Iowa-grown foods inspire holiday cooks

Cooking and serving an Iowa-grown holiday meal is one sure way to toast your family or friends. In addition, making meals with local foods contributes to your local economy, honoring the hard work of farmers and the richness of Iowa’s dark soils. With the recipes shown below, this is possible even during Iowa’s coldest and darkest months of the year.

Find local foods at late fall and early winter Farmer’s Markets. Here’s a list of just a few of these markets, held in November and/or December:

- **Des Moines Area** ([www.desmoinesfarmersmarket.com](http://www.desmoinesfarmersmarket.com))
- **Cedar Falls, Waterloo/Greater Cedar Valley**
- **Iowa City** ([https://icgov.org/farmersmarket](https://icgov.org/farmersmarket))

In **Dubuque**, the Farmer’s Market is a year-round event.

In addition to these sources for local foods, check out [http://www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org) to search for farmers near you. If you live near Polk county (Des Moines area) or plan an outing there, check out [http://iowafood.org/shop/](http://iowafood.org/shop/).

There, you can order Iowa-grown foods. In winter months, meats and cheeses, stored produce such as squash and potatoes, and hoop-house grown items such as spinach and arugula often are available.

Lastly, a statewide initiative—Buy Fresh Buy Local—may help you find local foods. The annual Food Guide for seven counties near Cedar Falls is on the [CEEE Local Food](https://icgov.org/farmersmarket) pages. There are numerous other groups across Iowa.

Indulge this season with these recipes:

**Carrot Soup**

According to the USDA, carrots are one of the most consumed vegetables in the country. Undoubtedly, they are most frequently experienced fresh and raw as a snack. Carrots also play an important role as a supporting character in sauces, stocks, and mirepoix. However, they are not often enough given a leading role as in the recipe below. Prepared with fresh, locally grown carrots, the recipe below will knock your socks off!

2 oz. butter
1 medium onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 stalk celery, diced
2 tablespoons fresh ginger, minced
6 cups stock (chicken or vegetable)
1 pound carrots, peeled and chopped
salt and pepper

Melt the butter in a large stockpot over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, celery, and ginger. Sautee for a couple of minutes. Pour in the stock and add the carrots. Cook until tender. Puree and season with salt and pepper. Add a bit of cream to make the soup extra rich and indulgent!
**Butternut Squash Gratin**
Butternut squash is a great storage crop, which makes this dish a favorite all winter. Use fresh sage if possible. However, if you don’t have a windowsill crop handy, dried sage will suffice.

**Olive Oil**
1 large red onion, sliced
1 handful fresh sage leaves, or 2 teaspoons dried sage
1 bunch chard, cleaned, deveined, and chopped
1 large butternut squash, peeled and cubed
3 tablespoons flour salt and pepper to season 1 cup swiss cheese, grated ½ cup milk slices of day-old bread

Preheat oven to 375° and butter a 1½ or 2 quart gratin dish. Heat a skillet on medium heat and add a tablespoon or so olive oil. Sautee the onion until nearly caramelized, adding the sage for a couple minutes, cooking it just until slightly crispy. Remove to the gratin dish.

Dredge the squash in the flour and cook in 2 tablespoons of olive oil over medium heat for about 5 minutes. Add the chard to the pan, just long enough to wilt. Season with salt and pepper and pour into gratin dish on top of onions and sage. Add the cheese and arrange whatever old bread you may have to cover. Pour the milk over the bread, cover, and bake for 35 minutes. Uncover and bake for 15 minutes more.

**Roasted Chicken**
There are many Iowa farmers committed to the safe, humane, and chemical- and hormone-free production of poultry. These birds are often given free-range over some pastureland, and benefit from access to bugs, sunlight, and fresh air. Specialty and heritage breeds are also gaining popularity among poultry producers. Experiment with different birds and recipes. Ask your poultry farmer how they would recommend preparing and serving the birds they raise.

3-4 pound chicken, rinsed and dried
2 tablespoons butter a couple cloves of garlic salt and pepper to season a few sprigs of thyme a few sprigs of rosemary

Pre-heat the oven to 500°. Rub the chicken with butter liberally. Cut a few scores in the garlic clove and rub over the chicken. Toss thyme and rosemary over the chicken to your liking, and season with salt and pepper.

Cooking time will vary depending on the size of the bird. A three to four pound bird will take approximately 4050 minutes. Juices should run clear and the skin should be crispy and golden.
Swiss Chard Sautee

Swiss chard is a nutrient-rich leafy green which can be grown quite easily in Iowa, and also makes a colorful addition to your landscape. Chard can be planted April through August in Iowa, to be harvested and enjoyed until the freeze.

Olive Oil

1 bunch swiss chard, cleaned, deveined, and chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
salt and pepper

Heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic and cook for one minute. Add the chard and cook until wilted – for just a couple of minutes. Sprinkle with pepper flakes and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Apple Tart

The Armistice Day ice storm of 1940 ruined many of Iowa’s once numerous apple orchards, though chances are good you can still find a few excellent orchards within a 30-mile radius. A firm apple with bold flavor works well in this recipe. Ask your orchardist for a recommendation.

¾ cup sugar
2 sticks butter
4 cups flour
1 egg salt
4 large apples
1 tablespoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
2 tablespoons honey or jam

Add sugar to mixer bowl, mix until broken up, then add sugar and mix until incorporated. Add flour and salt and mix until combined. Add egg and mix until a tacky dough is assembled. Flatten, cover, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. Then roll out dough into prepared tart pan or pie plate.

Preheat oven to 350°, then prepare apples. Wash and slice apples to about ½ inch thickness. Assemble apples on top of prepared dough. Combine sugar and cinnamon in a bowl, then sprinkle apples. Bake for 25 minutes or until apples have softened and crust is golden. While still warm, brush or drizzle honey or your favorite jam over tart.

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For more information, visit www.ReclaimYourHolidays.org.