FALL IS THE TIME FOR FORAGING!

By Arlin Reid

The beautiful, unmistakable Chanterelle mushrooms start popping in September. This years start looks to be a superb, bountiful season. The mushroom is an underground tree with the mushroom itself as the fruit. When you find one, stop and search the immediate area because you just found that underground tree!  Also, check the same spot weekly to ensure you’re getting the freshest mushrooms. My recipe for Chanterelles is:

Slice 1/8” then cut 1” to 1 1/2” sections (for bigger shrooms).

Cook on medium low with just enough oil to cover the bottom of the pan.

When the moisture is released from the shrooms and fills up the bottom of the pan, add the spices. I make it simple by adding salt, pepper and garlic powder.

Cook out the moisture until crisp. Add a splash or two of white wine, cook that out and add a little butter until melted.

The California Bay nut is by far one of the special gifts Mother Nature gives to us here. Not only does the California Bay have leaves which are delicious in spaghetti sauce, they also have a nut about the size of a pistachio that has a combination flavor of coffee and chocolate. Also called the Buzz nut because of its similar traits to caffeine. Slow roasted in its shell at 150 degrees for 6 hours produces a nut that compliments any squash! The high roasted nut out of the shell gives you that coffee and chocolate flavor that works perfect with yogurt for a big start me up in the morning. Dogs love them high roasted. I’ve seen a dog prefer the Bay nut over a bone biscuit.

November means Mussel season is back! The ocean provides us with so many beautiful, wonderful, tasty things, but mussels are the easiest and tastiest bounty that make me feel like a king! For me, the medium size is what I’m looking for. After cooking, it shrinks to be a perfect bite size. Choose a low tide when harvesting. The calmer the ocean and the length of calmness does have an effect on taste. I prefer the taste during larger surf. Always be aware of the ocean. Rouge waves are real and the places you’re harvesting have no emergency exit. Now on to the preparation and cooking. Mussels are connected to each other outside their shells by fibers called byssal threads, also known as their beards. We try to pull the beards out when harvesting or before cooking. If you are unable to de-beard during harvesting, save them for late. I really like to BBQ so here’s my recipe:

Start the charcoal. I’m going to give you my finishing sauce in order of ingredients to your taste and amount of mussels.

Mayo

Finely chopped tomatoes

Chopped cilantro

Horseradish

Lemon juice

Sriracha chili sauce

Then purée!

Place the mussels on the grill like a boat. As soon as the “boat” opens, discard the one side that isn’t attached to the meat. This is also the time to de-beard all the mussels that didn’t get done previously.

Add enough purée to cover mussels without overflowing the boat. Cook until it’s too hot to eat off the BBQ. If you’re doing a bunch, I prefer to cook on the BBQ until time to add the purée, then place all the mussels on a tray and finish in the oven on broil until the sauce starts to bubble.