

Port Royal Farmer's Market

Written by Debbi Covington
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Beaufort is blessed with an abundance of delicious produce! There's nothing tastier than a fresh-picked tomato from St. Helena Island or a juicy ripe South Carolina peach.



How lucky we are to have a great place to shop where we can purchase this locally-grown bounty! I'm talking about the Port Royal Farmers' Market. The market, which is open on Saturday mornings from 8:30 until 12:30, is a great place to shop for the freshest fruits, vegetables, homebaked breads and plants. It's located off Ribaut Road near the entrance to the Naval Hospital. The fruit and vegetables have been fabulous so far this summer! Vendors are also selling flowers and herbs, plants, honey, fresh baked breads, organic eggs, soaps and local seafood. There's always live music on Saturday mornings. It's turning out to be a real social event! I have my own booth and offer fresh baked breads as well as pies, tarts, scones and other sweet and savory menu items. It's such fun that I plan to return as often as my catering schedule permits. For more information and a list of the vendors visit the website at www.portroyalfarmersmarket.com

. This week's recipes are perfect for showcasing our locally-grown produce. Come out and support the Port Royal Farmers' Market and taste for yourself. We invite you to drop by and see firsthand the goodness that grows in South Carolina. See you on Saturday morning!

Spinach Salad with Blueberries

1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/4 cup raspberry vinegar
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 (10-ounce) package fresh spinach, torn into bite sized pieces
1 (4-ounce) package blue cheese, crumbled
1 cup fresh blueberries
1/2 cup chopped pecans, toasted

Combine the first five ingredients in a jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake well.

In a large salad bowl, toss the spinach, blue cheese, blueberries, and pecans. Add dressing and toss gently; serve immediately. Serves 6 to 8.

Fried Green Tomatoes

3/4 cup self-rising flour
1/4 cup cornmeal
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper

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3/4 cup milk
3-4 green tomatoes, cut into 1/4-inch slices
Vegetable oil, for frying

Combine first 5 ingredients, mix until smooth. Add additional milk to thin, if necessary; batter should resemble pancake batter. Working in batches, dip tomato slices into batter, allowing excess batter to drip back into bowl. Fry in 2 inches of hot oil (375*) in a large heavy skillet until browned, turning once carefully with tongs. Transfer to a colander to drain. Serves 6 to 8.

Fresh Dill Pickles

4 or 5 medium pickling cucumbers
1 slice of white onion
1 bunch of fresh dill
1 clove garlic
1/4 cup white vinegar
1/4 teaspoon tumeric
1 tablespoon rock salt

Cut cucumbers lengthwise into quarters. Pack into a quart-sized jar. Add onion, dill, garlic, salt, and tumeric. Pour in vinegar. Fill jar with cold water. Let stand at room temperature for 3 days. Refrigerate before serving. Serves 6 to 8.

Country Club Squash

10 medium-size yellow squash
1/2 cup chopped onion
1 (8-ounce) carton sour cream
1/4 teaspoon dried basil
Salt and pepper, to taste
1 cup soft bread crumbs
1/2 cup grated sharp Cheddar cheese
1/3 cup butter, melted
1/2 teaspoon paprika
10 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled

Wash squash. Cook with onion in water until tender (about 15 minutes). Drain and mash with a fork. Combine squash, sour cream, basil and salt and pepper to taste. Pour into a greased baking dish. Combine bread crumbs with cheese, butter, and paprika. Sprinkle over squash mixture. Top with crumbled bacon. Bake at 300 degrees for 30 minutes. Serves 6 to 8.

Sherried Vidalia Onions

4 medium Vidalia onions, sliced
4 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

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3/4 cup beef bouillon
1/8 teaspoon pepper
1/4 cup dry sherry
1-1/2 cups croutons
3 tablespoons butter, melted
1 cup grated Swiss cheese
4 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

Cook onions in 4 tablespoons butter until barely tender. Mix flour and bouillon together, then add to onion mixture. Stir in pepper and sherry and cook until thickened and bubbly. Turn into a 1-quart baking dish. Toss croutons with 3 tablespoons melted butter and spoon over onion mixture. Sprinkle with Swiss and Parmesan cheeses. Place under broiler just until cheese melts, about 1 minute. Serves 6 to 8.

Peach and Blueberry Cobbler

1 tablespoon cornstarch
1/4 cup light brown sugar
1/2 cup cold water
2 cups sliced fresh peaches, sprinkled lightly with sugar
1 cup fresh blueberries
1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 cup sifted all-purpose flour (sift before measuring)
1/2 cup sugar
1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup milk
4 tablespoons butter, softened
2 tablespoons sugar
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

Preheat oven to 350degrees. Combine cornstarch, brown sugar, and water in a medium-sized saucepan. Add the peaches and the blueberries and cook, stirring, over medium heat until the mixture thickens. Stir in 1 tablespoon of the butter and lemon juice. Pour mixture into a lightly greased 8-inch round baking dish. Sift the flour, 1/2 cup sugar, baking powder, and salt into a mixing bowl. Add the milk and 4 tablespoons of softened butter and beat with an electric mixer until smooth. Pour flour mixture over fruit. Sprinkle top with 2 tablespoons sugar and nutmeg. Bake for 30 minutes. Serves 6 to 8.

Rosemary Shortbread

1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
1/3 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon freshly chopped rosemary

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. In a large bowl, beat sugar and butter until light and fluffy. Add salt and vanilla, mixing well. Add flour and rosemary, stirring until well combined. Roll out on a floured board to 1/4-inch thickness. Cut out with a cookie cutter. Place cookies on a ungreased cookie sheet and bake for 15 to 20 minutes. Cookies should not overbake and should not be brown. Cool after removing from oven. Serves 8 to 10.

Lime Mint Tea

8-1/2 cups water, divided
6 regular-size tea bags
2 cups loosely packed fresh mint leaves, chopped
1-1/2 cups sugar
1-3/4 cups lemon juice
1/3 cup fresh lime juice
Fresh mint to garnish

Bring 4 cups water to a boil in a large saucepan; pour over tea bags. Cover and steep 5 minutes; discard tea bags. Stir in mint; let stand 15 minutes. Pour tea through a wire-mesh strainer into a bowl, discarding mint. Bring remaining 4-1/4 cups water and sugar to a boil in saucepan; cool. Stir in tea and juices. Chill; serve over ice. Garnish, if desired. Makes 10 cups.

Bourbon-Infused Honey

1 cup local honey
1 large bay leaf
1/4 cup bourbon

In a small saucepan heat honey and bay leaf over medium heat just until mixture bubbles around the edges. Reduce heat to low and cook for 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in bourbon. Set aside to cool, about 1 hour. Remove bay leaf. Transfer honey to jar and store overnight or up to 5 days in the refrigerator. (An excellent hostess gift! Delicious when used to sweeten iced tea or drizzled over ice cream.) Makes 1 cup.

The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of the cookbook, Dining Under the Carolina Moon. Debbi's website address is www.cateringbydebbicovington.com. She may be reached at 525-0350 or by email at debbic@cateringbydebbicovington.com.