

Food for Thought

News, views, interviews & reviews

April 2021

"Every commodity, beneath the mantle of its price tag, is a hieroglyph ripe for deciphering, a riddle whose solution lies in the story of the worker who made it and the conditions under which it was made." — Leah Hager Cohen



On a Roll

The Gomez family elevates butter to a whole new level

Nearly all of the commercial butter sold in this country is made with pre-processed cream, trucked in from multiple plants, and subjected to high-heat pasteurization and high-speed continuous churn before being turned into those ubiquitous bland blocks. Jennifer Gomez and her husband Tim saw an opportunity to do butter better when they created their brand Sawatch Artisan Foods. By law, European-style butter must contain at least 82 percent butterfat; their decadent offering is even higher, around 84 percent. Jennifer explains how the process works: their regional dairy plant receives raw milk directly from a local dairy, then uses cold bowl separation of the skim milk and cream, followed by batch pasteurization at a low temp for a longer period of time to preserve the integrity of the flavors. The cream is then allowed to ripen for 16 hours, before going into a traditional tumble-batch churn process for about 45 minutes. Then it's rinsed and churned again, which elevates the butterfat content even more. For the final touch — and the one most immediately identifiable to customers — the butter is hand-rolled in wax paper wrapping. "We're going from the raw milk, all the way through to the finished product, and no one else is really doing that right now," she says. "That gives us the flexibility to be creative and develop new products." Currently in the works are real buttermilk, artisan cheeses and ice cream, as they begin building out a new processing/retail space in Colorado Springs. "We're taking ordinary products we consume everyday and making them better," she explains. "We're seeing a revival of customers who really want to support local and know where their food comes from and how it gets to them."

SIMPLE GARLIC BUTTER PASTA SAUCE

Good butter is all you need for simple flavorful pasta

Prepare one pound dry pasta in boiling salted water. Meanwhile, warm a large pan on the stove. Add 6 tablespoons butter and allow to melt. Peel and mince 6 to 8 garlic cloves, add them to the pan and cook just until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Do not brown. Remove from heat and season with salt and pepper. Toss the sauce with the al dente pasta and a quarter cup of reserved pasta cooking water. Top with one-fourth cup of grated Parmesan, fresh chives, and additional salt and pepper if desired. Serve immediately. Makes a quick side dish or meal, enough for four servings.

More butterfat means a softer, creamier texture, faster melt, and a natural yellow hue, plus great flavor



Fresh, light, springy

Sauces

In addition to making small-batch pastas every week, Pasta di Solazzi also offers a line of fresh sauces that are now available at Ranch Foods Direct in the refrigerated section. The local family-owned-and-run business makes their sauces fresh from scratch with none of the preservatives or thickeners frequently found in jarred sauces. "The ingredient lists on the sauces is everything that's in them, not just highlights," assures Alex, one of three siblings who represent the second generation in the family business. Time is another special ingredient. "Our roasted tomato simmers for hours to get the delicious depth of flavor," she says. The porcini e funghi is made from seared crimini mushrooms, which are then bolstered with additional finely chopped criminis and porcinis. The aglio e olio consists of garlic, olive oil, red pepper flakes, salt, pepper, pasta water, and parmesan. "The creamy tarragon makes a perfect spring sauce; it's got the freshness and lightness from the tomatoes, lemon, and fresh tarragon, but also richness from the touch of cream," Alex says. She recommends serving it over pasta with a side of asparagus and lemon, along with seared chicken thighs or chicken piccata.



NATURAL ANIMAL FATS are making a comeback as more researchers question the validity of substituting them with highly processed oils and hydrogenized products made from industrially produced soybeans, corn and canola.

Rendered pork fat and beef tallow are both very stable fats, making them an excellent choice for high heat cooking, such as frying or searing. They also add delicious meaty flavor to dishes, along with essential amino acids and other unique nutritional properties. Over the past century, animal fats fell out of favor, even though heart disease was virtually non-existent prior to 1920, when animal fats were widely consumed. By the mid-50s, heart disease was the leading cause of death, a change accompanied over that same 60-year period by a 400 percent increase in the consumption of highly refined vegetable oils, margarine, and shortening, as Sally Fallon outlines in her classic cookbook *Nourishing Traditions*. Hydrogenated products like margarine and shortening are made through high-heat processing, then deodorized and bleached. Vegetable oils become rancid easily, unleashing unhealthy free radicals in the body. Healthy natural fats are essential for good health, assisting in the maintenance of cell membranes and a variety of hormones and hormone-like substances, Fallon writes, as well as providing a concentrated source of energy. As part of a meal, they slow down absorption, minimizing cravings and increasing feelings of satiation. In addition, they act as carriers for important fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K, which further contribute to the uptake of water-soluble vitamins. Dietary fats help with conversion of carotene to vitamin A, mineral absorption and a host of other processes. Saturated fatty acids, meanwhile, support healthy cells and healthy bones, protect the liver and enhance the immune system.

Ranch Foods Direct carries high quality animal fats sourced directly from regeneratively raised livestock at Callicrate Cattle Co., great for cooking and skin care. Also, check out the beautiful, locally handcrafted soaps.

"The nutrition's in the fat," says Ranch Foods Direct owner Mike Callicrate. That's why it's important to seek out products from livestock fed healthy diets.

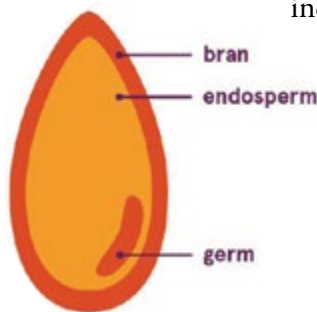
NOW OPEN daily for hang-out or takeout: Homa Bar + Cafe, inside the new Kinship Landing boutique hotel in Colorado Springs; they serve Callicrate meats!



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Whole grains explained

Wheat and other grains are strongly associated with health benefits, including improvements in metabolic processes. "With white flour, we don't see the same benefit, and, in fact, we actually see some negative effects on health," says David Killilea, a research scientist with a special interest in mineral metabolism and whole grains. He shared some interesting facts about whole grains during last month's UCCS Grain School Public Forum. Grains are potentially an important source of fiber, phytochemicals, macronutrients, and micronutrients, including zinc, which has been in the spotlight during the pandemic for its important role in immune function. The standard dietary recommendation, in place for more than a decade, urges Americans to "make half your grains whole" — a threshold achieved by only 8 percent of adults and 3 percent of kids; somewhere around 40 percent of Americans get little to no whole grains at all. But there's more to the story. Technically speaking, "whole grain" flour or bread should contain the same relative proportion of bran, endosperm and germ as grain in its original state. But that definition is not enforced. Instead, Killilea said, the



KNOW YOUR BAKER, KNOW YOUR BREAD! Sourdough Boulangerie makes long-ferment sourdough with grains grown and stone-milled in the San Luis Valley, and flaky pastries featuring Sawatch artisan butter. Enjoy the health benefits and depth of flavor that comes from honest ingredients and slow preparation methods, while supporting local farmers and food artisans!



only federal regulation applies to health claims, and labeling a product as "whole grain" only requires it be 51 percent actual whole grain. "For me this was a very startling discovery," he said, adding that the information that goes on food labels is ultimately supplied by the manufacturer. Lab studies have shown that many products labeled "whole grain" contain little to no detectable germ, which is the most nutrient-rich component of the kernel. Likewise, it has been shown that modern industrial milling removes half of the B vitamins, and much of the vitamin E. Instead of genuine whole grain, what Americans get is largely fine white flour that has been reconstituted from separate parts, a consequence of the invention of the industrial roller mill in the 1850s. While the original stone mills crushed the wheat but kept all parts of the kernel together, modern roller mills remove the germ, bran, and pretty much all of the nutrients, he says.

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grain chain

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Online Course with weekly Live Sessions
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Cost \$150
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Free Public Forum
April 3, 2021
10am-2pm

GRAIN SCHOOL continues in April, exploring the theme of "community not commodity"





COOK'S CHOICE: Chef Monika, shown here, uses Sawatch artisan butter in prepared dishes made in the Ranch Foods Direct kitchen. "The quality and flavor are out of this world," she says.

HAMS: various sizes, in-store during the month of April!

GET SEASONAL: Order online from SOCO Virtual Farmers Market, get produce items direct from area farms, with handy pick-up Saturdays at the Town Center location.



Shop in-store or online at www.RanchFoodsDirect.com

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