One Half for Me / the Other for You
Poems and Recipes

by

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one half for me
the other for you

poems & recipes
by Kristen Daily
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INTRODUCTION

I devour and delight in the genre of food memoir, such as Molly Wizenberg’s *A Homemade Life* and Laurie Colwin’s *Home Cooking*, and I wanted to combine my love of cooking with my writing because both are so deeply tied to my creative identity. Honestly, this collection is radically different from what I envisioned when I began writing a year ago. I came to the Iowa State University MFA program in Creative Writing & Environment because I saw myself as an environmental writer activist. My original thesis project—a collection of essays on foraging—perhaps offered a more direct connection to environmental conservation and activism. Foraging fulfilled my longing to be rooted to place. I wanted to explore how relationships to place are formed through foraging and how such an intimate connection to the land and food influences identity, both personally and politically. But what I discovered is that while writing about foraging for edible plants offered physical and intellectual challenge, I was struggling to express my creative ambitions as a writer. I sought a form that would render the scientific and technical language of botany and cooking—precise and beautiful as it is—in an authentic expression, so I turned to poetry.

Poetry, flora, and food are known for their distinctive languages, and I seek to distill the essence of a word like the distilling of vanilla or rose for flavor. Whether through an arresting image or surprising metaphor in poetry, the delicate color of a petal, or the sweetness or savor of a dish, these mediums stir memory and feeling. Both nourish—food the body and poetry the mind and soul. Pairing the two together layers the concrete and abstract, creating a space where the audience experiences food as symbol as well as substance, while bringing poetry into the tactile realm of taste. I have organized the collection in groupings to reflect the ways we use food to make meaning through themes such as intimacy, meditation, spell, hope, cure, gathering, and naming.
My work also examines identity as it relates to food and the plants used in cooking and baking. In doing so, I consider the personal, social, and cultural histories tied to particular plants and ingredients, which inevitably intersect with issues of gender and power. The symbolism of food—herbs and flowers, especially—has allowed me to explore shared cultural histories and etymologies of language tied to food. We are accustomed to encountering the political in poetry, just as we see the politics of the plate in the grocery store or in the crop fields that surround us, so combining poetry with recipe writing and the act of eating seemed like a natural means of extending my investigation of both.

There is a historical tradition of praise of food and flowers in poetry, which is often included in old cookbooks and gardening handbooks, but little in the field that combines the genre of recipe writing with poetry, which is one artistic form I explore here. Karen Leona Anderson, who published the collection Receipt (Milkweed Editions 2016), has influenced my perspective on this work, as she is the only other poet currently working in this hybrid genre of poem and recipe. Her poetry interrogates personal and seemingly domestic issues through recipes and receipts, and largely does so through fictitious and historical voices. I expand upon her work by examining how recipes become personal moments to savor—a chance for connection to those with whom we cook and eat.

I originally imagined these connections would be more strongly rooted in place, as so much of food is tied to the specifics of locale. What I cook is certainly influenced by season and what is grown locally, but I found the recipes more closely tied to the people with whom I shared the experiences of cooking and eating. Put simply, food is tied to place, but cooking is tied to people. This inspired me to frame One Half for Me / the Other for You in the spirit of a community cookbook and to include collaborative recipes. I have worked professionally as a cook and baker and continue to build my self-taught knowledge through cooking at home; I drew upon my culinary experience to develop and write the bulk of these recipes. Recipes written by me are original, while the
collaborative recipes are credited to the friends who created and shared them with me. I am honored to learn from them in the kitchen, and, in many cases, we have enjoyed eating these dishes together.

A recipe is much more than a simple set of instructions; it is a story. A well-written recipe not only teaches readers how prepare a dish but empowers readers to make the dish their own. In these recipes, I have included my notes and observations, as well as suggestions for how to eat and enjoy the resulting dish. I hope these brief narratives act the way hand-scribbled notes on family recipes do. A recipe has the power to inspire boldness—perhaps with a new ingredient or technique—and encourages creativity; poetry has the power do the same.

In the tradition of food narratives, most poems in the collection are paired with a recipe as a way to enrich the experience of reading and cooking. They are presented side-by-side with the recipe following the poem. However, at times, the recipe is interwoven into the poem itself, as it is in “Honeysuckle Ice Cream” and “Raspberry Chocolate Pie” because the process of cooking drives the imagery and meaning of the poem. In addition to this pairing of poetry and recipes, some poems stand alone as a meditation on food, as in “Grapefruit”. These poems are accompanied by illustrations by Andrea Piekarcyzk, which reflect the tradition of pen and ink drawings in older cookbooks.

As a reader, I love the inclusion of recipes either within the narrative or at the end of a chapter or essay because it feels like an invitation into the writer’s world of cooking. While cookbooks are becoming more and more narrative-driven, I find the cross-genre work of food memoirs to be even more compelling because the personal stories and writing often teach me more about cooking or eating a particular dish than a cookbook could. Because I am both a poet and cook, I needed to intertwine both genres. Writing One Half for Me / the Other for You has given me the chance to express my experience of cooking and eating in a way that I couldn’t have done in a either a traditional poetry collection or a cookbook alone.
Throughout my studies at Iowa State University, I have sought out research and reading that explores food, gender, and environmental politics, food activism, sustainable agriculture, and the history of cookbooks and food writing, as well as constantly immersing myself in books about food for pleasure. The writers below are only a handful of those who have shaped how I write about food.

Novels such as Stephanie Danler’s *Sweetbitter* influenced how I think about terroir—the culmination of place in flavor, as well as how eating often makes the private public and the public private, how identity is formed through eating, and the escapism food can provide. Joanne Harris’ novel *Chocolat* showed me the power food has through elements of magical realism and how wonderful image-driven food writing can be. Aimee Nezhukumatathil’s poetry collection *Lucky Fish* and Sally Ball’s *Annus Mirabilis* have helped me refine the balance of scientific language and history in poetry with imagery. Lee Ann Roripaugh’s *Dandarians* gave me ambition to try and interweave multiple threads throughout a poem and to pair poems with recipes, similar to a braided essay. I have also turned to poets such as Tess Taylor (*Work & Days* Red Hen Press 2016) and Éireann Lorsung (*Her book* Milkweed Editions 2013), whose collections explore food, women, community craft, growing, the boundary of bodies, and consumption.

Creative nonfiction, such as *Mastering the Art of Soviet Cooking a Memoir of Food & Longing* by Anya Von Bremzen artfully weaves the narrative of the history of her family’s table in the Soviet Union, her childhood adventures, or rather misadventures, in eating, and post-revolutionary Russian history alongside her and her mother’s attempt to recreate meals for each decade of Soviet history from the last Czar to Putin’s Russia. I admire her balance of tragedy and comedy, emotional honesty, and her expansion of the definition of landscape (i.e. the kitchen). She calls the dining room “a time machine and an incubator of memories”, which is what I see recipes and poems as, too.
While the experience of eating is temporary, we make the memory of a meal more permanent though writing, be it in recipe or poem.

Ultimately, I see *One Half for Me / the Other for You* as an exploration of process. The detail and ritual is part of what fascinates me as a poet, cook, and baker—it offers a chance for transformation. Recurring imagery such as light and the moon often reflects this sense transformation. Moreover, my writing intersects with ideas such as the act of eating and the community it can provide, the seasonality of food, the similarities between recipes and spells and how food is perceived or used a cure, and food as nurture or comfort. The power food carries in both hunger and want humbles and inspires me. In addition to this, the way intimacy is created through eating, whether it is temporary or lasting, is a constant curiosity of mine. I find the sensuality found in food, versus the sexuality, which can too often be reductive, captivating. These poems and recipes seek to capture seemingly small, but powerful emotions that reflect growth and change. I have approached this collection with the intention of creating a sense of quietness and content, and often use white space and breaks within lines to give pause for reflection. Both food and poetry rely on the senses—we make dishes and writing our own according to taste, which is often surprising and deeply satisfying.

To my committee members, I want to thank each of you for your encouragement and for reading *One Half for Me / the Other for You*. Barbara, thank you for your continual support and feedback. I have enjoyed our discussions about food, writing, and the purpose of cookbooks across the past year, and I am so grateful for your willingness to explore new forms and ideas. Abby, I can’t count the recipes we’ve exchanged, meals we’ve shared, and the conversations we’ve had about food and feminism. I couldn’t have done this without you—thank you. Christiana, your sourdough starter has not only made many a loaf of bread possible, but many of these poems, too. I remember reading your essay “Foiled” several years ago, and it showed me how lyrical and personal food writing can be. Thank you for always encouraging me to cook and write and to have fun with the process. Robert, in reading this collection, you are seeing the fruition of many an idea for a poem scribbled in
between my biology notes. I can’t express how excited your class Plants & People made me—it gave me new language on cooking and eating and truly deepened my perspective of food; I know these poems are stronger for it. Many thanks to you all!
intimacies
Heart(h)

your voice gets stuck when we walk past the houses curtained communion all the illumination of purple dusk moves from sky to table shocks like green grass look no snow our fingers lace tight as fiddlehead ferns but you are not here you are there looking through the window you sit down pass salt & pepper yellow butter for bread there not here here you smile warm glow let’s go home leave long shadows behind darling we are a house with the lights on
Grapefruit

You slice
bitter heat,
pink from the pith &
spoon from the peel.
A citrus kiss
I want to hold
on my
tongue,
reveal ruby gems
captured in a
globe
strung together
in silence
as snowflakes
vein the
pane.
You say, savor.
I whisper,
swallow the sun
until
the chill fades—
one half for me /
the other for you.
Sugaring

Xylem pulls water
from roots to leaves;
the Sugar Moon rises in March.
Sap flows through hollow
cells stacked end-to-end.
Silver light limns
woods wake to
the tap tap tap
of spile & hook.
A ceaseless connection
of maple lines drawn
between limbs,
unspoken in snow,
alive in this
midnight kitchen.
Maple Walnut Old Fashioned

with Ann Calsbee

Ann is one of my best friends. Her drinks have simple elegance. She balances sweet and bitter perfectly and her pairings of spices, fruit, and herbs always make the rich woodiness of whiskey or the sharp juniper notes in gin sing. I love her Coriander Orange Old Fashioned and her Pink Pepper and Basil Gin Smash, but the drink that stands above all others is the Maple Walnut Old Fashioned, perhaps because it speaks to my childhood growing up in New Hampshire. She created this drink for my birthday in February because making old fashioneds together is one of our birthday traditions. It’s both playful and classic—tasting of pancakes and warm, resinous flavors—a welcome comfort in cold months.

1 orange slice
5-7 dashes black walnut bitters
½ oz. maple syrup*
2 oz. whiskey*

Muddle the orange slice, bitters, and syrup in a cocktail glass. Add whiskey, then ice. Top with soda water and garnish with a cherry, if desired.

*A note about the syrup and whiskey: You want to use the best, so this means springing for pure maple syrup. I promise it’s worth it. As far as choosing whiskey, I live by the rule that you should drink what you like. However, I learned that you should trust the bartender. Initially, I went against Ann’s suggestion to use Woodford Reserve rye whiskey and tried Cedar Ridge bourbon. It turns out bourbon is too sweet here; it washes out the deliciously bitter flavor of walnut and the bite from the whiskey. Trust the bartender and go with rye whiskey—it’s got more spice and sharpness, and good maple syrup is enough sweetness to balance the drink. Cheers!
Honeysuckle Ice Cream

Honeysuckle hums
in summer sleep,
an electric whir
of wings. Two-lipped
blooms sip the day’s
warmth & offer
a perfume to draw night

moths’ tongues, velvet &
long, drink honeyed nectar
from twining vines.

Sun rises, yellow
on white petals pinched &
pulled from branch.

Two cups blossoms,
plus one & a half cups cream,
one cup whole milk & a half cup sugar;
slow simmer & stir—enough
heat to infuse florals overnight.

Honeysuckle flowers
strain—sweetened cream
separated by sieve.
Add one tablespoon vanilla
delicate as powder wings

& your whisper in my ear,
as loud as the hum
of our hearts—a staccato
between summer’s sheets.

Wait for the sun to rise again.
meditations
Meditation on Sourdough

dissolve quarter teaspoon yeast activate in one and a half cups water wait five minutes one and a half teaspoons salt to slow fermentation quarter teaspoon sugar to support hungry catalyst sourdough starter fold in three and a half cups flour sour symbiosis of lactobacilli & yeast to wait eight hours requires the need to knead flour-heavy dough a cause & react ritual shape loaves firm and smooth dust with flour roll between hands repeat score top shake cornmeal beneath leavened loaves trap steam heat beneath lid at five hundred degrees bake a half hour bite blistered crust & taste tang of wild yeast reawaken possibility of morning-mind untouched by too much salt-thought & flour-heavy worry let cause & react ritual rise & renew start of day
Sourdough

with Christiana Langenberg

I received this recipe and starter from Christiana, a former professor, dear friend, and terrific baker. It has changed how I bake bread and has been shared many times. The recipe is simple and easy to adapt—both in terms of taste and time. It’s flexibility and relative ease reminds me a lot of Laurie Colwin’s bread recipe in “Bread Baking Without Agony” from Home Cooking. I enjoy making herbed loaves and sourdough with whole-wheat flour and variety of seeds, nuts, and grains. I’ve also made the dough into a fig and pepper loaf, as well as garlic and cheese. With this bread, if you can think it, you can make it!

3 1/2 cups unbleached white flour + a few tablespoons as needed
1 1/2 cups lukewarm water
1/4 teaspoon yeast
1/4 teaspoon brown sugar
1 1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup sourdough starter*

*A note about sourdough and sourdough starter: Sourdough gets its characteristic tang from wild yeast in the starter. Sourdough refers to both the bread and starter, a leaven, that begins with a mixture of water and flour, generally in equal parts. Wild yeast and lactobacilli bacteria, both of which are present in our natural environment, are attracted to the water and flour, which they feed on. The byproduct of this action creates the distinct microflora that causes the dough to rise and gives the bread its complex flavor.

In a large bowl, mix all ingredients until just incorporated; the dough will look loose and shaggy. Cover and complete the first rise overnight or until doubled (8-16 hours). The time needed to rise depends on the temperature and humidity of the kitchen. I find that it rises more quickly in the summer when it’s warm and humid, but takes longer when the kitchen is cold, especially during the winter. Sometimes, I put the dough in the fridge overnight for a slow rise, especially if I know I won’t get to baking until the following afternoon or evening. After the first rise, fold and gently knead the dough. I split the dough into two loaves, but you can leave it as one large loaf. On a lightly floured counter, shape the dough into a firm and smooth ball and complete the second rise for about 45 minutes. During the second rise, preheat the oven to 450-500° F, and in the last 15 minutes of the second rise place a large ceramic dish or dutch oven in the oven to heat it up. This dish needs to have a lid because the lid traps steam heat and gives the bread that signature crackling crust and chewy inside. Right before you put the bread in the oven, score the top of the bread. Dust the bottom of the hot pan with cornmeal, so it doesn’t stick. Using a large, flat spatula or dough scraper, quickly place the dough in the dish or dutch oven and put the lid on. Bake with the lid on for 15-20 minutes (30 minutes for one large loaf), then remove the lid and finish baking the bread until golden brown. This usually takes about 10 more minutes. Cool and slice.

This bread is great for sandwiches (see Ramp Greens Pesto + Sandwiches with Burrata & Pink Peppered Ramp Bulbs pg. 31) and toast (see Lavender Butter pg. 13 and Honeycomb & Homemade Ricotta pg. 51). But as my partner Andrea says, it’s best warm from the oven with a generous spread of butter!
Spring

feed sourdough starter as tulips & warm air rush
across bare ankles & toes feed hope in the chest
snowmelt on the tongue lactobacilli & wild yeast float
free laughter through the window finally
open microflora breaks flour into sugar forms
carbon dioxide bubble in dough balloons like
mushrooms fed by dew & thaw growth within
a collection of intimacies fed spoonful by spoonful
Lavender Butter

by Kristen Daily

This butter makes me think of spring. It was inspired by learning about the process of perfume-making—called enfleurage—in which floral essences are extracted in fat. The fat is odorless for perfume making, so the scent of essential oils can be pure. Butter certainly has its own rich flavor, but adding lavender makes for a delicate, floral spread. I especially enjoy lavender butter with honey on fresh bread or toast (see Sourdough pg. 11). I also suggest the addition of lavender to sweets such as lemon poppy seed muffins and shortbread cookies—it’s assertive, yet soft flavor makes for a fresh twist on classic recipes.

½ cup butter
1 tablespoon dried culinary lavender or 2 heaping tablespoons of fresh lavender*

*The general ratio for using fresh versus dried herbs is increasing the amount 1 ½-2x. Fresh herbs tend to have a brighter flavor, but dried works just as well here, and means the butter can be enjoyed year round.

Mix lavender and butter until incorporated and enjoy!
Appling

fruit falls on
leaf-littered ground
suspension snapped
soft upon damp
morning grass
stiff with frost
fruit once firm
liquefied
by insect & sun
not rot
but return
wrapped in velvet-black dirt
light made sugar /
sugar made light
Apple Pie Jam

with Andrea Piekarczyk

This jam recipe comes from my partner, Andrea. Apples are her favorite fruit, and this jam, more than any dessert or dish featuring them, allows the apples to shine. It satisfies like apple pie, and the addition of cardamom gives it surprising heat and spice. Spread on toast or stirred into oatmeal and drizzled with cream, it makes for a comforting, yet decadent breakfast.

4 cups tart apples, peeled and chopped small
1 ½ tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon nutmeg
½ teaspoon ginger
A few cardamom pods, ground
4 cups sugar
1 cup brown sugar
3-4 tablespoons pectin*
1 tablespoon butter

In a large pot, combine apples, lemon juice, spices, and pectin, adjusting spices to taste. Bring the mixture to a boil and cook until apples are soft, but not dissolved. Stir in sugars and return to a rolling boil. Remove from heat, stir in butter, and can.

*This jam recipe is fairly flexible. As I said, adjust the spices to your own taste, and feel free to use more or less pectin depending on how you like the consistency of your jam. Tart, green apples, which we recommend using, have naturally high pectin content, so less can be used than if you’re making a jam with low-pectin fruit like strawberries. We also suggest tart apples for their flavor and because they tend to hold up better in cooking. When Andrea and I make this jam in the fall we often triple or quadruple the recipe because we love to eat it so much. Jars of apple pie jam also make a great holiday gift!
spells
Please Take My Bouquet

We are
the ones who bring
violets purple-veined
petal tongued
heads shocked
iridescent

swift & bright
eyes meet
smile flashes
a brilliant light
flower-speak
a secret

I want you
by the fistful
you (in particular)
In the early 20th century, queer women gave violets to each other as a symbol of love. Violets are one of the most famous symbols of Sapphic love. Using flowers to communicate feelings allowed for secrecy, and although the practice faded, purple has remained a color associated with homosexuality, especially in the naming of the Lavender Menace.
Tonic for Spring Fever

a witch’s dew-dropped draught
of lavender & violet pressed & steeped
bitter-sweet to heal broken seed heart
yellow cow-slip meadow charm &
resin from balm of gilead buds to lure
purple crocus petals a binding spell to bee
bay & basil leaf for prosperity
pepper licorice of fennel seed
will find or make hearts true.
Raspberry Chocolate Pie

For the crust,
cut butter into flour,
sugar sweet to balance
bitter deep bewitching
black cocoa.

Slowly spoon cold
coffee until crust
coalesces; press
between flattened palms
& wait for dough to chill.

For the filling,
cut the bite with sugar,
lemon juice & salt to heighten flavor,
pinch pepper & nutmeg to warm,
flour to thicken.

Mash fragile
fruit, slow falling
in love
the ripening of
raspberries
realize sun
has crept in &
cracked seed heart.
Falling-In-Love Raspberry Chocolate Pie

with Andrea Piekarczyk

Chocolate: what pie crust has always been missing. Andrea, my partner and the best pie baker I know, came up with this lovely combination. The dark chocolate crust paired with tart raspberries is sheer perfection. I love eating a thick slice of this pie with a heaping scoop of fresh whipped cream. It’s the first of many pies we have baked together, and the serendipity of flavors reminds me of the movie Waitress—giving this pie its name to reflect the feeling and magic of cooking together. Brought together by our love of baking, Andrea and I fell for each other in the kitchen.

For the double-crust:
1 cup (2 sticks) + 2 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons cocoa powder (King Arthur Flour’s Black Cocoa is my favorite)
3 tablespoons sugar
2 ½ cups flour
Approximately ½ cup cold coffee

For the filling:
6 cups raspberries
1 cup sugar
5-6 tablespoons flour (depending on how juicy your berries are—add more flour to thicken the filling)
1 ½ tablespoons lemon juice (about half of a lemon)
Pinch of nutmeg
Pinch of salt
1 egg white, mixed with about a teaspoon of water
Demerara or white sparkle sugar

Preheat oven to 425°F. To make the crust, mix flour, cocoa, and sugar together. Then cut the cold butter (¼-inch chunks) into the flour mixture, or pulse several times in a food processor until the mixture resembles cornmeal. Slowly add in cold coffee, a few tablespoons at a time, until it begins to come together. The coffee flavor subtly boosts the chocolate flavor in the crust. Next, separate in half and press into a disc. Wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, or up to two days.

To prepare the crust, roll the bottom crust out first, cut to fit a 9-inch pie pan, and press the crust in. Roll the second crust out and design as you like—a lattice or cut-out crust works well. Set aside and chill for about 20 minutes. In the meantime, make the filling. Mix all ingredients for the filling in a large bowl, using the spoon to break up the berries. To assemble the pie, spread raspberry filling evenly into the bottom crust. Carefully drape the top crust over the filling and crimp the edges of the top and bottom crusts together. Paint your crust with the egg white and water mixture, then sprinkle demerara or white sparkle sugar over the top for a sweet crunch. Bake at 425°F for 15-20 minutes, then reduce the heat to 375°F and bake for an additional 35-40 minutes, until the filling is bubbling and the crust is done. Keep a careful eye on it — since the crust is chocolate, the browning is much harder to detect. Enjoy!
Peach Picking

flashes of orange
in green, waxed leaf
out of reach

August sigh
thunder heavy
ever-pressing

you climb higher
until spindling branches
won’t hold you

wait
I whisper

but you
hand me orange orbs
over and over again
a dozen moons
in miniature
stack in my arms

as I stand
beneath the tree
peaches pulled taut—
so many

perfect in their
imperfections

fruit spills
from our arms
soft
thuds on grass

it is this reaching
toward fruit—
making
you give

light secreted
beneath skin
Peach Cobbler

by Kristen Daily, adapted from Deb Perelman of Smitten Kitchen

Deb Perelman’s recipes inspired the beginning of my culinary endeavors. Her writing and cooking pushed me to dare in the kitchen and gave me confidence to take on new ventures. Her Crispy Peach Cobbler recipe, which was the inspiration for this adaptation, is one of my favorite desserts. I also owe thanks to my friend Abby, who is a brilliant vegan and vegetarian cook, for the pairing of peach and basil in this recipe. Yum!

4 ½ pounds peaches, cut into 1-inch chunks or slices—no need to peel
Zest and juice of 1 lemon
½ cup butter (1 stick), softened
1 ½ cup sugar, divided
1 ½ cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon coarse or kosher salt
¾ cup milk (whole is best)
½ cup hot water
Handful fresh basil, chopped (or skip it and serve with Basil Vanilla Ice Cream)
¼ cup Amaretto or 2 teaspoons almond extract (optional)
Cream for drizzling (optional)

Subbing in part of the fruit with blueberries or raspberries is a delicious combination with the peaches!

Heat oven to 350°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil, to catch drips. (I often halve this recipe and bake in a pie plate—it bakes for the same amount of time.) Layer peaches (chunks or slices) in a 9x13” baking dish, then zest and juice a lemon over the peaches. If you are adding amaretto or almond extract, pour it over the peaches as well.

To make the batter, beat butter and ¾ of the sugar (1 cup + 2 tablespoons), saving the rest of the sugar for topping. Add flour, baking powder, and salt, and beat until combined. Slowly mix in the milk and beat until batter is light and fluffy. Spread the batter over the peaches in large blobs, then smooth as evenly as possible over the fruit. Sprinkle the remaining sugar on top and then drizzle hot water over the sugar. Once baked, this topping will make for a crème brûlée-like crust on top—it’s phenomenal!

Bake the cobbler for 60-70 minutes, until the top cracks and is golden brown. A toothpick should come out batter free when it’s done. Let the cobbler set for about a half hour after it’s finished baking so it can firm up—it’s worth the wait. Serve drizzled with cold cream or a scoop of Basil Vanilla Ice Cream.
Basil Vanilla Ice Cream

by Kristen Daily

I grew up making homemade ice cream with my mom from the Ben & Jerry’s Homemade Ice Cream & Dessert Book. Their ice cream was always a favorite of mine, and we used to make a yearly summer trip to the Ben & Jerry’s factory in Vermont. A few summers ago, my love of ice cream spurred a ton of ice cream making, including this recipe. If you choose to skip fresh basil in the cobbler itself, I highly recommend serving it with this ice cream. The delicate, aromatic flavor from the infused basil pairs perfectly with the sweetness of peaches.

2 ¼ cup milk (whole or 2%)
⅓ cup cream (or half-and-half)
¾ cup sugar (divided)
4 egg yolks
Pinch of kosher salt
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 cup fresh basil

Pulse basil with ½ cup sugar until mixture is bright green. Bring milk, cream, and basil-sugar mixture to a simmer over medium-low heat, stirring regularly. Remove from stove. Beat egg yolks with remaining ¼ c of sugar for 3-5 minutes on high until the mixture is thickened and light yellow. While whisking or with the mixer on low, slowly pour heated milk and sugar into the egg yolk and sugar. Whisk constantly, so the egg does not cook—you don’t want scrambled eggs in your ice cream. Next, pour the custard mixture back into a saucepan and heat over medium-low heat for approximately 4 minutes, or until the mixture is thickened. Stir constantly. Finally, transfer heated mixture into a large bowl, add in vanilla and salt. Cover ice cream mixture with plastic wrap, laying it directly on top of the mixture to prevent a skin from forming. Chill until cooled completely, preferably overnight. Then freeze according to ice cream maker’s directions or freeze for two hours, stirring the mixture every 20 minutes.

Basil pairs well with many summer fruits, including strawberries and melon. I also love the addition of strawberries to this ice cream and serve it with a balsamic reduction for a refreshingly sweet and tangy dessert.

1 lb fresh strawberries
½ cup sugar

Purée or finely chop strawberries and mix in sugar. Strawberries hold a lot of water, which can ruin the creamy texture of ice cream, so puréeing them and adding sugar helps prevent the ice cream from hardening during freezing. Add the puréed strawberry mixture to the ice cream when you put in the vanilla and salt.
hopes
Picking Violets

Pinch slender green
stems from dew-earth,
purple heads held
in a delicate embrace—
careful not to crush rainwater
velvet petals, the spell of
sun-thaw a daily miracle.
Violets spring in sidewalk cracks &
veil the yard, escape
trampling by dog paw & bicycle.

Tulips in glass vase &
rose, perfumed beauty
makes a clean break,
but picking violets
is a bright & messy thing—

skin stained green & lips
shaded a promise as strong
as forget-me-nots,
color captured
in sugar-crystal.
I can’t resist
the root-thread taste
of living—
ever-blooming
on the tongue.
Rhizomes

resist hierarchy    defy binary of root & tree
ramps web & curl    can’t untangle soil certainty
spring’s tonic of wild leeks    taste earth onion sweet
pink vein on emerald sheath    map but do not trace
to buried bulb    why bother with beginning & end
don’t want dichotomy    oppose arborescence
the tree does not work    vertical linear does not fit
an array of attractions    wind beneath soil    drink deep
& resist
Ramp Greens Pesto + Sandwiches with Burrata & Pink Pepper Pickled Ramp Bulbs

by Kristen Daily

Ramps—also known as spring onions, wood leek, and wild garlic—are wild onions found in wooded areas across the eastern United States and parts of the Midwest. They are one of the earliest plants to forage in spring. They are found in large groups, connected by rhizomes just beneath the soil, making them relatively easy to find and harvest. All of the plant is edible—the leaves can be eaten as greens, and the stalk and bulb can be pickled, chopped, or cooked, similar to a shallot. This bitter green, garlicky plant is one of my favorite flavors in March and April. Its sharp, earthy flavor is one I crave as soon as the snow starts melting and green shoots begin to appear.

Ramp Greens Pesto

1 bunch ramp greens
½ cup (2 oz.) parmesan
¼ cup pine nuts
½ cup olive oil
2 tablespoons white balsamic vinegar
Pinch of salt

Clean ramp greens and chop roughly. Combine ramp greens, parmesan, pine nuts, olive oil, vinegar, and salt in food processor until finely chopped or to desired consistency. If needed, add more salt and vinegar according to taste.

Pink Pepper Pickled Ramp Bulbs

1 ½ cups white vinegar
1 ½ cups water
2 tablespoons kosher salt
2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon pink peppercorns

Clean ramp bulbs thoroughly and pack bulbs into a clean pint jar. Bring the vinegar, water, salt, and sugar to a boil, stirring until the salt and sugar are dissolved. Carefully pour the boiling brine over the ramp bulbs, add pink peppercorns, and can.

Sandwiches with Ramps & Burrata

Generously coat a thick slice of bread with ramp pesto, and then spread with blobs of burrata. Toast open-faced under the broiler, if desired. Finish by topping with pickled ramp bulbs. The pink peppercorns add a surprising, yet subtle bite. This combination also makes a wonderful pizza! Fresh mozzarella is an excellent substitute for burrata, which can be difficult to find.
Tempering

The first morning feels like tempered chocolate; cocoa butter crystalized by constant heat & stirring to snap & gloss. Full mouth-feel, the air rushes in, punctuated by ephemeral blooms—the perfect balance of cool & melt.
Chocolate Bark with Edible Flowers & Nuts

by Kristen Daily

This simple, gorgeous dessert is one of my favorite ways to showcase a colorful array of flowers. Tempering chocolate isn’t as tricky you might think; it just requires patience and a careful eye. I learned how to temper chocolate while working in a bakery in order to do chocolate work for cake decorating. I find it so satisfying to melt the chocolate down and recreate as candy, like this recipe for chocolate bark. It’s a less fussy version of mendiants, a traditional French candy that I discovered in Joann Harris’ novel Chocolat. Heroine Vianne’s favorite candy, mendiants are small discs of chocolate, dark or white sprinkled with fruit, flower petals, or nuts. Vianne favors hers in dark chocolate, with candied lemon peel, but I encourage you to be creative and have fun with this colorful candy!

1 ½-2 lbs. white, dark, or milk chocolate  
Edible flower petals (violet, rose, lavender, strawberry or apple blossom, dandelion, clover)  
Handful of nuts (pistachios, hazelnuts, walnuts)

To temper chocolate, finely chop chocolate. Place about ⅔ of the chocolate in a double boiler; a metal bowl set over a pot of boiling water works, too, just be sure the bowl doesn’t touch the bottom in order to ensure even heating.

Tempering chocolate is easiest with a candy thermometer. The most important thing is to work slowly: fully melt the chocolate, stirring frequently (a rubber spatula works best), and gradually add the final ⅓ of the chocolate. While melting the chocolate, the temperature should not exceed 120°F for dark chocolate or 105°F for milk or white chocolate. To keep the chocolate in temper, it must be kept at an even heat between 88°F to 91°F for dark chocolate and 85°F to 87°F for milk and white chocolate.

Once this temperature has been reached, the bowl should be removed from atop the boiling pot on the stove and wrapped in a tea towel to maintain heat. To check if the chocolate is in temper, spread a small spoonful of chocolate in a thin layer on wax or parchment paper. If it dries quickly with a glossy finish it is in temper, and if it looks dull or streaked, simply re-temper the chocolate on the stove.

To make chocolate bark, spread the tempered chocolate in an even layer on a rimmed baking sheet lined with wax or parchment paper. Top with nuts and flower petals (feel free to use whatever nuts and flowers you like), plus a sprinkling of sea salt, if desired. Candied citrus peel is also a delicious addition. Allow the chocolate to fully set (this takes several hours at room temperature), break up into smaller pieces, and enjoy!
cures
Top Foods To Eat
to Become a Lesbian:

he (it’s always he)
postulates
our sexuality
as a consequence
of our mothers
eating
celery
arugula
herbal melilot leaf
& flower
of the bitter
orange tree

no wonder
we’re vegetarians
According to ninth-century physician John Mesué, lesbianism was caused by mothers eating particular foods during pregnancy, such as “celery, rocket [arugula], melilot leaves, and the flowers of a bitter orange tree”. He joins the ranks of privileged men who have felt the need to insert themselves into conversations about women’s bodies and sexualities.
October

one cup sugar
stir in slow
circles melt
to copper &
bubble bright
burnished leaves
color extinguished
soft & full
save for the fat
straw moon
kiss thick as
butter—six tablespoons
pinch of salt
sputter & hiss
cauldron incantation
completed by cream
a half cup plus
a little more
the coming cold
begs for more
always a little
more
Salted Caramel Sauce

by Kristen Daily

This salted caramel sauce is liquid gold. My candy making began with caramel sauce after I couldn’t get apple cider caramel to set. Recipes for caramel sauce abound, but the salt gives this recipe edge. It’s my most-requested recipe and the thing friends and family ask me for most often. I often bring a jar to serve alongside apple pie and ice cream at Thanksgiving and inevitably end up eating it out of the jar with a spoon because it’s so good. Its rich flavor is the perfect complement to the snap and spice of fall, and bubbling sugar and butter on the stove makes the house smell gloriously warm and sweet.

1 cup sugar
6 tablespoons butter (salted is best)
½ cup + 2 tablespoons cream
Pinch of sea salt (using Himalayan pink salt gives it an even brighter flavor)

Cook sugar to a deep copper color over medium-high heat, stirring constantly to ensure even melting. Be careful – molten sugar is very hot. Remove from heat and stir in butter, cream, and salt to taste. The mixture will bubble and foam up when cream and butter is added, but don’t worry—just stir until smooth. Pour caramel in jar and refrigerate to store.
gathering
The Hungry Month

cupboards yawn
February blue
spirit-sapped
& buried with
the curl root web
of violet & fern

wait to wake
this is the month
when heat is only
found trapped
in citrus sphere
& pepper
in glittering
worlds of glass

jars of fire
tomato simmered
with licorice basil
& sweet shallot

apple jam
laced with ground
ginger root
& cardamom pod
popped open

garlic scapes
spiraled tight like
snakes bathing
to soak up the after-

noon will come again
in cucumbers crisp
in vinegar & dill
salt licked from fingers

tongue red
raspberry picked
in firefly light
each glass globe
holds a small sun

wake
hunger again
Pickled Garlic Scapes

by Kristen Daily

Scapes are the curly, twisting green flower stems, often referred to as stalks or shoots, that grow from the garlic bulb in early summer. They are typically removed to encourage growth. I love how unruly they look stacked next to neat bunches of greens and bundles of asparagus on tables at farmers market. The scapes can be used like cloves of garlic in cooking. I love the flavor of garlic, so these pickled scapes are a wonderful excuse to eat an abundance of it. I prefer to eat them straight from the jar, but they are also a great addition to a sandwich or cheese plate. The heat from the red pepper flakes, black pepper, and mustard complements the pungent spice of the scapes.

2 bunches garlic scapes, washed and trimmed—1 bunch per pint jar

For the brine:
1 ½ cups apple cider vinegar
1 ½ cups water
2 tablespoons kosher salt
2 tablespoons sugar
Spices for each jar:
½ teaspoon black peppercorns
½ teaspoon mustard seed
¼ teaspoon coriander seeds
Dash of red pepper flakes

Coil each garlic scape and place in a sterilized jar; pack until the jar is nearly full. If scapes stick out of the top of the jar, break the scapes and push them into the center of the jar. Add spices to each jar and set aside. Bring the apple cider vinegar, water, salt, and sugar to a boil, stirring until the salt and sugar are dissolved. Carefully pour the boiling brine over the garlic scapes and can.
August Moon Tomato Jam

with Andrea Piekaryszk

Tomato jam is often sweet, but this recipe is made savory with the addition of balsamic vinegar, shallots, and garlic. Zesty and unusual, I love its lemon and balsamic brightness and red pepper heat. I like to eat tomato jam in baked eggs, on toast and bagels with cream cheese or goat cheese, and spread on grilled cheese with arugula. Andrea and I always make as much as we possibly can with tomato “seconds”—splitting and overripe tomatoes work perfectly for this jam. Farmers markets in late summer and early fall are a great place to find these “ugly” tomatoes.

If summer canning is more than you can bear, we recommend roasting your tomatoes at a low heat (300°F for 5-6 hours) and then freezing them until fall or winter. By then, you’ll be grateful for this potent reminder of summer’s best.

6 cups roasted tomatoes
6 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
¼ cup lemon juice
2 tablespoons lemon zest
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 small shallots, chopped
Dash of red pepper flakes
2 teaspoons salt
6 tablespoons pectin
2 ½ cups sugar
Fresh basil, chopped

Simmer and reduce tomatoes, balsamic vinegar, lemon juice and zest, garlic, shallots, red pepper, salt, and pectin in a large pot. When reduced, bring to a full, rolling boil, stirring constantly to prevent scorching. Stir in sugar and return to a full boil. Remove from heat, add basil, and can.
Gathering Rosehips

When we were young
we ruled tide
pools of periwinkle stars
& green crabs
with driftwood scepters
and crown of beach
rose petals bitten
by wind & sea spray.
Salt-aged pink like
our freckled August skin,
the flowers bloom
among leather leaf blade
& an armature of vines
sharp as the spines of
sea urchins in the water
below.

When September
crashes gray on the dunes
calyx & corolla fall away
first frost drives
sugar to tomato-red hips—
the only color
left after the last umbrella
of the season folds.
We gather rose-fruit
in clamshells
pop them between palm &
rock to reveal orange
inside, a sweet contrast to
bitter seaweed strands
burst between pearl teeth
to taste brine.
Rosehip Tisane

for my grandmother Patricia and sister Kelsey

My sister and I used to gather rosehips during summer trips to the beach in Maine. As a child, I was excited to learn that you could brew dried rosehips as tea, which my grandmother served to us. And although this recipe is not my grandmother’s, the drink captures that particular afternoon for me. Sipping from flowered china teacups is one of many memories I have of sharing meals at my grandparents’ worn wooden table. While working on this collection, I learned that the drink is technically a tisane—an herbal infusion—since it not actually brewed with tealeaves. Seeing the pink petals blossom in early summer around the edges of fields in Iowa reminds me of the sprays of roses dotting the rocky beaches of Maine, for beach roses and wild roses are indeed the same species—Rosa rugosa. I am thankful for the abundance of these flowers across both landscapes because they bridge the distance in the unique way food has the power to do—to connect us by tradition and memory.

To prepare rosehips for tea: wash, dry rosehips on a screen in the sun, grind finely in a food processor or coffee grinder for best extraction.

Steep 2 teaspoons dried rosehips in a teapot for 15-20 minutes, strain, and drink.
Calvatia gigantea

White meteor
balloons amid grass &
curling leaves. Pinprick
spores swell to the
size of a seed
pearl, chicken egg, tennis ball—
pull silver power
to grow into a moon-
faced mushroom,
cratered & pockmarked.
A puffball of
pearlescent skin
yellows to beaten
egg yolks with age,
discards spore memories
to wind & rain—
tiny orbs
feed fairy rings.
Fruitbody bursts
like smoke from
the beekeeper’s bellows.
Puffball Parmesan

by Kristen Daily

The giant puffball can be found in wooded areas around the country in early fall. The mushrooms rise up from the earth like white meteors; often growing to the size of skull—their Latin namesake. Puffballs only take about a week to reach maturity, despite their large size, and can be picked and eaten when the mushroom body is pure white. For me, its sheer size is what makes the giant puffball so thrilling to find and pick. After peeling, the puffball can be sliced and fried in butter; their versatility makes them perfect for a Parmesan dish like this one. The mushrooms have a strong, earthy flavor and pair well with savory herbs and Fresh Tomato Sauce. The giant puffball is fairly distinctive, but if you are new to mushroom foraging, always verify your mushroom identification with at least two knowledgeable sources.

1 puffball mushroom, peeled and cut into ½ inch thick slices
1-2 eggs, beaten
Splash of milk
Bread crumbs
Dash of savory herbs (oregano, rosemary, thyme, basil)
Salt & pepper, to taste
A few tablespoons of butter and/or olive oil for frying

Dip slices of puffball mushroom in milk and egg batter; coat with breadcrumbs seasoned with salt, pepper, and spices. Next, fry puffball slices in butter over medium heat until both sides are browned and crisp. Serve over pasta with Fresh Tomato Sauce and top with Parmesan.

Fresh Tomato Sauce

by Kristen Daily

This simple tomato sauce is summer at its finest. Ripe grape and cherry tomatoes are so sweet they require little adornment; the butter, garlic, and spice are here to amplify tomatoes at their peak. I also like to serve this sauce on top of polenta or pasta and alongside Herbed Oyster Mushrooms and Fried Squash Blossoms (see pg. 56).

Several cups tomatoes—any cherry or grape variety
1 onion, quartered and sliced thinly
A few cloves of garlic, minced
Dash of oregano
Dash of red pepper flakes, adjust for heat
A few tablespoons of butter or olive oil (an easy substitute to make the sauce vegan)
Salt & pepper, to taste
Fresh basil, chopped (toss in at the end)

Sauté onions in butter over medium heat until translucent; add minced garlic and cook until fragrant. Stir in tomatoes and spices and simmer all ingredients over low heat for 30-40 minutes. Remove from heat, add a handful of chopped fresh basil, and serve.
Canning Strawberry-Rhubarb Jam

Boil the jars;
lids & bands gleaming

bright as strawberry
coveted by greedy mouth.

The pale green-blushed-pink
rhubarb stacks against

berries piled high,
a red glim, a warm heap

against sugar & lemon.
Ready the wooden spoon

to stir a summer frenzy
sealed tight with a rubber band kiss.
naming
Honeycomb

I want
to know
the making

how folded flower’s
dark venation leads
the winged-
down whir

how clover & vetch
collected in wax
walls transform
apiary aspirations

becomes how you
taste, know

spun / unspun
your making
a binary
decomposed
by tongue

and if not
the making
then the
unmaking
Honeycomb & Homemade Ricotta

with Meghann Hart

I credit my friend Meghann for introducing me to the wonder of homemade ricotta when she served it for dessert atop homemade bread. After I consumed an embarrassing amount, she taught me how delightfully easy making the cheese is. Ricotta’s mild, creamy flavor pairs well with both the sweet and savory. I like serving it with honeycomb and blackberries as a simple, yet elegant dessert, but I also enjoy using it to stuff Fried Squash Blossoms (see pg. 56) and mixed into pasta dishes, such as lemon ricotta stuffed shells with basil.

2 quarts whole milk
1 cup heavy cream
½ teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Line sieve with cheesecloth and place it over a large bowl. Slowly bring milk, cream, and salt to a rolling boil over moderate heat, stirring occasionally. Add lemon juice, reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring constantly, until the mixture curdles, about two minutes. Pour the mixture into the lined sieve and let it drain for one hour. Discard the liquid skim. Weep over the amount of milk you just threw out. Cover and refrigerate until well chilled. Homemade ricotta can be stored in the refrigerator for several days.
My Vagina

is not
a papaya
no melon breasts,
cherry not your's
to pop
peach soft skin
not for you—
no assemblage
of fruit

that sweet
metaphor too
easy to swallow
flour sift language
promises rosemary
remembrance
a recipe is a poem that
breaks open secrets
like the back of a spoon
cracks crème brulée

yeast leaves
bubble in bread
sugar transforms to
caramel copper from heat
flavor quiet as nutmeg
dusted on custard &
 loud as chili in chocolate

the only way I know
to taste the delight of
strawberries in summer air
to braid love into loaf &
criss-cross comfort in lattice
Imagining the Oyster Mushroom

Imagine the growing—
how the bivalve mollusk
clamped onto skirt hems
& bootlaces dragged
saltwater trails through
bluestem & grama
tip-tapped up beech & aspen

imagine the naming—
how the homesick ache
of one hungry
for saltwater oysters
in rippled shell

how decurrent gills run
down to follow
roots that filter wind
instead of Atlantic wet
how moss replaces seaweed
as the companion of
the fan-shaped caps—
a familiar comfort
Herbed Oyster Mushrooms

by Kristen Daily

These fan-shaped mushrooms have a gentle flavor, often likened to anise. They are excellent served with Fresh Tomato Sauce (see pg. 47).

1 lbs. oyster mushrooms
½ cup flour
Salt & pepper to taste
Pinch of marjoram
Pinch of thyme
Pinch of paprika
Pinch of garlic powder
¼ cup butter (½ stick) or vegetable oil, for frying

Mix flour and spices in a paper bag and shake mushrooms in bag until coated with breading. Sauté over medium heat in butter or oil until lightly browned. Serve with a lemon wedge to squeeze over cooked mushrooms for a bright flavor.

Fried Squash Blossoms

by Kristen Daily

Zucchini blossoms abound in early fall, yet feel like a true delicacy. This recipe was born when I came across blossoms at the farmer’s market. It was too good of an opportunity to pass up — cooking with in-season produce sparks my creativity and pushes me out of my comfort zone in the best possible way. I have never described fried food as “delicate” or “light” before tasting these, but the vibrant, paper-thin blossoms truly sing against the cool flavors of mint and creamy ricotta.

12 to 16 squash blossoms
1 cup ricotta (see Homemade Ricotta recipe pg. 51)
1 egg yolk
¼ cup finely chopped mint (Basil, parsley, and sage also make excellent additions, if you want a different flavor.)
⅓ cup grated parmesan, divided
½ cup plus 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
⅓ cup sparkling water (Pilsner or lager style beer or white wine can also be used)—it should lighten the batter to the thickness of cream
About 3 cups vegetable oil for frying

Mix ricotta, egg yolk, mint, ½ cup parmesan, and salt and pepper, to taste. Open and fill each blossom with about 2 teaspoons of the ricotta filling. Gently twist the ends of the petals to close. Mix flour, remaining ½ cup parmesan, a pinch of salt, and the selzer or carbonated beverage of your choice in a small bowl. Heat about ½” oil in a large frying pan to 375° F. While the oil heats, dip half of the blossoms in the batter to cover with a thin coat. Fry coated blossoms, turning once, until golden, 1 to 2 minutes total. Set on paper towels to drain. Coat and fry remaining blossoms, returning the oil to 375° F between batches.
Recipe: An Etymology

*receipt—*
to take / to receive
ingredients inked &
copied by hand
passed down
folded / unfolded
between pages
sheaved & bound

*recipe—*
a suggestion
incantation
spell
cure
a promise
more idea
sugar-spun
escape captured
perfection glossed

*re—*
back & again
meaning spelled
in weight
& wait
NOTES

The phrase “midnight kitchen” in “Sugaring” comes from lesbian poet Mary Miriam’s poem “Midnight Kitchen” from The Lillian Trilogy. The phrase also reminds me of Maurice Sendak’s children’s book In the Night Kitchen.

The title “Appling” comes from poet Jane Hirshfield’s poem “A Sweetening All Around Me as It Falls”, which appears in the poetry anthology Hungry Ear: Poems of Food and Drink. I fell in love with the verb from her lines: “A winter light held this morning’s apples / as they fell, sweet, streaked by one touch / of the careless brush, appling to earth”.

Some of the earliest reference to violets as a lesbian symbol comes from Sappho’s poetry. In a love poem called “I have not had one word from her” she describes herself and her lover saying, “If you forget me think / of our gifts to Aphrodite / and all the loveliness that we shared / all the violet tiaras / braided rosebuds, dill and / crocus twined around your young neck”.

The flowers and herbs in “Tonic for Spring Fever” each reference commonly used ingredients in love spells in North American and European witchcraft.

The structure of the poem “Rhizomes” seeks to embody the way ramps (a rhizomatous plant) grows outward, horizontally. Rhizomes are systems of underground creeping stems that connect plants and preserve nutrients.

The poem “Top Foods to Eat to Become a Lesbian” explores how people attach power and meaning to particular foods. Ninth-century physician John Mesué was one of many who used food to explain and to other women and women’s sexualities that are not heteronormative. Dr. Sahar Amer, who specializes in comparative, cross-cultural relations between Arab and Muslim societies and Western cultures, as well as gender and sexuality, explores several other theories in her article “Medieval Arab Lesbians and Lesbian-Like Women” in the Journal of the History of Sexuality. I discovered this reference in an article on lesbianism and food myths by writer Anna Pulley, author of The Lesbian Sex Haiku Book (with Cats!). Although we may scoff at how bizarre and ridiculous these seemingly outdated theories are, I think we still attach cultural significance to food and identity, especially when it comes to gender and sexuality.
REFERENCES


