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Been There, Doing That

Portland gets its props as an early pioneer in the sustainable-organic-seasonal food movement.

By Susie Norris | Monday, 31 May 2010 | 09:24

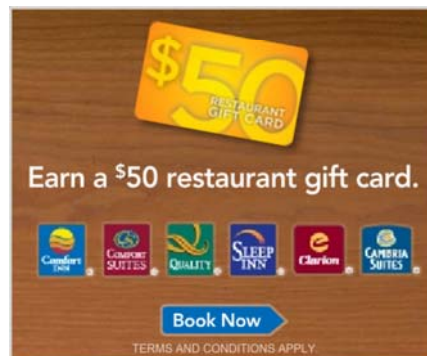


Portland's food philosophy prizes the sustainable, organic and seasonal in a way that makes other cities look like beginners. The [International Assn. of Culinary Professionals](#) convened Portland in late April for its 32nd annual conference. This year's theme, "The New Culinary Order," reflected a growing passion from food professionals who support eco-friendly values and oppose highly processed and relentlessly marketed corporate foods. For Portland, this approach is nothing new.

On a bike tour of North Portland's artisan eateries, chef Bryan Steelman of [Por Que No?](#) taqueria explained how rainwater from his restaurant roof was captured and recycled onto local vegetables. Chefs Jason French and Ben Meyer of [Nedd Ludd](#), a back-to-basics wood-fired cafe, explained the meaning they found in butchering the animals they serve and pickling the cucumbers they grow in their backyard organic garden. At [Grand Central Bakery](#), chef Piper Davis stressed the importance of moving the new order values from upscale boutique levels to mass production. "Until the movement goes mainstream," she argued, "we won't change the way the world consumes." Her warm strawberry rhubarb pie and piles of croissants made from locally sourced stone-ground wheat won the case that artisan values can transcend the challenges of large-scale production (she owns six bakery cafes in the Portland area -- all with such luscious pies and pastries). Other stops on the tour arranged by cookbook author [Ivy Manning](#) ("Farm to Table Cookbook"; "The Adaptable Feast") were [Toro Bravo](#) for tapas, lemon and olive asparagus, and sangria; [The Meadow](#) for chocolate and salt; [Lincoln](#) for sweetened rhubarb and cream.

In support of sustainable

The sustainable movement now has many faces nationwide: Jamie Oliver's "Food Revolution" and Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" anti-obesity campaigns, the Academy Award-winning documentary "Food, Inc.," Michael Pollan's bestselling books "An Omnivore's Dilemma" and "In Defense of Food," Alice Waters' decades of leadership and her pioneering restaurant, Chez Panisse, and the cultural initiatives of the [Slow Food](#) organization. The IACP's keynote speaker, author Ruth Reichl, the final editor of [Gourmet](#) magazine, echoed the message that Portland and food-appreciating



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communities continue to serve up: food unites, enriches and sustains people, and sustainable values are more important for us than the industrial values of speed, efficiency and profitability. The new culinary order eschews fast, processed foods disconnected from their roots and celebrates local, artisan and authentic fare.

Spring seasonal dishes in Portland include sophisticated versions of rhubarb, delicate asparagus, lamb and dungeness crab. These, in addition to the year-round availability of salmon, microbrewed beers, food trucks and local spirits create a voluminous bounty in a city that prides itself on its resources. Restaurants that showcased spring foods at the [Nines Hotel](#) included [Paley's Place](#) (serving local, sustainable and award-winning fare since 1995), [Nostrana](#), [Tabla](#), [Moonstruck Chocolates](#) and many more.

To bring the Portland spirit to your own culinary order, make this pie dough recipe adapted from Grand Central Bakery's excellent cookbook and fill it with fruits from your local farmers market.

Fruit Pie With All-Butter Flaky Crust

Ingredients

For Grand Central Bakery's pie crust:

- 2½ cups all purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 cup cold butter (2 sticks), cubed
- 3 tablespoons cold water
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 egg for egg wash
- 1 tablespoon water

For the fruit filling:

- 4-5 cups of fresh fruit (such as a mix of sliced strawberry and rhubarb, or fresh blueberries or sliced peaches)
- 3 tablespoons of arrowroot or cornstarch
- 3 tablespoons of sugar (white or brown)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt

Directions

1. Make sure all your ingredients are cold. The best way to do this is to measure them all out, then place them on a large plate or tray and place the tray in the refrigerator for 20 minutes.
2. After the ingredients have chilled, mix the water and lemon juice together and set aside. Place the flour in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Add the cold butter cubes and combine on the lowest speed for about a minute or two. The texture of the mixture will change to rough and mealy.
3. Add ¾ of the water and lemon juice mixture and mix very briefly. You should still be able to see pea-size chunks of butter, and the dough should start to hold together. If it is still crumbly, mix a little longer, then finally add the rest of the water.
4. Form the dough into 2 disks, flatten them and wrap in plastic wrap or tightly in a large Ziplock bag. Allow them to chill for 1 hour.
5. Once the disks are chilled, unwrap them and sprinkle the work surface and the dough with a little flour. Roll the dough out with a rolling pin to about 10 inches in diameter and about ⅛-inch thick.
6. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees
7. Gently place the dough in a 9-inch pie plate, wrap with plastic wrap and allow it to rest in the refrigerator as you repeat the process with the other disk, which will be the upper crust. You can wrap the second disk in plastic wrap and place it over the covered pie plate to allow them both to chill and rest.
8. In a medium bowl, toss the fruit slices or berries with the arrowroot, sugar, lemon juice, vanilla and salt.
9. Fill the pie plate with the sliced fruit or berry mixture.
10. Top with the other crust. Pinch the inch two crusts together to create a fluted edge. Cut a few decorative slices in the top of the crust to allow steam to escape.
11. Finally, mix the egg with a tablespoon of water and brush the egg wash on the crust before baking. Bake until the pie crust is golden brown and the fruit is bubbling -- about 35-40 minutes.



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Susie Norris is a chocolatier, TV producer and author of the book "Chocolate Bliss."

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Portland rhubarb. Credit: Bruce Block

Strawberry-rhubarb pie. Credit: Courtesy of AdLife Marketing

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