

NOTABLE EDIBLES



ALASKAN WILD SALMON...VIA CHICO, CA

With the oceans off California and most of Oregon closed to commercial and recreational salmon fishing this year, *Edible Shasta-Butte* readers might like to know about Lance Alldrin and the Alaskan wild salmon he catches each summer and ships to his home in Chico, then sells to those who come calling.

There is good reason to eat Alaskan wild salmon, both for health reasons (omega-3s) and for the environment. More and more, people who eat fish have become aware of the dangers to fish populations in the world's oceans. Fortunately, we fish eaters can inform ourselves about what fish to eat both for our health and for sustainable fisheries. Up-to-date information is available through the Monterey Bay Aquarium website (www.montereybayaquarium.org/ct/seafoodwatch.asp) and through the Environmental Defense Fund website (www.edf.org/page.cfm?tagID=1521), including handy pocket guides to download, tuck in a wallet, and pull out at the fish counter before choosing fish to purchase. (We were at a restaurant last week, and the folks at the end of the table pulled theirs out before ordering off the menu!) Wild Alaskan salmon is on both Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch and on Environmental Defense Fund's Seafood Selector as "Best choice."

So what about Lance? For the last four years, Lance, a high school counselor in Corning, and his fifteen year old son Caleb fish during the summer in Kenai, Alaska, on Cook's Inlet. In order to fish the inlet as a licensed commercial salmon fisher, Lance has to phone the hotline at Alaska's Department of Fish and Game every evening during the July 10 to August 15 season. Fish and Game officials count the salmon going up the Kenai River each day, and the count determines whether or not licensed fishers can fish the following day. So closely do they monitor the counts that one year Lance had just six fishing days the entire season. Such oversight has earned the area where Lance fishes certification as sustainable to the rigorous standards of the Marine Stewardship Council (www.msc.org).

This year, Alaska Fish and Game is predicting an average

to above average fishing season. If the prediction is accurate (Fish and Game estimates on the basis of the number of salmon going up the Kenai River four years ago. Those fish's young fry return to the ocean the following year, and now, three years later, are expected to head up the river to their own spawning adventures.),

Lance expects to catch between 50,000 and 75,000 pounds of salmon, most of which he sells to a processor.

About a ton of fish, though, Lance bleeds out onboard his boat in an ice slurry at about 30 degrees F. Onshore, the fillets are flash-frozen, glazed with water to avoid freezer burn, and vacuum packed as fillets in individual portions or portions for two. It's just a few hours from catch to packaged. Lance has built a freezer locker in Chico, and he ships the fish frozen here. "If you wanted a fresher fish," Lance says, "you'd have to catch it yourself." If we find "fresh" Alaskan salmon in the market, the fish has probably been out of the water at least three days, Lance estimates. (And farmed salmon is not recommended; see the websites above). Depending on his yield, Lance expects to offer these fillets at \$8.50 per pound.

Both the Environmental Defense Fund website and the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (<http://www.alaskaseafood.org/recipes/index.cfm>) offer plenty of salmon recipes; the latter even includes directions for cooking frozen salmon and downloadable videos of simple cooking techniques by award-winning chef John Ash.

For the fish, contact Lance Alldrin towards the end of August. You can phone him at 893.4435 or email alldrin@sbcglobal.net. He's also inquired about bringing these frozen fillets to Chico's Farmers' Market, so look for him there.

WHERE LOCAL NUTS GATHER

Looking for locally grown California walnuts to mix with that summer basil for homemade pesto? Look no farther than John and Peggy Chambers' California Harvest Shop. Just south of Chico off Highway 99, the California Harvest Shop has not just walnuts but bottles, packages, gift boxes, tins, and baskets of all sorts of local food products.

John and Peggy are native Chicoans; their families reach back four generations in the community. John's family has farmed that long, first wheat and now almonds. Separating himself from the land, John worked for nineteen years as an almond buyer at Golden West Harvest. Peggy worked with her dad for thirteen years prior to his retirement from the family business (since the 1920s), Staple's Studio and Camera Shop.

Visible from their Entler location, on Speedway Avenue, is Jim Miller's Comanche Creek Farm. This summer the entrepreneurs John and Jim are partnering to make Comanche Creek Farm's popular certified organic vegetables available at the California Harvest Shop. Chances are that the heirloom tomato appetizer you enjoyed at your favorite Chico restaurant was built from Comanche Creek heirloom tomatoes. Jim grows forty-one varieties of heirloom tomatoes on his thirteen production acres, plus onions, eggplant, summer squash, beans, basil, and other herbs. All this organic splendor will be available from the Comanche Creek produce wagon at the site of California Harvest Shop.

Beyond pesto and organic summer veggies, think of the California Harvest Shop during the holiday season. The Chambers pack and ship hundreds of gift baskets for both corporate and individual gift-givers. John and Peggy will pack selections of their products—Lodestar olive oil and Cinquini walnut oil, nut butters, jams, rice, coffees, cooking sauces, dried fruits, and, of course, all varieties of nuts (seasoned and candied almonds, pistachios, cashews, and Skinner Pecans), whatever you choose as your edible gift.

*California Harvest Shop
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HEALTHY COOKIES!

That's right, no oxymoron. Shoppers at Saturday's Redding Farmers' Market on Cypress Avenue know about these light, crisp, delicious cookies, known as Skuuter's Cookies, "The Cookies That Move You." Like many food artisans, Lynn Hohmeister began baking in her home kitchen and sharing her cookies with family and friends, who urged making the cookies more widely available. Lynn's response? "I love

to see people eat and be happy." Now, after two years of development and with Friday access to the ovens at From the Hearth Bakery, she has perfected the cookies for sale.

Lynn uses certified organic staples: whole oats, oat flour, flax seeds she grinds herself, vanilla, and unsalted butter. Many of the signature additions of Skuuter's cookie varieties are organic as well: evaporated cane sugar

sweetened chocolate chips, white chocolate chips, semi-sweet chocolate chunks, peanut butter chips, coconut, dried fruits, and nuts. These varieties include Chocolate Cocoa Nibs, Harvest, Tropical, Classic Chocolate Chip, Double Ginger Snaps, Black Forest, and Junior Skuuters for kids.

We chose Chocolate Chip Classic and Double Ginger Snaps (ginger powder doubled up with candied ginger pieces in the dough). Perfectly baked to even-colored crispness, both were delicious, crunchy and full of chocolate and ginger, with a rich butter flavor. Because these cookies do indeed move you (it's the flax seeds—well, the cookies are full of fiber), two or three per day are perfectly satisfactory, an added benefit for anyone with a mind to break the uncomely habit of eating a whole dozen cookies at one sitting.

To enjoy the cookies, find Lynn at Saturday's Redding Farmers' Market on Cypress, or purchase them on Fridays at From the Hearth Bakery, 4305 Caterpillar Road in Redding. You can also custom order them freshly baked in 1-, 2-, or 3-dozen batches by calling 530.209.6209 or emailing skuuters@mac.com. Do it.