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EAT BEAT

by Martha Wagner

Some people find the summer heat kills their appetite. These are not true food lovers. People for whom eating is one of life's daily pleasures, rather than daily necessities, may slow down their chewing on a hot day, but they relish the arrival of the first local corn, the season's first peaches and plums, homemade ice cream and the annual ritual of the barbecue.

When I was growing up in the Midwest, barbecues were pretty mundane—hotdogs and hamburgers and chicken pieces slathered with bottled gooey red sauce. Today barbecues have become classier and more varied. More vegetables are appearing on the grill, and more fish, too.

If the word "tuna" brings to mind the flaky canned fish of which sandwiches are made, let me break it to you gently that tuna is also a delectable, meaty-textured fresh fish that's superb when barbecued. August is the beginning of the fresh Albacore tuna season. These deep-sea fish caught off the Oregon coast have a beige-pink flesh which turns to white when cooked. Tuna is often sold in long, thick loin cuts. It's less expensive than salmon and every bit as flavorful.

For grilling, Dwight Collins of Newman's Fish Market recommends cooking a whole loin piece over a medium fire, turning as necessary, until only a bit of pink remains in the center of the fish. He likes to serve tuna with fresh salsa. The fish can also be marinated briefly (one hour) in a good vinaigrette or a fresh ginger-lemon juice-soy sauce mixture.

Pork is the barbecue choice of Bill, the butcher at the new Red Barn meat market (more on the market later) at Fourth and Van Buren. He offers the following pork chop recipe to serve three hearty appetites:

Pork Leon

6 pork chops
3 tablespoons chili sauce
1 tablespoon grated onion
¼ teaspoon each dry mustard and paprika
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
½ teaspoon salt

Place chops in a marinade of remaining ingredients and refrigerate overnight. Barbecue marinated chops over medium heat until cooked through. Serve with the following vinegar dip: 1 cup white vinegar, 1 tablespoon finely minced garlic, 1 tablespoon red hot pepper sauce (or to taste).

For a vegetarian barbecue, Surata Soyfoods recommends:

Barbecued Tempeh Burgers

1 10-oz. package tempeh, quartered
¼ cup honey
¼ cup soy sauce
¼ cup vinegar
¾ teaspoon fresh ginger, minced
½ teaspoon dry mustard
1 clove garlic, minced

Steam tempeh for 20 minutes. Mix remaining ingredients, then marinate steamed tempeh in mixture for up to 2 hours. Grill tempeh over medium heat until browned. Serve on buns with usual burger trimmings. Serves 4.

Grilled vegetables are delicious and save pot washing. The usual method for grilling vegetables is to place them on skewers and baste with an oil-based marinade. Here are a few alternatives:

- Steam-bake small new potatoes, whole or sliced, with fresh herbs inside a tightly-sealed sheet of heavy aluminum foil. For variety, add sliced onions.

- Grill whole small eggplants directly on the grill. Prick skins with a fork. Cook over medium-hot coals until the flesh is soft and the skins charred. Split open and serve with salt, pepper and butter or a drizzle of olive oil.

- Corn can be grilled in two ways. Pull down leaves without detaching. Remove corn silk and pull leaves back up around the ear. Soak in water for 10 minutes to prevent burning, if the fire is very hot. Place corn on grill and turn occasionally. Alternatively, husk corn and brush with oil or butter, then wrap in foil and place on grill. Corn will cook in 10 to 20 minutes.

- Combine summer vegetables for a French Ratatouille cooked in foil packets. Layer sliced onion, minced garlic, diced green pepper and eggplant, sliced zucchini or yellow squash, and sliced tomatoes on sheets of heavy foil. Sprinkle with olive oil and season with salt, pepper and fresh basil or oregano. Wrap packets tightly and place on grill for about 20 minutes.

The Bible tells us that "man shall not live by bread alone." Here in the Willamette Valley it seems that men and women owe their sustenance to bagels, corn chips and salsa, chocolate in most any form, tofu and granola. Let me know if I've missed any of the basics. Three local companies are in the granola business: Solstice Bakery, Golden Temple and Wildtime Foods. Wildtime, which sells under the name of Grizzlies, has recently added a third granola to its line—Date Almond Granola is sweetened primarily with pineapple juice. Another new Grizzlies product is muesli, an uncooked mixed-grain cereal originally developed years ago by health-conscious Swiss. The local version, sold in bulk at natural food stores, is amply fortified with dates, raisins and nuts. Unlike granola, it has no oil or concentrated sweeteners.

Once upon a time, there was ice cream, fruit sherbet and ice-milk in the freezer section. Today, with low-calorie and low-cholesterol as the words so many want to hear, there is a growing array of icy, sweet desserts: frozen yogurt, fruit sorbet, soy-based Tofutti and Ice Bean, fruit-based Yodolo and more. My new favorite is Rice Dream, a dairy-free product with the taste and creamy texture of a not-too-rich ice cream. It's made from Amasake, a traditional Japanese cultured sweet milk made from rice. Rice Dream is lightly sweetened with maple syrup and comes in such flavors as vanilla, carob-almond, strawberry and carob chip. It's sold in pints at natural food stores.

American meat consumption is falling. A recent Gallup poll commissioned by *American Health* magazine found that 24 percent of Americans have cut back on meat. Surveys show that concern about the chemicals in meat is one reason that people have cut back. At the new Red Barn meat market, opened in June, some 90 percent of the customers are looking for chemical-free meat, according to Bill, the market's butcher. The market specializes in locally-raised, grass-fed pork, beef and lamb that, Bill says, is not only free of the chemicals found in most meat, but it's also 50 to 75 percent lower in fat. He's finding some customers among people who once gave up meat because of the way it's usually raised. The market also carries hormone-free chicken and rabbit and a small selection of fresh fish. Homemade sausages of all types, from Bratwurst to Chorizo and all-beef hotdogs, are made on the premises.

Solstice Bakery, the whole grain bakery now in its fifth year of business selling breads and pastries throughout the state, has remodeled its store at 350 E. Third St., turning it into a sort of natural 7-11 Market. It stocks most of the aforementioned daily essentials: bread, granola, tofu, corn chips and salsa. It also sells cheese, dairy products, juices, bulk grains and a pastry case full of Solstice cookies. Store hours are 8 am to 7 pm Sunday through Friday (closed Saturday).

Can a 62-year-old statistics professor bake prize-winning powdermilk biscuits? You bet! Arthur Mittman, a professor at the University of Oregon, took first prize for his powdermilk biscuits at the second annual KLCC Prairie Home Companion Ice Cream Social on Sunday. Mittman says he's been a baker of breads and biscuits for years but never before entered any competitions. He whips up a batch of biscuits to serve with jam whenever there's company for breakfast. Here's his recipe:

Baking Powder Biscuits (1 dozen)

2 cups unbleached white flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
2 tablespoons powdered buttermilk
2 to 3 teaspoons sugar
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon cream of tartar
¼ pound margarine
¾ cup water

Sift dry ingredients together, then cut in margarine with a pastry cutter. Stir in water with a fork, mixing just until a ball forms. Place dough on a floured surface. Lightly pat out dough until about ¾-inch thick. The key to good biscuits is to handle dough as little as possible. Cut out one dozen biscuits with a biscuit cutter and place on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake in a preheated 450 degree oven for 10 minutes.