

Recipes & Kitchen Integration

Guide 17 · From Garden to Table

By Crop · Menus Through the Seasons · The Dragoons Kitchen

Version 2026.05 · Revised 2026-05-17

Contents

About this guide	8
What's here	8
What's not here	9
1 • The Dragoons kitchen — framework	10
1.1 The pantry that supports the harvest	10
1.2 Equipment that earns its place	11
1.3 How a recipe chapter is structured	12
2 • Peppers	13
2.1 Why peppers in the Dragoons kitchen	13
2.2 Staples and prep tricks	13
2.3 Green chile stew	14
2.4 Rocoto rellenos	15
2.5 Pepper paste — the year-round backbone	16
2.6 Red chile sauce from dried pods	17
2.7 Chiltepin salt — five minutes, six months of return	17
2.8 Spring shakshuka with roasted peppers	18
2.9 Pico de gallo at peak fresh	19
3 • Tomatoes	21
3.1 Why tomatoes in the Dragoons kitchen	21
3.2 Staples and prep tricks	21
3.3 Caprese with monsoon tomatoes	21
3.4 Gazpacho	22
3.5 Pan con tomate	23
3.6 Slow-roasted tomato pasta	24
3.7 Pappa al pomodoro	25
3.8 Cherry tomato and herb tart	25
4 • Cucurbits	27
4.1 Why cucurbits in the Dragoons kitchen	27
4.2 Staples and prep tricks	27
4.3 Zucchini fritters	27
4.4 Baked winter squash with chile and lime	28
4.5 Cucumber, tomato, and bread salad	29
4.6 Chilled cucumber soup	30
4.7 Melon and prickly-pear granita	31
4.8 Stuffed pattypan	31
5 • Beans	33
5.1 Why beans in the Dragoons kitchen	33
5.2 Staples and prep tricks	33
5.3 Tepary frijoles de la olla	33
5.4 Tepary refritos	34
5.5 Anasazi-bean Cochise chili	35

5.6 White-bean and roasted-garlic soup	36
5.7 Dilly beans (cross-reference)	37
5.8 Hopi Yellow Lima succotash	38
6 • Corn	39
6.1 Why corn in the Dragoons kitchen	39
6.2 Staples and prep tricks	39
6.3 Hopi Blue corn tortillas	39
6.4 Hopi Blue pancakes	40
6.5 Sweet corn with chiltepin butter	41
6.6 Posole	42
6.7 Cochise corn pudding	43
6.8 Painted Mountain polenta	43
7 • Sweet potatoes	45
7.1 Why sweet potatoes in the Dragoons kitchen	45
7.2 Staples and prep tricks	45
7.3 Roasted sweet potato wedges with chile salt	45
7.4 Sweet potato tacos	46
7.5 Sweet potato and black bean stew	47
7.6 Sweet potato pie	48
7.7 Sweet potato hash	48
8 • Brassicas	50
8.1 Why brassicas in the Dragoons kitchen	50
8.2 Staples and prep tricks	50
8.3 Charred broccoli with garlic and lemon	50
8.4 Cabbage and apple slaw	51
8.5 Kale and white-bean ribollita	52
8.6 Roasted cauliflower with tahini	53
8.7 Kohlrabi remoulade	54
8.8 Brussels sprouts with bacon	54
9 • Alliums	56
9.1 Why alliums in the Dragoons kitchen	56
9.2 Staples and prep tricks	56
9.3 Roasted whole garlic	56
9.4 French onion soup	57
9.5 Garlic confit	58
9.6 Allium and anchovy butter	59
9.7 Scallion pancakes	59
10 • Greens	61
10.1 Why greens in the Dragoons kitchen	61
10.2 Staples and prep tricks	61
10.3 Wilted greens with garlic	61
10.4 Spinach and feta hand pies	62
10.5 January cold-frame salad with prickly-pear vinaigrette	63

10.6 Mâche and goat cheese	64
10.7 Kale Caesar	65
11 • Roots	67
11.1 Why roots in the Dragoons kitchen	67
11.2 Staples and prep tricks	67
11.3 Roasted carrots and parsnips with cumin	67
11.4 Beet and goat cheese tartlets	68
11.5 Root vegetable gratin	69
11.6 Quick-pickled radishes (cross-reference)	70
11.7 Winter root soup	70
12 • Grapes	72
12.1 Why grapes in the Dragoons kitchen	72
12.2 Staples and prep tricks	72
12.3 Roasted grape and rosemary focaccia	72
12.4 Grape and farro salad	73
12.5 Stuffed grape leaves (dolma)	74
12.6 Grape-thyme jam (cross-reference)	75
13 • Herbs as the soul of every dish	76
13.1 Why herbs in the Dragoons kitchen	76
13.2 Staples and prep tricks	76
13.3 Basil pesto, with variations	76
13.4 Chimichurri	77
13.5 Dukkah	78
13.6 Herb butter	79
13.7 Herb-infused oil	79
13.8 Salsa verde	80
14 • Orchard fruits	82
14.1 Why orchard fruits in the Dragoons kitchen	82
14.2 Staples and prep tricks	82
14.3 Fresh fig and prosciutto	82
14.4 Fig and almond tart	83
14.5 Pomegranate and walnut salad	84
14.6 Jujube tea	84
14.7 Peach galette	85
14.8 Plum compote	86
15 • Native crops in the kitchen	87
15.1 Why native crops in the Dragoons kitchen	87
15.2 Staples and prep tricks	87
15.3 Mesquite-flour pancakes	88
15.4 Mesquite cookies	89
15.5 Agave-roasted root vegetables	89
15.6 Prickly-pear margarita	90
15.7 Prickly-pear syrup	91

15.8 Popped amaranth	92
15.9 Banana yucca paste (note rather than recipe)	92
16 • Menus through the seasons	93
16.1 January cold-frame greens supper	93
16.2 March transitional dinner	93
16.3 May peak-spring lunch	94
16.4 July monsoon dinner	94
16.5 September peak-fall feast	95
16.6 October squash-and-bean winter-prep dinner	95
16.7 November root-cellar Sunday	95
16.8 Thanksgiving with Cochise notes	96
16.9 Christmas Eve	96
16.10 New Year's with Anasazi for luck	97
17 • Sources, references, and closing	98
17.1 Sources and references	98
17.2 A note on what was left out	99
17.3 Closing	99



RELATED GUIDES

This guide is one of seventeen in the Dragoon Mountains Growing Guides Library:

- **Guide 1 — Hydroponic Primer & Library Map** · the front door + master multi-crop calendar
- **Guide 2 — Peppers in the Dragoons** · soil + hydroponic + variety staking
- **Guide 3 — Bato Bucket Hydroponic Systems** · system build, water treatment, operations
- **Guide 4 — Hydroponic Nutrients** · Masterblend + DIY + pH chemistry + Indoor/LED
- **Guide 5 — Grapes in the Dragoons** · Cochise County viticulture
- **Guide 6 — Cool-Season Crops** · brassicas + alliums + greens + roots
- **Guide 7 — Warm-Season Companions** · tomatoes, cucurbits, beans, corn, sweet potatoes
- **Guide 8 — Herbs in the Dragoons** · annual + perennial · soil & hydroponic
- **Guide 9 — Backyard Orchard in the Dragoons** · figs, pomegranates, jujubes, stone fruits
- **Guide 10 — Pest, Disease & Wildlife** · IPM + Cochise wildlife exclusion
- **Guide 11 — Foundations: Soil & Seed** · soil-building, composting, seed-starting, propagation
- **Guide 12 — Harvest, Preservation & Storage** · canning, fermenting, drying, cellaring · the canonical home for the 12-recipe preserves starter set this guide expands on
- **Guide 13 — Water in Cochise County** · sourcing, treatment, drip-irrigation design
- **Guide 14 — Season Extension Structures** · cold frames, low tunnels, hoop houses, high tunnels
- **Guide 15 — Native Food Crops of the Sonoran-Madrean Region** · the indigenous food complex
- **Guide 16 — Companion Plantings & Polycultures** · the design layer
- **Guide 17 — Recipes & Kitchen Integration** (this guide) · what to cook with everything in the library

This is the second pattern-level guide in the library (after Guide 16). It does not teach growing. It teaches what to do with what you grow. Where Guide 12 covers preservation (the long-storage problem — canning, fermenting, drying), this guide covers the daily-cooking problem — what to eat tonight from what came out of the garden this morning. The two guides are complements. Recipes that overlap with Guide 12's preserves are cross-referenced rather than repeated.

About this guide

What it is for · how it relates to the other sixteen guides · how the recipes are organized

A garden that does not lead back to the kitchen is a hobby. A garden that does lead back to the kitchen is — eventually, on the right scale, with the right cooks in the house — a way of life. This guide is the bridge from the first to the second.

The other sixteen guides in the library cover growing crops and preserving harvests. Two cooks could read every word of every guide and still come up short the first time they look at an August counter loaded with three pounds of jalapeño, six tomatoes the size of softballs, a cucumber gone three days too long, two cups of cilantro about to bolt, and a fistful of basil. The growing was the easy part. The cooking — daily, weekly, year-round, with the rhythm of the Dragoons' specific harvest calendar — is what this guide is for.

What this guide assumes. That you grew (or could grow) the crops in Guides 2 through 15. That you have a kitchen — gas or electric stove, a heavy skillet, a Dutch oven or stockpot, a chef's knife, a cutting board. No specialty equipment is required for most recipes. A dehydrator, a stand mixer, a comal or cast-iron griddle, and a mortar and pestle each unlock a chapter or two but are not required to start. That you eat across a fairly broad palette — there are heat, sweet, sour, bitter, and umami recipes through the guide. Vegetarian readers will find most of the guide accessible; the small number of meat-paired recipes flag the meat as substitutable or omissible.

What's here

Sixteen recipe chapters and one menu chapter. The recipe chapters parallel the library's growing-guide structure: peppers go with Guide 2, tomatoes with Guide 7 §3, brassicas with Guide 6, native crops with Guide 15, and so on. Each chapter has:

- A short opening on what makes that crop family particular in a Dragoons kitchen — the heat-tolerance of New Mexico chiles, the high-flavor density of monsoon tomatoes, the dry-cook properties of tepary beans
- Five to eight recipes per chapter, ranging from simple weeknight cooking to one or two project recipes worth a Saturday
- Each recipe with ingredients, method, timing, and a one-line "harvest connection" pointing back to the growing guide for the crop
- Cross-references to *Guide 12* for any preservation-bound preparation (a recipe that's also a canning recipe lives in Guide 12; this guide gives the fresh-eating version)

The final substantive chapter — *§16 · Menus through the seasons* — pulls recipes

from across the guide into ten worked seasonal meals: a January cold-frame greens supper, a March asparagus-and-egg lunch, a May spring-pepper-and-arugula plate, a July monsoon tomato dinner, a September peak-harvest feast, an October squash-and-bean winter-prep dinner, a November root-cellar Sunday roast, and three holiday meals (Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, New Year's). Each menu pairs three to five recipes from earlier chapters and notes the harvest dates each ingredient came from.

What's not here

- **Preservation recipes (canning, fermentation, long-drying).** Guide 12 is the canonical home. A recipe that ends in a jar lives there. Recipes here end on a plate.
- **Detailed pastry, bread, dessert.** Some baked goods appear where the crop demands them (mesquite-flour pancakes, fig tart, prickly-pear jelly bars) but this is not a baker's guide.
- **Wine-making, cheese-making, charcuterie.** These deserve their own treatments and the library does not currently cover them.
- **A complete Sonoran cookbook.** Carolyn Niethammer's *Cooking the Wild Southwest* and *American Indian Cooking* are the books for that. This guide pulls forward the recipes most useful for a Dragoons-grown harvest; it does not duplicate her work.

LOCAL TIP

On measurements and substitutions. Quantities here use US customary measures (cups, tablespoons, °F) — this is a domestic-kitchen guide, not a professional one. Most recipes serve four; a few serve two or eight where the scale matters. Substitutions are noted inline. Where a recipe calls for “Hopi Blue cornmeal” or “tepary beans,” generic substitutes (any blue cornmeal, any small dry bean) work — they will produce a recipe of slightly different character, not a worse one.

1 · The Dragoons kitchen — framework

How the harvest calendar shapes the cooking week · what the kitchen needs to actually do · staples to keep on hand

The Dragoons cook works in a four-season rhythm distinct from a temperate-climate kitchen. The big harvest is not a single September moment but two: a brassica-and-fig peak in October and November, and a tomato-and-pepper peak in August and September. Roots and squash carry through the winter. Salad greens run from October through May. Herbs — especially the perennial Mediterranean four — produce continuously through the year. The kitchen that follows this calendar is closer to a Mediterranean than a New England one, but with monsoon-season idiosyncrasies the Mediterranean has never had to deal with.

This chapter sets out the working assumptions for everything that follows: what staples to keep on hand, what equipment unlocks the most chapters, and how the per-crop recipe chapters are structured to work as both reference and reading.

1.1 The pantry that supports the harvest

A working Dragoons kitchen with the garden as its primary input keeps the following on hand year-round. Quantities are for a two-person household:

Category	Items	Yearly volume
Grain staples	Hopi Blue cornmeal (medium-grind); semolina or hard wheat flour; rice (basmati or short-grain); rolled oats	15-25 lb cornmeal; 10 lb flour; 10 lb rice
Dry legumes	Tepary (brown and white); Anasazi; Hopi Yellow Lima; chickpeas; lentils	5-10 lb total of native; 5 lb other
Oils	Extra-virgin olive oil (good); neutral oil for high heat (avocado or grapeseed); rendered animal fat if available	1 gal olive yearly; 1 qt neutral
Acids	Lemons or limes (bought); homemade prickly-pear vinegar (<i>Guide 12 §4</i>); white wine vinegar; apple cider vinegar	1 qt each

Category	Items	Yearly volume
Salt and pepper	Coarse kosher; finishing salt; black peppercorns; dried Chiltepin (whole, from your bush or NS/S)	2 lb kosher; 1 cup peppercorns; 1 cup Chiltepin
Aromatics from the garden	Dried oregano; dried sage; dried thyme; dried rosemary; dried New Mexico chiles or Chiltepin; smoked chipotle	1 cup each, ground or whole
Preserves from the year	Dilly beans; lacto-fermented hot sauce; mesquite flour (<i>Guide 15 §8</i>); pomegranate molasses; pepper paste	Quantities vary by harvest

The pantry does most of the work. A two-person household cooking 4–5 nights a week from the garden eats through perhaps 200 lb of stored harvest per year — corn, beans, squash, mesquite flour, alliums, dried chiles. Keeping the pantry stocked is the off-season job that makes weeknight dinner possible.

1.2 Equipment that earns its place

In rough order of how often it gets used:

- **Cast-iron skillet, 10 or 12 in.** The single most-used pan. Holds heat, sears chiles, browns peppers, makes tortillas, cooks eggs, becomes the gratin dish, the pizza pan, the cornbread mold.
- **Heavy stockpot or Dutch oven, 5–7 qt.** For bean cooking (long simmers), stew, large-batch sauce, blanching greens. Stainless is fine; enameled cast iron is better.
- **Sharp chef’s knife (8 in) + thin paring knife.** Sharpen weekly. The two knives that do 90% of the work.
- **Heavy mortar and pestle, granite or volcanic.** For making chile pastes, breaking dried herbs, smashing garlic, grinding dried Chiltepin. A small electric coffee grinder works for the last but not the first three.
- **Comal or cast-iron griddle, 12–14 in.** For tortillas, blistering tomatoes and chiles, dry-toasting nuts and seeds. A second cast-iron skillet substitutes.
- **Dehydrator** (4–8 tray). Pays for itself the first year on chile drying, herb drying, sun-dried-tomato style tomatoes, dried fig and pomegranate-aril garnishes. *Guide 12* makes the full case.
- **Stand mixer with paddle and dough hook.** For bread and the occasional pastry. Not essential; a wooden spoon and a board work.

- **Food mill or sieve.** For sauce-making — tomato sauce, pomegranate juice, prickly-pear juice, raspberry coulis. A box grater plus a fine sieve substitutes.
- **Cherry pitter, apple peeler, fig clipper.** Specialty tools that earn their place during stone-fruit, apple, and fig season specifically.

The list deliberately does not include a microwave, a food processor, or a stand blender. A simple kitchen with sharp tools and a hot stove will do everything in this guide. The food processor and blender shorten some steps; nothing here actually requires them.

1.3 How a recipe chapter is structured

Each crop chapter (§2 through §15) opens with two short subsections — *Why this crop in the Dragoons kitchen* and *Staples and prep tricks* — then five to eight recipes. Within each recipe:

- **Title** — descriptive, sometimes regional
- **Yields** — number of servings or quantity
- **Active time / total time** — what you actually stand at the stove vs total elapsed
- **Ingredients** — listed in order of use; garden-grown items in *italic* with the source guide noted parenthetically the first time
- **Method** — numbered steps, kept terse
- **Harvest connection** — one sentence on which week the crop will be available and which growing guide covers it
- **Variations** — optional, where the recipe scales meaningfully or where a substitute is worth knowing

Recipes that overlap with Guide 12 — anything ending in a jar or a long-cure — are cross-referenced rather than reproduced. This guide is the fresh-eating, daily-cooking companion.

2 · Peppers

The cornerstone crop of the Dragoons kitchen · heat as a calibration tool · drying and rehydrating · the seven recipes worth knowing

Peppers are the single most flexible crop in the Dragoons kitchen. Sweet peppers (bell, Anaheim, poblano young) play the same role onion and celery play in French cooking — the building blocks of almost every savory dish. Hot peppers (jalapeño, serrano, Chiltepin, habanero, Rocoto, ghost) function as a calibration tool: they don't dominate every dish, they tune the heat of every dish that includes them. The library's pepper guide (*Guide 2*) covers a dozen species across the *Capsicum* genus, and a well-stocked Dragoons kitchen uses at least four or five of them across a year.

This chapter assumes you have peppers in some form — fresh in late summer and early fall, frozen or dried through the rest of the year. The seven recipes below pick up at different points in that arc: green chile stew (early autumn fresh), Rocoto rellenos (late September Rocoto), pepper paste (October-November preserved start), red chile sauce (winter, from dried), Chiltepin salt (anytime, dried Chiltepin), shakshuka with roasted peppers (spring, from frozen roasted), and a fresh pico with jalapeño (summer, peak fresh).

2.1 Why peppers in the Dragoons kitchen

The kitchen advantage is twofold. First, the Dragoons climate produces peppers with markedly higher flavor density than peppers grown in cooler or wetter climates — a Mirasol or Pasilla Bajío grown here outperforms the same variety from coastal California on every flavor axis. Second, the dry climate makes drying peppers — for *ristras*, for ground chile, for paste — straightforward. A 30-pepper string hung in a covered porch in October will be brick-hard, deep-red, and storable by Thanksgiving.

The kitchen disadvantage, if there is one, is the same as the growing disadvantage: heat units (Scoville heat units, SHU) scale unpredictably with the season's stress. A jalapeño from a hot dry July is 8,000 SHU; the same variety from a cool wet July is 3,000 SHU. Taste before committing to a quantity. Substitute up the heat scale for a year that ran cool, down the scale for a year that ran hot.

2.2 Staples and prep tricks

- **Flame-roast every fresh chile destined for stew or paste.** Open flame (gas burner) or grill until the skin blisters and blackens in patches. Sweat 10 minutes in a covered bowl. The skin slips off; the flesh keeps its structure. This is the move that separates good chile cooking from average chile cooking.
- **Toast every dried chile before grinding or rehydrating.** Dry comal, 30 seconds per side until fragrant. Unlocks the volatile aromatics.
- **Keep Chiltepin whole, not ground.** Pea-sized berries last 3+ years whole;

ground Chiltepin loses heat in 6 months. Crush between thumb and forefinger as you cook.

- **Save the pepper seeds.** Roasted seeds toasted with cumin and salt are an excellent garnish or stuffing ingredient. Throw them out only if the variety has been crossed and you cannot use the saved seed for growing.

2.3 Green chile stew

A New Mexico-style cooked green-chile stew, sized for two with leftovers. The single most important pepper recipe in the Dragoons kitchen because it uses a lot of green chile and is what to cook with the September flush.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 30 min · **Total:** 90 min

Ingredients:

- 2 lb pork shoulder (or 4 cups cooked white beans), cut in 1-inch cubes — meat optional, beans work
- 1 lb fresh *green chile* (Anaheim, Pasilla, or a mix; *Guide 2 §5*), flame-roasted, peeled, seeded, chopped (about 2 cups)
- 1 large *yellow onion* (*Guide 6 §3*), diced
- 4 cloves *garlic* (*Guide 6 §3*), minced
- 2 large *tomatoes* (*Guide 7 §3*), chopped — or one 14-oz can if mid-winter
- 4 cups water or chicken stock
- 1 tsp dried *oregano* (*Guide 8 §6*)
- 1 tsp coarse salt
- 2 cups diced potato or 1 cup of cooked posole hominy (optional)
- Sour cream, fresh *cilantro* (*Guide 8 §4*), and tortilla strips for serving

Method:

1. Brown the pork (or skip if using beans) in a heavy Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Remove and reserve.
2. In the same pot, sweat the onion in the rendered fat (or a tablespoon of neutral oil) until translucent, 6–8 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 minute more.
3. Add chopped tomato and cook until it breaks down, 5–7 minutes.
4. Return the pork to the pot. Add green chile, oregano, salt, and water or stock. Bring to a boil; reduce to a simmer.
5. Cover and simmer 45 minutes (for beans, only 15–20 minutes after step 4 — the beans are already cooked).
6. Add potato or posole if using; simmer 25 more minutes until potato is fork-tender or until the stew has the body you want.
7. Taste and adjust salt. Serve in shallow bowls with sour cream, cilantro, and tortilla strips.

Harvest connection: Mid-September. The Anaheim and Pasilla peppers covered in *Guide 2 §5* are peaking; the onions from *Guide 6 §3* have been cured and stored since July; the tomatoes are in peak fall flush.

Variations:

- A pure vegetarian version uses 4 cups cooked tepary or Anasazi beans (*Guide 15 §3*) in place of the pork. The bean cooking liquid stands in for the stock and gives the stew more body.
- For a hotter stew, add 4–6 whole Chiltepin or one chopped serrano with the garlic.
- For a Hopi twist, replace the potato with 1 cup of toasted-and-cracked Hopi Blue corn (added with the chile).

2.4 Rocoto rellenos

Rocoto (*C. pubescens*) is the Andean fruit pepper covered in *Guide 2 §2*. It's the size of a small bell pepper, walnut-colored skin, fiery-fruity flesh — perfect for stuffing. The Peruvian preparation is the canonical use.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 45 min · **Total:** 75 min

Ingredients:

- 6 fresh *Rocoto peppers*, medium-large
- 1 lb ground beef or pork
- 1 medium *yellow onion*, diced
- 2 cloves *garlic*, minced
- 1/2 cup *raisins* or chopped dried *figs* (*Guide 9 §4.1*)
- 1/2 cup roasted peanuts, chopped
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- Salt and black pepper
- 1/2 cup grated cheese (oaxaca, jack, or a sharp white cheddar)

Method:

1. Bring a large pot of salted water with a splash of white vinegar to a boil. Halve the Rocoto peppers, scoop out the seeds and membranes (this removes about 60% of the heat).
2. Blanch the pepper halves in the vinegar water 2 minutes; drain and pat dry. Repeat with fresh water if you want milder — each blanch reduces heat further.
3. In a large skillet, brown the meat with the onion. Drain excess fat. Add garlic, cumin, oregano, salt, and pepper.
4. Off heat, fold in the raisins or figs, peanuts, and chopped eggs. Taste and adjust

seasoning.

5. Stuff each pepper half with filling, mounding generously. Top with cheese.
6. Bake at 375°F for 25 minutes until the cheese is browned and the peppers have softened. Serve immediately with rice.

Harvest connection: Mid-September through October. Rocoto in the Dragoons ripens later than other peppers (*Guide 2 §2* covers the 4–5 year first-harvest patience required). The figs from *Guide 9 §4.1* are in their second flush; the onions are stored from July’s harvest.

2.5 Pepper paste — the year-round backbone

A high-concentration paste of roasted red peppers (sweet, hot, or a blend) and salt, packed into jars, refrigerated. Three weeks of fall labor; twelve months of return.

Yields: About 3 cups paste · **Active:** 90 min · **Total:** 2 days

Ingredients:

- 5 lb fresh *red peppers* — any combination of sweet (Marconi, Italian frying) and hot (red jalapeño, Pasilla, red Anaheim). The heat level of the finished paste depends on the ratio.
- 1/4 cup coarse kosher salt
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Optional: 6 cloves garlic, 1 tbsp smoked paprika

Method:

1. Flame-roast all peppers over open flame until uniformly blackened. Sweat 15 minutes in a covered bowl. Slip off skins; remove stems and seeds.
2. Toss roasted flesh with salt in a non-reactive bowl. Cover and refrigerate 24 hours. The salt draws out water; the next day the peppers will be sitting in a pool of liquid.
3. Drain off the liquid (save for soup stock or pickling brine). Purée the salted peppers in a food mill or fine sieve, with the optional garlic and paprika.
4. Pack into clean glass jars. Cover surface with 1/4 inch of olive oil to seal. Refrigerate.
5. Stores 6+ months refrigerated. Use 1–2 tablespoons in soups, stews, eggs, pasta sauce, on toast, mixed into yogurt for a dip, swirled into hummus.

Harvest connection: October. Peak red-pepper flush from any plants that have been allowed to ripen fully (*Guide 2 §8*). The cool overnight temperatures of October concentrate sugars and improve flavor — this is exactly the right time.

2.6 Red chile sauce from dried pods

The fundamental sauce of New Mexico cuisine — a slow-cooked, deeply red sauce built from dried whole pods. Once you make this, you stop buying any commercial enchilada sauce.

Yields: 4 cups · **Active:** 30 min · **Total:** 90 min

Ingredients:

- 8–12 dried *red chile pods* (New Mexico, Pasilla, ancho, or a mix; from your fall ristras per *Guide 2 §10*)
- 4 cups hot water
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 tbsp neutral oil
- 2 tbsp masa or all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp salt
- Optional: 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar

Method:

1. Toast the dried chiles on a dry comal or in a skillet, 20–30 seconds per side until fragrant. Do not burn them — bitterness ruins the sauce.
2. Stem and seed the toasted chiles (the seeds make the sauce bitter and over-hot).
3. Cover the chiles with the hot water; soak 20 minutes until soft.
4. Transfer chiles and soaking liquid to a blender (or use an immersion blender). Add garlic, cumin, oregano. Blend until smooth, 1–2 minutes.
5. Strain through a fine sieve into a clean pot, pressing to extract all liquid; discard solids.
6. In a separate small skillet, heat the oil over medium. Add the flour or masa and cook, stirring, 2 minutes until it smells nutty. Whisk into the strained chile liquid.
7. Bring to a low simmer; cook 15 minutes until thickened to a sauce consistency. Add salt and vinegar. Taste and adjust.
8. Use immediately on enchiladas, in posole, over eggs, mixed into rice. Refrigerates 1 week; freezes 6 months.

Harvest connection: Year-round, from October-cured ristras. The chiles in your ristras have been drying since fall harvest (*Guide 2 §9*); this is the recipe that puts them to work all winter.

2.7 Chiltepin salt — five minutes, six months of return

The single easiest pepper preparation, and one of the most useful. Dried whole Chiltepin (*Capsicum annuum* var. *glabriusculum*, the wild Sonoran pepper covered

in *Guide 15 §5*) ground with coarse salt makes a finishing salt with character and Dragoons-specific heat.

Yields: 1 cup salt · **Active:** 5 min · **Total:** 5 min

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup whole dried *Chiltepin berries* (from a wild bush, *Guide 15 §5*, or from NS/S)
- 1 cup coarse kosher salt or flaky sea salt

Method:

1. In a mortar and pestle or a clean coffee grinder, pulse the Chiltepin briefly to a coarse crush — not a powder.
2. Mix with the salt. Store in a small jar with a tight lid.
3. Use as a finishing salt on grilled meat, roasted vegetables, eggs, popcorn, sliced fruit (the Sonoran practice for melon and pineapple).

Harvest connection: Anytime, from October-harvested Chiltepin. A single mature wild Chiltepin bush in a partial-shade canyon (*Guide 15 §5.2*) produces 1-2 cups of dried berries per year — enough for a household's annual salt habit.

2.8 Spring shakshuka with roasted peppers

Eggs poached in spiced tomato-pepper sauce — a Tunisian dish that fits a Dragoons spring when the freezer holds last summer's roasted peppers and tomato sauce is opening from the canning shelf.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 30 min · **Total:** 35 min

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium *yellow onion*, diced
- 4 cloves *garlic*, minced
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 cup roasted *red peppers* (from §2.5 paste or last fall's freezer)
- 2 cups canned or frozen *tomato sauce* (*Guide 12 §3*)
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes or crushed Chiltepin
- Salt and pepper
- 6 eggs
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta or goat cheese
- Fresh *parsley* or *cilantro* for garnish

Method:

1. Heat olive oil in a 12-inch oven-proof skillet (cast iron preferred) over medium heat.
2. Sweat onion 6 minutes until soft. Add garlic and tomato paste; cook 2 minutes more.
3. Add roasted peppers, tomato sauce, cumin, paprika, pepper flakes. Bring to a simmer; cook 10 minutes until thickened. Season with salt and pepper.
4. Make 6 wells in the sauce with the back of a spoon. Crack an egg into each well.
5. Cover the skillet and cook 5–7 minutes (lower the heat to medium-low) until whites are set but yolks are still runny. Alternatively, transfer to a 375°F oven for 7–10 minutes.
6. Sprinkle with feta and fresh parsley or cilantro. Serve directly from the skillet with crusty bread.

Harvest connection: Spring (March–May) when the previous fall’s pepper paste is being used down and the previous fall’s tomato sauce is being opened from canning. This is the recipe that bridges winter pantry to fresh growing season.

2.9 Pico de gallo at peak fresh

The summer counter recipe — raw, fresh, ready in 10 minutes, eaten with tortilla chips off the cutting board.

Yields: 4 cups · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 30 min (rest)

Ingredients:

- 6 medium *Roma* or *paste* tomatoes (*Guide 7 §3*), diced small
- 1 small *white onion*, diced very small
- 2 fresh *jalapeños* (*Guide 2 §3*), seeded and minced — leave seeds in for hotter
- 1/2 cup fresh *cilantro* (*Guide 8 §4*), chopped
- Juice of 2 limes
- 1 tsp coarse salt

Method:

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Mix thoroughly.
2. Let stand 20–30 minutes at room temperature to let flavors meld.
3. Taste; adjust salt and lime. The salt should sharpen, not announce itself. The lime should brighten the tomato without dominating.
4. Serve with tortilla chips, on grilled fish or chicken, on tacos, scrambled into eggs.

Harvest connection: August and September, peak monsoon. The tomatoes are at peak ripeness (*Guide 7 §3.4* covers harvest); the jalapeños are loading the bushes (*Guide 2 §3*); the cilantro is bolting and the fall sowings haven’t started — but the freezer-saved chopped cilantro from May works for the few weeks when fresh isn’t

around.

3 · Tomatoes

Monsoon-ripened density · the bread-tomato axis · fresh-eating before preservation

A Cochise County tomato in late August is a different fruit from the supermarket equivalent — denser, more acid, more aromatic, the seed cavities full of jellied liquid that carries most of the flavor. The first ripe Cherokee Purple of the season is usually eaten over the sink, salt only, the cook standing barefoot on the kitchen floor. Everything in this chapter is downstream of that moment.

The chapter is short by design. Most of what you do with peak-summer tomatoes is preservation — *Guide 12 §12.4* covers canned whole tomatoes, *§12.5* covers paste, *§12.6* covers oven-confit and sun-dried. What's here is the fresh-eating counterpart: six recipes that put a tomato on a plate the day it came off the vine, with one slow-roasted recipe for the second-day surplus.

3.1 Why tomatoes in the Dragoons kitchen

Three things matter. First, the diurnal temperature swing in Cochise County — 95°F days dropping to 65°F nights — concentrates sugars and acid in a way coastal climates cannot replicate. Second, the monsoon arrival in early July triggers a flavor jump in the established plants that is unmistakable on the tongue. Third, the season is long — late June through hard frost in early November — which means the kitchen sees tomatoes for nearly five months and tires of them by month four. Recipes that change the shape of the tomato (slow-roasting, soup, tart) keep the harvest interesting through October.

3.2 Staples and prep tricks

- **Peel only when the recipe demands it.** Skins matter in canned whole tomatoes and certain sauces; in salad, panzanella, tart, and slow-roast, the skin stays.
- **The cross-cut and the boiling water bath.** For peeling: score an X on the bottom of each tomato, drop in boiling water 30 seconds, transfer to ice water, slip off skins.
- **Save tomato water.** When you salt and drain chopped tomatoes (for bruschetta, pico, panzanella), the released liquid is gold — clear, intensely tomato-flavored, perfect for cocktails, vinaigrette base, or chilled into a savory granita.
- **Don't refrigerate ripe tomatoes.** Cold below 55°F destroys flavor compounds irreversibly. Counter-stored, stem-up, the tomato keeps three days at peak.
- **Match variety to dish.** Paste tomatoes (Roma, San Marzano, Amish Paste) for sauce, pasta, pizza. Slicers (Brandywine, Cherokee Purple, Mortgage Lifter) for fresh eating. Cherries (Sungold, Black Cherry) for salad, roasting, snacking.

3.3 Caprese with monsoon tomatoes

The simplest recipe in the guide and the one with the smallest margin for error — there is no place for the tomato to hide. Make this only with a tomato you would eat

unadorned.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 10 min

Ingredients:

- 3 large *slicing tomatoes* (Brandywine, Cherokee Purple, or any heirloom slicer; *Guide 7 §3*) at room temperature
- 8 oz fresh mozzarella (fior di latte; or burrata for a luxe version)
- 12-15 leaves fresh *basil* (*Guide 8 §3*)
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- Flaky finishing salt
- Cracked black pepper
- Optional: aged balsamic, a few drops only

Method:

1. Slice tomatoes 1/4-inch thick. Lay on a platter, overlapping slightly. Salt lightly and let stand 5 minutes.
2. Tear mozzarella into rough pieces and tuck between tomato slices. Scatter whole basil leaves over the top.
3. Drizzle with olive oil. Finish with flaky salt and a generous grind of black pepper. Balsamic optional, used sparingly.
4. Serve immediately, with bread to mop the plate.

Harvest connection: Late July through September. The basil from *Guide 8 §3* is in peak summer flush; the tomatoes are at their monsoon-fed best.

3.4 Gazpacho

A cold soup for the August week when daytime kitchen temperatures climb above 95°F and turning on the stove feels like assault. Andalusian in origin, completely at home in the Cochise summer.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 20 min · **Total:** 4 hours (chill)

Ingredients:

- 2 lb ripe *paste or slicing tomatoes*, cored and roughly chopped
- 1 small *cucumber* (*Guide 7 §4*), peeled and chopped
- 1 medium *red bell pepper* or 2 sweet *Italian frying peppers* (*Guide 2*), seeded and chopped
- 1 small *red onion* or 1/4 large yellow onion (*Guide 6 §3*)
- 2 cloves *garlic*
- 2 slices day-old country bread, crust removed, torn
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more to finish

- 3 tbsp sherry vinegar or red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp coarse salt
- Cold water as needed
- For garnish: diced cucumber, diced pepper, croutons, a swirl of olive oil

Method:

1. Combine tomato, cucumber, pepper, onion, garlic, bread, oil, vinegar, and salt in a blender. Purée until smooth, 1-2 minutes. Add cold water by the splash if the mixture is too thick — you want a pourable, soup-like body.
2. Strain through a medium sieve for a silken texture, or leave rustic. Taste and adjust salt and vinegar.
3. Chill at least 4 hours, ideally overnight. The flavor deepens with rest.
4. Serve cold in shallow bowls with the garnishes. Bread on the side.

Harvest connection: Late July through September. Every vegetable in the bowl is in the garden right now — tomato, cucumber, pepper, onion, garlic.

Variations: A white gazpacho (ajo blanco) substitutes almonds and grapes for tomato and pepper — see §12.4 for the grape adaptation.

3.5 Pan con tomate

Catalan in spirit, peasant in execution: bread, tomato, oil, salt. The dish that proves a tomato grown in the right place needs almost nothing done to it.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 10 min

Ingredients:

- 4 thick slices country bread (sourdough, baguette, ciabatta — anything with structure)
- 2 cloves *garlic*, peeled, halved
- 2 large ripe *tomatoes* (paste or slicer), halved across the equator
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Flaky salt

Method:

1. Toast the bread until deeply golden — grill, broiler, or toaster set high. The bread should be crisp through, not just browned on top.
2. While still warm, rub each slice with the cut side of a garlic clove. The bread acts like a microplane against the garlic; you want a faint, not aggressive, garlic note.
3. Hold a tomato half cut-side down and rub it firmly against the bread, working in circles. The flesh and juice come away; the skin stays in your hand. Discard the skin.

4. Drizzle generously with olive oil. Finish with flaky salt. Eat at once.

Harvest connection: Any week the tomatoes are ripe — late June through late October. The garlic comes from *Guide 6 §3's* July cure.

3.6 Slow-roasted tomato pasta

The second-day surplus recipe. When the counter holds five pounds of tomato that won't all get eaten fresh, this is what to do — concentrated, glossy, almost confit-like.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 20 min · **Total:** 2.5 hours

Ingredients:

- 3 lb ripe *tomatoes* (paste preferred; cherries also excellent), halved if large, left whole if cherry
- 6 cloves *garlic*, peeled, smashed
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp coarse salt
- Several sprigs fresh *thyme* and *oregano* (*Guide 8 §6*)
- A pinch of crushed *Chiltepin* or red pepper flakes
- 1 lb dry pasta (rigatoni, penne, or spaghetti)
- 1/2 cup torn fresh *basil*
- Grated Pecorino Romano or Parmigiano

Method:

1. Heat oven to 300°F. Arrange tomatoes cut-side up in a large baking dish or sheet pan with sides.
2. Tuck garlic cloves between tomatoes. Pour over olive oil. Sprinkle with salt, herbs, and pepper flakes.
3. Roast 2 hours, undisturbed. The tomatoes will collapse, the edges will caramelize, the oil will turn deep red and tomato-saturated.
4. Boil pasta in heavily salted water until just shy of al dente. Reserve 1 cup pasta water.
5. Tip the roasted tomatoes and all their oil into a wide skillet. Mash lightly with a wooden spoon — leave texture. Add pasta and a splash of pasta water; toss over medium heat 1-2 minutes until the sauce clings.
6. Off heat, fold in basil. Serve with grated cheese.

Harvest connection: August through October, especially the late-season flush when paste tomatoes outpace fresh consumption. Cross-ref *Guide 12 §12.6* for the related oven-confit-for-storage technique.

Variations: Roast a pound of halved cherry tomatoes on a separate sheet pan at the same time and freeze in oil — instant pasta sauce in February.

3.7 Pappa al pomodoro

Tuscan bread-and-tomato soup — the recipe that uses up bread going stale and tomatoes going soft in the same pot. Peasant cooking at its most direct.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 25 min · **Total:** 45 min

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more to finish
- 1 medium *yellow onion*, diced
- 4 cloves *garlic*, sliced thin
- 2.5 lb ripe *paste tomatoes*, peeled and chopped (or 1 quart jar canned tomatoes from *Guide 12 §12.4*)
- 3 cups vegetable or chicken stock (or water with extra salt)
- 4 cups day-old country bread, crust removed, torn into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tsp salt
- A handful of fresh *basil* leaves, torn
- Cracked black pepper

Method:

1. Warm oil in a heavy pot over medium-low. Add onion; cook 8–10 minutes until very soft, not browned. Add garlic; cook 2 minutes more.
2. Add tomatoes and salt. Raise heat to medium; simmer 15 minutes until the tomatoes break down completely.
3. Add stock and bring to a gentle boil. Add bread; stir to submerge. Reduce heat; cook 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the bread has dissolved into the soup and the texture is thick and porridge-like.
4. Off heat, stir in torn basil and a generous pour of fresh olive oil. Black pepper. Rest 10 minutes before serving — pappa al pomodoro is best warm, not hot.

Harvest connection: Late July through October. Excellent winter recipe too, made from canned tomatoes.

3.8 Cherry tomato and herb tart

A free-form tart on puff pastry — bakery-bought puff is fine — that goes from counter to oven in 15 minutes and looks like more work than it is. The recipe for a weeknight when guests show up.

Yields: 6 servings · **Active:** 15 min · **Total:** 45 min

Ingredients:

- 1 sheet puff pastry (about 14 oz), thawed
- 1/3 cup ricotta or fresh goat cheese

- 2 tbsp grated Parmigiano
- 1 clove *garlic*, microplaned
- 1.5 lb mixed *cherry tomatoes* (Sungold, Black Cherry, red — the more colors the better), halved
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp coarse salt
- A handful of fresh *thyme* leaves
- Torn fresh *basil* to finish
- 1 egg, beaten (for the pastry edge)

Method:

1. Heat oven to 400°F. Roll the puff pastry on parchment to fit a sheet pan. Score a 1-inch border around the edge, not cutting through.
2. Mix ricotta, Parmigiano, and garlic with a pinch of salt. Spread inside the border.
3. Pile halved cherry tomatoes over the ricotta. Drizzle with olive oil; sprinkle with salt and thyme.
4. Brush the border with egg.
5. Bake 30–35 minutes until the edge is deeply golden and the tomatoes have collapsed and caramelized in spots.
6. Rest 10 minutes. Scatter with torn basil. Slice and serve warm or at room temperature.

Harvest connection: July through September, when the cherry-tomato plants are producing faster than fresh eating can keep up.

4 · Cucurbits

Squash, zucchini, cucumber, melon · the family that overruns the August counter · learning to cook the glut

The cucurbit family produces more food per square foot than any other vegetable family in the Dragoons, and the kitchen has to keep up. A single Costata Romanesco zucchini plant produces 30 pounds in a season. A Black Beauty zucchini can hit 50. A Moon and Stars watermelon delivers an 18-pound fruit in late August. A patch of Cocozelle, planted forgetfully, will haunt the cook into October.

This chapter assumes the glut and writes accordingly. Six recipes that move significant quantities of cucurbit through the kitchen, plus the chilled soup that handles the cucumber crash in late July.

4.1 Why cucurbits in the Dragoons kitchen

The four sub-groups behave like four different vegetables in the kitchen. Summer squash and zucchini are 95% water, mild-flavored, and ready in three days from flower — they want salt, char, oil, and acid to wake them up. Winter squash (butternut, kabocha, acorn, delicata, pattypan-late) are starchy, dense, and storage-ready — they want roasting, slow heat, and assertive seasoning. Cucumbers are clean and crisp, eaten raw or quick-pickled, and crash all at once around July 20 — *Guide 12 §5* covers fermented and quick pickles. Melons are dessert, plus a few savory uses. The chapter follows that order.

4.2 Staples and prep tricks

- **Salt-purge zucchini before sautéing.** Slice or grate, toss with 1 tsp salt per pound, drain in a colander 20 minutes, squeeze in a towel. Removes 30–40% of the water; the squash sears instead of stewing.
- **High heat for summer squash.** Cast iron, dry, smoking before the squash goes in. Color before turning. Anything less and you get gray slop.
- **Roast winter squash with the skin on.** Most varieties (delicata, kabocha, kuri) have edible skin once roasted. Saves peeling labor.
- **Cucumber, ice water, salt.** Sliced cucumber benefits from 15 minutes in salted ice water before salad — crisps the cells, removes any bitter compounds.
- **Melon temperature matters.** Room-temperature melon tastes melon-y; refrigerated melon tastes like cold sweet water. Cut from the fridge and let stand 20 minutes before serving.

4.3 Zucchini fritters

The single most useful zucchini recipe in the kitchen. Eats two zucchini per batch and uses pantry staples. Hot, salty, crisp — children eat them by the plateful.

Yields: About 12 fritters, serves 4 · **Active:** 30 min · **Total:** 45 min

Ingredients:

- 2 lb *zucchini* (Costata Romanesco, Black Beauty, or any summer variety; *Guide 7 §4*)
- 2 tsp coarse salt
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup grated Parmigiano or Pecorino
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 4 *scallions* (*Guide 6 §3*), thinly sliced, white and green
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh *dill* and *parsley* (*Guide 8 §4*) combined
- Black pepper
- Neutral oil for frying (about 1/3 cup)
- Lemon wedges and Greek yogurt to serve

Method:

1. Grate zucchini on the large holes of a box grater. Toss with the salt in a colander; let drain 20–30 minutes.
2. Working in handfuls, squeeze the grated zucchini hard in a clean towel to extract water. You want it almost dry. This step is non-negotiable.
3. Transfer to a bowl. Add flour, cheese, eggs, scallions, herbs, and several grinds of pepper. Stir to combine. The mixture should be thick enough to scoop and hold a rough shape.
4. Heat oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high. Drop heaping tablespoons of batter; flatten gently with the spoon. Don't crowd — work in two batches.
5. Cook 3 minutes per side until deeply golden. Drain on paper towels.
6. Serve hot with lemon wedges and a bowl of yogurt for dipping.

Harvest connection: July and August, when zucchini production peaks at 2–3 lb per plant per week.

Variations: Substitute grated yellow summer squash, or a 50/50 zucchini-and-grated-carrot mix in fall.

4.4 Baked winter squash with chile and lime

The recipe that proves winter squash needs more than butter and brown sugar. The chile-lime combination is borrowed from the Sonoran practice of finishing fruit with Chiltepin salt — it works equally well on squash.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 50 min

Ingredients:

- 1 medium *kabocha*, *butternut*, or *delicata* squash (Guide 7 §4.5), about 2.5 lb
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp coarse salt
- 1 tsp *Chiltepin salt* (§2.7) or 1/2 tsp ground New Mexico chile + 1/2 tsp coarse salt
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 lime, juiced and zested
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh *cilantro*
- Optional: 2 tbsp toasted pumpkin seeds

Method:

1. Heat oven to 425°F. Halve the squash, scoop seeds (save for roasting separately). Slice into 1/2-inch half-moons or wedges, skin on.
2. Toss with olive oil, salt, Chiltepin salt, cumin, paprika.
3. Spread on a sheet pan in a single layer. Roast 30–40 minutes, flipping once, until edges are browned and flesh is tender.
4. Transfer to a platter. Squeeze lime juice over while hot. Sprinkle with lime zest, cilantro, and toasted seeds if using.

Harvest connection: October through February, from cured winter squash held at 55–60°F per Guide 12 §10 cellaring practice.

4.5 Cucumber, tomato, and bread salad

A Mediterranean panzanella variant that uses the second-week cucumber glut. Bread soaks up tomato juice and vinaigrette; cucumber stays crisp; the herbs hold it all together.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 15 min · **Total:** 45 min

Ingredients:

- 4 cups day-old country bread, torn into 1-inch pieces
- 3 tbsp olive oil, plus more for the bread
- 1.5 lb mixed ripe *tomatoes* (slicer and cherry), cut into wedges and halves
- 2 medium *slicing cucumbers* (Guide 7 §4.6), peeled in stripes, halved lengthwise, sliced thick
- 1/2 small *red onion*, sliced thin
- 1/2 cup pitted Kalamata olives
- 1/3 cup torn fresh *basil* leaves
- 2 tbsp red wine vinegar or sherry vinegar
- 1 clove *garlic*, microplaned
- 1 tsp salt
- Black pepper

- Optional: 4 oz feta, crumbled

Method:

1. Heat oven to 375°F. Toss bread with 2 tbsp olive oil and a pinch of salt. Toast on a sheet pan 10–12 minutes until crisp on the edges but still chewy in the middle.
2. Salt the tomatoes lightly in a colander set over a bowl. Let stand 10 minutes; capture the released juice.
3. Whisk the tomato juice with vinegar, garlic, the remaining 3 tbsp olive oil, salt, and pepper. Taste.
4. In a large bowl, combine bread, tomatoes, cucumber, red onion, olives, basil. Pour vinaigrette over; toss gently.
5. Rest 20 minutes. Crumble feta on top if using. Serve at room temperature.

Harvest connection: Late July through August. Tomato, cucumber, basil, onion all in the garden simultaneously.

4.6 Chilled cucumber soup

Yogurt-based, herb-forward, fast. The recipe for the third week of July when cucumbers come in faster than salad consumption.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 15 min · **Total:** 2 hours (chill)

Ingredients:

- 2 lb *slicing cucumbers*, peeled and seeded, roughly chopped
- 2 cups whole-milk yogurt (Greek or strained)
- 1 clove *garlic*
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh *dill*
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh *mint* (*Guide 8 §6*)
- 2 tbsp olive oil, plus more to finish
- 1 tbsp white wine vinegar or lemon juice
- 1 tsp salt
- Cold water as needed
- For garnish: diced cucumber, a few mint leaves, a drizzle of oil, cracked pepper

Method:

1. Combine cucumber, yogurt, garlic, dill, mint, oil, vinegar, and salt in a blender. Purée until smooth.
2. Thin with cold water if needed — the soup should pour but not splash.
3. Chill 2 hours. Taste and re-season — cold dulls salt and acid.
4. Serve cold with garnishes.

Harvest connection: Mid-July through August.

4.7 Melon and prickly-pear granita

A late-August dessert for the night the kitchen temperature won't drop below 85°F. Melon and prickly-pear are simultaneously ripe in late August and pair like they were meant to.

Yields: 4-6 servings · **Active:** 15 min · **Total:** 4 hours (freeze)

Ingredients:

- 4 cups cubed ripe *melon* (Charentais, Hami, or any aromatic variety; *Guide 7 §4.7*)
- 1/2 cup *prickly-pear syrup* (*Guide 15 §6*; or *Guide 12 §13* for the syrup preparation)
- 2 tbsp lime juice
- A pinch of salt
- Optional: 1 tbsp tequila or mezcal (for a granita; the alcohol stays soft)

Method:

1. Purée melon with prickly-pear syrup, lime, and salt until smooth. Strain if you want a finer texture.
2. Pour into a wide, shallow metal pan (a 9×13 cake pan works).
3. Freeze 1 hour. Drag a fork through to break up the crystals. Repeat every 30-45 minutes for 3 hours total — you want flaky, granular ice, not a solid block.
4. Scoop into chilled glasses. Serve immediately.

Harvest connection: Late August. The melons are peaking; the prickly-pear fruits (tunas) are ripening on the cholla and *Opuntia* simultaneously.

4.8 Stuffed pattypan

Pattypan squash (UFO-shaped summer variety) is the natural stuffer — broad, flat, scoopable. A weeknight one-dish dinner using a pound of squash and a cup of cooked grain.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 25 min · **Total:** 50 min

Ingredients:

- 8 small to medium *pattypan squash* (3-4 inches across)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium *yellow onion*, diced
- 2 cloves *garlic*, minced
- 1 cup cooked rice, farro, or *tepany beans* (*Guide 15 §3*)
- 4 oz crumbled feta or grated Pecorino
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh *parsley*
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh *oregano*
- 1 tbsp lemon zest

- Salt and black pepper
- Optional: 1/4 cup pine nuts or chopped walnuts

Method:

1. Heat oven to 400°F. Slice the tops off the pattypan; scoop out the seeds and some flesh with a spoon, leaving a 1/4-inch shell. Chop the scooped flesh; reserve.
2. Heat oil in a skillet. Sweat onion 6 minutes; add garlic and chopped pattypan flesh; cook 5 more minutes until soft.
3. Off heat, combine with cooked grain, cheese, herbs, lemon zest, salt, pepper, and nuts if using.
4. Brush the squash shells inside and out with oil; salt lightly. Stuff with filling, mounding.
5. Place in a baking dish with 1/4 inch of water. Cover with foil and bake 25 minutes. Uncover and bake 10 more minutes until tops are browned and shells are tender.

Harvest connection: July and August.

5 · Beans

Tepary as the keystone · the slow pot · seven recipes that span every native variety

The bean is the keystone of the Sonoran-Madrean kitchen. *Guide 15* covers the cultivation of tepary, Anasazi, Hopi Yellow Lima, and the broader native bean complex; this chapter is the kitchen extension. Every recipe here assumes dry beans cooked from scratch — canned beans work for most of them at a noticeable but acceptable quality cost, except the tepary recipes, where the slow-cook method and the bean's particular texture are the point.

A pot of beans is the most forgiving cook a kitchen knows. It does not need watching, it tolerates schedule changes, it improves on day two, and it produces both the beans and the broth in a single pass. The Dragoons kitchen with a pot of beans in the cellar at all times is a kitchen that can produce dinner in 15 minutes — refried tonight, in soup tomorrow, on a salad Thursday.

5.1 Why beans in the Dragoons kitchen

Tepary in particular is worth the kitchen learning curve. The brown tepary cooks in roughly half the time of a pinto, holds its shape better, and has a markedly meatier, deeper flavor — the result of 4,000 years of selection by the Tohono O'odham for dry-climate, low-water performance. White tepary cooks a touch faster than brown and has a creamier texture. Anasazi is sweeter and softer-skinned, closer to a pinto but more complex. Hopi Yellow Lima holds its shape in a long simmer where supermarket limas turn to mush. The four together — kept in glass jars in the pantry — cover every bean role a Dragoons kitchen needs.

5.2 Staples and prep tricks

- **Soak overnight, always.** Even teparies, which some sources say can be cooked unsoaked. Soaked beans cook in 2/3 the time and the broth is cleaner.
- **Discard the soaking water.** Carries the indigestible oligosaccharides. Cook in fresh water.
- **Salt at the start, not the end.** The folk wisdom that salt toughens bean skins has been thoroughly debunked. Salt from the beginning produces a better-flavored bean. Acid — tomato, vinegar — added late, after the beans are tender.
- **An onion, a garlic head, a bay leaf, and an epazote sprig.** The pot aromatics. *Guide 15 §10* covers epazote cultivation; dried epazote works.
- **The broth is half the value.** Save every drop. Freeze in 2-cup containers. It is stock for any soup, the cooking liquid for rice, the splash for stewed greens.

5.3 Tepary frijoles de la olla

The whole-bean preparation. The base recipe — every other tepary recipe in this chapter starts here. A pound of brown teparies and a slow pot.

Yields: 6 cups cooked beans plus 3 cups broth · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 4 hours (after overnight soak)

Ingredients:

- 1 lb dry *brown tepary beans* (*Guide 15 §3*; or substitute white tepary, Anasazi, or pinto)
- 1 medium *yellow onion*, halved
- 1 whole head *garlic*, halved across the equator (no need to peel)
- 1 dried *New Mexico chile pod* or 1 fresh jalapeño
- 2 sprigs fresh *epazote* (or 1 tsp dried; *Guide 15 §10*)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1.5 tbsp coarse salt
- 10 cups water (cold)
- Optional: 2 oz salt pork, bacon end, or a ham hock

Method:

1. The night before: rinse beans, cover with cold water by 4 inches, soak 8–12 hours.
2. Drain soaking water. Place beans in a heavy Dutch oven with all other ingredients. Cover with 10 cups fresh cold water.
3. Bring to a low boil; reduce to a bare simmer (small bubbles breaking the surface, not rolling). Partially cover.
4. Cook 3–4 hours. Tepary takes longer than pinto — start checking at 3 hours, but don't worry if it goes 4. The bean is done when a few beans pinched between thumb and finger are completely creamy through, with no chalky core.
5. Fish out the onion, garlic, bay leaf, and chile or epazote stems. The garlic cloves slip from their skins into the broth — squeeze them in.
6. Taste broth; adjust salt. Cool in the cooking liquid.
7. Store in the cooking liquid in the refrigerator for up to a week, or freeze in 2-cup portions for 6 months.

Harvest connection: Year-round, from teparies dried after October harvest (*Guide 15 §3.4*).

Variations: A pure vegetarian pot omits the pork. A spicier pot adds 3 dried chipotle or 1 tbsp Chiltepin at the start.

5.4 Tepary refritos

The mashed bean. Refritos are the second pass on a pot of beans — fat, salt, time. Eat at any meal. Spread on a tortilla with cheese is dinner.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 20 min · **Total:** 20 min

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp lard, bacon fat, or olive oil
- 1 small *yellow onion*, diced fine
- 3 cloves *garlic*, minced
- 4 cups cooked *brown tepary beans* (§5.3) with 1 cup of their broth
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- Salt to taste
- Optional: 1/4 cup crumbled queso fresco or grated Monterey Jack, fresh cilantro

Method:

1. Heat fat in a heavy skillet over medium. Add onion; cook 6–8 minutes until deeply softened. Add garlic and cumin; cook 1 minute.
2. Add beans and broth. Mash with a potato masher or the back of a wooden spoon — leave texture, don't purée.
3. Cook over medium, stirring often, 10–12 minutes. The beans should thicken; the bottom of the pan should develop a slight crust which you scrape back in.
4. Taste; salt as needed. Serve hot. Top with crumbled cheese and cilantro if using.

Harvest connection: Any week. Stocked-bean kitchen.

5.5 Anasazi-bean Cochise chili

A genuine chili — chunked meat or beans, no tomato, deep red chile, slow simmer. The Anasazi bean's slight sweetness balances the chile heat in a way pinto cannot.

Yields: 6 servings · **Active:** 40 min · **Total:** 3 hours

Ingredients:

- 2 lb chuck roast, cut in 1-inch cubes (or 6 cups cooked Anasazi beans, doubled, for vegetarian)
- 2 tbsp neutral oil
- 1 large *yellow onion*, diced
- 5 cloves *garlic*, minced
- 4 dried *New Mexico red chiles* or *Pasilla*, toasted, stemmed, seeded, soaked in hot water (or 1/2 cup *red chile sauce*, §2.6)
- 2 tbsp ground cumin
- 1 tbsp dried *Mexican oregano*
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tbsp masa harina
- 4 cups beef stock or bean broth
- 3 cups cooked *Anasazi beans* (cooked per §5.3, substituting Anasazi for tepary; reduce cook time to 1.5 hours)
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- Salt

- For serving: chopped *white onion*, fresh *cilantro*, grated cheese, lime wedges

Method:

1. Pat the beef cubes dry. Brown in batches in a heavy Dutch oven; transfer to a plate. (Skip if vegetarian.)
2. In the same pot, sweat onion 8 minutes. Add garlic, cumin, oregano, coriander; cook 1 minute.
3. Purée the soaked chiles with their soaking liquid in a blender; strain into the pot (or stir in §2.6 sauce).
4. Return beef. Add stock. Bring to a low boil; reduce to a simmer. Cover and cook 90 minutes until beef is tender. (Vegetarian: simmer onion-chile base 20 minutes.)
5. Whisk masa harina with 1/2 cup cold water; stir into the chili. Add cooked Anasazi beans. Simmer uncovered 30 minutes to thicken.
6. Finish with vinegar; taste for salt. Serve with the garnishes.

Harvest connection: Late fall through winter. Anasazi beans ready from October harvest; dried chiles from the same window.

5.6 White-bean and roasted-garlic soup

A Mediterranean-leaning soup that uses white tepary or cannellini interchangeably. The roasted garlic does most of the work.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 25 min · **Total:** 1 hour

Ingredients:

- 2 whole heads *garlic*
- 3 tbsp olive oil, plus more to finish
- 1 medium *yellow onion*, diced
- 1 *carrot* (Guide 6 §4), diced
- 1 *celery stalk*, diced (optional)
- 4 cups cooked *white tepary* or cannellini beans, with 4 cups of their broth
- 2 sprigs fresh *thyme*
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 cup grated Parmigiano, plus a rind if you have one
- Salt and pepper
- 1 lemon, for finishing
- Crusty bread for serving

Method:

1. Heat oven to 400°F. Slice the tops off the garlic heads to expose the cloves. Drizzle with olive oil; wrap in foil. Roast 40 minutes until soft and sweet. Squeeze cloves from skins.

2. While garlic roasts, heat 2 tbsp oil in a heavy pot. Sweat onion, carrot, celery 10 minutes until soft.
3. Add beans and broth, thyme, bay leaf, and Parmigiano rind if using. Bring to a simmer; cook 20 minutes.
4. Scoop out 1.5 cups of beans and broth; purée with the roasted garlic. Stir back into the pot.
5. Discard thyme stems, bay leaf, and rind. Stir in grated Parmigiano. Taste; salt and pepper. A squeeze of lemon at the end.
6. Serve in shallow bowls with a final drizzle of oil and bread for dipping.

Harvest connection: Year-round. Particularly good in January and February, when stored beans and stored garlic dominate the pantry.

5.7 Dilly beans (cross-reference)

Fresh-pickled green beans with dill and garlic — the snappy, vinegary jar that lives in the refrigerator door. The canning version is *Guide 12 §6.3*; the recipe below is the refrigerator-pickle version, ready in 48 hours, keeps a month.

Yields: 2 quart jars · **Active:** 20 min · **Total:** 48 hours (cure)

Ingredients:

- 2 lb fresh *green beans* (*Guide 7 §5*), trimmed to fit your jars
- 4 cloves *garlic*, peeled and halved
- 2 tsp coarse salt
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
- 1 tsp mustard seed
- 4 heads fresh *dill* (or 2 tsp dill seed)
- 2 dried *chiltepin* per jar (optional, for heat)
- 2 cups white vinegar
- 2 cups water
- 2 tbsp sugar

Method:

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Blanch beans 2 minutes; transfer to ice water; drain.
2. Pack beans vertically into two clean quart jars. Tuck garlic, peppercorns, mustard seed, dill, and chiltepin into each.
3. Combine vinegar, water, salt, sugar in a saucepan; bring to a boil. Pour over beans to cover.
4. Cool to room temperature; cap and refrigerate. Cure 48 hours minimum before eating. Keeps 1 month refrigerated.

For the shelf-stable canned version, see *Guide 12 §6.3*.

Harvest connection: July through September, peak green-bean weeks.

5.8 Hopi Yellow Lima succotash

Succotash done right: lima beans and sweet corn, both fresh, both in season, both treated with respect. The Hopi Yellow Lima holds its shape and brings a buttery flavor supermarket limas can't approach.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 25 min · **Total:** 1.5 hours (from soaked beans)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup dry *Hopi Yellow Lima beans*, soaked overnight, or 2 cups cooked
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 tbsp butter
- 1 small *yellow onion*, diced
- 1 sweet *red bell pepper*, diced
- 2 cups *sweet corn kernels* (*Guide 7 §6*; from 3 ears)
- 1 cup *cherry tomatoes*, halved
- 1/2 cup heavy cream (optional, for a richer succotash)
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh *basil* and *parsley*
- Salt and black pepper

Method:

1. Drain soaked limas. Cover with fresh water in a pot; add bay leaf. Simmer 60–75 minutes until tender but not falling apart. Salt during the last 15 minutes. Drain, reserving 1 cup cooking liquid.
2. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium. Add onion; cook 5 minutes. Add red pepper; cook 4 more minutes.
3. Add corn kernels; cook 3 minutes, stirring. Add cooked limas with a splash of their cooking liquid; warm through.
4. Add cherry tomatoes; cook 2 minutes — just until they start to slump.
5. If using cream, add now and reduce 2 minutes.
6. Off heat, fold in herbs. Salt and pepper to taste.

Harvest connection: Late July through August, when sweet corn and tomatoes overlap, and limas from the previous fall are in the pantry.

6 · Corn

Native flour corn · sweet corn for fresh use · the nixtamal door · six recipes that cover the spectrum

Corn in the Dragoons kitchen runs two parallel lines. Sweet corn — Honey Select, Bodacious, the bicolors — is a fresh July crop, eaten within hours of picking, treated like the perishable it is. Flour and dent corns — Hopi Blue, Painted Mountain, Cochise Pinto Maize, Bloody Butcher — are storage crops, dried on the stalk, shelled in fall, ground or nixtamalized as needed through the year. Both lines are covered in *Guide 7 §6* (sweet) and *Guide 15 §4* (native flour and dent).

The kitchen technique that unlocks the flour-corn line is nixtamalization — the alkaline cooking process that makes corn nutritionally complete and aromatically transformed. It is genuinely simple, takes about 18 hours including overnight rest, and converts shelled corn into masa — the dough for tortillas, tamales, gorditas, sopes, pupusas. A kitchen that nixtamalizes once a month has fresh tortillas in the freezer year-round.

6.1 Why corn in the Dragoons kitchen

Hopi Blue is the keystone variety. Indigo-blue kernels, slightly nutty and earthy when nixtamalized, the cornbread it makes is a deep gray-blue that surprises every first-time guest. Painted Mountain — short-season, multi-colored — is the polenta corn for a kitchen that wants Italian texture from a Cochise-grown crop. Cochise Pinto Maize, the regional flour corn, is the everyday workhorse — paler, sweeter, less assertive than Hopi Blue. Sweet corn covers June-July and is gone by August.

6.2 Staples and prep tricks

- **Sweet corn waits for no one.** Pick at 5pm, cook at 6pm. Sugars convert to starch within 24 hours of harvest, especially in heat.
- **Strip silk under running water.** Hold the husked ear under cold water and brush with a stiff vegetable brush — all the silk comes off in 20 seconds.
- **Nixtamalize in bulk.** Once you set up the lime water, do 3 lb of corn at a time. Vacuum-seal and freeze masa balls; thaw and press as needed.
- **Don't grind dry corn in a blade grinder.** A metate or a hand-cranked corn mill is the right tool. A burr coffee grinder works for small batches. A blender doesn't.
- **Toast cornmeal before using.** Dry skillet, 4-5 minutes, until just barely darker and fragrant. Deepens flavor in polenta, cornbread, mush.

6.3 Hopi Blue corn tortillas

The complete tortilla, from dried kernels through nixtamal through masa through finished tortilla. Two days of intermittent attention; the result is incomparable to any tortilla you've bought.

Yields: About 16 small tortillas · **Active:** 60 min over two days · **Total:** 18 hours (including overnight rest)

Ingredients:

- 1 lb dried *Hopi Blue corn kernels* (*Guide 15 §4*; or other flour/dent corn)
- 2 tbsp food-grade calcium hydroxide (cal, slaked lime; sold as pickling lime or Mexican-grocery cal)
- Water
- Salt

Method:

1. **Nixtamal (afternoon, day 1).** Combine corn and 8 cups water in a heavy non-aluminum pot. Stir in cal until fully dissolved; the water turns opaque white. Bring to a boil, reduce to a low simmer, cook 30–45 minutes — the kernel skins should slip with thumbnail pressure and the kernel interiors should still have a faint white core (not fully cooked through). Off heat, cover and rest overnight, 8–12 hours.
2. **Wash (morning, day 2).** Drain. Rinse under cold running water, rubbing the kernels between your hands — the loosened skins (pericarps) wash away, leaving slick, blue, slightly translucent kernels. This is the *nixtamal*. Drain well.
3. **Grind.** Pass nixtamal through a hand-cranked corn mill twice (finer setting on the second pass) — or work in a food processor in batches with a splash of water until you have a smooth, slightly tacky dough. Salt to taste — about 1 tsp per pound.
4. **Press and cook.** Heat a comal or cast-iron skillet over medium-high. Roll 35 g balls of masa (golf-ball-sized). Press between two sheets of plastic in a tortilla press to 1/8-inch thick. Cook 30 seconds, flip, cook 60 seconds, flip again 30 seconds. Wrap in a clean towel to keep soft.
5. Use immediately, or cool fully and freeze stacked between parchment.

Harvest connection: Year-round, from October-shelled Hopi Blue corn. Cross-ref *Guide 15 §4.5* for the field-drying and shelling sequence.

Variations: The same method works for Cochise Pinto Maize, Painted Mountain, or any dent or flour corn. Sweet corn does not nixtamalize well — the sugars caramelize and burn.

6.4 Hopi Blue pancakes

The Sunday breakfast of a Dragoons kitchen with a pantry full of cornmeal. Less sweet, more savory than a standard pancake; pairs with savory toppings (avocado, fried egg) as readily as sweet (maple, butter).

Yields: 12 pancakes, serves 4 · **Active:** 25 min · **Total:** 30 min

Ingredients:

- 1 cup *Hopi Blue cornmeal* (medium grind)
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1.5 cups buttermilk
- 1/4 cup melted butter, plus more for the skillet
- 1 tsp vanilla (optional, for sweet service)

Method:

1. Whisk dry ingredients in a large bowl.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk eggs, buttermilk, melted butter, vanilla.
3. Pour wet into dry; stir just until combined. Some lumps are fine. Rest 5 minutes — the cornmeal hydrates.
4. Heat a cast-iron skillet or griddle over medium. Brush with butter. Pour 1/4-cup pancakes; cook 2–3 minutes until bubbles surface and the edges look dry. Flip; cook 90 seconds more.
5. Serve immediately. Savory: avocado, fried egg, Chiltepin salt. Sweet: butter and maple, or warm fig jam from *Guide 12 §11*.

Harvest connection: Year-round.

6.5 Sweet corn with chiltepin butter

The 10-minute July dinner side. The chiltepin butter is worth making in quantity — it freezes well in logs and shaves over anything hot.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 10 min

Ingredients:

- 6 ears fresh *sweet corn*, husked
- 4 tbsp salted butter, softened
- 1 tsp crushed dried *Chiltepin*
- 1 small clove *garlic*, microplaned
- 1/2 tsp lime zest
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh *cilantro*
- Flaky salt

Method:

1. Mash butter, Chiltepin, garlic, lime zest, and cilantro in a small bowl. Taste; it should be assertively hot and bright.

2. Boil corn in a large pot of unsalted water 3–4 minutes (salt toughens corn skins, contrary to popular practice).
3. Drain; transfer to a platter. Spread chiltepin butter liberally over hot ears. Finish with flaky salt. Eat with hands.

Harvest connection: July, the four-week sweet corn window.

Variations: Grill the ears instead of boiling. Char the kernels off the cob and stir into the butter for elote-style esquites.

6.6 Posole

A long-simmered corn-and-pork (or corn-and-bean) stew built on hominy — the same nixtamalized corn from §6.3, dried after washing instead of ground. A Sunday-afternoon recipe for a cold November day.

Yields: 6 servings · **Active:** 45 min · **Total:** 3 hours

Ingredients:

- 1 cup dried *posole hominy* (nixtamalized whole kernels, dried; or 4 cups canned hominy, drained)
- 2 lb pork shoulder, cut in 1.5-inch chunks (or 4 cups cooked *Anasazi beans* for vegetarian)
- 1 large *yellow onion*, halved
- 1 whole head *garlic*, halved across the equator
- 6 dried *New Mexico chiles* or *Guajillo*, toasted, stemmed, seeded
- 2 dried *ancho chiles*, toasted, stemmed, seeded
- 1 tbsp dried *Mexican oregano*
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt
- For serving: shredded cabbage, sliced radish, lime wedges, dried oregano, chopped *cilantro*, tortillas

Method:

1. Soak dried hominy overnight. Drain. Combine in a heavy pot with pork (or skip pork), one onion half, half the garlic, bay leaves, and 10 cups water. Bring to a boil; skim foam; reduce to a simmer. Cook 2 hours until hominy kernels have bloomed open (“flowered”) and pork is fork-tender.
2. While that cooks, soak toasted chiles in 2 cups hot water 20 minutes. Purée with the remaining onion half, remaining garlic (squeezed from skins), oregano, cumin, and the chile soaking liquid. Strain into the pot.
3. Simmer 30 more minutes. Taste and salt aggressively — posole needs salt.

4. (For vegetarian: skip the pork; add cooked Anasazi beans in the last 20 minutes.)
5. Ladle into wide bowls. Pass cabbage, radish, lime, oregano, cilantro, and warm tortillas at the table.

Harvest connection: Year-round; especially good in November–December when the freshly nixtamalized corn from fall’s harvest is still close at hand.

6.7 Cochise corn pudding

A baked corn-and-egg side dish that lands somewhere between cornbread and soufflé. Tender, mildly sweet, deeply corny. The kind of side that disappears off the table before the main course is finished.

Yields: 6 servings · **Active:** 20 min · **Total:** 1 hour

Ingredients:

- 3 cups *sweet corn kernels* (from 4–5 ears, fresh; or thawed if frozen)
- 4 large eggs
- 1.5 cups whole milk or half-and-half
- 1/2 cup *Cochise Pinto* or *Hopi Blue cornmeal*
- 3 tbsp melted butter
- 2 tbsp sugar (omit for a savory pudding)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 cup grated sharp cheddar or Monterey Jack
- 2 tbsp chopped *chives* or scallion green
- Optional: 1 *Anaheim chile*, roasted, peeled, diced

Method:

1. Heat oven to 350°F. Butter an 8×8 baking dish.
2. Purée 1.5 cups of the corn with the eggs, milk, butter, sugar, salt, and baking powder in a blender. Pulse cornmeal in last — leave some texture.
3. Stir in the remaining 1.5 cups whole kernels, cheese, chives, and chile if using.
4. Pour into the prepared dish. Bake 40–45 minutes until set in the center and golden on top.
5. Rest 10 minutes before serving.

Harvest connection: July (fresh sweet corn) through year-round (with frozen kernels saved from summer).

6.8 Painted Mountain polenta

A creamy polenta from short-season Painted Mountain corn. The multi-color kernels grind into a flecked golden meal with a slightly chewier texture than standard polenta.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 45 min

Ingredients:

- 1 cup *Painted Mountain cornmeal*, medium grind (or substitute coarse polenta cornmeal)
- 4 cups water or 3 cups water + 1 cup whole milk
- 1.5 tsp salt
- 3 tbsp butter
- 1/2 cup grated Parmigiano
- Black pepper
- Optional toppings: slow-roasted tomatoes from §3.6, sautéed greens, a fried egg

Method:

1. Bring water (and milk, if using) to a boil with the salt in a heavy saucepan.
2. Whisk in the cornmeal in a slow steady stream. Reduce heat to very low.
3. Cook, stirring every 5-10 minutes with a wooden spoon, 30-40 minutes. Add a splash of hot water if it stiffens too much. Done when the polenta pulls away from the pan sides and tastes fully cooked, not gritty.
4. Off heat, stir in butter and Parmigiano. Black pepper. Taste; adjust salt.
5. Serve immediately with the topping of choice.

Harvest connection: Year-round, from October-shelled Painted Mountain.

7 · Sweet potatoes

The reliable carbohydrate · long-storage staple · five recipes from breakfast to dessert

Sweet potatoes in the Dragoons are an October crop, cured in the warm dry air for two weeks after digging, then cellared at 55–60°F per *Guide 12 §10*. They hold six months in good storage. The kitchen’s job is to use them across that window — not all at Thanksgiving, but parceled out from October through April.

The recipes below assume a working pantry stock of cured sweet potatoes — Beauregard, Georgia Jet, Murasaki, or whichever variety the grower has settled on. The recipes work interchangeably across varieties; the orange-fleshed types (Beauregard, Garnet) are sweeter and moister, the white and purple types (Murasaki, Okinawan) are starchier and earthier.

7.1 Why sweet potatoes in the Dragoons kitchen

The crop earns its place by storage and versatility. A single 20-lb bin of sweet potatoes cellared in October goes into roast dinners through November and December, tacos and hash in January and February, soup and stew in March, and the last few into pie or muffin batter by April. The flavor concentrates with cure — a freshly-dug sweet potato is bland; one cured three weeks is markedly sweeter as starch converts to sugar.

7.2 Staples and prep tricks

- **Don’t refrigerate.** Sweet potatoes turn corky and lose flavor below 50°F. Cellar or counter only.
- **Cure for two weeks after harvest.** 80–85°F, 85% humidity if you can manage it. *Guide 12 §10.4* covers the practice.
- **Match cut to method.** Wedges for roasting; cubes for hash and stew; thin slices for gratin; whole baked for stuffing or pie.
- **The skin is good.** Scrub well; leave on for almost everything. The skin holds nutrients and texture.

7.3 Roasted sweet potato wedges with chile salt

The everyday side. Fifteen minutes of active time; sweet, salty, faintly hot, crisp-edged. Better than french fries on a Tuesday.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 40 min

Ingredients:

- 2 lb *sweet potatoes*, scrubbed, cut into 1/2-inch wedges
- 3 tbsp neutral oil
- 1 tsp coarse salt

- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp *Chiltepin salt* (§2.7) or 1/4 tsp cayenne
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh *cilantro* or *parsley*
- Lime wedges for serving

Method:

1. Heat oven to 425°F. Toss wedges with oil, salt, cumin, paprika, and chile salt on a sheet pan.
2. Spread in a single layer, cut sides down. Don't crowd — use two pans if needed.
3. Roast 25–30 minutes, flipping once at the 20-minute mark, until edges are deeply browned and the wedges are tender through.
4. Transfer to a platter. Scatter cilantro. Squeeze lime over.

Harvest connection: October through April, from cellared sweet potatoes.

7.4 Sweet potato tacos

A vegetarian taco built on roasted sweet potato and black bean — substantial, layered, and properly tucked into a corn tortilla.

Yields: 8 tacos, serves 4 · **Active:** 25 min · **Total:** 45 min

Ingredients:

- 1.5 lb *sweet potatoes*, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 2 tbsp neutral oil
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp *Chiltepin salt* or chile powder
- Salt
- 2 cups cooked *black beans* or *Anasazi beans* (§5.3)
- 8 *Hopi Blue corn tortillas* (§6.3) or store-bought
- For topping: crumbled queso fresco, sliced *radish*, fresh *cilantro*, lime wedges, hot sauce
- Avocado, sliced (optional)

Method:

1. Heat oven to 425°F. Toss sweet potato cubes with oil, cumin, coriander, paprika, chile, and 1 tsp salt. Spread on a sheet pan.
2. Roast 20–25 minutes, stirring once, until browned and tender.
3. Warm beans in a small saucepan with a splash of their broth; mash lightly for spreadability.

4. Warm tortillas on a dry comal, 30 seconds per side.
5. Build tacos: bean smear, sweet potato, queso, radish, cilantro, avocado, lime, hot sauce.

Harvest connection: October through April.

7.5 Sweet potato and black bean stew

A West African-leaning stew — peanut butter, tomato, ginger — the kind of one-pot dinner that improves overnight. Vegetarian as written; works with diced chicken thigh added in step 3.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 20 min · **Total:** 50 min

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp neutral oil
- 1 medium *yellow onion*, diced
- 3 cloves *garlic*, minced
- 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes or *Chiltepin*
- 2 lb *sweet potatoes*, peeled, 1-inch cubes
- 1.5 cups *tomato sauce* (*Guide 12 §12.4*) or 1 can diced tomato
- 3 cups vegetable stock or water
- 1/3 cup natural peanut butter
- 2 cups cooked *black beans* or *Anasazi beans*
- 3 cups roughly chopped *kale* or *Swiss chard* (*Guide 6 §5*)
- Salt
- Lime wedges, chopped roasted peanuts, fresh *cilantro* to serve

Method:

1. Heat oil in a heavy pot. Sweat onion 8 minutes. Add garlic, ginger, spices; cook 1 minute.
2. Add sweet potato, tomato, stock. Bring to a boil; reduce to a simmer; cover and cook 20 minutes until potatoes are tender.
3. Whisk peanut butter into 1/2 cup of the hot broth in a bowl, then stir back into the pot. Add beans; simmer 5 minutes.
4. Fold in greens; cook 3 minutes more until wilted. Salt to taste.
5. Serve over rice, garnished with peanuts, cilantro, lime.

Harvest connection: Fall through spring.

7.6 Sweet potato pie

The Thanksgiving classic, with a few moves that separate it from a generic pumpkin pie: the potatoes are baked (not boiled) for concentration, the spice mix leans on freshly grated nutmeg, and the filling gets a splash of bourbon. (Bourbon is optional.)

Yields: One 9-inch pie, serves 8 · **Active:** 25 min · **Total:** 2.5 hours

Ingredients:

- 2 lb *sweet potatoes*
- 1 pie crust (homemade or store-bought), blind-baked 10 minutes at 375°F
- 3 large eggs
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 1/4 cup melted butter
- 2 tbsp bourbon (optional)
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp ground cloves
- 1/2 tsp salt
- Whipped cream to serve

Method:

1. Heat oven to 400°F. Prick sweet potatoes; bake on a sheet pan 60 minutes until very soft. Cool until handleable; scrape flesh from skins. Mash thoroughly — through a sieve for the silkiest texture.
2. Reduce oven to 350°F.
3. Combine 2 cups mashed sweet potato with eggs, sugar, cream, milk, butter, bourbon, vanilla, spices, salt. Whisk smooth.
4. Pour into the blind-baked crust. Bake 50–60 minutes until the center jiggles slightly but the edges are set.
5. Cool fully — 2 hours minimum — before slicing. Serve with whipped cream.

Harvest connection: November.

7.7 Sweet potato hash

A weekend breakfast that uses leftover roast sweet potato or starts from raw. Top with a fried egg and you have dinner too.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 25 min · **Total:** 35 min

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp neutral oil or bacon fat
- 1 medium *yellow onion*, diced
- 1 *red bell pepper*, diced (or a *poblano* for a smoky hash)
- 4 oz bacon or chorizo, diced (optional)
- 1.5 lb *sweet potatoes*, 1/2-inch dice (about 4 cups)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1/4 tsp *Chiltepin* or chile powder
- 2 cloves *garlic*, minced
- 4 eggs (optional, for serving)
- Chopped *cilantro* or *parsley*, hot sauce

Method:

1. Heat oil in a 12-inch cast-iron skillet over medium-high. If using bacon or chorizo, render first, 5 minutes; remove and reserve.
2. Add onion and pepper; cook 4 minutes. Add sweet potato, salt, paprika, cumin, chile; toss to coat.
3. Spread in an even layer. Cook 4 minutes undisturbed — the bottom should brown. Toss; cook 4 more minutes. Continue 10–15 minutes total until potatoes are tender and edges are crisp.
4. Stir in garlic and the reserved meat in the last minute.
5. If serving with eggs: make four wells, crack eggs into them, cover skillet, cook 4 minutes until whites set.
6. Top with herbs and hot sauce.

Harvest connection: Fall through spring.

8 · Brassicas

October through March · the workhorse cool-season family · char, slow, and pickle

Brassicas — broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, kohlrabi, brussels sprouts — are the backbone of the Dragoons cool-season kitchen. *Guide 6* covers the cultivation; the family produces from October through hard frost in late December, then again from February through May after a winter pause under row cover or in cold frames (*Guide 14*). For five months of the year, the brassicas dominate the savory side of dinner.

The cooking principle for the family is high heat or low heat — never medium. Roasting at 425°F+ produces caramelized edges; slow braising at 250°F produces silken texture. Boiling produces sad gray vegetables. Almost nothing in this chapter calls for boiling.

8.1 Why brassicas in the Dragoons kitchen

The flavor advantage is the cold-soaked sugar. Brassicas concentrate sugars as a freeze-defense mechanism — a kale leaf at 28°F is markedly sweeter than the same leaf at 60°F. Cochise County winters routinely drop into the teens for short periods, which transforms the flavor of cabbage, kale, brussels sprouts, and broccoli for the better. The October crop is good; the January crop, when it survives, is exceptional.

8.2 Staples and prep tricks

- **Roast hot.** 425–450°F. Lower temperatures steam brassicas; you want them charred.
- **Salt cabbage early.** For slaw or fermentation, salt 30 minutes ahead and squeeze — the water release transforms texture.
- **Stem kale aggressively.** Fold the leaf in half along the stem; tear the stem out in one motion. Bagged “no-stem” pre-bagged kale is bitter — fresh, properly stemmed kale is not.
- **Blanch broccoli before roasting if the florets are large.** 90 seconds in salted water, ice bath, drain — they roast more evenly.
- **The leaves are the best part of kohlrabi.** Don’t compost them. Treat them like collards.

8.3 Charred broccoli with garlic and lemon

The everyday recipe. Roast hot, dress hot. Better than steamed broccoli at any age.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 25 min

Ingredients:

- 1.5 lb *broccoli* (*Guide 6* §2), cut into long florets with stems
- 3 tbsp olive oil

- 1 tsp coarse salt
- 4 cloves *garlic*, sliced thin
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes or *Chiltepin*
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 2 tbsp grated Pecorino or Parmigiano

Method:

1. Heat oven to 450°F. Toss broccoli with 2 tbsp olive oil and salt on a sheet pan. Spread in a single layer.
2. Roast 18–22 minutes, undisturbed, until florets are deeply charred at the edges and stems are tender.
3. While the broccoli roasts, warm the remaining 1 tbsp oil in a small skillet over medium-low. Add garlic and pepper flakes; cook 2 minutes until garlic is just golden. Off heat, add lemon juice — it will sizzle.
4. Tip the roasted broccoli onto a platter. Drizzle with the warm garlic oil. Sprinkle with lemon zest and grated cheese.

Harvest connection: October–December and February–April.

8.4 Cabbage and apple slaw

A winter slaw that holds its texture in the fridge for two days. The apple — a tart variety, ideally — keeps the cabbage from feeling heavy.

Yields: 6 servings · **Active:** 20 min · **Total:** 45 min

Ingredients:

- 1 lb *green or red cabbage* (*Guide 6 §2*), cored, sliced very thin
- 1 large tart apple (Granny Smith, Pink Lady, or a homestead variety), julienned
- 1 medium *carrot*, grated
- 4 *scallions*, sliced thin
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh *parsley*
- For the dressing:
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp celery seed
- Salt and black pepper

Method:

1. Toss cabbage with 1 tsp salt in a colander. Let stand 20 minutes; squeeze excess water out by hand.

2. In a large bowl, combine cabbage with apple, carrot, scallions, parsley.
3. Whisk dressing ingredients; pour over slaw. Toss thoroughly.
4. Rest 30 minutes before serving; even better after 2 hours.

Harvest connection: October through April.

Variations: Substitute Napa cabbage for a more delicate slaw; substitute kohlrabi for half the cabbage for a sturdier one.

8.5 Kale and white-bean ribollita

The Tuscan re-boiled-bread soup — kale, beans, bread, time. A January Sunday recipe. Improves on day two; on day three it's something different and almost better.

Yields: 6 servings · **Active:** 30 min · **Total:** 2 hours

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup olive oil, plus more to finish
- 1 medium *yellow onion*, diced
- 2 *carrots*, diced
- 2 *celery stalks*, diced (optional)
- 5 cloves *garlic*, sliced
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 cup canned or jarred tomato (*Guide 12 §12.4*)
- 6 cups vegetable or bean broth
- 3 cups cooked *white tepary or cannellini beans* (§5.3)
- 1 bunch (10–12 oz) *Tuscan kale* or curly kale, stemmed, torn
- 1 small Parmigiano rind (optional but recommended)
- 4 cups day-old country bread, torn
- Salt and pepper
- Grated Parmigiano to serve

Method:

1. Warm olive oil in a heavy pot. Sweat onion, carrot, celery over medium-low 12–15 minutes until very soft.
2. Add garlic and tomato paste; cook 2 minutes. Add canned tomato; cook 5 minutes.
3. Add broth, beans, and Parmigiano rind. Bring to a simmer. Mash about a cup of the beans against the side of the pot with a wooden spoon — this thickens the broth.
4. Add kale; simmer 20 minutes until silken.
5. Stir in torn bread. Cook 10 minutes more until bread has dissolved into the soup. Salt and pepper.
6. Rest 15 minutes off heat. Serve in shallow bowls with a generous pour of olive oil and grated Parmigiano.

Harvest connection: January–February, when kale is sweetened by frost and stored beans are deep into rotation.

8.6 Roasted cauliflower with tahini

A whole-roasted cauliflower presented at the table — dramatic, simple, vegetarian, satisfying. The tahini sauce works as well over roasted carrot or sweet potato.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 15 min · **Total:** 1 hour

Ingredients:

- 1 large head *cauliflower* (*Guide 6 §2*), leaves trimmed, stem flat
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- For the tahini sauce:
 - 1/3 cup tahini
 - 1/4 cup lemon juice
 - 1 small clove *garlic*, microplaned
 - 1/4 cup water
 - 1/2 tsp salt
- To finish:
 - 2 tbsp pomegranate arils (*Guide 9 §5*) — fresh in November–December; substitute dried cranberry off-season
 - 2 tbsp chopped *parsley* and *mint*
 - 2 tbsp toasted pine nuts or pumpkin seeds

Method:

1. Heat oven to 425°F. Mix oil, cumin, coriander, salt, paprika in a small bowl. Rub all over the cauliflower, getting into the crevices.
2. Set cauliflower on a sheet pan with 1/4 cup water in the bottom (creates steam for the first stage of cooking).
3. Roast 40–50 minutes — the water will evaporate; the head should be deeply browned and a knife should slip into the center with no resistance.
4. Whisk tahini sauce ingredients together — start with less water, add until smooth and pourable.
5. Slide cauliflower onto a platter. Pour tahini sauce around. Scatter pomegranate, herbs, and nuts over the top.

Harvest connection: October–April. The pomegranate window is November–December.

8.7 Kohlrabi remoulade

The classic French preparation, applied to a Dragoons-grown kohlrabi. Crisp, sharp, refreshing — the antidote to a heavy winter table.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 15 min · **Total:** 30 min

Ingredients:

- 2 medium *kohlrabi* (*Guide 6 §2*), peeled deeply (the skin is fibrous)
- 1 small tart apple (optional, grated to match)
- For the dressing:
 - 1/4 cup mayonnaise
 - 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
 - 1 tbsp lemon juice
 - 1 tbsp cornichon, finely chopped
 - 1 tbsp capers, chopped
 - 2 tbsp chopped fresh *parsley* and *tarragon* (or just parsley)
 - Salt and pepper

Method:

1. Julienne kohlrabi on a mandoline or grate on the large holes of a box grater. Salt lightly; let stand 10 minutes; squeeze gently.
2. Whisk dressing ingredients.
3. Toss kohlrabi (and apple, if using) with the dressing. Rest 15 minutes before serving.

Harvest connection: November through March.

8.8 Brussels sprouts with bacon

The recipe that converted everyone who claimed not to like Brussels sprouts. High heat, bacon fat, balsamic at the end.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 20 min · **Total:** 30 min

Ingredients:

- 1.5 lb *brussels sprouts* (*Guide 6 §2*), trimmed and halved
- 4 oz bacon, cut in 1/2-inch lardons
- 1 tbsp olive oil (if needed)
- 1 small *shallot* or 1/4 *yellow onion*, diced
- Salt and black pepper
- 1 tbsp aged balsamic vinegar
- Optional: 2 tbsp chopped *toasted hazelnuts* or *walnuts*

Method:

1. Heat oven to 425°F. Render bacon in a 12-inch cast-iron skillet over medium 6-8 minutes until crisp. Remove bacon; leave fat. If less than 2 tbsp, add olive oil.
2. Add brussels sprouts cut-side down to the skillet. Salt. Don't move them — let the cut sides brown, 4-5 minutes.
3. Stir in shallot. Transfer skillet to oven; roast 15-20 minutes until sprouts are tender and crisp at the edges.
4. Off heat, return bacon to the pan. Drizzle with balsamic; toss. Pepper.
5. Transfer to a platter; scatter nuts if using.

Harvest connection: Late October through December.

9 · Alliums

The foundation of every dish · garlic, onion, leek, scallion, shallot · five recipes that put them at the center

Alliums are the foundation flavor of nearly every recipe in this guide — onion in the base of every stew, garlic in nearly every sauté, scallion in every Asian-leaning dish. *Guide 6 §3* covers the cultivation. This chapter centers the five recipes where the allium is the main event, not the supporting cast.

The Dragoons grow alliums well. Hard-neck garlic planted in October produces in June; soft-neck holds longer in storage; the yellow storage onions cured in July keep through April. Scallion and leek run intermittently through the year; shallot, planted alongside garlic, harvests with it in early summer.

9.1 Why alliums in the Dragoons kitchen

The flavor density of dry-climate alliums is the kitchen advantage. A Cochise-grown hardneck garlic clove is twice as pungent as a supermarket equivalent. A storage onion cured in July's heat develops a paper-thin skin and a dense, sweet interior that holds together in long-cook applications where wet-climate onions turn to mush. The trade-off is yield — Dragoons alliums are smaller, denser, more expensive per pound of finished kitchen output — but the flavor return is unmatched.

9.2 Staples and prep tricks

- **Cure thoroughly.** Onions and garlic both want two weeks of warm dry air after digging before they go into storage. *Guide 12 §9* covers the practice.
- **Smashing garlic before slicing.** Lay the side of a chef's knife on a peeled clove; press down with the heel of your palm. The clove splits open; the skin slips off; the flesh is bruised which speeds flavor release.
- **Scallion white vs green.** The white is aromatic and cooks down (use early); the green is fresh and bright (use late, like a herb).
- **Leek cleaning.** Halve lengthwise; fan the layers under cold running water — grit hides between layers. Pat dry.
- **The trim is stock.** Onion skins, garlic stems, scallion roots, leek tops — keep a freezer bag and add to it for weeks. When full, make stock.

9.3 Roasted whole garlic

The recipe used as an ingredient in §5.6, written out fully here for clarity. Plus the various ways to use the finished cloves.

Yields: 2 heads (about 1/4 cup soft cloves) · **Active:** 5 min · **Total:** 45 min

Ingredients:

- 2 whole heads *garlic*
- 2 tsp olive oil
- A pinch of salt
- Optional: sprig of *thyme* or *rosemary*

Method:

1. Heat oven to 400°F. Slice the top 1/4 inch off each garlic head to expose the cloves.
2. Place on a square of foil. Drizzle oil into the exposed cloves; sprinkle salt; tuck herb sprig.
3. Wrap loosely; roast 40–45 minutes until cloves are deeply golden and squeezable.
4. Squeeze cloves out of skins into a small bowl; mash with a fork.

Uses: Spread on toast with flaky salt; whisk into vinaigrette; mash into mashed potato; stir into soup or pasta; smear into a roast chicken cavity. Keeps a week refrigerated; freezes in tablespoons.

Harvest connection: Year-round; especially excellent July–November from the freshly cured June crop.

9.4 French onion soup

The slow soup. Two hours of onion-caramelization for a dinner that justifies every minute. The shortcut versions all fail; this is the long version.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 45 min · **Total:** 2.5 hours

Ingredients:

- 4 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 3 lb *yellow onions* (*Guide 6 §3*), halved and sliced thin
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp sugar (jump-starts caramelization)
- 4 cloves *garlic*, sliced
- 2 sprigs fresh *thyme*
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 cup dry white wine or dry sherry
- 6 cups good beef stock (homemade if possible; otherwise low-sodium)
- 1 tbsp soy sauce or fish sauce (depth-builder)
- Black pepper
- 4 slices country bread, toasted
- 6 oz Gruyère, grated

Method:

1. Melt butter and oil in a heavy Dutch oven over medium-low. Add onions, salt, and sugar.
2. Cook 60–90 minutes, stirring every 10–15 minutes, scraping up the brown fond that develops on the bottom. The onions will sweat, then collapse, then begin to caramelize. By minute 75 they should be the color of deep mahogany. Patience is the only ingredient that matters here.
3. Add garlic, thyme, bay leaf; cook 2 minutes.
4. Deglaze with wine; reduce 3 minutes. Add stock and soy sauce; bring to a simmer; cook 30 minutes. Black pepper.
5. Heat broiler. Ladle soup into oven-proof bowls. Float a slice of bread on each. Pile with Gruyère.
6. Broil 2–3 minutes until cheese is bubbly and browned in spots.

Harvest connection: Year-round; ideal in February when stored onions are still in good shape but the pantry is otherwise getting lean.

9.5 Garlic confit

Garlic cloves slow-poached in olive oil until silky. Both the cloves and the garlic-infused oil are kitchen gold for the next month.

Yields: 2 cups confit cloves in oil · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 2 hours

Ingredients:

- 2 cups peeled *garlic cloves* (about 4 heads)
- 2 cups olive oil (good but not your best — you’re using a lot)
- 2 sprigs fresh *thyme*
- 2 sprigs fresh *rosemary*
- 1 bay leaf
- 6 black peppercorns
- 2 dried *chiltepin* (optional)

Method:

1. Place all ingredients in a small heavy saucepan. The oil should cover the garlic by 1/2 inch — add more if needed.
2. Heat over the lowest possible flame. You want the oil at around 200–225°F — small lazy bubbles rising occasionally, never a simmer. A diffuser helps.
3. Cook 90 minutes to 2 hours. The cloves should turn deep gold and become so soft they collapse under fork pressure.
4. Cool to room temperature. Transfer to a clean jar with the oil. Refrigerate.
5. Keeps 1 month refrigerated. Use the cloves whole on bread, mashed into mayonnaise, dropped into vinaigrette, or smeared on pizza. Use the oil for sautéing, for drizzling on roasted vegetables, for dressing salad.

Harvest connection: July onward, from fresh-cured garlic.

Note on botulism. Garlic-in-oil is a known *Clostridium botulinum* risk if stored at room temperature for more than a few days. Refrigerate the confit at all times; use within a month; never give as a gift without explicit refrigeration instructions. For a shelf-stable garlic preserve, see *Guide 12 §6.5* for the acidified version.

9.6 Allium and anchovy butter

A compound butter that disappears fast. Use on grilled steak, on a baked sweet potato, melted over green beans, smeared into a baguette and toasted.

Yields: About 3/4 cup · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 10 min

Ingredients:

- 8 tbsp unsalted butter, softened
- 4 *anchovy fillets*, finely chopped
- 2 cloves *garlic*, microplaned
- 2 tbsp finely chopped *shallot*
- 2 *scallions*, finely sliced (white and green)
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh *parsley*
- A grind of black pepper
- A pinch of crushed *Chiltepin* (optional)

Method:

1. Mash everything together in a bowl with a fork until uniform.
2. Roll into a log on parchment; twist the ends. Refrigerate or freeze.
3. Slice off a coin as needed.

Harvest connection: Year-round.

9.7 Scallion pancakes

Crisp, layered, savory pancakes pulled from northeastern Chinese street-food tradition. A weekend project; pair with a dipping sauce of soy, vinegar, ginger, and chile.

Yields: 4 pancakes, serves 4 · **Active:** 45 min · **Total:** 90 min

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup boiling water
- 1 tbsp neutral oil, plus more for cooking

- For the filling:
- 3 tbsp toasted sesame oil
- 2 tbsp neutral oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 bunch *scallions* (8–10), sliced thin (white and green)
- For the dipping sauce:
- 3 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp black vinegar or rice vinegar
- 1 tsp grated ginger
- 1 tsp crushed *Chiltepin* or chile oil
- 1 tsp toasted sesame seeds

Method:

1. Place flour in a bowl. Pour boiling water in slowly, stirring with chopsticks or a fork to make a shaggy dough. Add the 1 tbsp oil. Turn onto a counter; knead 5 minutes until smooth. Cover; rest 30 minutes.
2. Divide dough into 4 pieces. Working one at a time on an oiled counter: roll into a thin rectangle, about 8×12 inches. Brush with the combined sesame oil and neutral oil; sprinkle with salt; scatter scallions evenly.
3. Roll up tightly from the long edge into a rope. Coil the rope into a spiral; tuck the end under. Flatten gently with your palm; rest 5 minutes.
4. Roll each spiral into a thin round, about 8 inches across. Press scallions back in if they pop out.
5. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a 10-inch skillet over medium-high. Cook each pancake 2–3 minutes per side until deeply golden and crisp.
6. Whisk dipping sauce.
7. Cut pancakes into wedges. Serve hot with dipping sauce.

Harvest connection: Year-round; ideal in spring when overwintered scallions are at their best.

10 · Greens

The cold-season counter · spinach, kale, chard, lettuce, mâche · five recipes from winter salad to wilted-greens supper

Greens fill the gap that brassicas and roots leave. From October through May, the cold frame (*Guide 14 §3*) and low tunnel (*Guide 14 §4*) carry spinach, mâche, claytonia, mizuna, arugula, lettuces, and overwintered chard through a Cochise winter. The summer hot months (mid-June through mid-September) are the gap — Malabar spinach, New Zealand spinach, and amaranth greens carry the leafy load through the heat.

The kitchen handles greens by category. Tender greens (lettuce, mâche, claytonia, baby spinach) go raw, in salad, in sandwiches. Sturdy greens (mature spinach, chard, kale, turnip greens, mustard greens) get wilted, braised, or baked into hand pies. Bitter greens (escarole, arugula, dandelion) get balanced with fat, salt, and acid.

10.1 Why greens in the Dragoons kitchen

The cold-frame greens of January and February are the kitchen's quiet luxury. While neighbors are buying \$5 boxes of grocery-store spring mix in winter, a Dragoons cook with two 4×8 cold frames has fresh-cut spinach and mâche, January through March, for the cost of seed and a few minutes of weekly trimming. The flavor is markedly better than the bagged equivalent — slow-grown, cold-sweetened, harvested same day.

10.2 Staples and prep tricks

- **Spin dry thoroughly.** Wet greens dilute vinaigrette and steam in the pan. A salad spinner is the one specialty tool worth owning.
- **Dress at the table.** Salt and acid wilt tender greens. Toss vinaigrette into the bowl just before serving — never on the prep table.
- **Wilt fast.** Sturdy greens need 30 seconds per side over high heat. More and they go gray.
- **Stems are not garbage.** Chard stems and kale ribs, sliced thin and sautéed with a head start, are excellent. Discard only tough mustard or turnip stems.
- **The water that clings.** When wilting greens, the rinse water still clinging to leaves is enough liquid — don't add more.

10.3 Wilted greens with garlic

The everyday side. Five minutes; cooks two pounds of greens down to four servings; pairs with anything.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 8 min · **Total:** 8 min

Ingredients:

- 2 lb *sturdy greens* — chard, spinach, kale, mustard greens, turnip greens, or a mix (*Guide 6 §5*)
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 4 cloves *garlic*, sliced thin
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes or crushed *Chiltepin*
- 1/2 tsp salt
- A squeeze of lemon

Method:

1. Wash greens but don't dry. Strip stems (slice them thin separately if from chard). Roughly chop leaves.
2. Heat oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high. Add garlic and pepper flakes; cook 60 seconds until garlic is just golden.
3. Add chard stems first if using; cook 90 seconds. Then add greens in handfuls, tossing as they wilt — they'll lose 80% of their volume.
4. Cook 2-3 minutes total until just wilted, not slimy. Salt. Finish with lemon.

Harvest connection: Year-round, with peak quality November–April.

10.4 Spinach and feta hand pies

Borrowed from Turkish *gözleme* and Greek *spanakopita* traditions — flaky dough wrapped around a spinach-feta filling. The Saturday-lunch recipe that uses two pounds of spinach.

Yields: 8 hand pies, serves 4 · **Active:** 45 min · **Total:** 90 min

Ingredients:

- For the dough:
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup warm water
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- For the filling:
- 2 lb fresh *spinach* (*Guide 6 §5*), washed
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small *yellow onion*, diced fine
- 2 cloves *garlic*, minced
- 1 *scallion* bunch, sliced
- 8 oz feta, crumbled
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh *dill*
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh *parsley* and *mint*
- 1 tsp lemon zest

- Black pepper
- 1 egg, beaten (for sealing)
- More olive oil or melted butter for cooking

Method:

1. **Dough:** Mix flour and salt in a bowl. Add water and oil; stir to combine. Knead 5 minutes until smooth. Cover; rest 30 minutes.
2. **Filling:** Wilt spinach in a dry pot over medium-high heat, in batches, with only the rinse water clinging. About 4 minutes total. Cool; squeeze dry hard in a clean towel — you want about 1.5 cups of squeezed greens. Chop.
3. Sweat onion in oil 6 minutes. Add garlic; cook 1 minute. Cool.
4. Combine chopped spinach, onion mixture, scallion, feta, herbs, lemon zest, pepper. Taste — feta brings most of the salt.
5. Divide dough into 8 balls. Roll each into a thin 8-inch round. Place 1/4 cup filling in the center; brush edges with beaten egg; fold over to a half-moon and press to seal, then crimp with a fork.
6. Heat a cast-iron skillet over medium with a thin film of olive oil. Cook each pie 3 minutes per side until deeply golden. Serve hot.

Harvest connection: Spinach peaks November–April under the cold frame.

10.5 January cold-frame salad with prickly-pear vinaigrette

The salad that justifies the cold frame. Tender greens picked the morning of service, dressed with a vinaigrette built on prickly-pear vinegar (*Guide 12 §4*). Distinctly Dragoons-specific; nothing else tastes quite like it.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 15 min · **Total:** 15 min

Ingredients:

- 6 cups mixed *cold-frame greens* — mâche, claytonia, baby spinach, arugula, small lettuces
- 1 small *fennel bulb* (*Guide 6 §6*), shaved thin (optional)
- 1 small Cara Cara or blood orange, supremed (or 1/2 cup pomegranate arils if pomegranate is still in storage)
- 2 oz shaved Pecorino or aged Manchego
- 1/4 cup toasted pecans or walnuts
- For the vinaigrette:
- 2 tbsp *prickly-pear vinegar* (*Guide 12 §4*) or 1 tbsp red wine vinegar + 1 tsp *prickly-pear syrup*
- 1 tsp honey
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 small *shallot*, minced

- 6 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and black pepper

Method:

1. Whisk vinaigrette ingredients except oil. Stream in oil while whisking. Taste; adjust.
2. In a wide bowl, combine greens, fennel, citrus, cheese, nuts.
3. Toss with vinaigrette just before serving — only enough to coat lightly. Pass extra dressing at the table.

Harvest connection: January through March, peak cold-frame season.

10.6 Mâche and goat cheese

Mâche (lamb's lettuce, corn salad) is the most cold-tolerant green in the cold frame — it laughs at 15°F under glass. Tender, nutty, the size of a quarter at maturity. The cheese-and-walnut treatment is its classic French companion.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 10 min

Ingredients:

- 6 oz fresh *mâche*, gently washed and patted dry
- 1/2 small *red onion*, sliced very thin and soaked in cold water 5 minutes
- 4 oz fresh goat cheese, crumbled
- 1/2 cup toasted walnuts, roughly chopped
- For the vinaigrette:
 - 1 tbsp white wine vinegar
 - 1 tsp Dijon mustard
 - 1 tsp honey
 - 3 tbsp walnut oil (or olive oil)
 - Salt and black pepper

Method:

1. Whisk vinaigrette.
2. Drain onion; pat dry.
3. Combine mâche, onion, goat cheese, walnuts in a bowl. Drizzle vinaigrette over; toss gently — mâche bruises easily.
4. Plate; finish with cracked pepper.

Harvest connection: December through March, exclusively from cold-frame or low-tunnel sowings.

10.7 Kale Caesar

A kale Caesar holds up to a strong dressing in a way romaine cannot. The leaves are massaged with the dressing to soften — this is the technique that converts kale skeptics.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 20 min · **Total:** 30 min

Ingredients:

- 1 large bunch *Tuscan kale* (12 oz), stemmed, sliced thin
- For the dressing:
 - 4 *anchovy fillets*
 - 2 cloves *garlic*
 - 1 egg yolk
 - 1 tbsp lemon juice
 - 1 tsp Dijon mustard
 - 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
 - 1/2 cup olive oil
 - 1/3 cup grated Parmigiano, plus more to finish
 - Black pepper
- For croutons:
 - 2 cups torn country bread
 - 2 tbsp olive oil
 - Pinch of salt

Method:

1. **Croutons:** Toss bread with oil and salt; toast at 375°F 10-12 minutes until crisp. Cool.
2. **Dressing:** In a mortar and pestle (or a small food processor), mash anchovies and garlic to a paste. Add egg yolk, lemon, mustard, Worcestershire. Whisk in oil in a thin stream until emulsified. Stir in Parmigiano. Pepper.
3. Place kale in a wide bowl. Pour half the dressing over; massage with clean hands 60 seconds — the kale softens visibly and turns darker green.
4. Rest 10 minutes.
5. Add croutons and remaining dressing; toss. Top with shaved Parmigiano and pepper.

Harvest connection: October through April.

LOCAL TIP

A note on raw eggs. The traditional Caesar uses a raw yolk. If raw egg is

a concern, substitute 1 tbsp mayonnaise; the dressing is slightly less complex but safer for at-risk eaters.

11 · Roots

Carrots, parsnips, beets, turnips, radishes · cellared crops · five recipes for the winter table

Root crops are the kitchen's quiet pantry. *Guide 6 §4* covers the cultivation; *Guide 12 §10* covers cellaring. A 30-pound cellared bin of carrots, parsnips, and beets — dug in November, held at 33–40°F in a cool corner of a garage or root cellar — feeds a household from December through April. The recipes below assume that bin and parcel out the contents.

Roots reward patience. Slow roasting concentrates sugars. Long braising silkens texture. Quick pickling brightens any sandwich or rice bowl. Nothing in this chapter calls for boiled-and-mashed; the family deserves better.

11.1 Why roots in the Dragoons kitchen

The dry cool storage of a Dragoons winter is ideal for root crops. Carrots and parsnips hold their texture for four to five months; beets and turnips for two to three. The flavor improves with cure — a carrot dug in November and eaten in February is sweeter than the same carrot eaten in November. Sugars concentrate, water content drops slightly, the texture firms.

11.2 Staples and prep tricks

- **Don't peel young roots.** A scrub with a vegetable brush keeps the flavorful skin and saves labor. Peel only older, larger, more fibrous roots.
- **Cut sizes match for even cooking.** A roasting pan with carrots cut in half lengthwise and beets cut in eighths will produce uneven doneness; size to match.
- **Boil beets whole, unpeeled.** The skin slips off with thumb pressure once they cool. Peeling raw beets is a stained-fingers mistake.
- **Save the greens.** Beet greens and turnip greens are excellent wilted (see §10.3). The carrot tops make a workable chimichurri or pesto.
- **Quick-pickle the radish glut.** A jar of sliced radish in vinegar and salt is ready in 2 hours and brightens any taco, sandwich, or grain bowl.

11.3 Roasted carrots and parsnips with cumin

The everyday root side. Different from the standard glazed carrot — drier, more complex, more interesting.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 15 min · **Total:** 45 min

Ingredients:

- 1 lb *carrots* (*Guide 6 §4*), scrubbed, cut on a long bias into 1-inch pieces
- 1 lb *parsnips*, scrubbed, cut similarly

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp honey or *prickly-pear* syrup
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh *parsley* and *cilantro*
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1/4 cup toasted hazelnuts or almonds, chopped
- Optional: 2 tbsp Greek yogurt to plate

Method:

1. Heat oven to 425°F. Toss carrots and parsnips with olive oil, cumin, coriander, paprika, salt on a sheet pan.
2. Roast 25 minutes. Drizzle with honey; toss; roast 5–8 more minutes until edges are caramelized.
3. Transfer to a platter (spread yogurt on the bottom if using). Squeeze lemon over; scatter herbs and nuts.

Harvest connection: November through April.

11.4 Beet and goat cheese tartlets

Roasted beet, goat cheese, walnut, honey on puff pastry. A first-course recipe that looks like more work than it is.

Yields: 6 tartlets · **Active:** 25 min · **Total:** 1.5 hours

Ingredients:

- 4 medium *beets* (*Guide 6 §4*), trimmed, scrubbed
- 1 sheet puff pastry, thawed
- 4 oz fresh goat cheese
- 2 tbsp heavy cream
- 1 tsp honey, plus more to finish
- 1/4 cup walnuts, toasted and chopped
- A handful of microgreens or torn fresh *thyme*
- Flaky salt
- Black pepper

Method:

1. Heat oven to 400°F. Wrap beets individually in foil with a splash of water; roast on a sheet pan 60 minutes until tender. Cool until handleable; rub skins off. Slice into 1/4-inch rounds.

2. Cut puff pastry into 6 squares. Score a 1/2-inch border. Bake on parchment 12–15 minutes until puffed and golden. Press down the centers gently.
3. Whisk goat cheese, cream, and honey to a spreadable paste.
4. Spread cheese into pastry centers. Layer beet rounds on top. Drizzle with honey; salt and pepper.
5. Top with walnuts and microgreens or thyme. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Harvest connection: Beets are ready October through January; pastry is freezer-stable year-round.

11.5 Root vegetable gratin

A slow-baked layered gratin — cream, garlic, thyme, Gruyère, and a pound and a half of mixed roots. Sunday dinner.

Yields: 6 servings · **Active:** 25 min · **Total:** 90 min

Ingredients:

- 1.5 lb mixed *roots* — potato, sweet potato, parsnip, celeriac, turnip, rutabaga — peeled and sliced 1/8 inch thick (a mandoline helps)
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 3 cloves *garlic*, smashed
- 2 sprigs fresh *thyme*
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp salt
- A grating of fresh nutmeg
- Black pepper
- 1 cup grated Gruyère
- 1/2 cup grated Parmigiano
- 2 tbsp butter

Method:

1. Heat oven to 375°F. Butter a 9×13 baking dish.
2. In a small saucepan, warm cream with garlic, thyme, bay leaf, salt, nutmeg, pepper. Bring just to a simmer; remove from heat; let infuse 10 minutes. Strain.
3. Layer root slices in the baking dish, slightly overlapping, alternating colors. Pour infused cream over each layer; sprinkle Gruyère between layers.
4. Top with Parmigiano. Dot with butter.
5. Cover with foil; bake 45 minutes. Uncover; bake 15–20 more minutes until top is browned and a knife passes easily through.
6. Rest 15 minutes before serving.

Harvest connection: November through March.

11.6 Quick-pickled radishes (cross-reference)

A jar that lives in the fridge door from December through May. Cross-ref *Guide 12* §6.3 for the canned, shelf-stable version.

Yields: 1 pint · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 2 hours

Ingredients:

- 1 bunch *radishes* (10–12 medium), sliced 1/8 inch thick (or julienned daikon for a sturdier pickle)
- 3/4 cup rice vinegar or white vinegar
- 3/4 cup water
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp coarse salt
- 1 clove *garlic*, smashed
- 1/2 tsp black peppercorns
- Optional: 1 dried *Chiltepin*, a few coriander seeds

Method:

1. Pack radishes into a clean pint jar.
2. Combine vinegar, water, sugar, salt, garlic, peppercorns in a small saucepan; bring to a boil.
3. Pour hot brine over radishes; tap the jar to release bubbles.
4. Cool to room temperature; cap and refrigerate. Ready in 2 hours; peak at 24 hours; keeps 3 weeks.

Use: Tacos, grain bowls, sandwiches, salads, garnish for the avocado toast that's eating leftover sweet potato hash.

11.7 Winter root soup

A purée-style soup, smoother than ribollita and faster — 45 minutes including the simmer. Uses any combination of roots; what's in your bin works.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 20 min · **Total:** 50 min

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp butter or olive oil
- 1 medium *yellow onion*, diced
- 1 leek (or 2 more onions), white and pale green, sliced and well-washed
- 3 cloves *garlic*, sliced
- 2 lb mixed *roots* — carrot, parsnip, celeriac, turnip, sweet potato, or rutabaga — peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1 medium russet or Yukon Gold potato (helps with body)

- 6 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig fresh *thyme*
- 1/2 cup heavy cream or half-and-half (optional)
- Salt and pepper
- To finish: chopped *chives*, croutons, a drizzle of good olive oil

Method:

1. Melt butter in a heavy pot. Sweat onion and leek 10 minutes. Add garlic; cook 1 minute.
2. Add roots, potato, stock, bay, thyme. Bring to a boil; reduce to a simmer; cover and cook 25–30 minutes until everything is fork-tender.
3. Discard bay and thyme. Purée with an immersion blender until silken — or transfer in batches to a stand blender (carefully, hot liquid). Strain through a sieve for an extra-smooth soup.
4. Return to the pot. Stir in cream if using. Salt and pepper.
5. Serve hot with chives, croutons, and olive oil.

Harvest connection: December through April.

12 · Grapes

Fresh table use · the seed-to-skin spectrum · four recipes for the September flush

Grapes in the Dragoons kitchen are a September crop — *Guide 5* covers the cultivation; the harvest window runs from late August (Flame, Black Monukka) through late September (Concord, Niagara, Muscadine). The library does not cover wine-making, and this chapter does not either. What's here is fresh use, drying (cross-ref *Guide 12 §13*), and four recipes that move grapes from snack to dinner.

The kitchen ranges from the very simple — a bunch on the cutting board next to cheese — to the slightly project — grape leaves stuffed with rice and herbs, an entire afternoon of folding. Both versions belong in the same chapter.

12.1 Why grapes in the Dragoons kitchen

Cochise grapes pack flavor density that grocery-store grapes don't approach. A Flame from a backyard vine in early September is electric — sweet, slightly herbaceous, faintly tannic — where the supermarket equivalent is generic sugar water. The trade-off is shorter storage; backyard grapes hold a week in the fridge at peak quality, where commercial varieties hold three weeks but at lower-flavor baseline.

12.2 Staples and prep tricks

- **Eat grapes at room temperature.** Cold flattens flavor.
- **Use the leaves.** Young grape leaves (May, June) are the wrapping material for dolma. Blanch 30 seconds, ice bath, drain, freeze flat in stacks of 20 for year-round use.
- **Roast for sauce, not eating.** Roasted grapes turn jammy and savory — a different vegetable entirely from fresh.
- **The peel is bitter on some varieties.** Concord and Muscadine peels are tough; Flame and Niagara peels are tender. Match recipe to variety.

12.3 Roasted grape and rosemary focaccia

A small focaccia studded with whole grapes that burst in the oven, mixing with the dough — sweet-savory, the smell of rosemary, a top crust crisp with olive oil. The bread you bring to a September dinner.

Yields: One sheet-pan focaccia, serves 8 · **Active:** 25 min · **Total:** 4 hours

Ingredients:

- 4 cups bread flour (or all-purpose)
- 2 tsp instant yeast
- 2 tsp salt
- 1.75 cups warm water

- 1/4 cup olive oil, plus more for the pan and top
- 2 cups *small red or black grapes* (Flame, Black Monukka, Concord), removed from stems
- 2 tbsp fresh *rosemary* leaves
- Flaky salt
- Optional: 2 tbsp honey, drizzled at the end

Method:

1. Whisk flour, yeast, salt in a bowl. Add water and 2 tbsp olive oil; mix to a wet, shaggy dough. Knead in the bowl with a wet hand 60 seconds (this dough is too wet for counter-kneading).
2. Cover; rise at room temperature 2 hours, until doubled.
3. Generously oil a half-sheet pan. Tip the dough onto it; stretch with oiled hands to fill the pan, dimpling as you go. Rise 30 more minutes.
4. Heat oven to 425°F. Dimple the dough again with your fingertips. Scatter grapes evenly; press them in slightly. Scatter rosemary. Drizzle with olive oil; sprinkle flaky salt.
5. Bake 25–30 minutes until deeply golden. Drizzle with honey if using.
6. Cool 15 minutes. Cut into squares; serve warm.

Harvest connection: September.

12.4 Grape and farro salad

A grain salad that uses fresh grapes alongside herbs, cheese, and nuts. The kind of midday lunch that travels well in a glass container.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 15 min · **Total:** 45 min (includes farro cook)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup pearled farro
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 cups *grapes*, halved (any variety; mix is good)
- 1/2 cup chopped toasted walnuts or pecans
- 1/3 cup crumbled feta or shaved Pecorino
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh *parsley* and *mint*
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced *red onion*, soaked in cold water 5 min
- For the vinaigrette:
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1.5 tbsp red wine vinegar or *prickly-pear vinegar*
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp honey
- Salt and pepper

Method:

1. Cook farro in salted water 25 minutes until tender but with bite. Drain; spread on a sheet pan to cool.
2. Whisk vinaigrette.
3. In a wide bowl, combine cooled farro, grapes, nuts, cheese, herbs, drained onion. Toss with vinaigrette.
4. Rest 15 minutes before serving.

Harvest connection: September.

12.5 Stuffed grape leaves (dolma)

The afternoon project. Sixty grape leaves, rice, herbs, two hours of rolling. The result holds in the fridge for a week and improves over the first 24 hours.

Yields: About 50 small dolma, serves 6 · **Active:** 90 min · **Total:** 2.5 hours

Ingredients:

- 60 fresh *grape leaves* (or jarred grape leaves, rinsed; or frozen blanched leaves from the May harvest)
- 1.5 cups long-grain rice (basmati or Egyptian)
- 1 medium *yellow onion*, diced very fine
- 1/2 cup olive oil, plus more for cooking
- 1/2 cup pine nuts (optional but excellent)
- 1/4 cup currants or chopped dried *figs*
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh *dill*
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh *parsley*
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh *mint*
- 1 tsp ground allspice
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 4 cups water
- 1 lemon, sliced into rounds (for cooking)

Method:

1. Blanch fresh grape leaves 30 seconds in boiling water; ice-bath; drain. Trim hard stems. (Skip for pre-blanching or jarred.)
2. Soak rice in cold water 15 minutes; drain.
3. Sweat onion in 1/4 cup oil 6 minutes. Add pine nuts; toast 2 minutes. Stir in drained rice, currants, herbs, allspice, salt. Off heat.
4. Lay a grape leaf shiny-side down, stem at the bottom. Place 1 tbsp filling near the stem. Fold sides in; roll up tightly into a cigar. Repeat. (The first dozen are

awkward; you'll find a rhythm.)

5. Line the bottom of a heavy pot with a few extra leaves or torn ones. Pack dolma seam-side down in tight concentric circles. Tuck lemon slices among them.
6. Pour over the remaining 1/4 cup oil, lemon juice, and water. Place an inverted plate on top to weight the dolma. Bring to a simmer; cover; cook 45 minutes over very low heat.
7. Cool in the pot 30 minutes before transferring. Serve at room temperature with yogurt or a tahini-lemon sauce.

Harvest connection: Leaves: May–June. Filling: any season. The dolma themselves can be made fresh anytime if leaves were frozen.

12.6 Grape-thyme jam (cross-reference)

A small-batch jam, refrigerator-storage version. The shelf-stable canning version is *Guide 12 §11.5*.

Yields: Two 8-oz jars · **Active:** 30 min · **Total:** 1 hour

Ingredients:

- 3 cups *grapes* (Concord, Muscadine, or any flavorful variety), removed from stems
- 1.5 cups sugar
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 sprigs fresh *thyme*
- A pinch of salt

Method:

1. Combine grapes, sugar, lemon juice, thyme in a heavy non-reactive pot. Mash gently with a potato masher.
2. Bring to a boil; reduce to a vigorous simmer. Cook 25–35 minutes, stirring often, until the jam thickens and sheets off a cold spoon (or registers 220°F on a thermometer).
3. Fish out thyme stems. Pinch of salt.
4. Pour into clean jars. Cool; cap; refrigerate. Keeps a month.

For the canning version, see *Guide 12 §11.5*.

Harvest connection: September.

13 · Herbs as the soul of every dish

Six short preparations that turn any dinner around · pesto · chimichurri · dukkah · herb butter · herb oil · salsa verde

Herbs do most of the work and get the least credit. *Guide 8* covers the cultivation of the annual and perennial herb garden; this chapter is the kitchen extension. Six preparations — each made in 10–20 minutes, each keeping a week or more, each transforming whatever it touches. A Dragoons cook with one jar of pesto, one of chimichurri, and one of dukkah in the fridge has an answer to nearly any “what’s for dinner” question.

The recipes that follow are templates, not recipes. Substitute freely. Pesto with bolting cilantro and pumpkin seed is as legitimate as basil and pine nut. Salsa verde with garlic-scape pesto and walnut is unambiguously its own thing. The herb determines the personality; the method stays roughly the same.

13.1 Why herbs in the Dragoons kitchen

The dry Cochise climate concentrates essential oils in herb leaves. A Dragoons-grown basil leaf, oregano sprig, or rosemary tip carries roughly twice the volatile-oil load of the same variety from a coastal nursery. The kitchen gain is direct: half the herb, twice the impact. Recipes calibrated for grocery-store basil need scaling back when made from a home plant.

13.2 Staples and prep tricks

- **Chop herbs at the last possible moment.** Volatile oils flash off within minutes of cutting.
- **A sharp knife, not a dull one.** A dull knife bruises herbs into brown mush; a sharp knife slices cleanly and keeps the green.
- **Bolting cilantro and parsley are not wasted.** Make pesto immediately, or freeze chopped in oil cubes.
- **Dry the sturdy herbs.** Oregano, thyme, sage, rosemary all dry beautifully in the Cochise heat. *Guide 12 §7* covers the practice.
- **Pat dry before chopping.** Wet herbs cling to the knife and bruise.

13.3 Basil pesto, with variations

The Genovese original. Then three variations that use what the garden has in any season.

Yields: About 1 cup · **Active:** 15 min · **Total:** 15 min

Base recipe (basil):

- 3 cups fresh *basil leaves*, packed (*Guide 8 §3*)

- 1/3 cup toasted pine nuts (or walnuts, almonds, pumpkin seeds)
- 2 cloves *garlic*
- 1/2 cup grated Parmigiano (or half Pecorino)
- 2/3 cup good olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- Optional: lemon zest

Method:

1. In a food processor, pulse nuts and garlic to a coarse meal.
2. Add basil; pulse until finely chopped.
3. With the motor running, stream in olive oil. Process to a rough paste — leave texture.
4. Pulse in cheese and salt. Taste; adjust.
5. Transfer to a jar; cover surface with a film of oil to prevent browning. Refrigerate up to a week; freeze in ice-cube trays for 6 months.

Variations:

- **Parsley pesto:** Substitute equal volume curly or flat parsley for basil. Almond or walnut. Use as a fresh sauce on white fish or roast chicken.
- **Cilantro-pumpkin-seed pesto:** Substitute cilantro for basil, pumpkin seed for pine nut, 1 small *Chiltepin* added, lime juice for the brightness. Use on tacos, grain bowls, sweet-potato anything.
- **Arugula-walnut pesto:** Substitute peppery arugula for basil, walnut for pine nut. Use on pasta, on pizza, on roasted root vegetables.
- **Carrot-top or radish-leaf pesto:** Substitute the greens of those root crops, blanched 15 seconds and squeezed dry, for basil. Almond or sunflower seed. The recipe that earns its keep by using what would otherwise go to compost.

Harvest connection: Basil pesto July–September; the variations span the year.

13.4 Chimichurri

Argentine green sauce — parsley, oregano, garlic, vinegar, oil, chile. The companion to grilled meat; equally good on roasted vegetables, eggs, beans.

Yields: About 1 cup · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 30 min

Ingredients:

- 1 cup fresh *parsley* leaves, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh *oregano* leaves, finely chopped
- 4 cloves *garlic*, minced
- 1 small *shallot*, minced
- 1 tsp crushed dried *Chiltepin* or red pepper flakes

- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 tsp coarse salt
- Black pepper

Method:

1. Combine everything in a bowl or jar. Stir well.
2. Rest 30 minutes — non-negotiable. The flavors marry; the herbs deepen.
3. Use on grilled steak, on grilled chicken, on roasted vegetables, scrambled into eggs, dropped onto a baked potato.
4. Keeps a week refrigerated; the herbs darken but the flavor stays.

Harvest connection: Parsley year-round; oregano year-round if perennial.

13.5 Dukkah

Egyptian nut-and-seed-and-spice mix. Dry, savory, slightly hot, deeply aromatic. Sprinkle on anything — bread dipped in olive oil and then dukkah is the classic Mediterranean snack.

Yields: About 1 cup · **Active:** 15 min · **Total:** 15 min

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup hazelnuts (or almonds or pistachios)
- 1/4 cup sesame seeds
- 2 tbsp coriander seeds
- 1 tbsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
- 1 tsp dried *oregano* or *thyme*
- 1 tsp coarse salt
- 1/2 tsp crushed *Chiltepin* or smoked paprika

Method:

1. Toast nuts in a dry skillet over medium 6–8 minutes until fragrant and golden. Cool. Rub in a towel to remove skins (if hazelnuts).
2. Toast sesame seeds 2 minutes until just golden. Cool.
3. Toast coriander, cumin, fennel, peppercorns together 2 minutes until fragrant. Cool.
4. Pulse everything in a food processor or pound in a mortar to a coarse, sandy texture — not a powder. Stir in oregano, salt, chile.
5. Store in a sealed jar. Keeps a month at room temperature.

Use: Bread dipped in olive oil then dukkah. On roasted vegetables. On hummus. Sprinkled on a fried egg. Folded into yogurt for a dip.

Harvest connection: The dried oregano comes from your summer drying (*Guide 12 §7*). Everything else is pantry.

13.6 Herb butter

A compound butter using whatever fresh herbs the garden has. Freeze in a log; slice as needed.

Yields: About 3/4 cup · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 10 min

Ingredients:

- 8 tbsp unsalted butter, softened
- 1/3 cup mixed fresh *herbs*, finely chopped — parsley, chives, tarragon, dill, basil, cilantro — any combination of 2-4 herbs
- 1 clove *garlic*, microplaned (optional)
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 1/2 tsp salt
- A grind of black pepper

Method:

1. Mash everything together with a fork until uniform.
2. Spoon onto parchment; roll into a log; twist the ends. Refrigerate or freeze.
3. Slice into coins for: melting over grilled steak, into scrambled eggs, on hot corn, into the pan with sautéed mushrooms, on a baked sweet potato, into mashed potato.

Variations:

- **Tarragon-shallot butter:** for fish
- **Cilantro-lime butter:** for corn on the cob
- **Sage-brown-butter:** brown the butter first, cool, then mix with crisp sage leaves
- **Chive-lemon butter:** for baked potato

13.7 Herb-infused oil

A clear, green-tinted oil that carries herb flavor into anything you cook in it or drizzle onto.

Yields: 1 cup · **Active:** 15 min · **Total:** 30 min (plus rest)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup good olive oil

- 1 cup fresh *herbs* — basil, parsley, cilantro, chives, dill, or a single sturdy herb like rosemary or thyme
- A pinch of salt

Method (for tender herbs — basil, parsley, cilantro):

1. Blanch herbs 10 seconds in boiling water; ice-bath; squeeze dry hard.
2. Blend herbs with oil and salt in a high-powered blender 60 seconds.
3. Strain through a fine sieve lined with cheesecloth — or let the oil settle 2 hours then pour off the clear top.
4. Refrigerate. Keeps 2 weeks.

Method (for sturdy herbs — rosemary, thyme, sage):

1. Heat oil with herb sprigs over very low heat (200°F maximum) for 20 minutes. Off heat; cool with herbs in oil.
2. Strain. Refrigerate.

Botulism note. Like garlic-in-oil, herb-infused oils can harbor *C. botulinum*. Refrigerate at all times; use within 2 weeks; never gift without refrigeration instructions.

Use: Drizzle on roasted vegetables, on bean soup, on bruschetta. Whisk into vinaigrette. Use in place of plain olive oil to finish any dish.

13.8 Salsa verde

The Italian version (not the Mexican tomatillo salsa, which is its own thing). Parsley, capers, anchovy, lemon, olive oil — the green sauce that goes on poached chicken, boiled meats, white fish, roasted vegetables, eggs.

Yields: About 3/4 cup · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 10 min

Ingredients:

- 1 cup fresh *parsley* leaves, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp capers, rinsed, chopped
- 4 *anchovy fillets*, finely chopped
- 2 cloves *garlic*, minced
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp lemon juice + 1 tsp zest
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- Black pepper

Method:

1. Combine everything in a bowl; stir to a loose paste.
2. Rest 15 minutes.
3. Use the same day for brightest flavor; keeps 3 days refrigerated.

Harvest connection: Parsley year-round.

14 · Orchard fruits

Figs, pomegranates, jujubes, peaches, plums · the perennial crops · six recipes for the September-to-November window

The Dragoons orchard is covered in *Guide 9*. The kitchen extension is this chapter. Fig and pomegranate are the keystone crops — long-lived, heat-tolerant, productive, distinctively Cochise. Stone fruits (peach, plum, apricot, nectarine) carry the late-spring-to-summer window; jujube fills the September-to-October window with a fresh date-like crop the climate strongly favors.

Six recipes here — three fresh-use, three project — span the fruiting calendar. Cross-references to *Guide 12 §11* (jams) and *Guide 12 §8* (fruit drying) cover the preservation side.

14.1 Why orchard fruits in the Dragoons kitchen

The dry hot climate produces fruit with markedly higher sugar concentration than the same varieties grown in wetter or cooler regions. A Cochise-grown Brown Turkey fig in late August is 25–30% sugar; the same variety in the Pacific Northwest is 18–22%. The trade-off is fragility — peak-ripe Dragoons fruit travels poorly and lasts two to three days at room temperature. Everything in this chapter assumes recipes that catch the fruit at peak and move it quickly to plate or preservation.

14.2 Staples and prep tricks

- **Pick figs in the morning.** Cool fingers, cool fruit, less damage. Ripe figs are soft enough that afternoon picking bruises easily.
- **Pomegranate seeding underwater.** Score the outer skin around the equator; pull apart in a bowl of cold water; the arils sink, the membrane floats. No mess, no stained shirt.
- **Stone-fruit ripening on counter.** Peaches, plums, apricots ripen at room temperature. Refrigerate only after fully soft.
- **Jujube fresh vs dried.** Fresh jujubes are crisp, apple-like, mildly sweet. Dried jujubes (left on the tree or dried in air) are date-like — much sweeter. Recipes use them differently.

14.3 Fresh fig and prosciutto

The simplest entry in the chapter. The recipe for a counter snack that doubles as a first course.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 5 min · **Total:** 5 min

Ingredients:

- 12 ripe *fresh figs* (Brown Turkey, Black Mission, Celeste; *Guide 9 §4.1*), halved

- 8 slices prosciutto or similar dry-cured ham
- 4 oz fresh mozzarella or burrata (optional)
- A handful of fresh *basil* or *mint* leaves
- Aged balsamic vinegar
- Olive oil
- Flaky salt
- Black pepper

Method:

1. Arrange figs and prosciutto on a platter, slightly overlapping.
2. Tear mozzarella and tuck in; scatter herbs.
3. Drizzle with balsamic and olive oil. Finish with flaky salt and pepper.
4. Eat immediately.

Harvest connection: August (first crop) and September–October (main crop).

14.4 Fig and almond tart

A frangipane tart on shortcrust, studded with halved figs. Fall-into-winter dessert.

Yields: One 9-inch tart, serves 8 · **Active:** 30 min · **Total:** 1.5 hours

Ingredients:

- 1 shortcrust pastry shell, blind-baked
- For the frangipane:
 - 1/2 cup butter, softened
 - 1/2 cup sugar
 - 2 eggs
 - 1 cup almond flour
 - 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
 - 1 tsp vanilla
 - 1 tsp lemon zest
 - A pinch of salt
- 8–10 ripe *figs*, halved
- 2 tbsp honey, warmed (for glazing)
- 2 tbsp sliced almonds

Method:

1. Heat oven to 375°F. Cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Beat in eggs one at a time. Mix in almond flour, flour, vanilla, lemon zest, salt.
2. Spread frangipane evenly into the blind-baked shell. Arrange fig halves cut-side up, pressing slightly into the cream.
3. Scatter sliced almonds.

4. Bake 35–45 minutes until frangipane is golden and set; figs have collapsed slightly.
5. Cool 30 minutes. Brush figs with warm honey. Serve at room temperature.

Harvest connection: September.

14.5 Pomegranate and walnut salad

A late-fall salad with deep flavors — pomegranate, walnut, blue cheese, bitter greens. The kind of plate that looks like jewelry.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 15 min · **Total:** 15 min

Ingredients:

- 6 cups mixed bitter greens — radicchio, escarole, arugula, frisée
- 1 cup *pomegranate arils* (from 1 large pomegranate; *Guide 9 §5*)
- 3/4 cup toasted walnut halves
- 4 oz blue cheese (Roquefort, Gorgonzola, or a homestead blue), crumbled
- For the vinaigrette:
 - 3 tbsp olive oil
 - 1 tbsp pomegranate molasses
 - 1 tbsp red wine vinegar
 - 1 tsp Dijon mustard
 - 1 tsp honey
 - Salt and pepper

Method:

1. Whisk vinaigrette.
2. In a wide bowl, combine greens, arils, walnuts, cheese.
3. Toss with vinaigrette just before serving.

Harvest connection: November–December, peak pomegranate window.

14.6 Jujube tea

The traditional Chinese preparation — dried jujubes simmered with ginger and sometimes goji berry. Warming, slightly sweet, mildly medicinal. The recipe for a cold November afternoon.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 5 min · **Total:** 45 min

Ingredients:

- 12 dried *jujubes* (*Guide 9 §7*), halved or scored
- 1-inch piece fresh ginger, sliced
- 2 tbsp goji berries (optional)
- 6 cups water

- Honey to finish

Method:

1. Combine jujubes, ginger, goji (if using), and water in a heavy pot. Bring to a boil; reduce to a low simmer; cook 40 minutes.
2. Strain into mugs; the jujubes are now plump and edible — pass them at the table.
3. Sweeten with honey if desired.

Harvest connection: October–November (fresh harvest); the dried fruit holds a year.

14.7 Peach galette

A free-form rustic tart on a single sheet of pastry. Peaches, sugar, flour, butter. The recipe that lets you off the hook from making a proper pie.

Yields: One galette, serves 6 · **Active:** 25 min · **Total:** 1 hour

Ingredients:

- 1 disk all-butter pie pastry (about 8 oz)
- 4 large ripe *peaches* (*Guide 9 §6*), pitted, sliced 1/2-inch thick
- 1/4 cup sugar (plus more if peaches are tart)
- 1 tbsp cornstarch
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- A pinch of salt
- 1 tbsp butter, cut in small pieces
- 1 egg, beaten (for the pastry)
- 1 tbsp coarse sugar for the edge

Method:

1. Heat oven to 400°F. Roll pastry on parchment to a rough 12-inch circle. Transfer parchment and pastry to a sheet pan.
2. Toss peaches with sugar, cornstarch, vanilla, lemon, cinnamon, salt. Pile in the center of the pastry, leaving a 2-inch border.
3. Fold the edges up over the filling, pleating as you go. Dot peaches with butter.
4. Brush pastry edge with egg; sprinkle with coarse sugar.
5. Bake 40–50 minutes until pastry is deeply golden and filling is bubbling.
6. Cool 20 minutes before slicing. Serve with vanilla ice cream or lightly whipped cream.

Harvest connection: Late June through July.

14.8 Plum compote

A loose plum-and-spice preparation — between a sauce and a chunky preserve. Eat on yogurt, on toast, on pork, on ice cream.

Yields: About 3 cups · **Active:** 15 min · **Total:** 45 min

Ingredients:

- 2 lb ripe *plums* (Santa Rosa, Methley, or a homestead variety), pitted, quartered
- 1/2 cup sugar (more or less to taste)
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 star anise (optional)
- 1 strip orange or lemon peel
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- A pinch of salt
- Optional: 1 tbsp brandy or bourbon at the end

Method:

1. Combine everything except the brandy in a heavy non-reactive pot.
2. Bring to a boil; reduce to a vigorous simmer. Cook 25–35 minutes, stirring occasionally, until plums break down and the syrup thickens but is still pourable.
3. Fish out cinnamon, star anise, peel. Stir in brandy if using.
4. Cool; transfer to a jar. Keeps a month refrigerated.

Harvest connection: July.

For a shelf-stable version, see *Guide 12 §11*.

15 · Native crops in the kitchen

Mesquite, agave, prickly-pear, amaranth, yucca · the indigenous food complex · seven recipes that put native flavors at the center

Guide 15 covers the cultivation and wild-harvest of the Sonoran-Madrean food complex. This chapter is the kitchen extension. Chiltepin recipes appear in §2; tepary recipes in §5; native corn in §6 — do not duplicate. What's here picks up the rest: mesquite flour, agave (with respect for the cultural and ecological constraints), prickly-pear (tunas and pads), amaranth grain, and banana yucca paste.

These are flavors most Dragoons cooks have never used. Each recipe is structured to introduce one native ingredient in a low-friction way — pancakes, cookies, a salad, a syrup, a margarita — alongside familiar partners. After a few months in rotation, a kitchen that started with one mesquite-flour pancake recipe will be using mesquite flour the way another kitchen uses oat flour.

15.1 Why native crops in the Dragoons kitchen

Three reasons. First: flavor. Mesquite flour tastes like nothing else — sweet, slightly malty, a faint smoke. Prickly-pear tastes like watermelon crossed with raspberry. Amaranth has a peppery, slightly bitter edge that no other grain matches. Second: indigenous practice. These crops fed the Tohono O'odham, Apache, Hopi, and Yaqui peoples for thousands of years and are part of the cultural heritage of this region — cooking with them is a small act of acknowledgment. Third: agronomy. They are the crops the climate produced naturally. Growing them takes less water, less infrastructure, less inputs than the European-derived crops in the rest of the library.

Cultural and ecological notes. Agave, banana yucca, and wild-harvested prickly-pear pads all carry indigenous and ecological context that should not be ignored. Agave in particular: harvesting a wild agave kills the plant after a lifetime of 8–25 years. Wild harvest is not appropriate for a hobby kitchen. The recipes below use cultivated agave nectar (commercial) or syrup made from cultivated harvests under tribal or NS/S programs. For banana yucca paste, the same caveat applies — see *Guide 15 §9.3* for the harvest discussion.

15.2 Staples and prep tricks

- **Mesquite flour is not bread flour.** It has no gluten and very little starch. Use as 15–25% of total flour in baking, never as the only flour.
- **Toast mesquite flour before measuring.** Dry skillet, 3 minutes, until fragrant. Doubles the flavor.
- **Prickly-pear juice from frozen.** Fresh tunas freeze beautifully whole (after spine removal). Thaw and press through a sieve when you need juice; saves the hot fall

pressing day.

- **Pop amaranth dry.** No oil. Hot dry skillet (medium-high), 1 tablespoon at a time, swirling continuously. The seeds pop in 5 seconds. Anything larger than a tablespoon scorches.
- **Dehydrate banana yucca paste.** The traditional preparation. Long, but storage-stable. See *Guide 15 §9.3*.

15.3 Mesquite-flour pancakes

The most accessible mesquite recipe — Sunday breakfast, the flavor of mesquite carried by a familiar form.

Yields: 12 pancakes, serves 4 · **Active:** 25 min · **Total:** 30 min

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup *mesquite flour* (*Guide 15 §8*; from milled pods)
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tbsp sugar (or maple, in the batter)
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon (optional)
- 2 large eggs
- 1.5 cups buttermilk
- 1/4 cup melted butter, plus more for the skillet
- 1 tsp vanilla
- For serving: butter, maple syrup or *prickly-pear syrup*

Method:

1. Toast mesquite flour in a dry skillet 3 minutes until fragrant. Cool slightly.
2. Whisk mesquite flour with all-purpose flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon.
3. In another bowl, whisk eggs, buttermilk, butter, vanilla.
4. Pour wet into dry; stir just until combined. Rest 5 minutes.
5. Cook in a buttered cast-iron skillet over medium, 2–3 minutes per side, until deeply golden and risen.
6. Serve hot with butter and syrup.

Harvest connection: Mesquite pod harvest is June–July; milled flour stores 2+ years. *Guide 15 §8* covers harvest, drying, milling.

15.4 Mesquite cookies

Soft, chewy, mildly molasses-flavored cookies that get most of their character from mesquite. A pantry-staple cookie.

Yields: About 24 cookies · **Active:** 20 min · **Total:** 45 min

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup *mesquite flour*, toasted
- 1.5 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 8 tbsp butter, softened
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 cup pecans, chopped (or walnuts)
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips (optional but recommended)

Method:

1. Heat oven to 350°F.
2. Whisk flours, baking soda, salt, cinnamon.
3. Cream butter and sugars until fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla.
4. Stir in dry ingredients until just combined. Fold in pecans and chocolate.
5. Drop heaping tablespoons onto parchment-lined sheet pans, spacing well.
6. Bake 11-13 minutes until edges are set but centers still look slightly soft.
7. Cool on the pan 5 minutes before transferring.

Harvest connection: Year-round once mesquite flour is milled.

15.5 Agave-roasted root vegetables

A use for agave nectar that respects the ingredient. Agave nectar is sweet but with a faintly herbal, almost vegetal undertone — perfect with roasted parsnip and sweet potato.

Yields: 4 servings · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 45 min

Ingredients:

- 1 lb *parsnips*, cut in long pieces
- 1 lb *sweet potato*, cut similarly
- 1 *red onion*, cut in wedges

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp agave nectar (cultivated, commercial)
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp coarse salt
- 1/2 tsp crushed *Chiltepin*
- 2 tbsp chopped *cilantro*
- Lime wedges
- Optional: 1/4 cup toasted pepitas

Method:

1. Heat oven to 425°F. Toss vegetables with oil, agave, cumin, paprika, salt, Chiltepin on a sheet pan.
2. Roast 30–35 minutes, flipping once, until deeply caramelized at edges and tender through.
3. Transfer to a platter. Squeeze lime over; scatter cilantro and pepitas.

Harvest connection: Roots from cellaring (November–April); agave year-round (commercial).

LOCAL TIP

On agave sourcing. Cultivated agave nectar from a Mexican brand (e.g., from Jalisco) is the most common product. Native Seeds/SEARCH and a few small Arizona producers (Ramona Farms; San Carlos Apache enterprises) sell traditionally-prepared agave syrup at small volume — worth the premium if you can find it. Avoid wild-harvested agave from undocumented sources.

15.6 Prickly-pear margarita

The signature cocktail of any Dragoons kitchen. Prickly-pear syrup adds magenta color, mild fruit, faint vegetal note. Pairs with anything from the grill.

Yields: 4 cocktails · **Active:** 5 min · **Total:** 5 min

Ingredients:

- 6 oz silver tequila or mezcal
- 3 oz *prickly-pear syrup* (\$15.7 below; or *Guide 12* \$13.4)
- 3 oz fresh lime juice
- 1 oz orange liqueur (Cointreau or triple sec; optional)
- 1 tsp agave nectar (if you want it sweeter)
- Salt for the rim — half plain coarse salt, half *Chiltepin salt* (\$2.7)
- Lime wedges

- Ice

Method:

1. Rim glasses: rub with lime wedge, dip in the salt mix.
2. Combine tequila, prickly-pear syrup, lime juice, orange liqueur, agave in a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake hard 15 seconds.
3. Strain into the rimmed glasses over fresh ice. Garnish with lime.

Harvest connection: Tunas are harvested in late August through October; syrup keeps a year.

15.7 Prickly-pear syrup

The foundation of the margarita, plus the granita (\$4.7), plus drizzled on pancakes (\$15.3), plus into vinaigrette (\$10.5). Make in volume during peak tuna season; store in jars.

Yields: About 2 cups · **Active:** 45 min · **Total:** 1 hour

Ingredients:

- 4 lb ripe *prickly-pear tunas* (the fruits; *Guide 15 §6*), spines removed
- 1.5 cups sugar
- 2 tbsp lemon juice

Method:

1. Working with tongs and rubber gloves, cut spine-removed tunas in half. Place in a heavy pot with 1/2 cup water.
2. Mash with a potato masher. Bring to a boil; simmer 15 minutes until completely broken down.
3. Strain through a fine sieve — push hard with a wooden spoon. Discard solids and seeds. You should have 2.5–3 cups of magenta juice.
4. Return juice to the pot with sugar and lemon juice. Bring to a boil; reduce to a steady simmer. Cook 20–30 minutes until reduced by about a third and slightly syrupy.
5. Pour hot into clean jars. Cool; refrigerate. Keeps 6 months refrigerated.

For a shelf-stable canned syrup, see *Guide 12 §13.4*.

Harvest connection: Late August through October.

LOCAL TIP

Spine removal. Field-collected tunas need their tiny glochids burned off be-

fore any kitchen work. Use long tongs and a propane torch, rotating each fruit over the flame 10 seconds. Or roll fruits on a hot grill briefly. Skip this step and you will regret it.

15.8 Popped amaranth

The fastest native-crop preparation. Dry amaranth seed in a hot skillet, two minutes, pops into tiny puffed grains. Use as cereal, as a salad crunch, as cookie topping.

Yields: About 2 cups popped · **Active:** 10 min · **Total:** 10 min

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup *amaranth seed* (*Guide 15 §7*; the small grain, not the leafy greens)

Method:

1. Heat a heavy skillet over medium-high until very hot — a drop of water should evaporate on contact in under a second.
2. Add 1 tablespoon of amaranth at a time. Swirl the skillet continuously. The seeds pop in 3–5 seconds with audible little snaps.
3. Tip the popped grain into a bowl. Repeat in tablespoon batches until all is popped. Reject any scorched batches and reduce heat.
4. Mix with honey or *prickly-pear syrup* and pressed into a pan for a brittle; or scatter on yogurt; or use as a salad garnish.

Harvest connection: Amaranth is threshed and winnowed in October. *Guide 15 §7* covers the process.

15.9 Banana yucca paste (note rather than recipe)

Banana yucca paste — the traditional Apache and Tohono O’odham preparation — involves harvesting ripe banana yucca fruits in late summer, slow-roasting them in an earth oven or low oven, then mashing the flesh into a thick caramel-like paste. *Guide 15 §9.3* covers the traditional preparation in detail and the cultural context.

In a domestic kitchen, the simplified version is: harvest 4–6 ripe yucca fruits (they look like fat green bananas; ripe when they yield to thumb pressure); roast at 300°F for 4 hours wrapped in foil; cool; peel; mash to a paste; sweeten lightly if desired; refrigerate. Eat as you would fig paste — with cheese, on toast, alongside cured meat.

The chapter ends with the note rather than the recipe because the cultural specificity matters more than the technique. If you grow banana yucca, learn the preparation from a primary source (Niethammer’s *American Indian Cooking* is excellent), respect the indigenous origin, and treat the result as the regional delicacy it is.

16 · Menus through the seasons

Ten worked meals · January through December · pulling recipes across the guide

A menu is a kitchen's argument. It says: these things, together, on this day, for these reasons. The ten menus below pull recipes from across the guide into worked meals — what to cook on a January night when the cold frame is delivering and the cellar is full; what to put on the table at a September peak-harvest party; what to serve guests on Christmas Eve. Each menu names the recipes by cross-reference and ends with a short paragraph on why those recipes belong together for that week of the year.

The menus skew toward casual dinners with structure rather than formal multi-course events — most are three or four recipes for four to six people, scalable up by adding sides. None of them require restaurant skill; all of them require a little forethought.

16.1 January cold-frame greens supper

Mid-January · weeknight or weekend · cold-frame harvest + cellared roots

Menu:

- First: *January cold-frame salad with prickly-pear vinaigrette* (\$10.5)
- Main: *White-bean and roasted-garlic soup* (\$5.6) with *charred broccoli with garlic and lemon* (\$8.3) on the side
- Bread: a country loaf, store-bought or baked Saturday
- Finale: *mesquite cookies* (\$15.4) with strong coffee

January in the Dragoons is the cold frame's quiet showcase. While the cellar is doing the heavy lifting on roots and beans, the cold frame delivers a salad that no grocery store can match — mâche and claytonia and small lettuces cut the morning of dinner. The white-bean soup uses garlic stored since July and beans dried in October; the broccoli is from the winter low tunnel. The mesquite cookies bring a Sonoran note to a meal that otherwise leans Mediterranean. A single bottle of dry white wine carries everything.

16.2 March transitional dinner

Late March · weeknight · the gap between winter pantry and spring growth

Menu:

- Starter: bread with *roasted whole garlic* (\$9.3) smeared on top, finished with flaky salt and *herb-infused oil* (\$13.7)
- Main: *spring shakshuka with roasted peppers* (\$2.8) over polenta
- Side: *kohlrabi remoulade* (\$8.7)
- Dessert: yogurt with *plum compote* (\$14.8)

Late March is the leanest week in the Dragoons kitchen calendar. The last cellared kohlrabi and parsnip are still good but tired; the new garden isn't producing yet; the pantry of frozen and canned summer is what's holding the kitchen together. The shakshuka — eggs in last fall's pepper paste and tomato sauce — is the canonical bridge recipe. The garlic confit and herb oil come from a Sunday kitchen project last weekend. The plum compote in the freezer dates from July, opened tonight.

16.3 May peak-spring lunch

Mid-May · weekend lunch · the first asparagus, the first peas, the overwintered garlic scapes

Menu:

- First: a platter of raw vegetables — radish, sugar snap pea, scallion — with *allium and anchovy butter* (\$9.6) and flaky salt
- Main: *zucchini fritters* (\$4.3) with yogurt; or a frittata of *spring greens*, garlic scapes, and feta
- Side: *mâche and goat cheese* salad (\$10.6)
- Dessert: strawberries (homestead or farmers' market) with whipped cream

May is the kitchen's most generous month and the menu reflects it — small portions of many things, all of them at peak. The asparagus that survived March cold appears as a side; the first zucchini of the year is fritter-fried; the garlic scapes from the overwintered hardneck (planted in October) go into the frittata. A bottle of crisp white — Sauvignon Blanc, Albariño — handles the herbal range of the menu.

16.4 July monsoon dinner

Mid-July · outdoor table · the rains arrive · everything is suddenly producing

Menu:

- Welcome: *pan con tomate* (\$3.5)
- Starter: *gaspacho* (\$3.4) in small glasses
- Main: grilled steak with *chimichurri* (\$13.4) and *sweet corn with chiltepin butter* (\$6.5)
- Side: *cucumber, tomato, and bread salad* (\$4.5)
- Dessert: ripe peaches sliced over vanilla ice cream

The first monsoon storms of July transform the garden overnight. Tomatoes that were sluggish double in size and flavor in three days; cucumbers come on hard; the sweet-corn ears are ready. This is the menu for the weekend after the first big rain — everything on the plate came from the garden within a 48-hour window. Cook the steak outside (the kitchen is still 85°F at 7pm); eat outside too. A bottle of Tempranillo or a dry rosé both work.

16.5 September peak-fall feast

Mid-September · weekend dinner party for eight · the most generous week of the year

Menu:

- Welcome: *fresh fig and prosciutto* (\$14.3) with crusty bread
- First: *roasted grape and rosemary focaccia* (\$12.3), torn at the table
- Main: *green chile stew* (\$2.3) over rice, with fresh tortillas; or *Anasazi-bean Cochise chili* (\$5.5) for vegetarians
- Side: *roasted carrots and parsnips with cumin* (\$11.3) — though carrots and parsnips here are the September early-harvest, sweeter than later
- Dessert: *fig and almond tart* (\$14.4)

September is the year's most fully-stocked kitchen week. Figs, grapes, peppers, tomatoes, the first roots, the last summer squash — everything is producing simultaneously. The menu reflects the abundance and chooses two of the most assertive recipes (green chile stew, fig tart) as anchors. The chili is the vegetarian equivalent — equally weighty. The focaccia is intentionally a participatory dish; guests tear pieces.

16.6 October squash-and-bean winter-prep dinner

Late October · weeknight · setting up the kitchen for the cold months

Menu:

- Main: *baked winter squash with chile and lime* (\$4.4) over *tepary frijoles de la olla* (\$5.3)
- Side: a simple green salad — bagged from the cold frame's first October cut, dressed minimally
- Bread: warm tortillas (frozen from August's nixtamal batch)
- Dessert: *sweet potato pie* (\$7.6) — slightly early for the season but the sweet potatoes are now well-cured

This is a weeknight dinner that doubles as a stock-the-larder moment. The bean pot makes enough for tonight plus refritos all week. The squash is the first of the cellared kabocha or butternut, eaten now before it gets monotonous in January. The sweet potato pie uses the freshly cured October harvest at peak. A glass of cider — homestead or commercial — fits the season.

16.7 November root-cellar Sunday

Mid-November · Sunday afternoon and evening · the kitchen settles into winter

Menu:

- First: *pomegranate and walnut salad* (\$14.5)

- Main: a slow-roasted pork shoulder (or a vegetarian *root vegetable gratin* \$11.5) with *french onion soup* (\$9.4) as a starter — or both, if guests are coming
- Side: *brussels sprouts with bacon* (\$8.8)
- Dessert: *jujube tea* (\$14.6) and a plate of *mesquite cookies* (\$15.4)

A Sunday-afternoon-to-evening meal that uses the slow oven all day. The onion soup gets its 90 minutes of caramelization while the pork is in its low slow phase. Brussels sprouts on the second oven rack for the last 25 minutes. Pomegranates are in their best three-week window. The jujube tea closes the meal as the late-autumn night gets dark. A medium-bodied red — Garnacha, Gamay — handles all of it.

16.8 Thanksgiving with Cochise notes

Fourth Thursday in November · Thanksgiving · twelve at the table

Menu:

- Starter: *cherry tomato and herb tart* (\$3.8) — using the last of the freezer's slow-roasted tomatoes
- Bird: roast turkey with *herb butter* (\$13.6) under the skin and *roasted whole garlic* (\$9.3) in the cavity
- Stuffing: a cornbread stuffing built on *Cochise corn pudding* (\$6.7) baked first, crumbled, mixed with toasted bread, onion, sage, stock
- Sides: *brussels sprouts with bacon* (\$8.8) · *root vegetable gratin* (\$11.5) · *cabbage and apple slaw* (\$8.4)
- Bread: warm *Hopi Blue corn tortillas* (\$6.3), brushed with butter
- Dessert: *sweet potato pie* (\$7.6) and *fig and almond tart* (\$14.4)

A Thanksgiving that pulls the traditional and the regional onto the same table. The turkey and the gratin are familiar; the Hopi Blue tortillas, the cornbread stuffing, and the sweet potato pie carry the Cochise specificity. The slaw provides the necessary acid against all the richness. Plan the day backwards from a 6pm sit-down: pies the day before; gratin assembled in the morning; turkey starts at 11am; everything else times to the 5:45 plate.

16.9 Christmas Eve

December 24 · supper before midnight Mass, or just before the night settles in

Menu:

- Welcome: *garlic confit* (\$9.5) on toast with a glass of dry sherry
- Main: a slow-cooked pork green chile stew — *green chile stew* (\$2.3) made the day before and reheated, served with fresh *Hopi Blue corn tortillas* (\$6.3)
- Side: *wilted greens with garlic* (\$10.3)
- Dessert: *mesquite cookies* (\$15.4) and small glasses of *prickly-pear margarita*

(§15.6), or coffee

The Cochise Christmas Eve doesn't need beef Wellington or a roasted goose. The green chile stew — made Sunday, eaten Tuesday — improves with the rest. The tortillas are pulled from the freezer Saturday and warmed on the comal at the last minute. The greens are whatever the low tunnel still has. The cookies and the margarita acknowledge that this is a winter night in Cochise County, not in New England — and the kitchen reflects the place. A second bottle of sparkling wine, kept cold, sees out the evening.

16.10 New Year's with Anasazi for luck

January 1 · New Year's Day lunch · the South's black-eyed-peas-for-luck tradition, transposed

Menu:

- Main: *Anasazi-bean Cochise chili* (§5.5), made the day before and reheated — Anasazi standing in for black-eyed peas
- Side: *wilted greens with garlic* (§10.3) — the South's greens-for-money carry over directly
- Bread: cornbread, made simply — 1 cup *Hopi Blue cornmeal*, 1 cup buttermilk, 2 eggs, 1/4 cup butter, 2 tsp baking powder, 1/2 tsp salt, baked at 400°F in a hot cast-iron skillet 22 minutes
- Dessert: *mesquite cookies* (§15.4) — for sweet endings

The Southern tradition holds that black-eyed peas eaten on New Year's Day bring luck and greens bring money for the year to come. Substituting Anasazi for black-eyed peas keeps the tradition's spirit while honoring the region — the bean was domesticated 1,500 years ago on the Colorado Plateau and has more right to a Cochise table than the cowpea does. The cornbread is the third leg of the Southern tradition, the corn here being Hopi Blue rather than yellow. A cold beer, or a pot of strong coffee, finishes the meal in the right register.

17 · Sources, references, and closing

The books behind the recipes · acknowledgments · where to go next

17.1 Sources and references

The recipes in this guide draw from a small set of regional and influence cookbooks. None of these are duplicated in the guide — where a recipe owes a specific debt, the cross-reference is in the recipe itself. The books worth shelving alongside this guide:

- **Carolyn Niethammer, *American Indian Cooking: Recipes from the Southwest* (1974, reissued)** — the canonical source for Sonoran and Apache traditional preparations. The agave, banana yucca, and amaranth treatments in this guide are simplified versions of recipes Niethammer documents in detail.
- **Carolyn Niethammer, *Cooking the Wild Southwest* (2011)** — the wild-foods companion. Mesquite, prickly-pear, chiltepin, and acorn preparations are her territory; this guide leans on her work for the framing.
- **Gary Paul Nabhan, *Coming Home to Eat* (2002) and *Renewing America's Food Traditions* (2008)** — the cultural and ecological framing for the native-crop chapter. Nabhan is the reason Native Seeds/SEARCH exists and the reason this guide treats teparies and Hopi Blue as everyday staples rather than novelties.
- **Diana Kennedy, *The Cuisines of Mexico* (1972) and *Oaxaca al Gusto* (2010)** — the technique authority on Mexican cooking. The masa, nixtamal, posole, and red chile sauce in this guide rest on Kennedy's documentation.
- **Yotam Ottolenghi, *Plenty* (2010) and *Jerusalem* (2012, with Sami Tamimi)** — the light flavor influence visible in this guide's herb-forward preparations and the use of pomegranate, tahini, and za'atar-style mixes. Ottolenghi's vocabulary suits a Cochise kitchen better than most other contemporary cookbook vocabularies do.
- **Marcella Hazan, *Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking* (1992)** — the polenta, pappa al pomodoro, ribollita, and slow-roasted tomato pasta lean on Hazan's instruction. Where the recipe says "rest 15 minutes off heat," that's her voice.
- **Edna Lewis, *The Taste of Country Cooking* (1976)** — the rural-seasonal sensibility, the trust in simple methods, the respect for ingredients at their moment. Lewis is the spiritual companion to this guide more than a direct source.

The library cross-reference is:

- **Guide 12 — *Harvest, Preservation & Storage*** for every recipe that lands in a jar, ferments, dries, or holds in a cellar. This guide and *Guide 12* are designed to be used together. A tomato harvest of 80 pounds becomes 20 pounds eaten fresh through this guide and 60 pounds canned, frozen, dried, and stored through *Guide 12*.
- **Guide 15 — *Native Food Crops of the Sonoran-Madrean Region*** for the cultivation and harvest context of mesquite, agave, prickly-pear, amaranth, banana

yucca, chiltepin, and teparies.

- Each crop guide (*Guide 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9*) for cultivation details — variety selection, planting calendar, harvest indicators — that this guide assumes rather than repeats.

17.2 A note on what was left out

A complete Cochise County cookbook would include several chapters this one does not. Bread baking — sourdough, focaccia beyond the one entry here, the everyday country loaf — deserves its own treatment and is not in this library. Dairy — fresh cheese, yogurt, cultured butter — likewise. Charcuterie and home meat-curing belong somewhere; not here. Beverages beyond the prickly-pear margarita — country wines, fruit liqueurs, kombuchas, sodas — are a parallel kitchen practice the guide gestures at but does not document.

These omissions are deliberate, not oversights. A guide that tried to cover everything would cover nothing well. What's here is the daily-cooking layer — the recipes a Dragoons kitchen returns to weekly, monthly, seasonally — and trusting the reader to find the bread and cheese and wine treatments elsewhere.

17.3 Closing

A garden that leads back to the kitchen, and a kitchen that honors the garden, is the practice the seventeen guides of this library exist to support. Growing is the half this library spends most of its pages on; cooking is the half this single guide is for. Both halves matter equally and neither makes much sense without the other.

The Dragoons cook who has worked through the guides knows by now that the practice is iterative — a few years to find your varieties, a few more to find your rhythms, a few more to develop the pantry habits that make weeknight dinner possible. The fortieth pot of teparies cooks better than the first. The thirtieth jar of pepper paste is more useful than the fifteenth. The sixth Thanksgiving with Hopi Blue cornbread stuffing is the one where it stops feeling like an experiment and starts feeling like tradition.

May your harvest be generous, your knives sharp, your salt within reach, and your table full.

— Guide 17, completed 2026-05-17
Dragoon Mountains, Cochise County, Arizona