

Savory vegetable pancakes



SARAH WALKER CARON | BDN
Vegetable pancake batter contains shredded zucchini, shredded carrots, thinly sliced spring onions, flour, egg, salt and pepper.



SARAH WALKER CARON | BDN

Enjoy your vegetable pancakes with a fried egg and a cup of blueberries.

A summery recipe using produce from the farmers market

When I opened my door to retrieve the newspaper early this morning, the chill in the air was shocking. After weeks of balmy temperatures, it felt decidedly cool.

I'm not ready to break out the sweaters and sweatshirts yet.

And when the auto-payment for summer camp was deducted from my checking account over the weekend, it struck me that it was the last one for this summer. We're in our ninth week of my kids' summer vacation. It's been 10 weeks since homework and classes and school schedules and earlier bedtimes. It's also been 10 weeks since my kids last boarded a bus together to head off to school in the morning. Before we know it, the new school year will be underway.



SARAH WALKER CARON
MAINE COURSE

I'm not ready for summer vacation to end.

This summer has felt like a whirlwind, and yet I don't think we've done enough. Sure, there have been parades and fireworks, theatre camp, plays, festivals, swimming, birthdays, day trips, robotics camp, hiking and biking. But there's so much more to do — so many more trails to tackle, so much more swimming to do and so much more excitement to fit in.

But really, it's not over yet. So we need to make the most of our last few weeks of freedom before diving into the school year. I guess that means our plans for the next few weeks are cut out for us.

What's the No. 1, can't-miss thing you do every summer? What shouldn't we miss?

While summer vacation's end may be approaching, we're just hitting prime season at farmers markets across the state, where there's a vast variety of fresh produce available — squash and cucumbers, greens and peppers, corn, tomatoes, herbs

and so much more. There are many weeks more of summer farmers markets to enjoy.

It's in that spirit that I share this summery recipe using lovely fresh produce from the farmers market. And if you serve these with eggs, like I like to, you probably can find those at the farmers market, too.

These vegetable pancakes are savory. Skip the maple syrup and instead fry an egg — or make a lovely over-easy one — to serve with these. The creamy, runny yolk is a lovely accompaniment to the pancakes. We love these for breakfast, but they could be good for any meal of the day — including a special breakfast for dinner.

Making them begins with shredded fresh zucchini. We're in the time of summer when zucchini is plentiful in gardens and farmers markets throughout the state. If you're approaching the point where you're zucchini- and summer squash-ed out, this will help. It's a different and fresh

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How to enjoy your farmers market haul at its peak

BY JEANMARIE BROWNSON
CHICAGO TRIBUNE (TNS)

Kohlrabi, sweet and hot peppers, broccoli, kale, spinach, cucumbers, summer squash (including tatume, eight ball, light and dark green zucchini, light and dark yellow zucchini), radishes (red, white and striped), skinny green beans, wax beans, beets, turnips and assorted onions.

Oops. I just typed in my farmers market shopping list for the week.

All to be supplemented by the lettuces, herbs and tomatoes plucked from our garden. Oh, and a CSA (community-supported agriculture) box later in the week.

This is the time of year vegetable lovers embrace. Now, the challenge is to enjoy everything while the produce remains in top-notch condition with peak nutrients. For me, that means cooking most of what I buy a day or so after my splurge. Then, containers of vegetable sides and mains are at the ready all week long — or until the next market trip.

The first thing I love to assemble: veggie toasts. No recipe required. Simply top hearty slabs of toasted whole grain bread with a smear of soft cheese, thick slices of tomato and a shower of chives. Or smear the toast with a nut butter and quickly sauteed sweet onions and spinach.



MICHAEL TERCHA | CHICAGO TRIBUNE | TNS
Crisp radishes, carrots and kohlrabi, thinly sliced and tossed with a lemon Parmesan vinaigrette, make a great summ'r salad.

Speaking of quick sautes, most summer vegetables take well to this fast, high-heat cooking. A few tips I've learned: Prep the vegetables first, use a heavy pan and heat it thoroughly, add flavorful oil and heat it, add veggies in an uncrowded layer to promote browning, turn off the heat a few seconds before the vegetables are done — residual heat will finish the cooking. If working in advance, spread the cooked vegetables out on a sheet tray to cool before spooning into storage containers.

Sauteed vegetables make great additions to weeknight pastas, cooked brown rice and scrambled eggs. Spoon them over a hearty green salad with fresh cheese and a sprinkling of nuts.

All summer long, I've been enjoying a wide variety of radishes. Thinly sliced, heavily salted, they add great crunch to a piece of buttered baguette. Lightly sauteed tiny striped radishes make a crunchy side for grilled fish. Quartered and tossed with ribbons of carrots and a lemon Parmesan vin-

aigrette they make a great summer salad. When it's too warm for radishes to thrive in the garden, I turn to tiny turnips or crunchy kohlrabi, as in the recipe below.

I love garden-fresh broccoli and usually blanch it to keep it bright green and crisp for weekday enjoyment. I detest the smell of burnt broccoli — it reminds me of my early days learning to cook. However, a bowl of charred broccoli salad with cashews at Superiory Burger in New York changed my thinking. This summer, I enlist the help of my cast-iron skillet to sear broccoli pieces without burning. I'm adding an equally flavorful balsamic dressing — seasoned with capers, anchovies and fresh basil — to complement the dark char flavor. With a sprinkle of nuts, you have a great vegetarian main.

Curry and vegetables make the perfect match. For fast cooking, I puree a can of unsweetened coconut milk with some bottled Thai curry paste — red or green works — and keep the blend on hand. Then add a few splashes of the sauce to a panful of sauteed vegetables. Chilled, the mix keeps for several days. Reheat and serve warm over steaming hot brown rice or cooked udon noodles.

Summer veggies all week long. Enjoy them, then repeat.

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Poutine Palooza coming to County

Event to take place at Acadian Festival

BY JULIA BAYLY
BDN STAFF

MADAWASKA — Just how much poutine can one person eat in under an hour?

The world will find out Friday, during the inaugural Poutine Palooza taking place during Madawaska's annual Acadian Festival.

An homage to all things poutine — the traditional Quebecois delicacy of french-fried potatoes covered in gravy and cheese curds — Poutine Palooza is taking place around town, with organizers hoping it boosts festival attendance.

"The whole original purpose behind this was to enhance the numbers at the Acadian Festival," according to Brian Bouley, executive director of the Greater Madawaska Chamber of Commerce and sponsor of the event. "We figured we would create a whole different event that the chamber would own as its own thing."

Variations of poutine have been popping up on menus around the country, Bouley said, and his organization hopes the popularity of the gooey dish will bring people into town.

To date, more than 5,000 people have clicked on the chamber's Poutine Palooza social media page, with more than 300 indicating they are interested in attending.

"Everyone loves poutine," he said. "We are hoping this could become the next big thing in town."

Poutine Palooza kicked off last week, with judging among the town's established restaurants on just who will hold bragging rights for "Best Poutine in Madawaska." Five judges sampled 35 variations on poutine, and Bouley said the winner will be announced Friday. Among those participating was

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Beets secret ingredient for chocolate cake

Why beets in chocolate cake? I don't know why not. We put carrots, zucchini, pumpkin, squash and even parsnips into breads or cakes, so beets are just another in a long line of vegetables sneaking into places where they may not be expected.

I first learned about chocolate beet cakes when Cheryl Wixson, who lives on Deer Isle (and teaches all kinds of food-related stuff on behalf of the

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners, and goodness knows what else) led a vegetable cooking class for a conference I attended. At the time, I thought, "Good heavens! Beets?" But this year, with a ridiculously plentiful beet harvest, dear Cheryl's chocolate cake floated back into my consciousness.

I knew I wasn't going to find this in my old Fanny Farmer cookbook, or even in "Joy of Cooking," so off to the internet I went, and sure enough, there were several versions, and the one below is an adaptation of a couple. I prefer a semi-sweet chocolate, but you may prefer a milk chocolate. Feel free to go to the sweeter side. Some recipes recommended baking the beets wrapped in foil in the oven. Frankly, I don't see why. Now, I simply boil them, and I think you might just as well do that, too.

As with many of these vegetable-based cakes, you don't taste the beets (or the zucchini, or the carrots, etc.), and you can't see them either. The chocolate conceals all. So if you have a beet-resistor in your household, they will never be the wiser unless they catch you making the cake

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SANDY OLIVER
TASTE BUDS