

FOOD



<< MEATBALLS

Nothing says the beginning of warmer days like a dish made with lamb. C2

FRIED CHICKEN

This oven-baked version of a family favorite will please mindful eaters. C6

INSIDE



EAT WITH THE SEASONS

Embrace spring with these peak fruits, vegetables



ARTICHOKES

Depending on where you live, the mighty artichoke might flash into season for a brief moment in spring. The intimidating thistle is one of the great vegetables, its edible parts including the inner stem, heart and yellow tips at the leaf bottoms. True, artichokes take some work to prepare. But with experience, the ritual of trimming them can become fun.

BY CHRIS MALLOY
REALSIMPLE.COM

Spring has returned, meaning you don't have to eat another root vegetable for months if you don't want to. If you eat with the seasons (and hey, even if you don't), few events on the food calendar beat when those first asparagus spears appear at the market. They signify that you have a wonderful stretch of fresh produce ahead of you; a months-long run

through a rainbow of fruits and vegetables is about to begin.

In reality, that run begins as more of a walk. Spring produce comes into season slowly—one here, one there, one delicate vegetable at a time. What's available when and where will vary, to some degree, by region. But here's what to look for, generally, now that the season has turned and spring's first crops are arriving.



STRAWBERRIES

A watershed moment in the progression of spring produce is the end-of-season arrival of tiny strawberries that actually recall berries, not the watery monsters from the supermarket. Though you can do a whole lot with strawberries, you probably already know that you don't have to do more than rinse and eat them right from the crate.



RADISHES

A dark horse among spring produce, radishes are great because they are affordable and come in many forms, flavors and colors. Farmers' market vendors might carry several varieties, with the peppery sizzle coming through in slightly different ways. Look for French breakfast, lime, black, watermelon and Easter egg radishes. Subjected to heat, the peppery notes mellow (and the leaves can also be cooked). Slivered and used raw, a pound of radishes can go a long way.

ASPARAGUS ♪

The arrival of asparagus marks the coming of spring produce in full force. Buy thin spears if you can; they're more tender and won't require peeling. Store your bundles upright in a jar of water. Asparagus has serious versatility, thriving in both star and supporting roles. Its delicate season typically lasts into June.



MUSHROOMS (ESPECIALLY WILD MORELS)

Though excellent mushrooms can sprout in climate-controlled indoor grow houses year-round, some truly fantastic wild mushrooms start to pop in spring. Morels, which have a dark, earthy nuttiness, are some of the very best. They have smooth pale stems and tall caps that look like elongated nectarine pits. But don't forage them yourself, as mushrooms are highly dangerous unless identified by a pro. Instead, rely on your local market farmer or forager.

RHUBARB ♪

In mid-to-late spring, rose-tinted stalks of rhubarb make their appearance. This comes as a delight to the subset of shoppers who want to make pies, galettes, bread puddings and other sweet baked preparations.



PEAS

In late spring, plain old green peas drop again, reminding the world of how much more delicate and all-around better they are than their frozen cousins. The pairing of peas and mint creates one of the great spring flavor teams.



PHOTOS FROM iSTOCKPHOTO

A croque monsieur is for any time of day

BY AMELIA RAMPE
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A croque monsieur is a delicious toasted sandwich made with humble ingredients commonly found in a French pantry. It's traditionally made with pain de mie (white sandwich bread), ham, cheese, and béchamel. The sandwich is layered with the ingredients then baked in the oven until the edges are crisp, the cheese is melty, and the top is golden-brown in spots. It's quick and easy to make

A croque madame is a variation of croque monsieur that has a fried or poached egg on top. It is said that the egg represents a woman's hat.

and a great dish for any time of day.

What does croque monsieur mean?

The word "croque" is **SEE MONSIEUR, C3**



JOE LINGEMAN / TNS

Toast up a classic French sandwich made with creamy béchamel, Gruyere cheese and ham until golden and melty.

New memoir from San Diego author serves up a feast for life

SAN DIEGO—One of the first times food spoke to her, Madhushree Ghosh was 7 years old and being tempted by a guava.

It was the last of the three guavas Ghosh's father had brought home to the family, and while she knew in her dutiful-daughter heart that she should probably wait to share it with the rest of the household, the guava had other ideas.

"To this day," Ghosh writes in her new memoir, "I swear the peyaara (guava) said, 'Eat me. Eat me now.'"

So she ate the guava, keeping a (slightly) guilty silence

COMMENT

Karla Peterson

when her sister, Didi, started looking for it. More than 40 years later, Ghosh is still engaged in a deep dialogue with food. But this time, she is not keeping the conversation to herself.

On April 4, the San Diego writer and oncology diagnostics strategist made her publishing debut with a memoir that uses food and food memories as a way to talk about so many other things.

SEE PETERSON, C3