

Your guide to a Local Foods Summer Cookout

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www.minnesotagrown.com

If we know anything about Minnesotans, it's that they *know* how to enjoy the summer! From weekends at the cabin to days at the lake, from cookouts with friends to potlucks with family, Minnesotans are doin' it right! So what's better than Minnesotans celebrating all there is to love about Minnesotan summers? Minnesotans celebrating Minnesotan summers with Minnesota Grown food grown and raised by Minnesotan farmers. We thought we'd put together a little local food cookout guide on incorporating local foods into your summer fun. We compiled recipes and tips on incorporating fresh foods from your farmers markets, local farmer, or CSA box from the world wide web and our knowledgeable Minnesota Grown members.



Ah, Minnesotan summer.

We know if you're reading our Pick of the Month Newsletter you're probably already a local food fan, aficionado, and connoisseur of locally grown and raised products. We applaud you. And we know you have some awesome local food recipes of your own! We understand some family secret recipes are too good to share, if you'd like to share with us ([email your recipe to Tessa.Ganser@state.mn.us](mailto:Tessa.Ganser@state.mn.us)), we will mail you a free Minnesota Cooks calendar! As always, thanks for reading and enjoy!

Local Meats

It's easy to incorporate locally raised meats into your summer cookout! Do you and your family love a good burger on the grill? Have you given [bison](#) burgers a try? Now's the time! [Elk](#) burgers present another delicious



Photo Credit: www.kaboompics.com

option. Our bison farmer-members recommended using a meat thermometer when preparing bison as on average it takes a third less time to cook this meat compared to beef. Our elk members agree- shorter cooking times are the key to success!

You can also find locally raised [beef](#) by reaching out to farmers near you. The [Minnesota Grown Directory](#) includes beef farmers who raise grass-fed cattle, grain-fed and a combination! Minnesota Grown can help you connect with a local farmer raising beef that aligns with your interests and values. If you're purchasing grass-fed beef and haven't prepared it in the past, our members advise to cook the meat slow and low. They suggests letting the beef naturally defrost in the refrigerator for a few days before cooking. Then, cook the beef at a low temperature for a longer amount of time. Letting the meat rest off of the grill before consuming can also aid in a tender, perfectly cooked meal. When making those perfect burgers, don't forget [local cheese](#) for cheeseburgers!

[Locally raised chicken](#) is another fresh option when incorporated into your potluck or backyard barbeque! For a picnic, try local [chicken or turkey salad sandwiches](#).

Or, try [locally raised pork](#) for your next barbeque or rack of ribs! Kebabs are another fun summer grilling idea and can utilize many different local foods all on one stick (time to practice for State Fair season). If you haven't checked out our ["Ultimate Grilling Guide" from June](#), it's a must read!

Veggies on the Grill

If you have vegetarians attending your meal, don't worry! Vegetables love to be grilled too! Grilled [mushrooms](#) are a common alternative to meats on the grill. Put those yummy CSA share veggies to good use. Find local, seasonal produce direct from the farm, at [farmers markets](#), in your CSA box, or in your grocery store or food co-op.

Zucchini and summer squash are delightful when lightly brushed with olive oil and seasonings and placed on the grill. Red, green, and yellow peppers, onions, sweet corn, and green beans can join the fun too! If asparagus is still in season near you, add this tasty local veggie as well! Another unexpected favorite is grilled garlic scapes. Our member [Sogn Valley Gardens](#) says,



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"Garlicscapes are the 'flower stalks' of hardneck garlic plants... and are removed to develop a larger bulb at harvest." -plus they're delicious! These tender green stalks taste faintly of garlic and can be grilled! Brush them with olive oil, seasoning, and grill them like asparagus this summer.

Another fun idea we came across is grilled pizzas! Delicious and fresh personal pizzas can be made and grilled with homemade tomato sauce, fresh basil, and local mozzarella cheese – all toasted to perfection via your backyard grill.

Salads

Have you ever heard the classic Bring-A-Salad-or-Something response after asking what you can contribute to a cookout or potluck? Never fear! Salads at your cookout can be anything but boring! With so many fresh, delicious options to mix and match, your guests and friends will be surprised by these exciting combinations!

The [Strawberry and Spinach Salad with Herbs and Goat Cheese](#) is a tried and true favorite summer salad that even incorporates sweet seasonal strawberries! Click to find local [strawberries](#), [spinach](#), and [goat cheese](#).

Strawberry and Spinach Salad with Herbs and Goat Cheese

Recipe from [Fine Cooking](#)

- 3 cups baby spinach
- 1 cup packed small mixed fresh herb leaves such as basil, mint, and parsley
- 2 Tbs. packed tarragon leaves
- 1 cup quartered strawberries
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 3 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- 3 oz. fresh goat cheese

In a large salad bowl, combine the spinach, mixed herbs, and tarragon leaves. Gently toss with the strawberries and a few pinches of salt and pepper.

In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, 1/4 tsp. salt, and 1/4 tsp. pepper. Toss the salad with enough vinaigrette to coat and crumble the goat cheese on top.



Cilantro Vinaigrette

Recipe from the My Minnesota Farmer Newsletter:
Member Submitted Recipe. Thanks Gwen!

- ½ c cilantro leaves & upper stems, roughly chopped
- ¼ c oil – olive
- ¼ c vegetable oil – canola, grapeseed, your favorite
- 1 garlic clove, peeled
- 1 tsp granulated sugar
- ½ tsp kosher salt, or to taste
- Pepper to taste

Puree until smooth in blender. This will store for a week or more in the refrigerator. You will need to shake or whisk to re-emulsify.

June and early July are the prime time for greens like lettuces, arugula, spinach, kale, And more. Looking for a new dressing to spice up your fresh greens? One of our members, [My Minnesota Farmer](#), included a member-submitted recipe with their most recent newsletter for a delicious cilantro vinaigrette. Check it out on the recipe card to the left!

Coleslaw is always a crowd pleaser during cookouts and potlucks! Check out this new take on coleslaw pictured below from [SheKnows.com](#).

Do you have a favorite seven layer salad recipe? Challenge yourself to find seven local layers in your next masterpiece!

Many [Minnesota Grown vegetable farms grow potato](#) varieties that have blue and red skin and flesh! Make your next family potato salad recipe using these local new potatoes and surprise your guests with a red, white, and blue potato salad for the fourth.



Photo and recipe from [SheKnows.com](#)

Our member, [Untiedt's Vegetable Farm](#) includes many recipes on their website using their fresh local foods. We found their family pickle recipe- a must have for a picnic or cookout! [Check it out here.](#)



Drinks

Growing mint in your windowsill or backyard garden? Have you found this fragrant herb in your CSA box or at the farmers market? Make your own homemade sweet mint tea with [this easy recipe from Food Network](#). We thought this [homemade Basil Strawberry Lemonade](#) from Relish.com looked refreshing as well!

Photo and recipe from: <http://relish.com/recipes/basil-strawberry-lemonade/>
Minnesota Grown- Pick of the Month

Locally made [wine](#) could grace your next cookout table. The Minnesota Grown Directory contains [over 56 wineries](#) and we'll leave the choice and creativity up to you. Fresh strawberry sangria for appropriately aged guests perhaps? The possibilities are endless!



Dessert

With all the delicious Minnesotan fruits in season, crisps and baked goods are fresher than ever! [Strawberries](#), [blueberries](#), [raspberries](#), [cherries](#), [melons](#) and more are all stars of many family dessert recipes, and can be sweetened with local [honey](#) or [maple syrup](#). We thought we'd include a more unusual recipe in our cookout guide this month brought to you from Minnesota Grown member, [Solar Fresh Produce](#).

Moist Chocolate Beet Cake

8 ounces (240 g) beets, unpeeled, rinsed and scrubbed free of dirt
7 ounces (200 g) bittersweet or semisweet chocolate (70% cacao solids), chopped
1/4 cup (60 ml) hot espresso (or water)
7 ounces (200 g) butter, at room temperature, cubed
1 cup (135 g) flour
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder (the darkest you can find, natural or Dutch-process)
1 1/4 teaspoon baking powder
5 large eggs, separated, at room temperature
pinch of salt
1 cup (200 g) superfine sugar

Butter an 8- or 8 1/2 inch (20 cm) spring form pan and line the bottom with parchment paper. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Boil the beets in salted water with the lid askew until they're very tender when you stick a knife in them about 45 minutes. Drain then rinse the beets with cold water. When cool enough to handle, slip off the peels, cut the beets into chunks, and grind them in a food processor until you get a coarse, yet cohesive, puree. (If you don't have a food processor, use a cheese grater.) In a large bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water, melt the chocolate, stirring as little as possible. Once it's nearly all melted, turn off the heat (but leave the bowl over the warm water), pour in the hot espresso and stir it once. Then add the butter. Press the butter pieces into the chocolate and allow them to soften without stirring. Sift together the flour, cocoa powder, and baking powder in a separate bowl. Remove the bowl of chocolate from the heat and stir until the butter is melted. Let sit for a few minutes to cool, then stir the egg yolks together and briskly stir them into the melted chocolate mixture. Fold in the beets. In a stand mixer, or by hand, whip the egg whites until stiff. Gradually fold the sugar into the whipped egg whites with a spatula, then fold them into the melted chocolate mixture, being careful not to overmix. Fold in the flour and cocoa powder. Scrape the batter into the prepared cake pan and reduce the heat of the oven to 325°F (160°C), and bake the cake for 40 minutes, or until the sides are just set but the center is still just a bit wobbly. Do not overbake. Let cake cool completely, then remove it from the pan.

Place [locally grown flowers](#) in the center of your cookout table and you've done it! You have completed your cookout featuring locally grown and raised products. Now it's time to sit back, relax and enjoy your Minnesotan summer with family and friends. Happy eating!