

This Month's Feature

North Carolina Herbs and Vegetables

Finally, our North Carolina herbs and vegetables are ready! I love this time of year because when I cook with fresh ingredients grown locally the food just seems to taste even better. It also makes cooking more enjoyable. To stop by the farmers market for a few minutes and just walk the aisles and take the time to pick out those fresh ingredients for dinner is truly something to relax and enjoy. We need to slow down and what better way than by shopping at a roadside stand or your farmers market. The time is here so enjoy it while it lasts!

Herb Biscuits

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
1-tablespoon baking powder
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
1-cup buttermilk, plus more if needed

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. In a large bowl, combine flour, thyme, baking powder, salt and baking soda. Using a fork, pastry blender, or your fingers, incorporate butter into flour mixture until mixture resembles coarse meal.

Mix in buttermilk until a sticky dough forms; you may need to add up to 1 tablespoon more buttermilk.

Drop 8 mounds (each about 1/3 cup) onto a nonstick baking sheet; lightly pat tops to flatten slightly.

Bake until golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through. Transfer to a wire rack to cool slightly. Serve warm.

PERSONAL Note: I found this recipe back in 2005 in Everyday Food magazine. You know how it is when you see a recipe you want to make but forget about it. That's what happened to this one so I'm glad I finally get to enjoy it and I hope you do too.

Tomato-Corn Salsa

4 ears fresh NC corn, husks removed
2 teaspoons olive oil
1 pt. NC grape tomatoes
3 green onions, sliced
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped fresh basil
2 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar

1-teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper

Brush corn evenly with oil. Grill, covered with grill lid, over medium-high heat (350 to 400 degrees) 8 minutes, turning every 2 minutes or until done. Let stand 10 minutes. Cut kernels from cob; discard cobs.

Combine corn, tomatoes, and next 5 ingredients, tossing to coat.

Prep: 15 minutes, Grill: 8 minutes, Stand: 10 minutes. White balsamic vinegar has a milder flavor and won't darken the corn color. Yield: makes 2 cups

PERSONAL Note: My cousin sent me this recipe and said it was just delicious! She found it in the July 2007 edition of Southern Living.

Zesty Squash, Zucchini and Pasta

3 cups orzo pasta or 2 cups bow-tie pasta
1 medium NC zucchini, thinly sliced (1 ¼ cups)
1 medium yellow summer NC squash thinly sliced (2 cups)
¼ cup finely chopped shallots
1 ½ tablespoons margarine
¾ cup chicken broth
¼ cup lemon juice
1-tablespoon cornstarch
1-tablespoon honey
½ teaspoon dried dill weed
1/8-teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons finely shredded Parmesan cheese

Cook the pasta in a large saucepan according to package directions, add zucchini and yellow squash last 3 minutes. Drain; return to saucepan.

Meanwhile, cook shallots in hot margarine in small saucepan until tender. Combine broth, lemon juice, cornstarch, honey, dill weed and salt in small bowl; add to shallots. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir 2 minutes longer: Pour over pasta mixture: toss gently to coat. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese before serving.

PERSONAL Note: This is a recipe I have made for years. It is a great side dish and to pair veggies and pasta together is also a crowd pleaser for the little ones.