks. This is a very simple and excellent way to serve it. Having farmers' markets nearby and friends with a lemon tree continue to be a great combination.

## **Shaved Raw Asparagus and Fennel with Meyer Lemon Vinaigrette**

1 pound asparagus, tough ends broken off  
1 fennel bulb  
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice  
4 tablespoons olive oil  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
Parmesan to shave

Peel the asparagus and fennel using a vegetable peeler. (I tried a slicer I bought years ago from late-night cable TV without success.) Whisk the olive oil into the lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper. Toss the vegetables with all or some of the dressing on a serving plate. Top with some shaved parmesan. Enjoy this light, wonderful side dish.

Our government says we should all eat nine servings of fruits and vegetables daily. That's a lot more than simply eating an apple a day to keep doctors away. If everyone actually ate what is recommended we would need three times as much farmland devoted to fruits and vegetables as currently exists. Current farm bill policies only minimally support these crops. One way to take action is to plant some of your own food. It's the season, at least in the west. Even a small 4-by-8-foot plot can grow a lot of fresh vegetables. Containers work well too, particularly for herbs.

In my opinion, it is more practical to buy organically grown asparagus from a farmers' market than to wait a couple years to harvest your own at home. Recognizing that last week's recipe celebrated asparagus, I just have to share an additional asparagus recipe with you that is easy to make and very good.

## **Asparagus with Sesame-Soy Dressing**

One bunch asparagus, tough ends snapped off and cut into 2-inch pieces  
1 tablespoon soy sauce (lower sodium if you wish)  
1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil  
3 to 4 drops hot chili oil  
2 teaspoons sesame seeds, toasted

Bring water in a large saucepan to a boil. Add a tray of ice cubes to a bowl and fill it with water. Blanch the asparagus in the boiling water for 2 minutes and no more. Quickly drain the asparagus and submerge it in the ice water to stop it from getting mushy. Toast the sesame seeds in a skillet over medium heat. Don't let yourself get lulled into complacency as the seeds stay white for a while. When they start to toast, they do so quickly. Whisk the soy sauce and sesame oil together. Dribble in the chili oil. Drain the asparagus and toss with the dressing. Top with the toasted sesame seeds.

As new people subscribe to the farmers' market update and recipe of the week, they often submit comments and questions. Many want to know if there is a Kaiser Permanente farmers' market at their home facility. While there are over 30 markets in six states and the District of Columbia, there are hundreds of Kaiser Permanente facilities. Markets only have a realistic chance of thriving at the larger facilities with large numbers of employees, visiting patients, and enough foot traffic. Even these markets need lots of shoppers to make it worthwhile for the farmers. Every day a farmer spends at the market is one less day they can work the earth. Find locations and times of our markets. Other markets in your community can be found using any search engine.

Another common request is to have the nutritional information listed with the recipes. While I don't analyze them when they are first offered by e-mail, many are included on Kaiser Permanente's Web site after they are reviewed by a nutritionist. To find these recipes, click on the link at the bottom of this e-mail that offers "Dr. Maring's recipes and others with nutritional analysis."

While the archive of previous recipes of the week is not yet in alphabetical order, there's a helpful new feature: Click on the volume you would like to reference; you'll find each recipe is accessible as a separate link. I thought this was very cool as I like to go back and cook old recipes.

This week's offering is one of those that uses many ingredients from the grocery store but then uses farmers' market produce for the actual dish. I used this black bean marinade on beautiful fresh market lettuces and added leftover roasted salmon.

## **Black Bean Salad Dressing**

- 1 can black beans
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 jalapeño, finely minced
- 1 small shallot, finely minced
- 4 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Add a little olive oil to a small saucepan and briefly sauté the garlic, jalapeño, and shallot. Add the black beans with liquid. Simmer for a few minutes until heated through. Drain the beans in a sieve. Add the vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, remaining olive oil, and season to taste. Use some or all of the mixture on a big salad. Top with leftover fish or chunked chicken. Be certain to wash your hands well after mincing the jalapeños.

Many people around the country want to increase the amount of "good food" available to us. Good food is food that is healthy for us, grown in a way that is good for the long-term health of the planet and the people who grow it, available to all communities, and affordable. Unfortunately, less than 1 percent of food sales in the U.S. meet these criteria. To reach 10 percent in 10 years, it will take many changes to the food supply and distribution systems. It will also take many changes in our purchasing habits.

The majority of food bought by households comes from grocery stores. Only a tiny fraction of the nation's food comes from farmers' markets. At these farmers' markets you know exactly where the food was grown. You can't tell that for many fruits and vegetables at a grocery store, though some are now labeling the origin of their produce. Buying food grown close to home, particularly if it is organically grown, is your best chance to eat healthy food. It's going to take continued support of small and mid-size farmers to ensure the supply of healthy food is sufficient to be available in all communities at an affordable price.

This week's recipe is for quick and easy shrimp pasta. Serve this with a big salad of spring greens.

## **Linguine with Shrimp, Garlic, Parsley, and Crushed Red Chilies**

- 1 pound shrimp, shelled and deveined
- 8 ounces whole wheat linguine
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 bunch parsley, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red chilies
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- Splash of dry white wine or chicken stock

Bring water to a boil in a pasta pot. Rinse and dry the prepared shrimp. While the pasta is cooking, heat the olive oil in a non-stick skillet. Stir-fry the shrimp for about three minutes until they are cooked through, seasoning with salt and pepper. Add the garlic and crushed red chilies just before the shrimp are done. Toss with

the parsley. Add a splash or two of wine or stock. Drain the pasta and add it to the skillet. Toss it with the shrimp and heat through. Adjust the seasoning.

Do you know about your personal carbon footprint and the concept of carbon offsets? A carbon footprint is the amount of carbon dioxide you cause to be emitted by your daily activities. Offsets are what you can do to make up for all that carbon. There are those who may choose to pay a tax to atone for their carbon-emitting behaviors. For example, if you fly via private jet, you pay an organization to plant more trees in the rain forest, which will theoretically absorb the carbon dioxide produced by the combustion of the jet fuel. Some of us drive huge gas-guzzling vehicles and eat double-cheese burgers. The cost of the burgers is falsely cheap due to corn subsidies (production of corn uses large amounts of fossil fuels, growing corn is subsidized by the government's farm bill, corn feeds cows which turn into burgers, corn makes high fructose corn syrup used in ketchup for the burger, corn is used in the making of buns, etc). Others are totally vegetarian and live "off the grid," using no commercially produced electricity, running their homes with solar power, and riding bicycles. Most of us are somewhere in between.

Each of us can make a choice every day that can make our carbon footprint smaller. We can use a compact fluorescent light bulb, not rev our cars, and buy organically grown local fruits and vegetables. I will write more about this concept later. For now, make this delicious dressing and use it with some romaines of the day from your local farmers' market.

## Romaine Salad with Blue Cheese

Serves 8

3 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
 1 large shallot, chopped coarsely (small chunks of shallot are good)  
 1 tablespoon fresh thyme, chopped finely  
 1 bay leaf  
 1 1/2 teaspoon salt  
 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper  
 1/2 teaspoon sugar  
 1 clove garlic, crushed  
 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil  
 Romaine lettuce for 8  
 4 ounces blue cheese

Mix the vinegar, shallot, thyme, bay leaf, salt, pepper, sugar, and garlic in a bowl. Let the mixture sit for 20 to 30 minutes. Remove the bay leaf. Whisk in the olive oil.

Dress the washed and dried lettuces. Top with the crumbled blue cheese of your choice. I think you will like this one.

5/17/07

I've been told, in various ways, that I need to develop a better relationship with beans. Since they are nutritious, tasty, and inexpensive, I listened carefully.

First, a retired military leader who, along with his wife, cooks almost 90 percent of the recipes I send out told me that the black bean dressing was one of my few failures—he couldn't tell if it was really a dressing or not so he used it as a side dish. Then a rural food system expert, who butchers her own 400-pound hogs in a weekend to make salami and prosciutto, told me I should really use soaked dried beans instead of canned beans. A director of a big department that creates working relationships between different health care systems took a different approach. He simply hinted by giving me a bag of heirloom dried red beans to try. They were used for this week's recipe. Whenever there is time for forethought, the dried beans are the best choice. Heirloom beans are those varieties that have been around for centuries. Check out [www.ranchogordo.com](http://www.ranchogordo.com). It really isn't that hard to use the real thing.

## Refried Beans

Serves 6

1½ cups dried red pinto beans or red kidney beans  
2 tablespoons canola oil  
1 yellow onion, minced  
1 to 2 jalapeños, minced  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
1½ teaspoon dried oregano  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 tomato, diced (tomatoes aren't in season—since I really wanted to use the beans I used a couple of canned plum tomatoes)  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

Pick over the beans to get rid of stones. Place in a bowl and cover with water. Let soak at least three hours.

Drain the beans. Place in a saucepan and cover them in water about 2 inches deep. Bring to a boil uncovered, then simmer for about an hour or until they are very tender and the skins are cracking open. This may take an hour. Drain them and **RESERVE THE LIQUID**. (The caps are a reminder—I have drained a whole soup pot

of newly prepared turkey stock forgetting to capture the stock and watched it disappear down the drain.)

In a large nonstick skillet, sauté the onion, jalapeño, garlic, oregano, and cumin in the oil until the onion is very soft. Add the beans and tomato. Mash the beans with a masher or wooden spoon. Add some of the reserved cooking liquid until the desired consistency is reached. Season the beans with salt and pepper to taste. I never got them to the creamy consistency of refried beans in a can, but these were great garnished with avocado, non-fat sour cream, and chopped cilantro.

5/24/07

I have offered a recipe in the past that combines brown sugar and mustard to make a wonderful caramelized glaze for salmon. This week's recipe is a way to get similar flavors, but in a more versatile way. Maple syrup isn't only for pancakes, French toast, and waffles. It is also an ingredient in a great salad dressing passed along to me years ago by my sister in the Midwest. When you read the recipe, you may gasp reading about the amount of maple syrup used and wonder how I could possibly consider promoting this indulgence.

It's simple. The recipe makes enough dressing for about four salads. The amount of sugar and fat in each salad for four people is very moderate and easily can be part of a healthy diet. Topped with pan-roasted salmon or chicken, a big salad of fresh farmers' market lettuce with maple syrup-mustard vinaigrette, makes a great one-dish meal.

## Maple-Mustard Vinaigrette

Enough for four salads, each serving four people

- 4 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1 large shallot, peeled and finely diced
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1/3 cup maple syrup
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

Whisk the first five ingredients or blend them in a blender or food processor. Whisk/blend the oil in a slow stream (I am not sure why it's supposed to be in a slow stream--I often just add it all, whisk away, and no one has ever complained).

Dress your salad. Toss it and top with a protein source.

5/31/07

The average daily census for pediatric inpatients at the Kaiser Permanente Oakland Medical Center was 21 during 2006. Sixteen of those beds were filled by children from medical centers all around the region. The families of these often seriously ill children have to find places to stay and eat, often on very short notice. This takes resources that many just don't have.

A small team of families and coworkers just hosted the first Cooking for Kids event at a colleague's home. A four-course, seasonal dinner in good company was enjoyed and a significant amount of money was raised. Our hospital's pediatric social workers now have the beginnings of a fund to use to help the families of our youngest patients. Quarterly events are planned, and a number of people have already stepped forward to help in the future, including someone from another facility who sends patients to us.

This week's recipe is probably not a dinner party dish. But it's healthy, tasty, and very simple. It uses farro, a robust grain easily found at Italian delis, and fresh vegetables.

## **Farro with Lettuce, Red Onion, Celery, and Olives**

Serves 4

- 2 cups farro
- 1 head lettuce of your choice
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- 2 stalks celery, thinly sliced
- 1 cup Kalamata olives, halved
- 4 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Cover farro with water about 2 inches deep. Bring to a boil then simmer until crunchy tender. (Just follow the instructions on the package. I've had some that took only 13 minutes and some that took 30 minutes.) Drain it. Rinse, drain, and dry the lettuce. Tear the leaves into bite-size pieces. Whisk the olive oil into vinegar in a small bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Toss the remaining ingredients with the farro, lettuce, and dressing. Serve as is or with a pan-roasted protein source like chicken or salmon

6/7/07

It's been a long time since I have written about the Dirty Dozen. Extensive Food and Drug Administration data about the levels of pesticides in foods collected between 2000 and 2004 was analyzed by the nonprofit organization Environmental Working Group. Consumer's Union featured information about this group's work early last year. They looked at 43 of the most commonly eaten fruits and vegetables to see which had the most pesticides in them and which had the least. Before testing, the food was washed or peeled as it most commonly would be served. For example, apples were washed and bananas were peeled. The results give shoppers a good idea when to seek out organically grown products and which conventionally grown products may have the least pesticide residue.

What we don't know for sure is exactly what health impacts pesticide residue might have. However, I heard an Amish farmer speak at a food system conference a few years ago. He had a very simple message. He said "Most of you flew to this conference in an airplane. I bet you wouldn't want anything but the best jet fuel used in the planes you used. Why would you put anything less than the best into your children?"

The most contaminated non-organically grown fruits and vegetables are peaches, apples, sweet bell peppers, celery, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, pears, imported grapes, spinach, lettuce, and potatoes. The Consistently Clean non-organically grown are onions, avocados, sweet corn, pineapples, mangos, asparagus, sweet peas, kiwis, bananas, cabbage, broccoli, and papayas. Check out [www.foodnews.org](http://www.foodnews.org) for details. When possible, buy organic, at least from the Dirty Dozen list.

For this week's recipe, head to your farmers' market to pick up the vegetable ingredients, organic if possible, and prepare a treat for yourself, friends, and family.

## Curried Chicken Salad Lettuce Wraps

Serves 4

- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breast
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup low or nonfat mayonnaise
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 tablespoon curry powder

1 teaspoon honey  
2 celery stalks, thinly sliced  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  red onion, minced  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup raisins  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup toasted almond slivers (toast almonds at 350 degrees for about 10 minutes before slicing) Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Bring to a boil in a sauté pan enough water to cover the chicken breasts. Add the chicken breasts and simmer, covered, for 13 to 15 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through. Remove the chicken, let it cool, and shred it. Mix in a large bowl with the remaining ingredients and season to taste. Distribute appropriate portions for the size of the lettuce leaf and fold them over. These turned out to be more like lettuce leaf tacos, but who's worrying about the details? I think you will like these. My family did.

## TOMATOES ARE BACK.

I am not usually prone to the use of caps but I really got excited when I saw big boxes of multicolored heirloom tomatoes on the Happy Boy Farm table at our Kaiser Permanente Oakland Medical Center farmers' market last week. Along with newly offered Armenian cucumbers, red onions, fresh basil, some olives, and feta cheese, the tomatoes were the inspiration for this week's recipe for a delicious Greek salad.

I last offered this recipe in August of 2004 during the Olympics in Greece. Highlighting an oldie but goodie is a way to reach the many new subscribers to the Farmers' Market Update. It has been a very long winter and spring. For me, the availability of locally grown, organic tomatoes is a reaffirmation that much is actually good in the world.

## Farmers' Market Greek Salad

Serves four as a salad course

About 1 pound of tomatoes of different sizes and colors, thickly sliced  
 1 Armenian cucumber, sliced diagonally (looks fancy)  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  red onion, thinly sliced  
 2 ounces feta cheese  
 12 basil leaves, torn into pieces  
 12 Kalamata olives, pitted and halved  
 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar  
 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
 1 large garlic clove, mashed with salt  
 Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Arrange the tomatoes artfully on a platter. Top with red onion, cucumber, feta, basil, and olives. Mix the mashed garlic with the vinegar in a small bowl then whisk in the olive oil. Dress the salad just before serving. Season to taste. This is an incredibly simple and wonderful way to welcome summer.

6/21/07

One of the regional leaders of The Permanente Medical Group is an avid fisherman, a local foodie, and has excoriated me in the past for not mentioning in a prior recipe of the week that you should only purchase wild salmon. He also recently admitted that he is addicted to Cheetos. And, I imagine, he's not the only one.

What is it about crunchy, salty snacks? I went to my local deli to investigate. A 2-ounce bag of potato chips costs \$1.69. The nutritional content label seductively proclaims there are only 9 grams of fat and 1 gram of saturated fat. In small print it mentions that this is the amount of fat per serving. Voilà! There are two servings in the 2-ounce bag. Do you think anyone ever ate half the bag one day and the other the next? The cost for a pound of potato chips purchased in these packages is \$13.62 (a pound bag at the grocery store is about \$5.50). For this \$13.62 you get 144 grams of fat and 16 grams of saturated fat.

Fast forward to Friday when you can shop at our hospital's farmers' market. From Happy Boy Farm you can buy Russian fingerling potatoes, organically grown, for \$2 a pound. This week's recipe may not be the snack of choice for my regional friend at 4:30 p.m. on a workday, but you never know. Maybe he'll bring some roasted rosemary potato chunks to work some day.

P.S. Readers in the Bay Area can check out a segment on our farmers' market on ABC Channel 7, sometime during the 6 p.m. news on Thursday, June 21.

## Russian Fingerling Potatoes with Parsley

1 pound of Russian fingerling (or another kind) potatoes, cut into bite-size pieces, unpeeled  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  bunch parsley, chopped coarsely  
1 tablespoon Smart Balance or butter  
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  
Water

Cover the potatoes with water in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil, then simmer until the potatoes are fork tender, about 15-20 minutes. Drain them well in a colander and return them to the pan. Shake the pan gently over low heat to dry the potatoes a bit. Toss them with the butter or butter substitute and parsley. Season to taste with salt and pepper. For a crispy variation, boil the potatoes for five

minutes, drain them, then finish cooking them at 400 degrees in the oven. This may be the version that's more likely to come to work in a snack bag.

I've written before about the vital link The Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) plays in Kaiser Permanente's ever-expanding efforts to bring "produce to the people." The people with whom I have worked in my 36 years at Kaiser Permanente are all experts in providing excellent health care in one capacity or another. But, for our health care system to grow our "good food" program, we need the help of the experts who know the land and the farmers, as well as what it takes to provide food in a way that is good for the earth and for the people who eat it, and who treat those who grow it with respect.

On Sunday June 10th, CAFF held the kickoff event for its "Buy Fresh, Buy Local" campaign, at the Jack London Square Farmers' Market in downtown Oakland. This campaign is already in full swing in the Sacramento Valley, the Central Coast, and the San Joaquin Valley. The CAFF Buy Fresh, Buy Local Food Guide lists all the farmers' markets, grocers, restaurants, CSAs, U-Picks, and, yes, hospitals that feature fresh, healthy, local foods. You'll see the listing of approximately 135 farmers' markets in the nine county Bay Area. Our Oakland hospital's market is one of only five markets that sells all organic fruits and vegetables. Go to [caff.org](http://caff.org) to check out its online Buy Local database.

Believe it or not, I had the privilege to fake it as the "celebrity chef" at the market during the event. One of the appetizers we showcased was crostini with fresh peaches and nectarine slices. Remember, bruschetta is hard to pronounce correctly, so simply cut your baguettes thinly and call them crostini.

## **Crostini with Stonefruit, Balsamic Vinegar, and Honey**

- 1 baguette, sliced thinly on the diagonal so it holds more fruit
- Olive oil for brushing
- 2-3 peaches or nectarines, sliced thinly in wedges. Ask your farmer which are the sweetest, or better yet, taste-test them.
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons honey
- Optional blue cheese or goat cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Brush each of the baguette slices with a little olive oil on one side. Bake in the oven on a baking sheet until the crostini are beginning to

brown. Whisk the vinegar and honey together. Toss the stonefruit slices in a bowl with the vinegar and honey. Spread the crostini with cheese if you wish (this is really, really good). Top with the slices of fruit and enjoy.