



Local Harvest

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Waterloo Region



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Local Food Profile: Charbries – Four Seasons of Dining

It's been said that the success of a restaurant depends on the quality of ingredients it uses. Increasingly, chefs are featuring local foods on their menus and buying from local farmers because of the freshness of the foods and the availability of unique, specialty items. At the same time, consumers are becoming more interested in where their food is coming from and demanding local products when they eat out. Here in our community there is yet another great opportunity for those seeking out local fare.

Charbries – Four Seasons of Dining, located at 15 King St. North in Uptown Waterloo, is now featuring local foods in their restaurant and are earning a reputation as a trailblazer among dining establishments. *Charbries* has partnered with Foodlink Waterloo Region to launch its *Taste Local! Taste Fresh!* menu. With the introduction of a new, very distinctive seasonal menu every three months, the restaurant showcases a bounty of fresh, local ingredients sourced from a range of farms and food producers in the area. A special *Taste Local! Taste Fresh!* logo identifies which menu items feature local foods from Foodlink's *Buy Local! Buy Fresh!* map.

Charbries is a 60-seat boutique-style restaurant that offers a hands-on personal approach, says owner Charmaine La Brie. Since the restaurant opened in 2000 they have continued to change their menus to reflect the seasons and their patrons have come not only to expect it, but to look forward to it. Now they have taken the next step and begun to source ingredients from the area, marrying locality and seasonality. "Our local food menus have become our signature and have set us apart from other eating establishments," says La Brie.



Chef Lance Edwards and Charmaine La Brie of Charbries are the first to launch a Taste Local! Taste Fresh! menu.

Chef Lance Edwards works his culinary magic in creating truly, unique dishes that capture the flavours of each season. "One of the best parts of my job is going out to purchase products from the many fine farms in the region," says Edwards. *Charbries'* roster of local farm suppliers all have ties to the *Buy Local! Buy Fresh!* map. They include Oakridge Acres (Black Angus beef), Howling Pork, Big Dipper Whitetails (venison), Snyder's Heritage Farm (turkeys), Stevanus Family Farm (produce), Martin's Family Fruit Farm (apples) and Monforte Dairy (cheeses). *Charbries* also grows its own herbs and edible flowers on the premises.

The Gerber family raises Black Angus beef on their farm, Oakridge Acres, outside of Ayr. In

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Local Food Profile continued

addition, they operate the *Well Fed Food Meat Store* located on the farm which features their beef as well as chicken, pork, lamb, fish, venison, wild boar and more from other local farms. As a primary supplier of *Charbries*, Cindy Gerber says that their business has continued to grow rapidly as more and more restaurants and consumers seek local out local foods. “By supporting and promoting one another we all benefit,” she says.

While a ‘local foods menu’ delivers a multitude of rewards to all links in the food chain, it also presents certain challenges and requires an unconventional approach. Typically, a restaurant first establishes a menu and then sources the ingredients, explains La Brie. “But we pretty much do the opposite, first assessing what is available at any given time of year and then building our menu around it.” She likens it to a black box competition where the challenge is to creatively use the ingredients on hand. “It’s easy to impress with exotic food items such as quail eggs or fancy cuts of meat but turning a simple carrot or parsnip into something spectacular demands much more,” says La Brie.

Eating locally may be easier at certain times of year but it is certainly possible to “extend” the season through freezing and preserving. For example, Edwards makes eggplant jam, freezes raspberries, dries chilli peppers, smokes meats and veggies and even makes his own pasta from fresh local beets. They also try to use the whole food as much as possible. Squash may be acquired in the fall but its seeds are roasted, ground and made into flour that, in turn, is used to make crackers. Similarly, full pork backs are purchased and used for several different cuts, and then all the wonderful bones are used for soups and sauces.

“We have changed the way our profession works and have created

a working model for how more restaurants and farmers can work together in the future. It has been an incredible challenge, but rewarding at the same time,” says Edwards. Some of the tantalizing items featured on *Charbries’* new winter menu include a *French Onion Tartetatin*, *Beet Linguini* with local smoked bacon and *Pears St. Denis* (wine poached, flambéed tableside).

Through its innovative seasonal menu offerings, *Charbries* has demonstrated that restaurants can also be local food champions. They have set a fine example of the many benefits that result when bonds are formed between farmers and chefs.

The best part is that eating local year round has never been easier or more fun. Come celebrate the bounty of our region and experience how delicious our local foods can be. Visit www.charbries.com for more information.

Roasted Pommery and Maple Glazed Pork Chops with Apple Marmalade

Chef Lance Edwards of *Charbries* shares a favourite recipe featuring local products from the *Buy Local! Buy Fresh!* map.

What you will need:

4 <i>Howling Farm</i> pork chops	2 tsp fresh thyme
2 tbsp olive oil	1/3 cup salted butter
2 cloves garlic	1 cup Martin’s apple cider
¼ cup dry sherry	2 Fuji apples
¼ cup pommery (grainy) mustard	2 Mutsu apples
1/2 cup maple syrup	2 Empire apples
	2 tsp honey

Pommery Maple Glaze:

Gently smash the garlic. Heat up olive oil in small sauce pan and sauté the garlic until lightly browned. Remove from heat and pour in the sherry. Return to stove top and add, maple syrup, pommery mustard and fresh thyme. Turn to med-low heat and reduce until slightly thickened. Season with salt and pepper.

Martin’s Apple Farm Marmalade:

Wash and core apples leaving skin on. Roughly chop apples and puree in a food processor. Heat up a frying pan over medium heat. When pan is warm add butter, apple puree and caramelize until golden brown. Add cider and honey. Reduce until thick stirring often to avoid burning. Cook until there is little moisture left. Cool.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly brush each pork chop with oil, season with salt and pepper and place on a non-stick baking sheet, preferably on top of a piece of parchment paper. Brush top of pork chops with pommery maple glaze and put in oven. After 10 minutes remove chops and baste the other side, continuing to do so every 5 minutes until all the glaze is used up. When the chops reach an internal temperature of 144-150 degrees it is done.

Serve with the Martin’s Apple Farm marmalade. Roasted potatoes and squash make excellent side dishes.



Finding Local Pork in Waterloo Region

If you’re looking for pork why not consult Foodlink’s *Buy Local! Buy Fresh!* Map. The 2007 edition features a number of farms close by that raise and sell it.



Faul Farms
1180 Wrigley Road, Ayr
Tel: 519-632-7678



David E.M. Martin
4635 Ament Line
Hawkesville



Oakridge Acres/
Well Fed Meat Store
2132 Greenfield Rd. Ayr
Tel: 519-632-7653



Bambrook Farm
2332 Bertlette’s Rd.
St. Agatha
Tel: 519-699-6205



Gerber Meats
2513 Greenwood Hill
Rd, Crosshill
Tel: 519-699-4441



Charles Quality Meats
1448 Wilby Road
St. Agatha
Tel: 519-886-7931



The Whole Hog

When you start to think about it, the English language is peppered with references to pigs. Your room looks like a pig pen. Don't eat like a pig. He was happier than a pig in mud. On a really hot day, in the midst of strenuous exercise, you may even have heard someone say that you sweat like a pig. Chances are you don't, especially if your shirt is soaking wet. You see, pigs don't have sweat glands and are therefore unable to sweat like humans. Instead, they wallow in mud, which draws out heat through their skin, and helps to regulate body temperature. Mud also helps protect them from sunburn and bug bites. Their mucky appearance gives pigs an undeserved reputation for slovenliness. In fact, pigs are some of the cleanest animals around, refusing to excrete anywhere near their living or eating areas when given a choice. When it comes to eating like a pig, well, pig ancestors had to forage constantly for the same nuts, grains, fruits, and vegetables that many other forest dwellers sought. Why don't we say "You eat like a squirrel!"? In the wild, pigs are naturally lean and would neither be considered lazy nor overweight. The truth is that pigs are highly intelligent and easy to train. They find mud just as soothing on the nerves and skin as elephants, rhinos and even humans at a pricey urban spa. And, all that exercise that went into finding food kept them at a perfect pig weight and in good health. Humans are to blame for creating massive modern pigs. Many of our pig references are simply "hog-wash" (meaning the kitchen waste given to pigs as food) or "absolute rubbish"!

The saying "living high on the hog" (or "living better than most people") started early on among enlisted men in the U.S. Army, who received shoulder and leg cuts of pork while officers received the top loin cuts. The naming of Wall Street even has a connection to pigs. Originally, this street bordered a long wall on the northern edge of Lower Manhattan meant to keep out free-roaming hogs that rampaged through the valuable grain fields of colonial New York City farmers.

The Origin of Pigs

Those Manhattan pigs were certainly not native to the island, nor even to North America. Archaeological evidence suggests the pig was first domesticated from a wild boar ancestor around 9,000 years ago in Eastern Turkey. Prior to this, wild boar were important prey animals for early hunter-gatherers across Eurasia. As pigs are difficult to herd, the domestication of pigs could only have become successful in an already established farming community, rather than by a nomadic people. There has always been a question among archaeologists about how agricultural practices spread to Europe from the Middle East – through the diffusion of ideas and cultural practices, or by direct migration of people? DNA analysis of domesticated pigs is helping to shed light on this issue. We know that agriculture began about 12,000 years ago in the Middle East, spreading rapidly across Europe between 6,800 - 4000BC. The discovery and analysis of ancient Middle Eastern pig remains across Europe reveals that although cultural exchange did happen, Europe was definitely colonised by Middle Eastern farmers who



brought domesticated pigs as part of their farming package. These early farmers also tamed European wild boars, and analysis of bone remnants show that these European domestics eventually replaced the original Middle Eastern ones among European farmers. In fact, the European domestic pigs were so successful that over the next several thousand years they spread across the continent and even back into the Middle East where they overtook the indigenous domestic pigs.

Wild boars are fierce, intelligent animals so how did they become the placid, domesticated creatures we see on farms today? It is quite likely that the first steps in pig domestication were initiated by the boars themselves. As noted, boars need to constantly forage for



David E.M. Martin

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food, and human garbage probably provided some good eats. Juvenile boars that were typically less cautious and aggressive than adults would get more food and become more comfortable around humans. People would find it easier to tame these animals and, over time, other juvenile traits like shorter snouts, smaller tusks and squealing were bred into the pig.

Hernando de Soto, the Spanish explorer, has been dubbed the father of the American pork industry. In 1539, he landed near Tampa Bay, Florida with 13 pigs. Native Americans reportedly became very fond of the taste of pork, resulting in some of the worst attacks on the de Soto expedition. Many ancestors of these original pigs ran away and became the wild razorbacks found in some American forests. It was common practice on exploratory expeditions to transport domesticated pigs in the ships' stores, and liberate them in new lands so that they could reproduce and provide food for future travellers in the area. By the end of the seventeenth century, a typical New England farmer owned a handful of pigs that supplied salt pork and bacon for his family, and barrelled pork for trade or sale. With the abundance of corn in the colonies, it became a popular practice to finish the pigs on this grain before slaughter.

Canadian Pigs

Pigs were first brought to what is now Canada in 1598 by the Marquis de La Roche-Mesgouez as part of his unsuccessful venture on Sable Island. Apart from wild game, pork was the most popular meat of early settlers as it could be preserved in heavy brine and was available as a meat source during the long winters. There's a good reason why traditional Quebecois food includes pork and beans, tortiere, and cretons. An 1815 account of Canadian history indicates that, by 1723, pork was even being exported back to France along with the familiar pelts and lumber.

Pigs come in a variety of breeds that provide differences in colour, size, and shape. While some farms specialize in one breed of pig, most pigs raised today combine the best traits from two or three different breeds. In Canada, four main breeds dominate the pork industry. The Canadian Yorkshire, the most popular breed at 44% is all white with erect ears. These pigs are known to grow quickly, have many piglets, and produce very lean, high quality pork. Landrace pigs originated in Scandinavia and now make up 33% of Canadian numbers. They are also white and muscular but with droopy ears and commonly crossed with other breeds. Hampshires are black and white pigs, known for fast growth, exceptional muscling, and really

DID YOU KNOW?

In livestock circles, a pig becomes a hog when it passes the weight threshold of 50 kilograms.

lean pork. Finally, Duroc pigs originating in the US are solid red with drooping ears.

Duroc are a heritage breed currently being promoted as gourmet pork. And the black Berkshire pig with its darker meat that has been likened to the Kobe of beef. Another "new" meat on the scene is wild boar, but not perhaps as wild as it once was. There has been a great deal of interbreeding between it and the domestic pig during its 200 years in North America, and the standard today is estimated to be 60-70% wild boar and 30-40% domestic pig.

Pork Nutrition

Although traditional pork dishes were awash in fat, today's pork is leaner than ever due to improvements in feeding and breeding. Besides being an excellent source of phosphorous, magnesium, zinc, thiamine (B1), riboflavin (B2), niacin (B3) and vitamin B6, 100g of cooked lean pork provides 190 calories, 30g protein, and 7.5g fat. The leanest cuts of pork are the tenderloin, boneless loin roast and loin chops, and boneless ham. Years ago, consumers were concerned about trichinosis in pork and would therefore overcook it. Today, as a result of changes in the pig's diets, trichinosis has become obsolete in Canadian pork, allowing it to be safely cooked to a medium 160°F (70°C) for a juicy and tender product. Indeed, if it is overcooked, the less fatty meat tends to dry out and be tough. The exception is ground pork and sausage, which like all ground meats, should be cooked thoroughly. And Canadians do love their pork products. According to Statistics Canada, the average Canadian consumed approximately 9.7kg of pork in 2006.

A Few Stats

Pigs are big business in Canadian agriculture. In the 3rd quarter of 2007, there were 14,400,000 pigs on farms across the country. Nearly 4 million of these were found on Ontario farms. According to the 2006 Agricultural Census, Waterloo Region was home to 142,531 pigs. Hog prices continue to be soft as they have been since 2005, in part because of a stronger Canadian dollar. Farmers exported hogs, principally to the United States, at a record pace, an estimated 7.2 million hogs, during the first nine months of 2007.



Yorkshire

The Canadian Yorkshire, the most popular breed of pig in Canada, are known to grow quickly, have many piglets, and produce very lean, high quality pork.



Landrace

Landrace are large, muscular white pigs, recognizable by their droopy ears. It is known for its strong maternal abilities and adapting to different climates.



Duroc

The Canadian Duroc is a solid red pig, known for fast growth, stamina and high quality meat products.



Hampshire

Hampshires are black and white pigs, known for fast growth, muscling, and really lean pork.