

A Traveler's Library

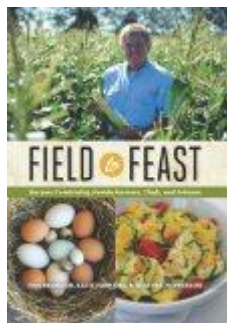
Books, Movies, and other Travel Inspirations

Feasting in Florida–The Cook Book of Locally Grown

🕒 June 7, 2013 📁 Books, Cookbook, Destinations, Food, United States 💎 Brette Sember, Disneyland, farming, Florida, guest post, locally-grown, locally-sourced food, recipe, watermelon ice 👤 Brette Sember

TASTY TRAVELS

Destination: Florida



Book: *Field to Feast* by Pam Brandon, Katie Farmand, and Heather McPherson

By Brette Sember

For many people, **Florida** means just two things: beaches and **DisneyWorld**. There is much more to this big, beautiful state. My grandparents moved to Florida for the winters when I was young and we've been going once a year ever since. I have made a point to travel to various areas of the state, from the Keys to **St. Augustine**, and there is so much to see and experience.

My family history with Florida goes even farther back, because when my grandparents married in 1933, they went to Florida on their honeymoon (with my grandfather's parents along!). They saw Old Florida in a way that is hard to find today, but does still exist.



Picking strawberries in Florida. No that's not snow, its' plastic. Photo courtesy of Two Kids and a Map.

Field to Feast by Pam Brandon, Katie Farmand, and Heather McPherson, appealed to me because it shows that there is much more to Florida than the stereotype. In fact, most of Florida is still about fields, orchards, pastures, pigs, cows, and produce. It's a place where people make their living growing, picking, selling, and sharing food. There are some fruits that don't grow anywhere else in the U.S. other than Florida.

The goal of this cookbook is to highlight the state's homegrown assets. You won't find a single picture of a sandy beach or mouse ears in this book, but you will be overwhelmed by the lushness of the greens and produce that fill in the outline of this vacation land. The recipes in this book are from farmers, growers, chefs, ranches, vineyards, and apiaries – the people who understand firsthand the bounty that is available and goes so far beyond citrus. I have to admit I was overwhelmed by how much is grown and raised here and how fertile the land really is.

Divided into four categories (sips and starters, mains, sides, and desserts), there is a wide range of recipes and only a handful that use seafood or citrus. Instead the focus is on the fresh vegetables and tropical fruits that are grown here, with attention to the beef, poultry (yes, they raise turkeys in Florida), lamb, and pork raised in the area. The book includes a source list for how to contact the farms and people in the book, a list of menu suggestions for the recipes, and a page spread showing some of the unusual fruits and vegetables grown here (longan, lychee, hua moa, swamp cabbage, and more).



Now, my hungry friends, it's time to tell you what you can cook from this book: Chilled Mango Soup, Siesta Key Lime Martini, Alsatian Tart with Spring Peach Salad, Deep Creek Lamb Burgers, Sugarcane-Skewered Scallops (with instructions about how to make your own skewers), Ranch Hand Hamburger Casserole, Purple Cabbage and Goat Cheese Sauté, Baby Turnips with Cipollini Onions, Zucchini Carpaccio, Mema's Guava Roll, and Tupelo Honey Baklava Rolls. The underlying theme here is local, fresh, ingredients that are the stars of the dishes. The dishes are definitely restaurant-quality, but they aren't fancy and fussy, so you won't feel intimidated.

While I am always excited about good recipes for new things I haven't tried yet, I also love to sit down with a cookbook and read more than just the recipes. Each recipe is preceded by information about the person who grows the food, or the chef who prepares it. The chefs talk about why locally grown foods are important to their restaurants, what their relationships with farmers are like, and how they are active in their local food community (supervising community gardens or working with schoolchildren to talk about food). The ranchers and farmers talk about what it means to raise heirloom meats, use biodynamics, be humane, be caretakers of the land, understand agroforestry, and appreciate being a farming family. There is a face behind every recipe, which gives personality and depth to the book.

You would never guess that this is a book about Florida if you just flipped through it. Photos of plants, vines, cows, pigs, baskets of produce, and rows of greens seem as though they could be from anywhere. These gorgeous photos are mixed with photos of the dishes themselves, ensuring that you will crave the real, fresh food on offer. To celebrate the start of summer, I thought it would be fun to try the ice pop recipe from the book. This is probably the simplest recipe you'll find in this volume, but it sounds so refreshing and light, I'm looking forward to trying it.



Florida Farmer's Market.

Photo courtesy of Two Kids and a Map.

Watermelon-Rose Ice Pops From Wynn Heritage Farms in Madi-



son, Florida

Makes about 12

6 cups large-diced watermelon, seeds removed

¼ cup sugar

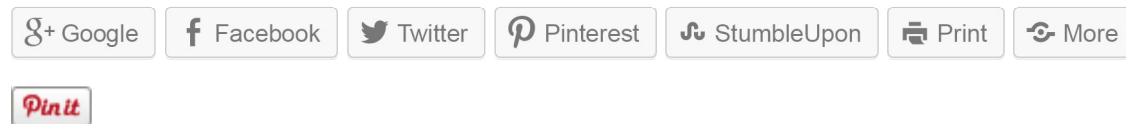
2 teaspoons rose water

2 teaspoons fresh lime juice



Place watermelon in a blender and puree until smooth. Strain puree through a fine-mesh sieve lined with cheesecloth, pushing on solids. Discard solids. Combine watermelon juice and sugar in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Cook just until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and cool completely. Combine sweetened watermelon juice, rose water, and lime juice in a medium bowl and refrigerate until cold. Pour chilled mixture into ice-pop molds. Freeze until solid, about 8 hours.

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About Brette Sember

Brette writes often about travel, food, and home arts and is the author of more than 40 books about food, law, health, family issues, business, finance and textbooks. She blogs at Putting It All on the Table and her personal web site is Brette Sember. [View all posts by Brette Sember →](#)

4 thoughts on “Feasting in Florida–The Cook Book of Locally Grown”

June 11, 2013 at 4:17 pm



Jane+Boursaw

Watermelon ice pops – yum. My grandparents lived in Orlando, so we traveled there quite a few times when I was a kid. I just remember being astounded to see oranges on trees (they might have felt the same way about seeing cherries on trees). And I have a lovely memory of my grandfather teaching me how to “score” an orange.



wanderingeducators

June 7, 2013 at 12:36 pm

YUM! i totally need this cookbook – i love reading of locally sourced food, and yummy recipes. thanks for the inspiring review!



Vera Marie
Badertscher

June 7, 2013 at 4:09 pm

I would love to go to some of those farmer's markets in Florida and pick up some of the exotic fruits. Although I know there are ranches in Florida, I never really thought about all the variety of foods raised there. Thanks, Brette.



Melanie

June 7, 2013 at 12:16 pm

Sounds like a lot of unique, fresh recipes. Yum.

Comments are closed.