

Warm *up to* winter

Story by **Tracy Sellers** • Photos by **Sarah Lee**

While the nip of winter may be cooling you down, it's the perfect time to heat up your creativity in the kitchen—thanks to the annual enticement of winter vegetables.

Adding winter vegetables to your diet can be good for both your wallet and your well-being, as fresh, in-season produce is usually less expensive and definitely more nutritious.

And if it's fresh and in-season, you can bet it will be on the menu at Paul Martin's American Bistro in suburban Sacramento. Owners Brian Bennett, Peter Serantoni and Paul Fleming, along with chef Josh Korn, spent more than a year handpicking the sources for Paul Martin's menu. The thorough search produced 40 partnerships with thoughtful, local farmstead producers, 80 percent of whom are located in Northern California.

From soups and entrées to hashes and even desserts, the possibilities are endless for enjoying some of winter's finest produce at the restaurant. And in your own kitchen, Korn offers many creative ideas for using winter vegetables. For instance, add to soups, stews and casseroles, toss with hot pasta dishes, stir into beans or black-eyed peas or place atop meat dishes right before the end of cooking.

"Winter actually has a lot of great produce to enjoy," Korn said. "You just have to know what to do with it."

Josh Korn, chef of Paul Martin's American Bistro in Roseville, says the foundation of all great food is fresh, local, peak-of-the-season ingredients.





SAUTÉED WILD CALIFORNIA PETRALE SOLE

Serves 1

4 to 7 oz. fresh petrale sole fillet per person

Salt, to taste

Oil, for sautéing

1/2 tbsp. minced shallots

1/4 cup white wine

4 to 6 pieces cold, unsalted butter

Fresh thyme leaves (or your favorite fresh herb)

Minced fresh chives

Meyer lemon wedges

Pat sole dry and lightly salt. Heat a sauté pan over medium-high heat, then add enough oil to cover the bottom of the pan. Once hot, add sole, flesh side down, carefully placing in the pan away from your body. Adjust heat as needed to brown sole gently on both sides. Remove from pan and transfer to a warm plate. Add shallots to pan and sauté quickly until soft. Deglaze with wine and cook off the alcohol. Add butter and carefully swirl to make a sauce. Add herbs and squeeze some Meyer lemon into the sauce, then spoon over sole. Serve immediately with your favorite sides, such as roasted winter vegetables. Recipe is easily doubled.

ROASTED WINTER VEGETABLES

Serves 2 to 3

1 cup large diced fennel bulb

1 cup large diced celery root

1 cup large diced rutabagas

1 cup large diced carrots

1 cup large diced onions

Good quality olive oil

Sea salt and ground black pepper, to taste

4 to 8 tbsp. honey (see note)

1/2 bunch fresh thyme, chopped

1/2 bunch fresh sage, chopped

1/4 bunch fresh mint, chopped

Toss vegetables with olive oil, salt, pepper and honey in a bowl to coat. Place in a heated baking dish and bake in a preheated 350-degree oven until caramelized and tender crisp, approximately 30 minutes. Before serving, add herbs and transfer to a serving dish.

Note: Vegetables may contain more natural sugars at certain times of the year, which should be taken into account when sweetening to taste.

ROASTED BEET SALAD

Serves 2

3 leaves butter lettuce

*1 1/2 tbsp. walnut oil vinaigrette
(recipe follows), divided use*

1/2 tsp. salt, divided use

*2 medium beets, roasted and
thickly sliced*

1/4 tsp. ground black pepper

1 oz. goat cheese

1 tbsp. candied walnuts

3 orange segments

1/2 tbsp. walnut oil

Place lettuce, 1 tbsp. of the walnut oil vinaigrette and 1/4 tsp. of the salt in a bowl. Mix to coat lettuce. Place lettuce on a round plate at the 12 o'clock position and mound beets atop, allowing them to shingle onto the plate. Season beets with remaining 1/4 tsp. salt and pepper. Crumble goat cheese and candied walnuts over beets and lettuce. Place orange segments at the 3 o'clock position, fanned out. Drizzle with remaining 1/2 tbsp. walnut oil vinaigrette, then walnut oil. Recipe is easily doubled.

Walnut oil vinaigrette:

In a small bowl, combine 1/4 cup champagne vinegar, 1 tbsp. minced shallots, 1 tbsp. honey, 2 tsp. Dijon mustard, 1 tsp. fresh orange juice and 1/2 tsp. roughly chopped fresh thyme leaves. Whisk to combine. Slowly drizzle 6 tbsp. olive oil and 1/4 cup walnut oil while whisking to emulsify. Add salt and ground black pepper to taste. Makes 3/4 cup. Refrigerate leftovers in an airtight container for 1 to 2 weeks.



BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

Serves 8 to 10

*3 to 5 butternut squash
(depending on size), cut in quarters with
seeds and stems removed*

Honey, for brushing on squash

5 large carrots, peeled and diced medium

1 large onion, peeled and diced medium

3 stalks celery, diced medium

5 tbsp. butter

Salt and white pepper, to taste

*Chicken stock, vegetable stock
or water, to cover all vegetables*

1/2 tbsp. chopped fresh thyme

Nutmeg, to taste

1 cup heavy cream

Additional chopped fresh herbs and croutons, for garnish

Brush cut squash with honey and place, cut side up, in a baking dish. Roast in a preheated 400-degree oven until sweet and tender, approximately 1 hour. Allow squash to cool; scoop out flesh and set aside. Sauté carrots, onions and celery in butter over medium heat until soft, adding a touch of salt and pepper. Add cooked squash to vegetable sauté, plus enough stock to cover all vegetables. Add thyme, nutmeg and, if you wish, more salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer, stir in cream (add more or less if you like) and cook for 5 minutes. Purée entire mixture with a mixer, hand blender or food processor to create a smooth purée. Adjust seasonings and bring to a simmer before serving. Top with fresh chopped herbs, along with croutons or additional garnish.

Note: Take caution when puréeing hot soups and/or sauces. Make sure to vent and allow the steam to escape to avoid a “steam blast.”

PEAR HUCKLEBERRY CRISP

Serves 8 to 10

Crisp topping

1/2 cup shelled walnuts

2 cups oatmeal

1 cup all-purpose flour

1/3 cup sugar

1/3 cup brown sugar

1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon

1 1/2 tsp. nutmeg

1 1/2 tsp. salt

1 lb. unsalted butter

Pear-huckleberry filling

4 to 6 ripe pears, peeled, cored and diced into large pieces

1/2 cup huckleberries (washed and cleaned; substitute frozen if fresh is not available)

2 to 4 tbsp. sugar

2 tbsp. bourbon

1/4 to 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

For topping:

Chop walnuts into 1/4-inch pieces and combine with dry ingredients. Cut butter into small pieces, add to bowl and hand mix until mixture resembles a coarse meal with pea-size lumps. Cover and refrigerate until cold.

For filling:

Combine all ingredients and allow to macerate for 10 minutes. For baking, a large dish or smaller individual dishes may be used. Fill baking dish 8/10 full and cover



with enough topping to create a thick top crust. Bake in a preheated 350-degree oven for 20 to 25 minutes or until the topping is a nice golden brown. Serve with vanilla ice cream, whipped cream or a topping of your choice.

