

White-linen farms

Real silverware and cloth are showing up on farms as more chefs move to the country to grow what's on the menu, like at B.C.'s Stone Soup Inn

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At Stone Soup Inn (far left), Brock Windsor propagates yellow-flowered mizuna and other specialty items in the greenhouse. He thinks of the inn like the old folk story it was named for, as “a community effort, a coming together of people to produce and enjoy it.”





Ayako, Eiji, and Brock Windsor

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OR YEARS, CHEFS HAVE BEEN GETTING CLOSER TO

their ingredients: shopping Saturday markets, having farmers visit their restaurants, and even planting their own kitchen gardens. But chef Brock Windsor inched even closer to the farm when he bought acreage and an inn at Vancouver Island's Cowichan Valley. He and his wife started tilling the soil and raising chickens, turkeys, and sheep, as well as serving four-star meals to guests at his Stone Soup Inn. Previously chef at the acclaimed Sooke Harbour House on Vancouver Island, Brock says the reward for him—and diners—is getting to grow specialty ingredients not found everywhere else, like King Edward spinach, wild onions and foraged berries, fresh wasabi, and real heritage carrots. "There's a story behind every vegetable," says Brock. Like these: Asparagus harvested same-day is much sweeter, and oxeye daisies, an edible weed, taste like a mix of sorrel and spinach.

Worth the trip

Spot prawns and clams are caught nearby; the onions are grown from wild foraged seed. Brock cooks the seafood Native American-style in a cedar box filled with hot stones. Opened tableside, it smells like a seafood sauna.



The recipes from Stone Soup Inn

Cedar-steamed prawns and clams with onion mayonnaise

SERVES 6 | 50 MINUTES, PLUS 6 HOURS TO SOAK CEDAR PLANK

Our version, made in a roasting pan with a grilling plank or wood chips (but no cedar box or hot rocks), still imparts a woody flavor and aroma. You'll need a cooling rack that fits in the pan.

- 1 large egg
- 1½ tsp. cider vinegar
- ½ tsp. each kosher salt and Dijon mustard
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- ⅔ cup grapeseed oil
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped green onion plus 2 green onions cut into 2-in. slivers
- 1½ lbs. clams in the shell, scrubbed and rinsed
- 1½ lbs. medium shrimp, shells on (26 to 30 per lb.), snipped through shell along outer edge and deveined

1. Rinse a cedar grilling plank* or rinse 3 cups alder or cherry wood smoking chips in a colander. If using plank, set in a roasting pan and weight with a heavy jar. If using chips, put into a bowl and weight

Basalt rocks heat at the inn



with a smaller bowl. Add water to cover plank or chips. Soak at least 6 and up to 24 hours.

2. Crack egg into a blender and add vinegar, salt, mustard, and pepper. Whirl to blend. With motor running, slowly pour in oil, whirling until incorporated and mayonnaise is thick. Scrape mayo into a bowl and stir in chopped onion. Chill until serving.

3. Preheat oven to 500°. Drain water from plank or chips, saving 1 cup. Set plank or scatter chips in roasting pan, then put a cooling rack on top. Cover tightly with foil and bake until very fragrant, about 20 minutes. Heat reserved water until steaming. Arrange clams on board or chips and cover pan, leaving a corner open. Carefully add hot water and close foil. Bake for 5 minutes. Add shrimp in a single layer, then bake, tightly covered, until clams open and shrimp are cooked through in thickest part, 6 to 8 more minutes.

4. Transfer shrimp and clams to a serving bowl, using a slotted spoon. Scatter slivered onions on top. Serve with onion mayonnaise.

**Find plank or chips at a grocery store with grilling supplies or at barbecuewood.com*

PER SERVING 341 CAL., 69% (234 CAL.) FROM FAT; 24 G PROTEIN; 26 G FAT (2.9 G SAT.); 1.6 G CARBO (0.2 G FIBER); 396 MG SODIUM; 215 MG CHOL.

Rhubarb upside-down cakes with rosemary caramel sauce

SERVES 8 | 1¾ HOURS

We were intrigued, if skeptical, about trying Brock's dessert of rhubarb, caramel, and rosemary. But the unusual combo bowled us over. Though the recipe is time intensive, nothing is difficult.

CAKES

½ lb. rhubarb, cut in ½-in. slices (2 cups)

½ cup plus 3 tbsp. granulated sugar

3 oz. good-quality white chocolate such as Callebaut, chopped

½ cup unsalted butter, at room temperature

2 large egg whites, at room temperature

¾ tsp. vanilla extract

1½ cups cake flour

2 tsp. baking powder

½ tsp. salt

½ cup milk

SAUCE

1 cup whipping cream

1 rosemary sprig (5 in.)

1 cup granulated sugar

½ tsp. lemon juice

COMPOTE

½ cup packed light brown sugar

½ lb. rhubarb, split lengthwise and cut in 2-in. pieces

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Make cakes: Butter 8 (1-cup) ramekins or a 9-in. round pan and line with parchment paper or waxed paper cut to fit. Butter the paper. In a bowl, toss rhubarb with 3 tbsp. granulated sugar. Spoon evenly into ramekins or pan; if using ramekins, set on a rimmed baking sheet.

2. Melt chocolate in a small metal bowl over a pan of barely simmering water, whisking until smooth, 2 to 4 minutes. Let cool.

3. Beat butter and ½ cup granulated sugar in a bowl with a mixer until fluffy. Add egg whites and vanilla and beat until well blended. Combine flour, baking powder, and salt in another bowl. Beat flour mixture into egg mixture half at a time, alternating with milk, until smooth. Stir in chocolate.

4. Spread batter evenly over rhubarb. Bake cakes until golden brown and a toothpick inserted in center comes out almost clean, 28 to 35 minutes. Let cool in ramekins or pan about 30 minutes.

5. Make sauce: Heat cream and rosemary in a small saucepan over medium heat until bubbles form at edge of pan, stirring occasionally, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat and discard rosemary.

6. Stir granulated sugar with lemon juice and 2 tbsp. water in a 12-in. frying pan. Cook over medium-high heat, occasionally picking up pan and swirling mixture around sides to wash down sugar crystals, until deep golden, 5 to 6 minutes. Immediately remove pan from heat, add cream (it will bubble up), and whisk until smooth. Scrape sauce into a serving bowl.

7. Make compote: In a small saucepan over medium heat, bring brown sugar, ⅓ cup water, and rhubarb to a boil, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat and simmer until rhubarb is tender, 4 to 5 minutes.

8. Loosen cakes from sides of ramekins or pan with a small metal spatula. Invert

Worth the trip

The TK/red/pink rhubarb is harvested Xdaily, and fresh chamomile is picked to add a herbaceous note to the churned ice cream. Brock's surprise: grand fir needles sprinkled on top for a fruity taste.



Herbs and tuberous begonia blossoms



each onto a dessert plate (or invert pan onto a platter) and remove paper. For cake on platter, cut in wedges and transfer to plates. Using a slotted spoon, spoon compote and some of syrup on cake. Spoon some of sauce next to cake and serve the rest on the side. Serve with chamomile ice cream (recipe follows).

PER SERVING 559 CAL., 00% (213 CAL.) FROM FAT; 5.3 G PROTEIN; 24 G FAT (15 G SAT.); 84 G CARBO (1.5 G FIBER); 317 MG SODIUM; 67 MG CHOL.

Sour cream chamomile ice cream

SERVES 8 (MAKES 1 QT.) | 45 MINUTES, PLUS AT LEAST 4 HOURS TO FREEZE

If you have access to fresh chamomile,

give it a try here. But we also enjoyed the ice cream made with dried chamomile tea, which gives a more earthy flavor. As for the grand fir needles Brock sprinkles on, you can skip that part.

1 cup half-and-half
5 chamomile tea bags or 3 tbsp. finely chopped fresh chamomile* leaves

2 cups sour cream

Pinch of kosher salt

1 tsp. lemon zest

1½ cups sugar

1. Heat half-and-half to boiling in a small saucepan (if using tea bags). Add tea bags, remove from heat, and let steep 5 minutes. Press liquid from bags, discard them, and let liquid cool. For fresh chamomile, just

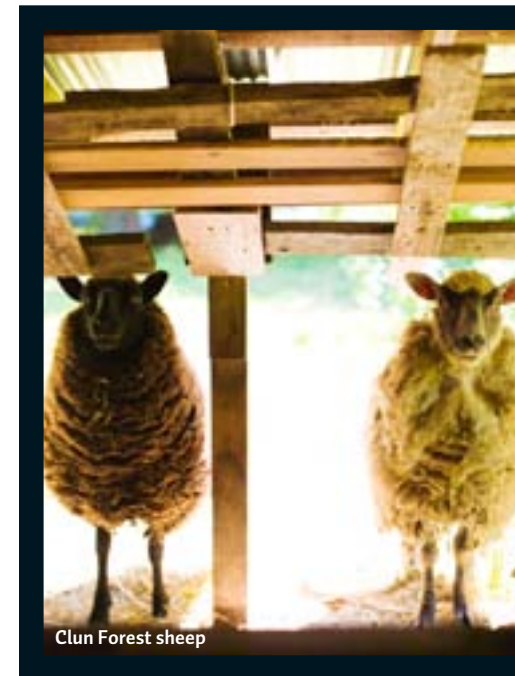
stir it into cold half-and-half.

2. Whisk together chamomile mixture, sour cream, salt, lemon zest, and sugar in a bowl until smooth.

3. Freeze mixture in an ice cream maker according to manufacturer's directions until softly frozen, about 30 minutes. Transfer to a metal bowl, stir to distribute lemon zest, and freeze airtight until firm enough to scoop, at least 4 hours and as long as 1 week.

**Grow your own, or try a farmers' market.*

PER ½-CUP SERVING 000 CAL., 00% (00 CAL.) FROM FAT; 00 G PROTEIN; 000 G FAT (000 G SAT.); 000 G CARBO (000 G FIBER); 000 MG SODIUM; 00 MG CHOL



Clun Forest sheep

Table for 2 away from the chicken coop, please

6 places to get the farmiest freshest meals

1. Stone Soup Inn

Lake Cowichan, B.C.

WHY IT'S FRESH? Whatever you see, chef Brock Windsor has, more than likely, toiled over, with the help of his wife. "I wake up at 6 a.m.; feed my turkeys, ducks, chickens, and pigs scraps; feed my sheep hay; feed my B&B guests (just-laid eggs with wild mushrooms and house-smoked and cured bacon, anyone?). He laughs. "But I got what I wanted: I'm the chef-owner of my own farm-restaurant."

WHAT TO EAT All of the five courses that highlight the freshness like spinach with farm eggs, green apple, drizzled with an apple vinaigrette; or potato salad with a

twist: grainy mustard and rhubarb dressing. \$\$\$ U.S.; dinner Thu-Sun; 6755 Cowichan Lake Rd.; 250/749-3848.

WHERE TO STAY Right there on the 3-acre spread, where two spare rooms (conveniently close to the dining room) come with skylights, a shared deck, and a small library lined with books on cooking and farming. The farm-fresh breakfast is part of the deal, of course; the chores, fortunately, are not. From \$130 U.S.; stone soupinn.ca -R.L.



3. Manresa

Los Gatos, CA

WHY IT'S FRESH Chef David Kinch typically spends at least two to three days a week in Scotts Valley, checking in with the owners of the new 22-acre biodynamic Love Apple Farm, which feeds his (and only his) two-Michelin-star restaurant.

WHAT TO EAT Manresa is the kind of restaurant foodies cross the country for. The menu changes but Monterey spot prawns are a star, set atop, say, stewed onion, sorrel, and coriander. Cabbage submerged in caviar; spring lamb roasted with leeks and anchovy. \$\$\$\$; 320 Village Lane; 408/354-4330.

WHERE TO STAY At Los Gatos Hotel, like the world's best chefs (Redzepi, Passard), when they come to dine at Manresa. From \$199; jdvhoteles.com -R.L.



At left: Manresa, in the village of Los Gatos. Bottom left: Fremont Diner's house-canned produce. Below: Elizabeth Miller and Chris Jenkins at their on-farm food cart.

4. MIG Eats

Salem, OR

WHY IT'S FRESH Elizabeth Miller and Chris Jenkins run a certified organic farm, CSA, and farm-stand—and get this, a destination food cart. From dawn to almost bedtime, the couple mows, Rototills, rips, and pulls—and makes meals.

WHAT TO EAT A Niçoise like no other: crisp butter lettuce tossed with sweet cherry tomatoes,

capers, dilly beans, and fresh-laid hard-boiled eggs. Plus, seasonal popsicles like zingy serrano lime. \$; cart from mid-May, Tue-Sat 11-6; 3394 Brown Island; mintogrowers.com **WHERE TO STAY** This is B&B-land, and the best of the bunch is Hopewell, 13 miles northwest of Salem. From \$159; hopewellbb.com -R.L.



2. Trellis Restaurant

Kirkland, WA

WHY IT'S FRESH You'll often find chef Brian Sheehser beekeeping or tending to new plantings on the 10 acres that feed his restaurant, about 6 miles away. That is, if he's not fixing the tractor.

WHAT TO EAT The heirloom purple passion asparagus with champagne-honey vinaigrette, made with the farm's honey, or what the

chef calls his "2-hour salad:" tossed with literally just-picked greens. \$\$\$; 220 Kirkland Ave.; 425/284-5900.

WHERE TO STAY Right upstairs. Trellis is on the bottom floor of The Heathman Hotel, Kirkland's luxe hotel. From \$149; heathmankirkland.com -JESS THOMSON



Above: At Stone Soup Inn, Amercauna chickens lay pale blue eggs served for breakfast. Near right: Trellis' Brian Scheehser.

5. The Fremont Diner

Sonoma, CA

WHY IT'S FRESH Three of the restaurant's four acres are sprouting everything from fava to zucchini, collards to corn—plus three pigs and 200-plus hens. Chef-owner Chad Harris puts in about an hour a day; he's hired hard-working Riley Nowicki as restaurant farmer.

WHAT TO EAT Breakfast (chicken and waffles!) and lunch (fig-smoked pork and house-made

potato chips!) at this low-key hot spot along the Carneros Highway has had a cult-following since it opened in TK, but starting in April, it's doing dinner, too. With a new beer and wine license to boot. \$; 2698 Fremont Dr.; 707/938-7370.

WHERE TO STAY MacArthur Place is 5 miles away, with gorgeous gardens and fruit from the orchards turned into pies. From

6. Black Cat Farm-Table-Bistro

Boulder, CO

WHY IT'S FRESH Chef Eric Skokan swaps his toque for a straw hat to tend to his all-organic Black Cat Farm, just 8 miles from his restaurant. Eric and his farmhands grow more than 250 varieties of heirloom and heritage breeds of produce and meats, some of which he's brought back from near extinction, like rare Mulefoot pigs.

WHAT TO EAT

A slow-roasted young lamb with even younger veggies (pinky-sized carrots, sweet pea pods no bigger than a nickel.) \$\$\$; 1964 13th St.; blackcatboulder.com or 303/444-5500.

WHERE TO STAY Three blocks away is Hotel Boulderado, a 102-year-old classic. From \$209; boulderado.com -JOHANNA SILVER

