

Food

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2005

Recipes

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F

Wine: Ben Giliberti does a shopping list makeover

MG



Ditch The Plates

These Cups, Bowls And Boxes Are Easy to Make And Good to the Last Bite

By LISA CHERKASKY
Special to The Washington Post

You approach the summer buffet, drink in hand, and pick up a plate. Suddenly you're helpless, without a free hand to serve yourself. On Zuraidah Hoffman's sun-drenched Arlington patio, the solution is simple: Finish off your drink and eat the glass.

Okay, it wasn't truly a glass. It was a chilled cucumber tumbler filled with Pimm's Cup. Refreshing on a stifling Washington summer day, it was perfectly disposable, no bottles to haul to the curb, no glasses to wash and dry.

Edible containers have been around for ages. Think hot dog bun, taco shell and that eat-the-whole-thing-then-lick-your-fingers container, the ice cream cone.

All of those products are ready-made. But Hoffman, a cook and caterer, and I wanted to think outside the box. What if we made the box itself?

We had two guidelines: All had to be simple to make with commonly found ingredients and equipment. And they had to be whimsical.

We took some prepared wraps, such as eggroll skins and crepes, and transformed them. We molded mashed potatoes and draped shredded cheese and almonds on upside-down custard cups to make crisps. We used icing to "cement" thin chocolate squares into a box.

We even put together a whole meal of edible containers. Who wouldn't get a kick out of eating a bowl of berries and then taking a big bite out of the bowl?

Lisa Cherkasky is a cook, writer and food stylist who lives in Arlington. She last wrote for Food about decorating cupcakes.



■ A **Watermelon Box**, above, is a summer delight when filled with fruit, sorbet or smoothie.

■ Spooned into **Toast Boxes**, rear at left, egg, tuna, crab or shrimp salad never had it so good.

■ Asparagus and just anything else works in **Cheesy Mashed Potato Bowls**, front at left.

■ A **Wonton Wrapper Cup**, left, could hold shrimp, stir-fried vegetables or edamame.

■ A **Parmesan and Almond Crisp**, above, provides a crunchy basket for lightly dressed greens.

■ Fill a **Cucumber Cup**, top, with sake, Pimm's Cup or chilled juice; after drinking, munch the cup.

Recipes and instructions appear on Page 6

PHOTOS BY RENEE COMET / STYLED BY LISA CHERKASKY FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

INSIDE



BY JULIA EWAN — THE WASHINGTON POST

On the Fridge: Asian influence on the table **Page 3**



BY LUCIAN PERKINS — THE WASHINGTON POST

Mark Toigo, selling peaches at Dupont Circle, says he wouldn't still be farming if it weren't for the farmers markets.

Buy Fruit, Save a Farm

Increasingly, Farmers Markets Keep Growers Going

By JUDITH WEINRAUB
Washington Post Staff Writer

In the early 1980s, Mark Toigo began making weekly trips from his family's farm to farmers markets with a pickup truck full of peaches, cherries, apricots and, as the summer faded, apples and pears. On a good day, he'd come home with \$1,000.

The produce he took to the farmers markets was "probably 1 percent of everything that came off the farm," he says. But it accounted for "as much or more money than all the rest of the crops put together."

A quarter-century later, as Toigo sends trucks full of fruit to the Arlington Farmers Market, elsewhere in Virginia and Baltimore, it's still true. "When we sell apples, I'm lucky to get eight to 10 cents a pound for premium fruit" from processors, he says. "But I'll make a dollar and a half a pound selling at farmers markets."

All over America, farmers markets are saving family

farms. "It's fairly clear there's no future for our family in traditional agriculture," says Toigo, a south-central Pennsylvania fruit and vegetable farmer. "If it weren't for farmers markets, there never would have been a chance for me and thousands of other people like me to farm."

Like Toigo, a growing number of American farmers are staying in business by selling directly to consumers. In 2000, the last year for which figures are available, 19,000 farmers were selling their produce only at farmers markets, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service.

Why? Farmers make more money selling retail. They can set their own prices. They can sell a much higher percentage of their crop — including the bruised or less than perfectly shaped peaches and tomatoes and potatoes that supermarkets reject. They can have more control over their finances.

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BY DONNA MCCULLOUGH FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

What's Green And Flies 120 Feet?

By CANDY SAGON
Washington Post Staff Writer

In August, there are some things you can always count on: complaints about the heat, gripes about the humidity and kvetching about zucchini.

It's a rite of summer. The heat and the zucchini crop hit their peak this month, and cooks and gardeners often view both occurrences with something approaching dread.

"Going zucchini crazy" is how blogger Ed Hawco, on his Bork site, described an overabundance of zucchini and the marathon eating binge that followed. The Gardener's Network Web site listed its "top 10 signs you have too much zucchini," including "spraying your zucchini plants with sugar water so the insects will eat them."

And then there are, of course, all the urban myths (or should it be rural myths?) about anonymous bags of zucchini left on neighbors' doorsteps, in unlocked cars or

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FOOD 101

Robert L. Wolke

Coming Unglued

I have often wondered about the safety of the glue used to attach those little labels on fruit. It annoys me because some fruit (e.g., plums) can be damaged by peeling off the label. While I wash the fruit after I peel the labels, how safe is the stuff they use to hold the labels on?

Jeff Cooper, whom you will instantly recognize as "the father of modern combat pistol shooting," (www.dvc.org.uk/johnny/jeff/aboutjff.html) has written, "Safety is something that happens between



BY LAURA STANTON

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