

FARMERS MARKET RECIPES

The Amador Farmers' Market is now open, and I went and checked out the goodies. There were vendors selling wonderful fruit, like ollalieberries, strawberries, peaches, nectarines and cherries. There were vendors selling vegetables like fresh kale, chard, tomatoes, lettuce, carrots, onions and potatoes, and herbs like fresh basil, dill, and parsley. There were vendors selling honey and beeswax candles, and vendors selling handmade bags and shirts and plants for your garden. And Andrae's Bakery was doing a brisk business in bread and pastries and cheese.

I had no idea what I was going to cook, so I just wandered about and put together a dinner from what was fresh and good. So I thought I'd share with you some of the things I made with the goodies I brought home from the Farmers' Market. For breakfast, I chopped up some of the dill and basil and some oregano and sage from my own garden, and stirred them into some scrambled eggs made with the farm fresh eggs I got at the market.

I also bought some beautiful young green beans, so I trimmed off the stem ends and cut the beans in half. I zapped them in the microwave for about 3 minutes, and then poured a vinaigrette dressing made with Dijon mustard, wine vinegar, salt and pepper and some of Sue Bragstadt's Amador Olive Oil over the still warm and slightly crunchy beans, along with some finely chopped shallots and some shredded basil, and let them sit in the dressing all afternoon before serving. They made a delicious first course served on some of the baby lettuce I found at the Farmers' Market, topped with some shavings of the fresh Parmesan cheese I found at the Andrae's Bakery stand.

For dinner, I served barbecued steaks. I made a topping with some of the onion I bought, finely sliced and caramelized in some butter with a little balsamic vinegar. Then I took the kale I'd bought and stripped the leaves off the stems. I sautéed a little sliced onion in some olive oil, and then added the kale leaves and a pinch of salt. I stirred for several minutes until the kale was cooked, then just before serving I stirred in some toasted pine nuts and a splash of balsamic vinegar.

Along with the kale, I peeled about a pound of the carrots and cut them in half lengthwise and cut the halves into roughly one-inch long pieces. I put them in a small saucepan with $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup of fresh orange juice, a tablespoon of unsalted butter, about $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of freshly ground black pepper. I brought the mixture to the boil and boiled it, uncovered, over medium-high heat for about 15 minutes or so, until the carrots were tender and the liquid has pretty much completely evaporated and the carrots are beginning to glaze in the butter. Then I sprinkled on about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of chopped fresh dill, and served.

The potatoes, which were Yukon Golds, were real easy. I cut them in wedges lengthwise and put them in a large skillet with about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of olive oil in the pan, some unpeeled cloves of garlic, and some stems of fresh rosemary. I cooked them over medium heat, covered, for about half an hour, turning them from time to time, until the edges were all golden. The garlic I squeezed out of the cloves onto slices of Andrae's blue cheese and walnut bread. The tomatoes were cut into wedges, tossed with a little mayonnaise and some torn basil leaves, salt and pepper, and served for salad.

For dessert, I made cherry clafouti. I pitted about 3 cups of the fresh cherries, which were just ripe and incredibly flavorful. I put the cherries into a buttered baking dish, and poured over a batter made from 2 eggs, 2 tablespoons of sugar, 1 cup of all-purpose flour and 1 cup of milk. I poured the batter over the cherries and baked it in a preheated 350 degree oven for about half an hour, and then when the clafouti had cooled somewhat, I dusted it with some powdered sugar and served wedges of it garnished with some whipped cream, made with some sugar and a little vanilla.

And there you have it—a delicious dinner made from the wonderful raw materials I found at the Amador Farmers' Market. Try it yourself—you'll be amazed at how good your food tastes. This is Steve Muni for the Hometown Kitchen.