



Georgia peach
Athens offers a delightful array of things to do.
Travel, B6

Side dish

Select a taste
To highlight the beginning of Michigan's growing season and the newly launched "Select a Taste of Michigan" campaign,

Gov. Jennifer Granholm declared May as "Select a Taste of Michigan" month. "Selecting Michigan grown and processed foods helps keep food dollars circulating in our local communities, strengthen Michigan's family farms, improve the quality of life for our citizens in both rural and urban areas, and preserve the state's rich and diverse agricultural heritage," Granholm said.

The Governor kicked off the state's enhanced marketing program "Select a Taste of Michigan" for Michigan locally grown and organic foods in late March.

"The designation helps recognize the tremendous contributions Michigan's food and agriculture industry makes to our state," said Dan Wyant, Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA).

Agriculture is the state's second largest industry, contributing \$7.1 billion annually to economy.

Additionally, the state grows over 125 commodities commercially, making Michigan second nationally in agricultural diversity. "During Michigan Week, the month of May and throughout the year, we encourage consumers to select safe, high quality, wholesome Michigan food and agriculture products," Wyant said. "Doing so is a win-win for Michigan families, farmers, agribusinesses and retailers."

Asparagus, one of the state's earliest crops, makes its annual debut in May, and signals the beginning of Michigan's fresh agricultural bounty that will be evident through late fall.

In addition to fresh commodities, the state has a significant food processing industry that adds value to Michigan crops and livestock, producing a wide variety of products from pastas, sauces, and wines, to jams, jerky, cooking oils and frozen fruits.

Wyant also noted that Michigan consumers will also see another Michigan agricultural product promotion with "Take Home a Taste of Michigan."

This effort is geared to highlight Michigan's specialty food products by linking them to retailers in the state's prime travel destinations and organizing promotional activities like tastings during peak tourism activities, including festivals and parades.

For more information on Michigan food and agriculture products, the "Select a Taste of Michigan" program, a copy of the Governor's Certificate of Proclamation, or a searchable directory of nearly 300 Michigan farm and farmers' markets and u-pick operations with locally grown, organic and/or processed foods, visit www.michigan.gov/mda or call the Department toll-free at (800) 292-3939.

The Grill will to Grill

Fire up your summer with pork, steaks and vegetables

Now that we're well into the month of May, the long cooking methods of braising and stewing have been replaced with grilling and barbecuing.

It's a great way to relax during the summer, sitting by that scaring fire with a nice chair, good music and a favorite refreshment.

Will it be a spice rub, or a teriyaki or lime marinade? Or maybe a glaze ...

Ignite. Preheat. Sear. Cook. What's your pleasure? It's all here, whether you enjoy a steak, ribs, chicken, fish, onions, peppers, zucchini, tomatoes and potatoes.

Frank Agostini grills all year long, but when summer comes along, it also means it's time to barbecue on a much larger scale.

The executive chef at E.G. Nick's in West Bloomfield planned to grill for a party of 160 people this weekend for radio station WYCD at the Downtown Hoedown. This year's theme was a Texas-style barbecue.

When summer unofficially kicks off with the Memorial Day weekend, it also means the grills will be fired up and grates brushed down for another season of outdoors cooking.

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association recommends the following: Dress up lean and tender beef top loin steaks (also called strip steaks) with a full-flavored glaze of coarse Dijon-style mustard, black pepper and garlic complemented by the subtle sweetness of apple juice.

For Agostini, it was another chance to cook some of his favorites: barbecue chicken, ribs and pulled pork. "We do a rub, then a par bake before we put on the sauce," Agostini said.

Agostini doesn't boil the ribs beforehand, as it draws the flavors out of the meat. "You do that when you create a chicken stock for soup, but you don't want that when you're cooking back ribs," Agostini said.

"You're extracting all the flavors from the ribs. I like to cover them and bake them with a little liquid smoke and water." That



Mustard-pepper beef steaks with favorite grilled vegetables make a perfect summer meal.

ratio of liquid smoke to water is about 20-to-1. Agostini uses E.G. Nick's dry rub, a formula of which he is not allowed to disclose, but for his own personal use, he likes a paprika base and herbs. "I like to put the emphasis on the ribs, not the sauce," Agostini said. "I like to taste the sauce, but not bury the ribs."

Coriander, garlic and peppers are other ingredients used in the rub before baking in a convection oven at 350° for about 90 minutes. The ribs are done when they can be cut with a fork.

"Ribs are one of those things people like to experiment with," Agostini said.

For pulled pork, Agostini uses a pork shoulder cooked slow-to-slowly, similar to the ribs. Some people bake it with beer, bourbon, mesquite flavoring or hickory flavoring, but Agostini likes a mixture of pork with onions, then a sauce of ketchup or mustard.

Homemade sauces often contain mustard, ketchup, brown sugar, black pepper, garlic and vinegar.

Agostini enjoys tuna, chicken, ribs and steaks. He likes fajitas of steak and chicken, with roasted peppers, onions and tomatoes. He even creates a marinara



Burgers are one of the top choices for summer grilling. For a fresh, new serving idea, try these burgers with red relish and herb aioli.

sauce with these ingredients. Agostini also likes to grill vegetables, whether it is corn on the cob with herbal butters for a slight charcoal burn, or kabobs with zucchini, peppers and onions.

"That's my favorite thing - grilling," Agostini said. "There's nothing better than open flame."

ON THE GRILL

APPLE GLAZE FOR PORK CHOPS

- 1/2 gallon apple juice
- 1/2 pound brown sugar
- 4 red delicious apples, peeled and chopped
- 1/2 cup beer

Bring to a boil. Boil for five minutes, then lightly thicken with mixture of water and cornstarch.

Glaze can be used on pork chops or on a pork loin during the last few minutes of cooking.

Recipe courtesy of Frank Agostini.

MUSTARD-PEPPER BEEF STEAKS

- 4 boneless beef top loin (strip) steaks, cut 1/2 inch thick (about 2 1/2 to 3 pounds)

MUSTARD-PEPPER SAUCE

- 1/2 cup apple juice or apple cider
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons coarse-grind Dijon-style mustard
- 4 large cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon coarse-grind black pepper

Combine sauce ingredients in small bowl. Remove and reserve, cup for basting. Brush steaks with remaining sauce.

Place steaks on grid over medium, ash-covered coals. Grill 15 to 18 minutes for medium rare to medium doneness, turning occasionally. Baste steaks with reserved 1/2 cup sauce during last 10 minutes of grilling.

Remove steaks from grill; serve. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 451 calories; 61 grams protein; 2 grams carbohydrate; 20 grams fat; 236 milligrams sodium; 162 milligrams cholesterol.

Recipes courtesy of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

SUMMER STEAK & POTATO SALAD

- 1 beef top round steak or 2 boneless beef chuck shoulder steaks, cut 1 inch thick (about 1 1/2 pounds)
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated lemon peel
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 12 red-skinned new potatoes, cut in half (about 1 pound)
- 8 cups Boston, leaf or romaine lettuce leaves (about 10 ounces)
- 1 cup red or yellow cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 1 cup pitted green and ripe olives
- 6 ounces blue cheese, cut in chunks

Combine oil, lemon juice, lemon peel, garlic, thyme, salt and pepper in small bowl. Place beef steak and 1/2 cup lemon marinade in food-safe plastic bag; turn steak to coat. Close bag securely and marinate in refrigerator six hours or as long as overnight, turning occasionally. Cover and reserve remaining marinade in refrigerator.

Thread potatoes onto four 12-inch metal skewers, leaving small space between pieces. Brush with 1/2 tablespoon reserved marinade.

Remove steak from marinade; discard marinade. Place steak on grid over medium, ash-covered coals; arrange potato skewers around steak. Grill potatoes, uncovered, 10 to 12 minutes or until tender, turning occasionally. Season with salt to taste.

Grill top round steak, uncovered, 10 to 18 minutes for medium rare doneness (chuck shoulder steaks 10 to 20 minutes for medium rare to medium doneness), turning occasionally. Remove; set stand 10 minutes. Carve steak into thin slices. Remove potatoes from skewers. Line six plates with lettuce leaves. Arrange steak slices, tomatoes, olives, potatoes and cheese evenly over lettuce. Drizzle evenly with remaining reserved marinade. Makes 6 servings.

Nutrition information per serving using Top Round (1/6 of recipe): 802 calories; 40 grams protein; 19 grams carbohydrate; 29 grams fat; 1,086 milligrams sodium; 105 milligrams cholesterol.

Using Chuck Shoulder (1/6 of recipe): 457 calories; 34 grams protein; 19 grams carbohydrate; 31 grams fat; 1,076 milligrams sodium; 98 milligrams cholesterol.

Recipes courtesy of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

CILANTRO BUTTER

- 1/2 pounds butter
- 2 bunches fresh cilantro
- 1/2 cup garlic, chopped
- 1/2 cup lime juice
- 1 cup tomatoes, chopped
- 3 jalapeno peppers

and place in food processor. Grind up fine. Mix butter and mixture, then return to food processor and emulsify.

Use butter with chicken, beef or fish (avoid fish) to add a Southwest-ern zing.

Recipe courtesy of Frank Agostini.