



FOOD

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Pumpkin Pie Bars.

SARAH WALKER CARON | BDN

Corn Relish is summer in a jar

Even though it isn't officially summer anymore, we who live Down East are still harvesting tomatoes, corn, and peppers while in the garden winter squash is ripening and root vegetables are fattening up. It was cool enough this past week to put a fire in the cook stove where I heated up corn relish before spooning it into canning jars. Yellow corn with flecks of red and green really brightens up the preserves shelf and the dinner plate in winter.

This recipe came from my island neighbor Sharon Daley, the telemedicine nurse on the Seacoast Mission vessel, the Sunbeam, who somehow squeezes canning time in between trips to Maine island communities. I had not ever made corn relish and for some reason didn't think I would like it. Sharon handed me a spoonful and changed my mind for me. "I knew I could convert you," she said.



SANDY OLIVER

TASTE BUDS

I try to grow enough corn for fresh eating; corn cut raw off the cob to freeze; and sometimes still have more. A few jars of corn relish is a good addition to the winter supply: sharpens up the salad plate, is great on chicken, fish, and pork, and embellishes vegetable dishes of almost any sort (think sweet potatoes or butternut squash).

The original recipe had what are, for me, a couple of annoying features: for example it recommended half a cup of chopped onion and a cup and a half chopped celery. Measures like that tend to relegate the rest of an onion or a bit of celery to refrigerator oblivion, and I think that sensible cooks will agree upon rounding to the nearest whole vegetable. Four ribs of celery is roughly a cup and a half. A small onion will do the trick. If you are a nervous cook, go ahead and chop and measure if you want.

As far as mustard seed is concerned I figured on a heaping tablespoon rather than one and quarter tablespoons, and a heaping teaspoon of the celery seed rather than one and a quarter teaspoons. Besides, since it really is a matter of taste and I prefer slightly more muscular flavorings anyway, I added them a bit more generously.

You'll need five cups of cooked corn — I used about seven ears for that but how many you'll need

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Absolutely play like a girl

Don't play like a girl," a little girl on the soccer team I coach said to another this weekend. We were mid-game, standing on the sidelines, talking about a play my daughter, Paige, 8, just made as goalie. She'd caught the ball — the first time anyone did this season.

It was our second game, and the girls rotate positions. After we cheered for Paige, I said to the girls near me that catching the ball to stop a play can be scary but they should never be afraid. They can do it.

The little girl's words hit me like an icy shot to the heart. As a woman, as a mother, as someone raising a daughter to be fierce, images of Brandi Chastain and Michelle Akers immediately came to mind. As a young girl myself, they were among the women soccer players showing people everywhere that women players could be fierce and competitive. Back then, the Women's World Championship (now the FIFA Women's World Cup) was just beginning — it was



SARAH WALKER CARON
MAINE COURSE

held for the first time in 1991. I couldn't get a response out fast enough.

"Absolutely play like a girl. Always play like a girl, because girls are awesome. Girls can do anything. Just don't be afraid of the ball. No one should be," I said, or at least said something very close to that.

Playing like a girl means playing like retired professional soccer player Mia Hamm, who played with the United States women's national soccer team for 17 years and won two women's World Cups and two Olympic gold medals. She joined the national team at age 15, and was the youngest member of a soccer team to win a World Cup — ever.

It means playing like fiery goalkeeper Hope Solo, a two-time Olympic gold medalist who played impressively to help her team win the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup. Though she was suspended from the U.S. team for remarks following an August game, she is still considered the all-time greatest women's goalkeeper.

And it means playing like Abby Wambach, the two-time Olympic gold medalist and FIFA Women's World Cup champion, who played forward. She scored 184 goals over the course of her soccer career (she's retired now) — more than any other player (male or female) ever in the

history of international soccer. Wambach, whose autobiography "Forward: My Story," was recently released by HarperCollins Children's Books, is a six-time winner of the U.S. Soccer Athlete of the Year award.

But where does that sentiment come from? I admit, there was a time when I might have said the same thing. When the idea that somehow "playing like a girl" meant something other than being brave, fierce, unstoppable and fabulous. If there's one lesson I can impart on my team — this group of girls who are learning to trust each other, work together and play well together — it's that playing like a girl is the best thing you can do. Being a girl is wonderful.

Girls are fierce. Women are fierce. And I hope all the girls on my soccer team — along with my daughter, sister and all the other important young women in my life — know that they are fierce, too.

There's nothing we can't do.

There's no easy transition to this week's recipe. Well, except maybe saying that being fierce in the kitchen is pretty awesome, too. Nonetheless, let's get to the dessert, shall we?

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Fork Food Lab tasting room opens this week. Co-owner Bruno Tropeano of Gelato Fiasco holds up a cup of an experimental flavor people can try here.

Portland food lab opens tasting room

BY KATHLEEN PIERCE
BDN STAFF

PORTLAND — Blueberry olive oil gelato made before your eyes. Fresh-pressed almond milk. Pumpkin ale-infused brownies. It's a food show every day at Fork Food Lab, and starting this week you can grab a forkful.

The tasting room in Portland's new shared kitchen incubator opened this week to showcase inventions its members are cooking up.

"Through experimental

product lines, we are trying to give people a taste of a wide variety of food," said CEO Neil Spillane, who is excited about a new nitro cold brew company called White Cap Coffee and the meal prep service Carr Eats, two of many startups that will test market their products to the public before they go to market.

"This is the first shelf that any of our incubators will land on."

Each week will spotlight new members in the tasting

Restaurateurs living the dream in Ellsworth

BY EMILY BURNHAM
BDN STAFF

When her mother-in-law came to Ellsworth from Sri Lanka to visit this past summer, Menemsha Abeysekera was very nervous about having her try Love Cake, something her mother-in-law had made most of her life. Abeysekera tried to be very faithful to the family recipe for the cake — a Portuguese-influenced dessert comprising nuts, semolina, spices and pumpkin, made with much affection by generations of Sri Lankan mothers.

"I was waiting for her to come and school me on it. But she liked it, thankfully," Abeysekera said. "And then she helped out in the restaurant the whole time. She was in here helping every day, doing dishes. It was so sweet."

Menemsha and Sanjeeva Abeysekera opened Serendib, their cozy, cheerful Sri Lankan eatery, on State Street in downtown Ellsworth, last fall. While Menemsha Abeysekera, 34, makes the Love Cake, Sanjeeva Abeysekera, 33, who cooked in Bar Harbor restaurants for a decade before opening his own place, is behind the stove in the tiny kitchen, making everything else.

The pair met while they were students at College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor. Menemsha Abeysekera is a native of Sri Lanka, while Sanjeeva Abeysekera is a native of Sri Lanka, who arrived to the U.S. from Sri Lanka to attend school. They've been married for eight years, have two children ages 14 and 4, and their own small



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN
Sanjeeva Abeysekera cooks up a dish at his restaurant, Serendib, in Ellsworth recently. The Sri Lankan restaurant opened last fall.

business — something Sanjeeva Abeysekera dreamed about for years.

"This has always been the dream. And then just one day, we knew it was time. I was never sure when we were going to open our own place, but it managed to happen last year," Sanjeeva Abeysekera said.

"We just opened the doors, didn't tell anybody and waited to see what would happen," Menemsha Abeysekera said. "So far, it's worked out really well."

Fans of Indian cuisine will likely recognize many of the elements of Sri Lankan cuisine. Dishes such as Tikka Masala, Vindaloo and Palak Paneer are on the menu at Serendib, naan

and chutney accompany most orders and spices cardamom, coriander and cumin are usually present. Where Sri Lankan cuisine differs, however, are in some of the ingredients — or lack thereof — and in the volume of spices used in each dishes.

"India, Pakistan, the whole area is like the U.S. There are always basic similarities in terms of what you'll find in basic ingredients, but there are regional differences. And that's true of Sri Lanka, as well," Sanjeeva Abeysekera said. "I think where Sri Lanka is different is that it can be a little more rustic. I think there's a little more flair to it."

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