

Renewing America's
Food Traditions



Place-Based

Foods

at **RISK**

in the

Great Lakes



THE GREAT LAKES (*Grands Lacs*) region of Southern Canada and the Midwestern United States encompasses an area larger than that of the United Kingdom, and contains more than a fifth of the world's freshwater surface reserves. It includes lakes Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario, as well as the surrounding watersheds whose rivers serve as tributaries to these lakes. The Great Lakes foodshed

Introduction



also includes all of the land in the state of Michigan, a third of Wisconsin, the lower reaches of Quebec and Ontario and the shoreline fringes of eastern Minnesota, northern Illinois, northern Indiana, northern Ohio, far north Pennsylvania and the extreme northwestern reaches of New York. In this region, food was historically traded by canoe, cargo ship or barge, or by foot, horse, wagon, truck or railroad car along shoreline routes that have circumscribed the lakes themselves. It is a foodshed dominated by hues of blue and green, by berries, fruits, fish and waterfowl.

In addition to some 150 species of freshwater fish historically caught within the Great Lakes themselves, the surrounding wetlands and rivers have for centuries produced other aquatic foods, such as wild

rice and cranberries, as well as ducks and geese in near mythic proportions. While many of the aquatic habitats that were historically harvested have been depleted or contaminated, some have recently been restored and their species are on the road to recovery.

Unlike the rest of Midwestern North America, the Great Lakes foodshed has a climate moderated by the *lake effect*, which buffers temperatures in a manner conducive to the production of many fruits. The “fruit belts” of Grand Traverse Bay and southwestern Michigan, of Door County, Wisconsin, the Cuyahoga Valley of Ohio, the Finger Lakes in New York and Prince Edward County, Ontario are just a few of the locales that are world-renown for their cherry and apple orchards, their vineyards and their nut plantations.

Within this bountiful region, the Anishinaabeg (Chippewa or Ojibwe, Potawatomi and Ottawa) and their neighbors, the Ho-Chunk, Mesquakie/Fox, Sauk, Miami, Cree, Huron and Menominee, have not only harvested but intentionally managed many of the aquatic and terrestrial habitats for centuries. Their hunting and gathering rights to certain resources are established in historic treaties that are now legally protected by Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Commission agreements, and their efforts toward full food sovereignty should be respected and actively supported. We estimate that 17% of Great Lakes at-risk foods (or 47 out of the 273 foods on the enclosed



list)—particularly wild edible plants, fish and game—have historic and current ties to indigenous or First Nations communities. Wild or managed populations of these foods on or near their reservations may be critically important to their food sovereignty, food security and community health. Compared to other foodsheds in North America, few native crops have persisted, and the five Native American crop varieties that are recorded here make up only 2% of the total regional list.

The region may have been visited by Basque fishermen before Columbus reached the Americas, but it has been visited and settled by other Europeans almost continuously since 1679. Other cultures that have immigrated to and settled in the Great Lakes include: French (including “Metis”), German, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Cornish, Polish, Finnish and Belgian. Their communities and even their languages have persisted in the same places for well over a century and a half, and their food traditions have taken root in their adopted homeland. In addition, Southern Black farmers and fisherman from the Mississippi Delta, Hmong and Cambodian refugees from Southeast Asia, Arabs from the Middle East and Northern Europeans of the Amish, Church of Brethren and Mennonite faiths have more recently established cultural enclaves within this foodshed. Each of these distinctive cultures has adapted its culinary traditions to the range of foods that can be produced in the Great Lakes and has contributed to its culinary diversity. Transplants or descendants from many other cultures from around the world now call the Great Lakes their home and will continue to infuse the region with new flavors, taste preferences, culinary ideas and innovations.

This list of at-risk foods grew out of a series of participatory workshops held in Michigan and Wisconsin in 2008 and 2009, and has already included input from hundreds of people from many cultures. Nevertheless, we consider this list preliminary and dynamic—not static or definitive—and welcome additions, refinements or suggestions for deletions. It is *your* list to build upon and to use in *your* food community.

We do not list at-risk foods to passively accept their decline or declare it imminent, but instead to encourage communities of stewards to bring them

back to their fields, orchards, forests and waters, and ultimately, to their tables. Our goal is not nationalized or globalized markets for these foods, but recovery and access within the region’s communities and among their traditional users. For ethical reasons, we do not encourage commercial harvesting of any truly endangered wild species, stock or population, but hope that acknowledging their vulnerability through this list will encourage collaborative efforts toward their biological recovery, and once that is accomplished, toward their cultural restoration.

We hope that this list, and the enclosed food tradition and food recovery stories, will be inspiration for Slow Food USA members, Chefs Collaborative members, American Livestock Breeds Conservancy members and farmers, foragers and fishers in communities throughout the region. We wish to support you in advancing collaborative efforts to identify, recover and celebrate the diverse foods and food traditions important to your food community and others in the region.

—Gary Paul Nabhan, Jenny Trotter and DeJa Walker
on behalf of the Renewing America’s Food
Traditions Alliance



Dr. Gary Nabhan, founder of the RAFT alliance, is a writer, food and farming advocate, sheep and fruit producer, and conservationist currently based at the University of Arizona’s Southwest Center. He grew up among Arab immigrants in the Indian Dunes on Lake Michigan.

Jenny Trotter runs Slow Food USA’s biodiversity program. Slow Food USA is working to create a world in which all people can eat food that is good for them, good for the people who produce it and good for the planet. Originally from California, Jenny now lives in Brooklyn, NY, where she helps run her neighborhood CSA.

DeJa Walker is currently an environmental studies student at Northern Arizona University. By trade, she is a pastry chef with past education at the University of Gastronomic Science in Italy. She is now working for the Center for Sustainable Environments (NAU), American Grassfed Association and is a RAFT alliance intern.



Wild Time in Wisconsin: The Foraged Foods of Spring

by Terese Allen



In Wisconsin there is near-frantic pleasure in the wild-gathered foods of May.

After months of heavy, winter comfort fare, my body practically cries out for nutrient-packed, blood-cleansing watercress and ramps. For winter-weary foragers like me, it's a thrill to come across a patch of fragrant mint in the woods or a feathery, field-side stand of wild asparagus. I kneel low, smell the earth again and harvest a meal.

Springtime wild edibles reconnect our snow-bound selves to nature, but also dress up our menus with seasonal delicacies. To me, there's nothing like the elation I feel when I've just discovered a mother lode of morels in the unglaciated hills of southwestern Wisconsin, unless I'm downing dewy-fresh mushrooms sautéed in pure Dairyland butter.

In my state, dairy products and other signature crops are paired with wild fare in regional, culinary specialties, such as Lake Michigan whitefish with wild asparagus cream sauce and jack cheese studded with chopped morels. And after a long hunt or a day on a stream, everyone knows the best way to quench a thirst—with a tall, foamy glass of Wisconsin-brewed beer, of course.

While numerous wild foods prized in the state are also found outside the region, they become expressions of local flavor in such early-season preparations as wilted watercress salad with hot bacon dressing. This German-style recipe is a manifestation of a dominant ethnic heritage in the area, and one I like to serve alongside the brook trout my husband sometimes snags during the opening days of trout season.

My own love affair with local, wild foods began on a May morning when I was about eight years old. I was with my Polish grandmother who plucked a dandelion from the railroad bed behind her Green Bay home, held it beneath my chin and asked, "Do you like butter?" According to custom, I did, since my skin glowed sun-yellow from the blossom's reflection. Grandma made wine from the sackfuls of dandelion "weeds" we gathered that morning and later, she poured me a shot glass of the previous year's batch. Its sweet flavor held empowering, lifelong lessons about Midwestern frugality, self-sufficiency and nature appreciation.

Today, encroaching development, deteriorating environmental conditions and a fast-food culture may be threatening the foraged food traditions in my region, but the call of the wild is still strong for many Wisconsinites, especially in spring. Rural folks and urbanites alike continue to celebrate the state's "untamed" legacy at such celebrations as the annual Smelt Fry in Port Washington and the Morel Mushroom Festival in tiny Muscoda. In recent years I've found renewed interest at local farmers' markets, where vendors sell lemony wild sorrel and stinging nettles by the bunch. I've tasted ramp pickles, ramp dip and other "wild ideas" created by region-conscious chefs at restaurants like The Washington Hotel on Washington Island, and L'Etoile in Madison.

Old and new, springtime and otherwise, Wisconsin's wild food traditions fill our bellies, feed our culture and link us to the land.

Morel forager Terese Allen writes about the pleasures and benefits of regional foods. A Wisconsin native, her most recent book is an expanded second edition of The Flavor of Wisconsin: An Informal History of Food and Eating in the Badger State. She is a founding member and past-president of the Culinary History Enthusiasts of Wisconsin (CHEW) and chairs the REAP Food Group, a groundbreaking sustainability organization in southern Wisconsin.



Back in the Day



Women farmers, 1918



I grew up in the “prairie peninsula” of Michigan, the area described by James Fenimore Cooper as “the oak openings” in his novel of the same name.

There, the upland woods of oak, maple and beech trees frame the fields and marshes. In the pre-settlement landscape the woods scribed boundaries around patches of prairie and permeated the openings, with the entire landscape perpetuated by Indians via fire. This is and was a foodshed defined as oak savanna.

To this day, any landscape that spells home to me has about equal measures of land and sky. I can recall the moist, warm, spring morning air extending to the horizon on the edge of my two-dimensional small town, accented by the clear whistle of a bobwhite perched atop a burr oak, stitching land to sky. In my mind’s eye, I revel again in tall July thunderheads over a ripening wheat field, illuminated both by lightning and lightning bugs.

This foodshed includes the ancestral lands of the Potawatomis. At the time of contact, their villages in

Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin were in the savanna. They were nourished by all of the intertwined lives of plants and animals of the prairie, the woods, the marshes and the numerous small lakes and ponds. Their subsistence began to change radically in the 1830s, when the U.S. Government promulgated the treaty that signed away the Potawatomi rights to Chicago, then a little village. The Potawatomis, like so many other tribes, were moved west. Many resisted, including one group in Wisconsin who travelled northward and lived continually on the move for over a century, known in that period as “the strolling Potawatomis.” They finally settled down in northeast Wisconsin where they live today.

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, this community established homesites for their families and clans in small clearings scattered throughout the cutover parts of the northern hardwood forest. But what did they nurture in these clearings and along the trails between them? Plants of the savanna! Plants that nourished, cured and defined home. Some species, like common milkweed, welcomed them, letting them know that they had arrived at a place in

which they could stay, where they could make their milkweed soup in the early summer. Wild bergamot also greeted them, offering tea and medicine. In the clearings they planted crops introduced by white settlers: heirloom apple varieties like Wolf River and Yellow Transparent, as well as Hubbard squash and Bird's Egg beans.

Unbeknownst to most of the white settlers, the north woods were permeated with fragments of savanna. It was and is a historical tapestry of thousands of years of adaptable, enduring Potawatomi life. Of course, most of the former savanna has now been subsumed by corn and soybeans. Even in my youth, one had to scour the pioneer cemeteries or the right-of-way of the Grand Trunk railroad for traces of the savanna. After some botany courses in college, I came home to explore the tracks with my mother, looking for relict populations of prairie plant species.

I moved northward nearly two decades ago. I love the northern forest, yet during my wanderings in the woods, I am still always looking for openings. I think I am looking for the nourishment of home. I imagine that the Potawatomis in their “strolling” days

were also looking for home, for the foods and medicines they needed to survive. These openings that they nurtured with their milkweed, cup-plant, apples and other plants hold the history of their community, memories of home and the old ways and, perhaps most critically, food and medicine for the future. Like so many other cherished and largely forgotten heirloom crops of our society, these openings themselves are native heirlooms. These habitats, with their edible plants and game, are desperately in need of being remembered and cared for if they are to nourish future generations of “savanna strollers.”

Elizabeth Rogers, Ph.D., is a fourth generation Michigander, raised in the prairie peninsula of southwestern Michigan and now a resident of the Upper Peninsula. She holds a doctorate in ornithology from Michigan State University, works as an ecologist and continually follows her life-long studies of the birds, mammals and plants of the Great Lakes Region. Elizabeth has a particular passion for prairie plants and is fascinated by their disjunct distributions in the north, frequently in conjunction with traditional Native American habitations.

Back in the Day



Harvesting cucumbers, 1941

Family Farm Apple Orchards: A Change from Years Past

by Dan Bussey



The part of southern Wisconsin where I live has a long history of local family-run apple orchards, much like other parts of the Great Lakes region.

These orchards were never large enterprises, but historically consisted of several acres of trees that would offer a few dozen varieties of apples throughout the fall season. They are still located in nearly every community. These orchardists are the keepers and direct marketers of heirloom varieties you seldom see in chain grocery stores: tart apples like Windsor Chief, the dry but engaging Northwest Greening, and the simultaneously sweet and tart Snow or Fameuse.

Often, the orchards were part of the family farm, providing additional income to the owners who sold apples in the fall. A special subset of these orchards had cider presses. The flavors of these ciders varied among orchards, depending on the varieties grown and the taste preferences of the operators. They would often blend particularly sweet apples with tart ones to get what they considered to be the best taste

possible. The local recipes for these ciders were often closely guarded and because of this, the consistency of particular family ciders became legendary.

Many ciders were very sweet, but others had an eye-opening spiciness derived from the tart apples that may have dominated the mix. Avid consumers of these ciders would pick and choose between the various orchards for just the right kind of cider that pleased them the most.

From the time I was a child until now, the number of active orchards making ciders that I can name have dwindled down to just a handful. The reasons for the decline are as varied as the owners that used to run them: some say it took too much work for the monetary return; in other cases, the farms were sold when their original owners retired and the new owners didn't want to take care of the trees. Of

Back in the Day

course, some orchards became too old to produce enough apples to make a living. Sadly, some orchard-keepers who once sold apples to grocery stores in their area were later dumped by the corporate offices of the grocery store chain, which mandated that all produce had to come exclusively from *their* distributors. Many orchard-keepers were shut out of their former markets.


The more tenacious orchard-keepers carry on a rich legacy that began in the Great Lakes region so many decades ago. They have adapted to changes in consumer preferences and diversified their sources of income. Some orchards have become destinations for tourists and now feature petting zoos, corn mazes, pumpkin patches and gift shops where visitors are entertained while being supplied with apples for the season.

A few traditionalists, however, have not adopted this trend. For these people, the apples themselves remain the center of their attention, as they have remained for me. When my mother used to take me to an orchard, we were there to buy apples, nothing more, nothing less. The smells and sights of the apple room—located in a cool part of the barn where bushels and peck baskets of ripe fruit were kept—was enough to provide me with the pleasure I needed. Apples glistened with various stripes and blushes of reds, greens and yellows. Sometimes even the dull hues of russet apples—and their remarkable flavors hidden within—made the trip worth taking.

My, how the world of apples has changed around our small town. We must bring these forgotten fruits back into our memories and orchards and onto our tables.

Dan Bussey is a local orchardist and cider maker from Edgerton, Wisconsin, who has operated an orchard for 29 years. Dan is also an apple historian and is currently working on a book to describe more than 14,000 varieties of apples grown in North America from 1629 to 2001.



 top: Harvesting cranberries
middle: Woman with shocks of grain, 1912
bottom: Commission row

Taking Back the “Fruits” of Our Table: Future Fruit Traditions of Midwest Landscapes by Erin Schneider



Innovate, collaborate, celebrate.

These are the seeds of transforming an abandoned two-acre field into an organic orchard of mixed fruits tucked along the slopes and silt loams of the Bear Creek Valley in the Great Lakes state of Wisconsin.

I often find myself working as a “cross-pollinator,” that is, working at the juncture where farmers, ecologists, educators and entrepreneurs meet to bear fruit. Currently, I am working with my partner, Rob McClure, on a multi-faceted undertaking at Hilltop Community Farm, a small Community Supported Agriculture farm and market garden in La Valle. Working in collaboration with the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Association, other growers’ networks, our CSA members and our friends and families, we’re exploring how to grow

uncommon, yet imminently marketable fruits for our region, including aronia, saskatoon, quince, elderberry and currants. These fruits can be a catalyst for transforming and renewing the traditions that define our diets in the Midwest.

All of these plants are native to the region, can be sustainably grown from an ecological, economic and social standpoint and exhibit high nutraceutical content, so that they sustain our bodies as well the land itself. These are the fruits of our labor that are now being offered so that they’ll have a place on your table.

What are the key factors that influence the trajectory of future food traditions? One of them, I believe, is the need to foster an ecological literacy of foods adapted to our region and its cultures. We can

do this by celebrating particular plants in ways that demonstrate their importance to people, by invoking our connections to elements of wildness still around us and by helping facilitate the reconnection to place.

“If people’s diets were truly reflective of the foods that can be sustainably grown around them,” Rob has suggested to me, “then the definition of a food tradition would include a sustainable connection to place.”

Imagine currant jam on rye toast for breakfast. Sate your thirst with elderberry juices. Snack on sea buckthorn fruit chips at your next picnic. Re-invent yogurt with saskatoons. Toast with aronia cabernet at your next gathering. Expand your culinary language to include these and other fruiting treasures of the Great Lakes and place them at the epicenter of your pantry.

Our on-farm research and work is part of a longer-term regional project that seeks to establish sustainable production practices, expand regional

grower networks and processing systems and test consumer acceptance of these forgotten fruits.

I grow from my heart. My hope is that we will continue to create a way of life for small farmers that has markets, meaning and improves our quality of life. I hope that my story of struggling toward such goals inspires others, especially young women farmers, to re-think their roles in the landscape and reflect on their connection to place.

In the meantime, I’m celebrating eating what I love—the delicious diversity of pomes, berries and nuts rooted in Wisconsin’s landscapes and communities.

Erin Schneider M.Ed, is co-owner and organic farm manager of Hilltop Community Farm, LLC and an engagement facilitator in the Madison, WI area. She spends her time growing great organic food while helping people get along by engaging them in the collaborative process of sustainable living and eating.

Back in the Day



Cherry picking, 1921

Foods at Risk in the Great Lakes Foodshed

The following at-risk foods were historically produced and eaten by native and immigrant communities in the Great Lakes foodshed. Foods on this list have a half-century or more of tradition in the region and are labeled as threatened or endangered. Please help expand and refine this list. Send additions or edits to raftalliance@slowfoodusa.org.

KEY

T = Threatened

For wild species, federally listed as threatened or vulnerable – few (11-20) sites, small range, or rapid declines noted in the NatureServe database; for domesticated food varieties, availability known only through 4-6 farmers markets, CSAs, seed catalogs, tree nurseries, botanical gardens, community festivals and museums.

E = Endangered

For wild species, federally listed as endangered or critically imperiled – few (1-10) sites, small range, rapid declines in NatureServe database; for domesticated food varieties, availability known only through 1-3 farmers markets, CSAs, seed catalogs, tree nurseries, botanical gardens, community festivals and museums.

NA+ = Native Americans have traditional management rights at some fishing, hunting or gathering grounds that should be respected and actively supported in terms of their food sovereignty and treaty rights.

NA = Native American traditional crops for which tribes may have farmer's rights.

* = on the Ark of Taste, Slow Food USA's catalog of endangered foods

Like the other foods on this list, Ark of Taste foods are at-risk and place-based. Additionally, they have (1) deep historical and/or cultural roots and a tradition of use in the locale/region, (2) unique/superior flavor, appearance or texture and (3) market potential. Anyone can nominate a food to the Ark of Taste. Nominations are vetted by a committee of Slow Food USA members. Go to <http://www.slowfoodusa.org> for more information.

Wild Native Plants

Roots, corms, bulbs & tubers

American Lotus	T	NA+
Canadian Milkvetch	T	NA+
Small Yellow Pond-lily	E	NA+
Wild Chives	T	NA+

Berries, fruits, grains & nuts

Alleghany/Sloe Plum	T	NA+
Alpine Blueberry	T	NA+
American Chestnut	E *	NA+
Beach Plum	T	NA+
Beaked Hazelnut	T	NA+
Black Haw	T	NA+
Black Twinberry	T	NA+
Butternut	T *	NA+
Canada Gooseberry	T	NA+
Downy Shadblow Gooseberry	T	NA+
Douglas Hawthorn	T	NA+
Dwarf Raspberry	E	NA+
Dwarf Bilberry	T	NA+
Dwarf Hackberry	T	NA+
Fragile Prickly Pear	E	NA+
Frost Grape	T	NA+
Manoomin (Hand-harvest Wild Rice)	T *	NA+
Mountain Cranberry	E	NA+
Northern Black Currant	T	NA+
Possum Haw	T	NA+
Red Mulberry	T	NA+
Shumard's Oak	T	NA+
Squashberry, Mooseberry	T	NA+

Leafy herbs & stalks

Cutleaf Water-Parsnip	T	NA+
Fascicled Broomrape	T	NA+

Fish

American Eel	T	NA+
Copper Redhorse	T	NA+
Lake Michigan Whitefish	T	NA+
Kiyi	T	NA+
Lake Sturgeon	E	NA+
Mooneye	T	NA+
River Redhorse	T	NA+
Sauger/Sand Pike	T	NA+
Shortjaw Cisco	T	NA+

Wildland & Water Amphibians & Reptiles

Blanding's Turtle	T	NA+
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Gamebirds

Black-Crowned Night Heron	T	NA+
Common Moorhen	T	NA+
Great Sage-Grouse	T	NA+
Northern Bobwhite Quail	T	NA+
Spruce Grouse	T	NA+
Wild Turkey	T	NA+

Wild Mammals/Fur-Bearing Game

Moose	T	NA+
Woodland Caribou	T	NA+

Domesticated Crops & Livestock

Heritage livestock breeds

Galloway Cattle	E	
Guernsey Cattle	T	
Kerry Cattle	T	

Heritage poultry breeds

Beltsville White Turkey	E	
Java Chicken	E *	
White Wyandotte Chicken	T *	

Domesticated Field & Garden Crops

Heirloom vegetables, legumes & grains

BEANS

Cocobean (White)/ Coco Nain Blanc Précoce	T	
Dow Purple Pod	E	
Goldmarie Vining Flat Pod	T	
Eastern Butterwax	E	
Early Leviathan Lima	E	
Kishwaukee Yellow Wax	E	NA
Magpie French Green	T	
Odawa Bush Soup	E	NA
Red Valentine (Stringless)	E	
Stockbridge Indian	E	NA
Stringless Blackwax Butter	E	

BEETS

Detroit Dark Red variants, New Globe etc	T	
Early Blood-Rooted Turnip	T *	

CABBAGE

Drumhead Savoy, Late	T	
Stone Head (Ballhead)	E	
Winningstadt	E	
Wisconsin Hollander No. 8	E	

CARROT

Early Market	E	
Long Red Surrey	E	
Parisienne, Short	E	

CELERY

Red Stalk (English Hardy)	E	
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CORN

Aunt Mary's	E	
Baby Rice	E	
Bear Island Chippewa Dent	E	NA
Beasley's Red Dent	E	
Blue Fox Flour	E	NA
Boone County White Dent	T	
Early Evergreen Sweet	E	
Ernest Strubbe's Dent	E	

Extra Early Golden Bantam	T	
Iroquois Tooth Dent	E	NA
Lady Finger	T	
Mesquakie Dent	E	
Northstine Dent	E	
Northwestern Red Dent	E	
Ohio Blue Claridge	E	
Silver King Dent	E	
Silvermine Dent	T	
White Rice	E	
Wisconsin Black Pop	E	

CUCUMBER

Longfellow	T	
Long Green/Windemoor Wonder	T	
Perfection	E	

GROUND CHERRY

The Yellow	E	
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KALE

Dwarf Green Curled Scotch	T	
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LETTUCE

(Fine) Imperial Winter	E	
Grand Rapids Forcing	E	

MELON

Hearts of Gold	T	
Montreal Nutmeg	T	

MUSKMELON

Bride of Wisconsin	E	
Nutmeg	T	

ONIONS

Southport Red Globe	T	
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PEA

American Wonder	E	
Blizzard	E	
Dwarf Telephone	E	
Strategem	E	

PEPPERS

Beaver Dam	E *	
Ruby Giant (Ohio Crimson)	E	
Sheepnose Pimiento	T *	
Squash	E	
Wisconsin Lakes	E	

POTATOES

Chippewa	E	
Garnet Chile	E	
Early Ohio	T	
Saginaw Gold	E	

RHUBARB		
MacDonald Strain		T
RUTABAGA		
Purple Top		T
SPINACH		
Round (Leaved)		E
SQUASH/PUMPKIN		
Wisconsin Cheese		E
TOMATO		
German Queen		T
Rose		T
Sheboygan		E *
Trucker's Favorite Pink		E
Wayahead Red		E
Wisconsin 55		E
TURNIP		
Yellow Globe		T
WHEAT		
Bishop		E
Huron		E
Preston		E
Stanley		E
Heritage Berries		
BLACKBERRIES		
Eldorado		E
Lawton		E
BLUEBERRIES		
Rubel		T
Stanley		E
CURRANTS & GOOSEBERRIES		
Champion		E
Perfection		E
Red Jacket		T
Wilder		T
MULBERRY		
Black English		T
Downing's Everbearing		E
RASPBERRIES		
Black		E
Brandywine		T
Golden Queen		E
Hansell		E
Indian Summer Everberry		T
Sodus Purple		E

TRUE CRANBERRY		
Ben Lear		T
Bennett		E
Early Black		E
Franklin		E
LeMunyon		E
McFarlin		E
Pilgrims		E

Heritage Fruits

APPLES		
Avista		E
Black Oxford		T *
Dyer (Pomme Royal)		E
Eureka		E
Florence Crab		E
Forest Winter		E
Hanko		E
Hass		E
Hyslop		T *
Iowa Blush		E
Lowell		
(Greasy Pippin, Tallow Pippin)		E
Lyman's Large Summer		T
McMahon (White McMahon)		E
Melba		T
Melon		E *
Milam		E *
Milwaukee		E
Minkler		E
Munsons Sweet		E
Newells Winter		E
Northfield Beauty		E *
Okabena		E
Ontario		E
Opalescent		T *
Pawpaw		E
Pewaukee		T
Pomme Gris		T
Primate		T *
Salome		T
Shiawassee Beauty		E *
Stark		T *
St. Lawrence		T
Swayzie		E
Utter		E
Windsor Chief		E
Wisner's Dessert		E
CHERRIES		
<i>Bigarreau:</i>		
Yellow Spanish		E
Windsor		T

<i>Heart:</i>	
Governor Wood	T
<i>Other:</i>	
Late Duke	E
Mesabi	E
FIGS	
Hardy Chicago	E
GRAPES	
Agawam	E
Barry	E
Campbell's Early	T
Delaware	T
Diamond	T
Iona	E
Isabella	E
Kishwaukee	E
Lindley	E
Suelter's Beta	E
Wilder	E
Worden	T
NECTARINE	
Boston	E
PEACH	
Amsden	E
Crawford's Early	E
Crawford's Late	E
Stump-The-World	E
PEAR	
Beirschmitt	E *
Belle Lucrative	E
Beurre Gifford	E
Beurre Gris d'Hiver Nouveau	E
Beurre Hardy	E
Beurre Superfin	E
Doyenne Gray	E
Duchesse d'Angouleme	T
Jungs Hardy Wisconsin	E
Lincoln	E *
Madelaine	E
Sheldon	E *
Sudduth	E *
Urbaniste	E
Vicar of Winkfield (Le Cure)	E
Washington	E
White Doyenne	E
Winter Nelis	E
PERSIMMON	
Craggs	E
Wabash	E

PLUM	
Abundance	T
Bavay's Green Gage	E
Coe's Golden Drop	E
Fellemborg	E
General Hand	E
Imperial Gage	E
Jefferson	E
Prune d'Agen (Robert de Sergente)	E
Shropshire Damson	E
Surprise	E
Victoria	E
Wild Goose	E
Yellow Egg	E
QUINCE	
Champion	E
Heritage Nuts	
BUTTERNUT	
Ayers	E
Booth	E
Butternut	T *
Craxey	E
Weschke	E
HEARTNUT	
Mitchell Hybrid	E
Schubert	E
HICKORY, SHAGBARK	
Silvis No. 303	E
Wilcox	E
Yoder No. 1	T
PECAN	
Busseron	E
Campbell No. 4	E
Fisher	E
Lucas	E
BLACK WALNUT	
Clermont	E
Elmer Myers	T
Emma Kay	T
Hare	E
Lamb's Curly	E
PERSIAN WALNUT	
Cook's Jumbo	E
McKinstler	E
Sauber Giant	E
Somer's Carpathian	E
Sister Persian	E



I'm kneeling in a canoe just south of Madison, Wisconsin, pushed gently by the west wind, watching the tip of my fishing rod for the telltale panfish twitch.

The willow and hackberry trees of Hog Island—once a pig farm, then a duck blind, now part of Capital Springs State Park—fade into the background. A string of memories surfaces: waiting in the blind, shoulder to shoulder with well-grayed fellows, as sickle-winged gadwall ducks twist out of a gloomy sky toward this very point; hunting the hedgerow at the Byrne Farm on a snowy Christmas day, with a pair of cottontails weighing heavy in my canvas

gamebag; pushpoling a duck skiff through Door County's island-specked North Bay as strings of ducks darken November's dawn; a farmer waving his hand toward the Kickapoo floodplain—"There's 80 acres of slough land, go ahead and hunt."

Go ahead and hunt.

The rod thumps gently against the gunwale. I reel in a yellow perch and drop it into the 5-gallon bucket at my feet. Just as these Madison lakes drain into the Yahara River, which in turn feeds the Rock, which ultimately joins the Mississippi, my memories spill into a bigger—now darker—pool. I remember the day at the Byrne Farm when Clarence stood in the

doorway, hunched in apology. “Can’t let you hunt. Guys got it leased.” I remember another morning when I paddled out to Hog Island, boat filled with dog and decoys, only to read the yellow metal plate—State Park, No Hunting—riveted to the fencepost I used to lean against in the blind. Now, on the Kickapoo floodplain, where wood ducks used to come to roost on October evenings, there’s a rumble of ATVs and dirt bikes.

I catch a few more perch. They lie wide-eyed in the bucket, extravagant yellow-gold as a summer sunset. There are, to be sure, still fish to be caught and game to hunt in the Great Lakes states. Some game—deer, turkeys and giant Canada geese—are more abundant than ever. Yet, there has been a shift in how we regard land, a collective drawing-in of the reins. Railroad officials who once waved to hunters from passing trains are now likely to call the sheriff from their cell phones. Farmers who once let hunters

onto the back forty for a Sunday squirrel hunt might now have leased it—perhaps exclusively to a wealthy hunter. And expanses like Hog Island that had been no man’s land, are now often posted, defined, developed. We’re a more urban society, given to recourse of the law, seeking certainty where trust once prevailed. Perhaps, too, some hunters have grown sloppy, acting out the image that mainstream society holds of them. Whatever the cause, it’s harder now to take to the local woodlot—shells stuffed in your pocket, a possible bag slung over your shoulder—and come home with the makings for dinner. And that hurts tradition, as well as the stewpot.

John Motoviloff spends a hundred days afield each year, foraging the woods and waters of the Upper Midwest. He’s the author of Wisconsin Wildfoods and is currently remodeling his dacha on the banks of the Kickapoo River.

❧ Back in the Day ❧



❧ Men in fishing boats



Birthing Terroir in the “Land of Sky Blue Waters”

by Michelle Miller



Michelle with Bill Stone. Bill has a heritage orchard and also makes award-winning wines and sparkling wines.

TV commercials for beer were a thing of my youth, growing up as I did in Wisconsin.

One brew, from St. Paul, touted the purity of the water with the slogan “Land of Sky Blue Waters” and left an indelible image of the Mississippi River’s bedrock bluffs on my mind. The Driftless region echoes the coastal reaches of the Great Lakes basin, as the land transitions from Eastern forest to the Great Plains.

Geologically, the Upper Mississippi River Valley is a fragment of what the rest of the Upper Midwest looked like before the second glacier made a trip through the region 10,000 years ago. The ice receded leaving no glacial till, and the land was hence named the “Driftless Region.” The Driftless karst formations create landscapes similar to the karst of the Niagara Escarpment that winds along the shores of the Great Lakes, and another famous karst region—the Great Appalachian Valley. With few natural lakes, the region’s creeks and streams rush into major tributaries. The Kickapoo, Wisconsin, Pecatonica, Zumbro, Whitewater, Root, Upper Iowa, Turkey, Yellow, Volga, Maquoketa, Wiapsipinicon, Apple, Plum and Rock Rivers in turn feed the Mighty Mississippi River—called “Michi Zhiibi” or “Big River” in Ojibwe. Just as the Lakes define the coasts, the river cuts through the middle of the Driftless, shaping 57 counties in four states.

French settlers established river-based trade routes in the region. Battles of the War of 1812 were fought as British-controlled fur trading sites became focal points for territorial disputes with the Americans. Soon after the war, Europeans flooded in—land speculators, then Scotch-Irish settlers and Norwegian and German Lutheran farmers. At one time the region’s oak savannahs were the easternmost reach of grazing buffalo herds. European newcomers grazed cattle herded from the Western grasslands headed for the Chicago Livestock yards and they established orchards and vineyards on the hills where oak savannahs once grew. Prohibition put a halt to wine grape production until recently, but apple orchards continue to flourish along the Great River, just as they do in pockets along the Great Lakes. New immigrants continued to make their way to the region—hippies in the 1960s and 70s, and in the last decade Amish farmers settled here.

The hills and hollows—“coulees,” as the Québécois referred to them—are home to plant and animal communities distinct to the region. It requires resolve to get from point A to point B in the Coulees. Roads meander through the hills and valleys and then rivers must be bridged. There are few direct roads anywhere in the region; high-speed internet

access is not available and the well-worn mountains obscure cell phone reception. All this creates a slower pace that encourages artisan endeavors and insulates us from urban concerns.

The people of the region are developing a culinary identity and tying it to what is naturally, sustainably grown. High value perennials, like apples, grapes, hazelnuts and aronia, are crops that suit the terrain. Animals that thrive on high quality grass and their food products—specialty cheeses, organic milk and beef—are also well suited to the region. Modest-scale, organic, diversified vegetable production also makes use of rich bottom lands and protects water quality by building soil.

People here are blessed with good food and that is reflected in the many food festivals, farmers' markets, community gardens, food coops and restaurants that celebrate local. Local-food-in-school programs have been successful, in part because farming intermingles between rural communities and towns. School districts are relatively small and therefore capable of creating lunches with food from the region. Local apple growers are finding that apples are the entry into many school lunch programs. Apples require little in the way of preparation and children appreciate the quality of fresh, in-season fruit.

Local apples feed the people within the region, and through culinary tourism, they also lure urban tourists interested in an authentic experience. The same apples are increasingly available in urban supermarkets with a commitment to local. Varieties developed here and selected for this region, such as Haralson, Honey Crisp, Zestar and Regent, stand out in supermarkets, while heritage varieties like Black Willow Twig, Snow, Wolf River and Prairie Spy, are offered for direct sale at the orchards and farmers' markets.

Award-winning specialty cheeses are another entry point for urban dwellers in Chicago and the Twin Cities who are interested in local foods and food producers. Driftless artisans such as Sid Cook at Carr Valley, Michael Gingrich at Uplands and Anne Topham at Fantome, as well as many others, are recognized as rock stars by cheese aficionados. These cheese makers prize milk made from the


flush of green grass in June because of its flavor and overall quality.

Protecting these natural, regional gifts from exploitation, while fully enjoying and widely sharing them is the challenge. But as my Ojibwe mentor would say, from balance come all blessings.

Michelle Miller is associate director at the UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems. She is an applied anthropologist working in food systems and sustainable agriculture and comes from a long line of farmers and agrarian reformers with roots in Michigan, Iowa, North Dakota and Wisconsin.

Back in the Day



 Squash harvest, 1920

Harvesting with the Seasons on the Shores of Lake Michigan: Smelt, Sweet Corn, Grape Leaves and Bittersweet

by Gary Paul Nabhan



About the time that my clan of Lebanese immigrants arrived in the Indiana Dunes on the shores of Lake Michigan, a little fry by the name of smelt was introduced to the lake and it later took on a mythic roll in my childhood.

Although smelt were originally fish of the Atlantic seaboard that spawned in the freshwater estuaries and streams, they were first introduced into the Great Lakes foodshed around 1912 at Crystal Lake, Michigan. By 1923 they had appeared in Lake Michigan and soon spread to the other Great Lakes. By the time my father reached high school, four to five million pounds of smelt were harvested from Lake Michigan each year, primarily as they came near shore to spawn in the icy, shallow waters in late winter.

My father and his friends made an annual ritual out of the smelt spawning, building bonfires on the beach, setting nets out in the shallows and frying their catch in huge cast-iron pans well into the wee hours of those late winter days, not long after the last ice had melted. Some of my earliest memories are riding atop my father's shoulders down to the beach to meet his friends. There, stretching northeastward up the Indiana and Michigan shoreline, were hundreds of bonfires built by like-minded parties. On clear nights we could see other bonfires aglow in northern Illinois, and perhaps even into southeastern Wisconsin. As the men would take turns harvesting the wriggling silvery fish in plastic buckets and baskets, I would stand close to the fire with a crunchy, fried smelt in my hand, listening to the men tell fishing stories as they downed their Drewery's beers and ate from their fish fry.



Fast-forward to the next season, and I would be helping my Aunt Mary—the matriarch of our Lebanese clan—prepare sweet corn, hamburgers and leg of lamb for the Fourth of July. Aunt Mary was fastidious in her ways of preparing sweet corn, so that it would be as close to being fully alive as corn on the cob could be when it reached your lips. She would heat a tall caldron of water, telephone a muck farmer a few miles away to tell him to start picking, then grab my hand and whisk me away to pick up the harvest. She would cover five miles in her monster car in a matter of four minutes, hand me a five dollar bill and have me fetch three bags of sweet corn harvested just moments before. I would hand the five spot to the African-American farmers who had been her friends for years, pick up one paper sack of corn and a farmer would carry the other two to Aunt Mary's car. She would speed away and I would shuck all the corn in the bags by the time we got back to her house. She would hustle back into her kitchen and begin tossing the shucked ears into the caldron as quickly as I could bring them in. As soon as they were done—she timed their boiling down to the second—her husband John would drain the caldron, pour the ears into colanders and place them on platters to carry into the dining room where everyone was already assembled. Aunt Mary would offer a



Smelt, NOAA, Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory

blessing for the food and then ask everyone to eat the sweet corn before anything else. Each kernel burst with flavor, for it was still alive and kicking.

In late summer and early fall, I went with my uncles into the wild Indiana Dunes for two other seasonal treats: grape leaves and bittersweet. Old Uncle Mike—an Armenian friend of Papa, my step-grandfather—would entice me out into the dunes to help him pick enough grape leaves to satisfy the entire female membership of his Orthodox church. He would carefully instruct me to pick the female (curvaceous, full-bodied) leaves rather than the useless, male (pointy-tipped and highly divided) leaves. Then he would start to count backward, “One thousand, nine hundred ninety-nine, nine hundred ninety-eight...”

“Uncle Mike,” I would ask, “Why are you counting backward?”


“NINE HUNDRED NINETY SEVEN... So that we know how many more leaves we need to pick to satisfy all the church women!”

The final fall harvest was not necessarily for eating, but for table decorations at Thanksgiving, although I have recently learned that the Ojibwe have historically eaten this plant to fend off stomachaches. My Uncle Chuck would take me into the Indiana Dunes by Jeep after the first hard frost of the fall, to harvest the yellowish-orange capsules of bittersweet. Somewhere in-between a woody vine and a scraggly bush, bittersweet branches would display their dried capsules, burst open from a killing frost, revealing scarlet arils and berries. Although they were not eaten, they were a visual reminder on our Thanksgiving table that along Lake Michigan, everything has its own special season.

Gary Paul Nabhan grew up in the village of Miller Station in what is now Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. His love of local foods came from his romping in the dunes with his father, aunts, uncles, cousins and brothers.

Back in the Day



 Corn shucker, 1905

Celebrating the Relationships That Feed Us

by Mrill Ingram



I would like to raise a glass to the invisible organisms we work with as we create food.

Through our negotiations and collaborations with microbial creatures we create local flavor, including pleasures such as sauerkraut and beer, yogurt and cheese and even, perhaps, *terroir*. We don't directly observe our nonhuman counterparts working away in the compost piles that nourish our soil, or that ferment cabbage in a jar of sauerkraut or that acidify milk in an artisan cheese kitchen, but these are all places of performance where microbes and humans work together to create and produce.

To make the sauerkraut we enjoy with our brats here in the upper Midwest (Frank's Quality Kraut is a regional favorite), we rely on three groups of bacteria indigenous to cabbage. Once salt is added to the cabbage, and given nice, tight anaerobic conditions, coliform (rod-shaped) bacteria kick off the acidifying process; they are followed by leuconostoc bacteria that continue to pickle the fermenting cabbage, and finally, as the pH continues to drop, a strain of lactobacillus steps up to complete the transformation from cabbage to kraut. In making the perfect complementary beverage to brats, Wisconsin beer makers, including Madison area brewers such as Lake Louis, Ale Asylum and Great Dane, rely on cultivated strains of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* ("sugar fungus of the beer"). For millennia brewers have worked with

different strains of saccharomyces to produce just the right amount of carbon dioxide, ethyl alcohol and desired taste.

Cheese makers also work with cultivated microbial organisms, adding cultures of penicillin and other microorganisms in order to encourage, for example, blue cheese molds. Hook's makes my favorite blue cheeses: "Blue Tilston Point" and their "Bloomin' Idiot," which are produced in Mineral Point, Wisconsin. People who make yogurt, buttermilk and cheese start by acidifying their milk with *Lactobacillus* and *Lactococcus* bacteria. When my husband, Ken, makes yogurt, he introduces these desired microorganisms by stirring previously-made (or store-bought) yogurt into our milk (fresh from the Zinniker Family Farm). Through a careful progression of heating, cooling and maintaining temperature, he works with his invisible collaborators to encourage just the right tartness and firmness. Subtle shifts in practice can make for some surprises, such as the time he and *Lactococcus lactis* spp. *cremoris* created his own version of the Finnish *villi*, the consistency of which is best captured by the word "stretchy."

Kitchen adventures like these, and the variety of delectable local artisan cheeses that have blossomed in Wisconsin in recent years, are born out of the

place-specific interactions of microbes, soil, grass, farmers, cows, yogurt, cheesemakers and more microbes. Harold McGee has written eloquently about the eclectic and satisfying creation of human-microbial symbiosis:

So these are the ingredients that have generated the great diversity of our traditional cheese: hundreds of plants, from scrubland to alpine flowers; dozens of animal breeds that fed on those plants and transformed them into milk; protein-cutting enzymes from young animals and thistles; microbes recruited from meadow and cave, from the oceans, from the animals' insides and skins; and the careful observation, ingenuity, and good taste of generations of cheesemakers and cheese lovers.

—*On Food and Cooking*, Harold McGee (2004) Scribner, NY, p. 64.

It is important that we celebrate our invisible cohorts and the performances through which we co-create cheese, yogurt, beer, bread and more. Even while local food celebrates unique strains of microbial life, our centralized nature of food distribution and increasing fears over food safety pose significant barriers to “pro-microbial” practices. Indiscriminant antibiotics are used liberally in industrial agricultural production as a routine way to manage disease and promote growth. According to McGee, over a dozen different microbial species once involved in making yogurt have now disappeared. U.S. food safety policy mandates that cheese made from raw milk (milk not pasteurized) must be aged at least 60 days at a temperature no less than 1.7° C (35° F) before it can be sold. This policy negatively impacts the taste of cheese as well as the availability of a number of cheeses, such as camembert, to consumers.

A growing body of medical evidence shows that we are healthier when exposed to a diversity of microorganisms. Because raw-milk cheeses are rich in enzymes, they are said to be easier for humans to digest. Compost piles, artisan cheese kitchens, and even kitchen yogurt makers offer opportunities for anyone to cultivate positive human-microbial relations. Because they are often small-scale and with few barriers to entry, technologies like these can be used by many different people and promote a culture of respect and celebration for our invisible collaborators in the creation and maintenance of our food cultures and traditions. Cheers!

Mrill Ingram lives in Madison, Wisconsin and cohabits with her husband Ken, their sons Isaiah and Emlyn and microbes too numerous to name. An “almost-native” of the southwestern desert, she has lived in the Midwest for more than a decade and is thankful every day for her access to a wide variety of locally grown, fresh food.

Back in the Day



Picking beans at a Chicago vegetable garden, 1917



Renewing America's Food Traditions (RAFT), managed by Slow Food USA, is an alliance of food, farming, conservation and culinary advocates who have joined together to ensure that the diverse foods and traditions unique to North America reach our tables by means that make our families and communities healthier and our food system more diverse: ecologically, culturally and structurally. We focus on clusters of foods at risk that we feel we have a capacity to recover, using models of discovery, recovery and sustainability that may inspire others to do similar work. Go to <http://www.raftalliance.org> for more information about the alliance's current initiatives.

Founding RAFT partners: American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, Chefs Collaborative, Cultural Conservancy, Native Seeds/SEARCH, Seed Savers Exchange and Slow Food USA. RAFT Founder/Facilitator: Dr. Gary Paul Nabhan

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