Food for Thought

People · Products · Purpose

"What pleases our senses pleases our hearts."

Horticulture Therapist
Anne Meore

Know your beef, know your tallow

Ranch Foods Direct provides high-quality animal fats, as interest grows

By some estimates, Americans are eating 10 percent more meat than they were prior to the pandemic. Beef tallow is part of the trend, emerging as the preferred cooking oil based on flavor and health properties. "RFKing the fries" is the new short-hand for frying in tallow, a reference to Robert Kennedy Jr's influence as Health and Human Services Secretary and the rise of "Make America Healthy Again."

In Colorado Springs, Ranch Foods Direct owner Mike Callicrate said he has seen a dramatic increase in tallow sales. "Just today we had a woman drive all the way up from New Mexico so she could cook her French fries in it," he says. (For fries cooked in Callicrate beef tallow, visit the El Chapin burger truck adjacent to the Fillmore store, championship winner of the Gazette's inaugural Taco Takedown. Below is a snapshot from the awards presentation earlier this year.)

Interest in tallow is so high the Wall Street Journal is reporting the supply could fall short of meeting demand. It's worth noting the U.S. currently produces ***15 times more canola oil than tallow***.

But when it comes to tallow, the source matters. "The nutrition's in the fat," Mike says. "But that's also where the hormones, steroids and other contaminates end up. It's important to know what the cattle are fed. All of our animals get a clean healthy diet, with no performance-enhancing drugs."

Beef tallow is a natural moisturizer in soaps, lotions, skin balms and even sunscreen. Tallow is rich in fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K along with essential minerals and antioxidants which help in repairing and soothing the skin.

Audio now available

After months of work, Ranch Foods Direct customer and avid gardener Sandra Knauf released an audio version of ***George Washington Carver: An American Biography***, narrated by award winning public radio host Karl T. Wright. The owner of Greenwoman Publishing is distributing the audiobook on Audible and Amazon. In addition, two printed copies of the book are now available for loan from the Pikes Peak Library District.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE EARLY SUMMER FLAVORS? Chimichurri herb sauce is always the first thing that comes to mind. And deviled eggs. I love blending herbs from the garden into the filling. Chives, parsley, dill and tarragon, separately or in a mix, add aroma, flavor and beautiful color.

IS THERE ANYTHING NEW YOU'RE EXCITED ABOUT ADDING TO YOUR GARDEN FOR THE FIRST TIME? I bought some Honeydrop Cherry Tomato seeds I heard about from Roots & Refuge Farm, a homesteader I follow on YouTube. Reportedly they are sweeter than Sungold, but they aren't a hybrid, so that means if you save the seed they'll come back true.

CHIMICHURRI HERB SAUCE

1 bunch parsley, leaves finely chopped
1 bunch cilantro, leaves finely chopped
4 tablespoons fresh mint, finely chopped
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 shallot, minced
1 small medium-heat pepper, chopped
3 tablespoons vinegar
2 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/4 cup olive oil

Put the parsley, cilantro, mint, garlic, shallot, and pepper in a medium mixing bowl and work together for about two minutes with a wooden spoon. Add the vinegar, salt, red and black pepper and stir another two minutes. Pour in the oil and mix until well combined. Let sit for 30 minutes at room temperature to allow flavors to develop. Try it on lamb, burgers or steaks.

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BASIL

MINT

SHARING INSIGHT: In May, owner Mike Callicrate welcomed representatives from the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska for an extensive educational tour of Callicrate Cattle Co and Ranch Foods Direct, as the tribe explores putting together its own homegrown pasture-to-plate production system. "I want to see more operations like ours around the country," Mike says. "I think it's critical that animals are slaughtered close to where they are produced. It's better to haul carcasses, not live cattle. And we need to put more of our investment in people, not equipment."

ROASTED PORK BELLY

Recipe provided by Chef Noah Siebenaller

2 lbs. Callicrate pork belly
1/4 cup each kosher salt and granulated sugar, mixed together to make a cure
Extra seasonings, such as smoked paprika, to taste

Using a sharp knife, score the fat with a 1-inch diamond pattern. Rub the cure all over the pork belly. Place on a sheet tray with a wire rack and cover with plastic (or put into a storage container with lid). Set in the refrigerator for 24 hours. On day two, remove from fridge and discard any liquid that has accumulated on the sheet tray. Cook the pork belly at 450 F (low fan if you have a convection oven) for 1 hour. Reduce heat to 200 F and cook for an additional 1.5 hours. Remove from the oven and allow to cool slightly. Once it's cooled enough to handle, wrap tightly in plastic wrap and store in the fridge until fully cooled and firm. Reheat to serve.

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