



## June's Bounty

**I**t was a long and cold winter. I am sure that you, like I, are looking forward to June's bounty of fresh fruits, vegetables, and seafood.

Below are some of my favorite June market finds and some suggestions for serving. All of the preparations are quite simple and permit the flavors of the main ingredient to shine.

### Radishes

My favorite root vegetable is the radish, and my favorite type of radish is the Easter Egg radish. These come in a mix of red, pink, purple, and white and are ideal served the French way — accompanied with French Fleur de Sel and a ramekin of room temperature French butter (or, if you cannot find French butter, Kerrygold Irish butter).

Slice off the roots and the tops and arrange the radishes on a serving dish. When you serve them as an hors d'oeuvre, tell your guests to place a touch of butter and then a pinch of salt atop each radish.

### Cherry Salsa

Most associate cherries with dessert, but consider using them alongside your main course. This cherry salsa makes an excellent accompaniment to a grilled pork loin, a duck confit, or a grilled fish.

Pit and roughly cut into chunks 1 1/2 dozen sweet cherries. Mix them with a roughly chopped small shallot, and 1/3 cup roughly chopped cilantro. Add one dried red chili pepper, sliced into rings. Stir in two tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil. Add sea salt and a dash of curry to taste. Allow the flavors to combine by refrigerating the salsa for about one hour before serving.

### Salad of Rocket, Watercress, Fennel, Endive, and Raspberry

Arrange several handfuls of rocket (arugula) and watercress on a serving plate. I like to serve this salad on a flat dish rather than in a bowl. Top with very thin slices of a small fennel bulb and one handful of fresh raspberries. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar and olive oil, and add salt and pepper to taste. The rocket and watercress are peppery, so take heed when adding pepper. I also enjoy adding salted cashews for some crunch.

### Sardines

Sardines are not well understood. Some confuse them with anchovies while some think they only come squished in a can. However, sardines are lovely fish. Not only are they full of nutrients, they are flaky and tasty. Ideally, you will have the fishmonger scale and gut them for you so that you only have to rinse them.

My favorite preparation is very simple. After rinsing the sardines under cold water, drizzle with some extra virgin olive oil. Grill them whole, a process that should only take about two minutes per side. The olive oil will help to prevent the fish skin from sticking to the grill. To serve, top with freshly squeezed lemon juice and season with sea salt and fresh cracked pepper. For a light appetizer, garnish with fresh herbs or serve over shaved fennel. I also add a dash of Aleppo pepper or my favorite, Piment d'Espelette — the famed chili pepper of the Basque region.

### Okra

Fresh okra is quite lovely and not only intended for gumbo. It can make a colorful and tasty side dish when served with another seasonal favorite, cherry tomatoes.

Slice a pint of okra into chunks on a bias and halve a handful of cherry tomatoes. Sauté the okra in several tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil in a non-stick pan for about seven to eight minutes. Moving the okra around the pan with a wooden spatula, allowing the edges of the okra to brown.

Add the tomatoes and cook for another two to three minutes until they are slightly softened. Season with sea salt and fresh ground pepper to taste (or more Piment d'Espelette!)

Happy Summer — when farm to table cooking is a must. 🍷



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