



DORY'S DIARY

DOROTHY SWART
FLESHMAN

The sweet melody of memories

We used to long for summer — to be out of school and free to enjoy all of the activities these new freedoms would allow.

But, before long we began grumbling about having to return to school and all the while feeling a small tingling of excitement in the getting ready. There was the purchasing new clothing and various implements of learning — notebooks and paper, pencils, erasers, rulers, specified note or workbooks, and other sorts of items to show we were serious about the subject of education.

Beyond this, though, was my returning to band, whether in high school or our local college, the Eastern Oregon College of Education (EOCE-EOU). Armed with my clarinet, swab, cork grease, and a number of reeds I anticipated returning to the band room at either school.

The gymnasium building behind the two schools on Fourth Street still stands but for a different use basically in that the Central elementary school (replaced by the Middle School) and the high school buildings are no longer there, demolished by father time and the idea of progress.

And there my memory clings in spite of my other leanings towards journalism and the Tiger Hi-Lights school paper.

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BETWEEN THE ROWS

WENDY SCHMIDT

Weeds: Can't beat 'em? Eat 'em

I don't know about you gardeners, but I'm weary of pulling weeds in the vegetable garden. This is the first year that I've ever been happy growing tomatoes. The plants have become giants full of green tomatoes. It is hard to keep ahead of the weeds. Too bad the weeds are not the edible kind.

EDIBLE WEEDS

- Pig Weed (*Amaranthus retroflexus* L. Redroot pigweed) — Tastes like spinach, great steamed.
- Purslane (*Portulaca oleracea* L.) — Raw in salads. Very nutritious and tasty.
- Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* Weber, T. vulgare Lam.) — Raw in salad and sandwiches, cooked as greens and stirfry. Roast roots and use as coffee substitute. Flowers are used to make dandelion wine. Perennial herb. Substitute for spinach recipes for raw pasta.
- Chicory (*Cichorium intybus* L.) — cooked greens or roasted roots as a coffee substitute. Raw in salads. Native of Mediterranean region, cultivated in Europe. Throughout most of the USA, and southern Canada.
- Sour Dock (*Rumex crispus* L.) — cooked as a green. Reproduces by seeds. Native to Eurasia. Throughout the USA.
- Wild Lettuce (*Lactuca pulchella*, *Lactuca serriola* L.) — cooked as a green. If you pick them young, they are less likely to be bitter. Native of Eurasia to the Himalayas; introduced from Europe. In Wyoming pulmonay emphysema develops in cattle feeding exclusively on this weed. Throughout all USA except northern Maine and southern Florida. Young lettuce can be eaten raw.
- Sow thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus* L.) — Annual herb, rarely biennial, reproducing by seeds or stems from a taproot. Has a milky sap.

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Making The Most Of Summer's Corn Crop

KERNEL OF AN IDEA

By JeanMarie Brownson
Chicago Tribune

Some of my favorite summer memories include sweet corn — dripping with butter at the state fair; popped and salty at the drive-in movie theater; slathered with mayonnaise, cheese and chile powder at street festivals; sweet and crunchy in salads at the family picnic.

To this day, we love to stop on the way to the cabin near Galena, Illinois, and buy firm, tightly wrapped ears from local farm stands. Two ears apiece for most of us, three for the hearty eaters. The pot of salted water is set to boil before we've unpacked the car. My family knows full well that the closer the eating is to the picking, the sweeter the corn. Sometimes, corn on the cob is dinner.

I slice kernels from any excess cobs to transport easily back to the city house. There, we turn the corn into fresh corn polenta to serve with quick-grilling pork chops. Other kernels get tucked into a cold salad to pack for lunches.

Every summer my fresh corn salad sees a change-up. This summer, I'm crazy about creamy white choclo corn from Peru. The slightly nutty-tasting kernels are more than four times the size of summertime sweet corn — and not sweet — so the contrast between the two when eaten together is terrific. It's sold frozen in large bags (look for "choclo desgranado" — shelled — from Goya) at Latino grocery stores. I stock it for use in ceviche, soups, stews, side dishes and the salad recipe that follows below. It just needs a gentle boil in salted water to soften it to a toothsome texture. You can substitute canned chodlo or hominy; just rinse it well, and skip the boiling.

Trader Joe's sells Giant Peruvian Inca Corn as a salted and roasted snack — kind of like toasted and salted corn nuts. Both are great as a garnish on salads, adding ginormous corn crunch.

Polenta might sound like a cold weather dish, but laced with sweet corn kernels, both pureed and whole, it's light, nearly fluffy. The recipe that follows can be made in advance, freeing up the cook to pay attention to other vegetables or items cooking on the grill.

We grill pork chops all summer long for their versatility and their affinity with sweet corn. For family meals, I select lean, boneless loin chops or the pleasingly chewy blade chop. When we're having people over, I splurge and purchase bone-in, center cut rib chops. They are gorgeous, lean, yet juicy.

Chops between 1½ inches and 2 inches thick cook beautifully on the grill. Thinner ones dry out easily; thicker ones prove difficult to cook properly. For added flavor and moistness, I soak them in a sweet-salty whiskey brine. You'll be amazed at the lovely whiskey flavor that comes through the chop. I dollop a simple, fresh relish of plums and tomatoes over the pork and serve with polenta on the side.

For even more summer corn goodness, I make cornbread croutons from store-bought cornbread. It barely takes 10 minutes, and these crispy, sweet nuggets elevate any summer salad. Try them as a garnish on the sweet-corn polenta or on a chicken salad. Or, toss with a bit of sugar; toast them extra crispy and then crumble over vanilla ice cream topped with caramel sauce. Genius.

2 CORN AND EDAMAME SALAD

Prep: 25 minutes
Cook: 10 minutes
Makes: 6 to 8 servings

When taking this on a picnic or to a potluck, make the lemon vinaigrette in a jar with a tight-fitting lid, and transport it separately. Toss it all together shortly before serving.

- 1 cup frozen shelled edamame or small lima beans, thawed
- 2 cups fresh sweet corn kernels, from about 4 small ears
- 1 cup frozen choclo corn, optional (or drained, canned hominy)

Lemon vinaigrette:

- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon white balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon lemon oil or grated rind from ½ lemon
- ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes of



Terrence Antonio James/ChicagoTribune-TNS

This fresh corn salad uses Peruvian corn, called choclo, which has a toothsome texture.

- assorted colors, halved
- ¼ cup chopped fresh chives
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil leaves
- ½ cup broken tortilla chips or toasted, salted Peruvian corn, optional for garnish

1. Heat a large saucepan of salted water to boiling. Add choclo corn. Return water to boil, then simmer until corn is nearly tender, about 5 minutes. Add edamame and return water to boil; simmer until the edamame is nearly tender, about 4 minutes. Add sweet corn kernels and simmer 1 minute. Drain and rinse under cold water to stop the cooking.

2. In a large bowl, whisk together vinegars, lemon juice, oils, mustard, salt and pepper. Add the drained corn and edamame. Stir in tomatoes. Let stand, stirring often, about 15 minutes. Taste and adjust seasonings with salt and pepper. Stir in chives and basil. Serve garnished with chips or Peruvian corn for crunch.

Nutrition information per serving: 161 calories, 12 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 12 g carbohydrates, 3 g sugar, 4 g protein, 169 mg sodium, 3 g fiber

SWEET CORN AND CHIVE POLENTA

Prep: 15 minutes
Cook: 15 minutes
Makes: 6 servings

Look for instant polenta in the imported foods aisle of large supermarkets, or order it online. This polenta is delicious reheated — just stir in a little butter if it seems dry. I also like it cold with sliced juicy tomatoes and chopped arugula for a summertime lunch.

- ¼ cup butter
- 1 small sweet onion, such as Vidalia, finely chopped
- 3 cups fresh sweet corn kernels, from 5 to 6 small ears corn
- 4 cups chicken broth
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup instant polenta
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Chopped fresh chives
- Small pearls of fresh mozzarella, optional
- Crispy cornbread croutons, optional (see recipe below)

1. Melt butter in a small skillet over medium heat. Add onion and saute until golden brown and soft, about 5 minutes. Stir in half of the corn kernels, and set aside. Puree the remaining corn kernels in a blender or food processor until very smooth.

2. Heat broth and salt in large, heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat to a simmer. Whisking constantly, add the polenta in a slow steady stream until the mixture is smooth. Reduce heat to very low. Cook, stirring often with a wooden spoon, until the mixture is thick and creamy, about 5 minutes. (Use a splatter guard to prevent getting splashed with hot polenta.)

3. Stir corn puree into the polenta. Cook and stir on low for 2 minutes. Stir in onion-corn mixture, and simmer a few minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve garnished with plenty of chives. Top with mozzarella and/or cornbread croutons if desired.

Crispy cornbread croutons: Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Cut 8 ounces (about 4 large baked squares) into ½-inch pieces. Place in a single layer

on a baking sheet. Bake until edges are golden brown, about 10 minutes. Cool completely. Store wrapped in foil for a day or so.

Nutrition information per serving: 235 calories, 9 g fat, 5 g saturated fat, 20 mg cholesterol, 34 g carbohydrates, 3 g sugar, 6 g protein, 254 mg sodium, 4 g fiber

WHISKEY-BRINED PORK CHOPS WITH TOMATO-PLUM RELISH

Prep: 30 minutes
Brine: 1 hour to 4 hours
Cook: 15 minutes
Makes: 6 servings

- Brine:
- ¼ cup whiskey
- ¼ cup kosher salt
- ¼ cup dark brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 6 bone-in center-cut rib chops, each 1½ to 2 inches thick, total about 4 pounds

- Tomato-plum relish:
- 1 lime
- 2 or 3 medium-size red skinned plums, halved, pitted
- ½ cup very finely chopped red onion
- 2 or 3 cups assorted colors small cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- ½ to 1 whole small serrano chile, seeded, minced
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Oil for high-heat cooking, such as grapeseed, safflower or sunflower
- Sweet corn and chive polenta, see recipe

1. For the brine, put whiskey, kosher salt, brown sugar and Worcestershire sauce into a large bowl. Stir in 3 cups water until the salt and sugar are dissolved. Add the pork chops, so they are completely submerged. Cover and refrigerate, turning chops once or twice, 1 to 4 hours. Remove chops from brine; pat dry, and refrigerate up to 1 day.

2. For the tomato-plum relish, grate about ¼ teaspoon of the lime rind into a bowl. Squeeze the lime, and add 1 tablespoon juice to the bowl. Very thinly slice the plum halves and add to the bowl. Place the onion in a sieve or colander, and rinse it under running water and shake it dry. Add to the bowl. Stir in the tomatoes, chile, mint, basil, sugar and salt. Let stand at room temperature.

3. Let chops stand at room temperature while setting up the grill. Prepare a charcoal grill, and let coals burn until they are covered with gray ash. Or, preheat a gas grill until medium-hot.

4. Lightly oil chops, then place them on the grill directly over the heat. Cook covered for 3 minutes. Flip and cook the second side 2 minutes. Move chops to the side of the grill with no heat. Cover the grill, and cook until chops are nearly firm to the touch, usually 5 to 8 more minutes. An instant-read thermometer inserted away from the bone should register 140 degrees. Remove chops to a platter, tent with foil and let stand a few minutes.

5. Serve chops topped with the tomato-plum relish accompanied by the sweet corn polenta.

Nutrition information per serving: 324 calories, 15 g fat, 4 g saturated fat, 119 mg cholesterol, 7 g carbohydrates, 5 g sugar, 39 g protein, 700 mg sodium, 1 g fiber