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Rare Meat

Products • People • Recipes • Ideas**Happy New Year! January 2010**

Eating in more?

"To me, life without veal stock, pork fat, sausage, organ meat, demi-glace, or even stinky cheese is a life not worth living." — *Celebrity Chef Anthony Bourdain*

Find gadgetry galore at downtown kitchen store

Except for the countertop infrared cooker that takes a steak from frozen to fabulous in 20 minutes, Ranch Foods Direct sells mostly meats, cheeses, produce and ingredients rather than the cookware and gadgetry for preparing it. For that, shoppers who want to keep their business local can head downtown to Sparrowhawk Gourmet Cookware, the amazing local "toy store for foodies," independently owned and operated since 1979.

Owner Sam Eppley points out that for the price of an expensive dinner at the Broadmoor, shoppers can go to Ranch Foods Direct for great meat and then visit his store for the right cookware and kitchen equipment and have control over what's in their meal and how healthfully it is prepared. "We send people down to Ranch Foods Direct all the time," he says. "Likewise, if they care enough to buy good meats, they want to cook it right. People right now want to make sure their money is well-spent. They want to know that what they buy is going to be exactly what they were thinking it would be."



Sam and his wife Christine follow two main guidelines when it comes to healthy eating.

"We don't have any problem eating steaks or pork chops, but we do stay away from processed foods," he says. "Also, portion control is a biggie."

Sparrowhawk stocks a wide selection of food scales to help insure judicious servings.

"We eat a lot of beef. A ribeye steak is probably our favorite," Sam adds. "We love prime rib as well. My wife is British, so Sunday dinner is big with us."

Sam loves to grill outside on the deck virtually year-round. His store has a huge selection of grilling utensils, including an increasing number of grill pans, grids and woks especially designed for vegetables.

"If someone is spending a lot of money on a steak, often they will want to grill it," he says. "And if they are having vegetables, that smoky flavor makes it more appetizing."

At his store, Sam also sees evidence of a food trend toward the desire for more purity in foods and appreciation of quality in small things. Take salt, which is popular now. "Salt is something that people don't realize takes on the flavors of where it comes out of the earth," he says. "Sea salt was an early push toward something more natural with less chemicals. But now we are seeing more grinding of salts. It's a control thing again. It allows you to have different consistencies of grind. These are finishing salts, not just for throwing into a pot of soup. On a steak, it's great because you can really taste it."

Sparrowhawk is a local downtown institution. A year ago the store moved a block away into a larger space at 120 N. Tejon that triples the room they had before, proving that there will always be demand for quality and a great shopping experience.

Shopping local is about more than getting healthy food or quality items made by reputable companies, Sam says.

"Approximately 65 percent of the money spent at a store like this or at Ranch Foods Direct stays local," he notes. "At a chain store, only about 15 percent stays in the local community. That's a huge difference."

He points out that there's a price for quality, always has been, always will be. "We have a lot of U.S. and European products," he says. "But it's a fact of life that manufacturing is going to cheaper labor markets."

Sam is generally supportive of international trade as long as it is fair and includes necessary quality and safety standards.

"What really matters is that something is well-made," he says.

He points out that a cheaper product, thrown away and replaced often, quickly becomes more expensive in the long run. The same could be said of the long term investment inherent in buying healthy nutritious food or supporting local merchants.



Simple · Healthy · Tasty

Thinking more about eating better? Looking for some handy tips for healthful eating or a few new seasonally appropriate recipes that are simple, healthy and delicious? Here's what local personal chef Hethyr Pletsch brings to the table

Colorado Springs' Hethyr Pletsch is a fabulous cook, but also a health conscious one. She helped us put together some recommendations to get your new year off to a healthy start. And she gave us a couple of great recipes for wonderful meals that are simple, nutritious and affordable.

"Healthy food doesn't have to hard," she says. "The flank steak recipe is an example of that. There are about 3 minutes of preparation time. It's absolutely easy."

The flank is a lean cut, and Hethyr also provides some tips for how to use the right preparation to make the most out of it.

Like Sam Eppley of Sparrowhawk Gourmet Cookery, featured on the cover, she mentions taking special care with portion sizes. "We're so used to going out to restaurants and getting a huge plate of food," she says. A 6-ounce portion of meat is usually plenty for an average size person. She recommends adding generous servings of colorful fresh fruits and vegetables, grown locally if at all possible.

Get with a CSA/Home Delivery Plan

CSA stands for **community supported agriculture**, a program that allows you to buy shares in a farm in exchange for the regular delivery of what is produced throughout the growing season. "Having a CSA practically forces you to use fresh fruits and vegetables," Hethyr says. "I plan our menu around it." Though gardens are mostly dormant now, your winter diet can benefit from vegetables harvested in the fall that store well, such as squash, onions and other root vegetables, Hethyr points out.

Ranch Foods Direct Home Service is similar to a CSA in that you get an ample supply of healthy meats and U.S. organic frozen vegetables delivered to your door, meaning quality ingredients are always close at hand for making healthy meals instead of warming up processed foods or grabbing fast food on the run. You are less likely to resort to a frozen pizza if you have delicious healthy high quality food items right at your fingertips. Call Ranch Foods Direct to make an appointment to discuss this option and find out how it could work for you. You can customize it!

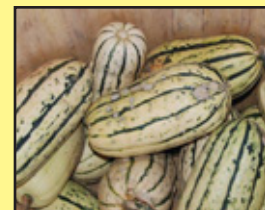
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Curried Pumpkin-Chicken Chowder

Serves 4

- 1 tablespoon canola oil
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 1 cup red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tablespoons curry powder
- 4 cups chicken broth, low-sodium
- 16 ounces canned pumpkin or cooked fresh pumpkin (or substitute any other squash)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1 pound chicken, cooked and shredded
- 1 cup brown rice, cooked
- 1 cup corn kernels, fresh or frozen



1. Heat canola oil in a soup pot over medium heat. When oil is hot, add chopped onion, bell pepper and garlic and cook for 5 minutes. Add curry powder and cook for another 2 minutes.
2. Stir in broth, pumpkin, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Remove from heat and blend with a stick blender or in batches in a blender or food processor until smooth.
4. Return to soup pot and place back over medium heat. Add cooked chicken, brown rice and corn and continue to cook for approximately 5 minutes or until hot throughout. Serve with baked pita chips if desired.

Baked Pita Chips

- 4 pita bread rounds
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt

Preheat oven to 400°F. Brush pita bread with olive oil, cut into wedges and place wedges on baking sheets. Season pita wedges with kosher salt and bake for 10 minutes, flipping once.



Easy Marinated Flank Steak

Serves 6

2 pounds flank steak
2/3 cup olive oil
4 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
2/3 cup soy sauce, low-sodium
1/2 cup honey
1/2 teaspoon black pepper, freshly ground
Kosher salt
Black pepper, freshly ground
1 tablespoon cilantro (optional, for garnish)

1. Score the surface of the steak with 1/4 inch deep knife cuts, about an inch apart, across the grain of the meat.

2. Whisk together next 6 ingredients in a small bowl. Place steak and marinade in a large freezer bag and coat the steak well with the marinade. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

3. Preheat broiler (to high if your oven has a setting option). Remove steak from marinade bag, reserve marinade and sprinkle steak generously on all sides with kosher salt and pepper. Place steak on baking sheet lined with foil and sprayed with cooking spray. Broil 4-6 inches from heat source for 4-5 minutes on each side for medium-rare.

4. Remove from oven and place steak on a cutting board. Cover with aluminum foil to hold in the heat and to keep from drying out, and let rest for 10 minutes.

5. In the meantime, pour excess marinade in small saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and continue to simmer for approximately 5 minutes or until thickened.

6. Cut the steak into very thin slices, against the grain. Drizzle sliced steak with sauce and garnish with cilantro if desired. Serve any remaining sauce on the side for dipping.

Note: *This is also excellent in a stir-fry. Prepare steak and sauce; set aside. Stir-fry vegetables of your choice in a small amount of oil with garlic and ginger, then add sliced steak and toss with sauce and toasted sesame seeds. Serve over brown rice.*

Hethyr's tips for flank steak

"A lot of people think flank steak is tough," Hethyr says. "Not if it's properly prepared. It's one of the favorite meals at my house." Keep in mind, it's a lean cut that is also affordably priced: perfect for this time of the year!

- Marinating helps tenderize this lean cut of meat.
- Flank steak is best eaten medium-rare. Cooking it more well-done will make it tough.
- Let the steak rest for at least 10 minutes before slicing. This allows the natural juices to redistribute and keeps the steak moist.
- Slice the steak very thinly against the grain for tender, succulent bites.

DIY soups and salad dressings

Call it common sense eating. Hethyr recommends eating whole foods and avoiding packaged and processed foods as much as possible. One thing you can do is make more of your own soups and salad dressings. Consider this: most canned (and packaged) soups have high levels of trans fats, sodium and artificial preservatives like MSG. Just one cup of canned soup can have almost 1,000 milligrams of salt (dietary guidelines recommend consuming no more than 2,400 milligrams for the entire day.) Instead, control what goes into your soup by making your own. Get healthy stock and soup bones at Ranch Foods Direct.

Eat organ meats

Liver is an excellent, very concentrated source of high-quality protein, vitamins and minerals. Gram for gram, it contains more nutrients than any other food. But it should be carefully selected. In an animal, its role is to filter and process the food consumed in addition to storing glycogen and fat-soluble vitamins. It's important to buy liver from animals that have been fed a clean, healthy diet. Ranch Foods Direct is the ideal source for quality beef liver!

Liver with Sour Cream

Courtesy of Weston A. Price Foundation

2 1/2 pounds beef liver, sliced
2 onions, chopped
1 cup sour cream
4 tablespoons butter
2 cup beef stock
2 tablespoons dill, freshly chopped
2 tablespoons unbleached white flour
Sea salt and pepper to taste

Wash, pat dry, and sprinkle each piece of liver with salt and pepper. Dredge in flour, fry on each side in butter and remove. Sauté the onions until golden brown and then layer both liver and onions in a deep pot. Deglaze the pan with beef stock, stir well and add the sour cream, stir, then add to the liver and onions. Mix well and cover. Cook slowly over low-heat for 20 minutes. Uncover, stir well, re-cover and cook for another 10 minutes. Remove liver from pot, arrange on individual plates and pour sauce over the slices. Sprinkle with the dill. Serve with boiled or fried potatoes or rice.



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Food the foundation of healthy economies

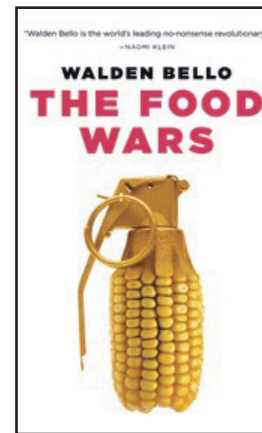
Shouldn't plentiful fresh food form the foundation of a healthy economy? Walden Bello, an internationally recognized sociology professor who has spent his life working to restore democracy in his native Philippines, has argued just that in numerous books, including *The Food Wars*, an account of the effects of modern global economic development around the world.

Countries worldwide have produced abundant food for export while their own people starved; it's happened in Ireland, Southeast Asia, Africa and Latin America — in fact, virtually everywhere. Bello's writings detail the phenomenon, arguing it's a faulty way to develop a sustainable economy.

"It's the whole concept of globalization, whereby third world countries that have borrowed money to compete in the international market are forced to produce more for export in order to generate the cash needed to repay the banks, which exploits their land and people while extracting valuable resources," says Ranch Foods Direct owner Mike Callicrate. "Awareness is growing that this is not an acceptable way for a nation to achieve long-term sustainability and prosperity." Nor is it healthy at the local community level, for similar reasons.

Watch for details regarding a Colorado Springs **local food forum** in early 2010 to promote building a vibrant regional food system.

Did you know? ... Fast food chains have more stringent quality requirements for the food they serve than the federal school lunch program. (*USA Today*)



"This is not romanticism of the past... When they consider the environmental destabiliation, health hazards, and low-quality products that come with capitalist industrial agriculture, partisans of small-scale agriculture are convinced of its superiority."



— Walden Bello