



Introduction

The Hudson Valley's history goes back very far to Native Americans, who for centuries fished in the Hudson River and grew their foods in the valley's fertile grounds. The European history starts with the explorations of Henry Hudson in 1609. He came here, while in the employ of the Dutch East India Company, hoping to find a northerly passage to the Orient. The first Dutch settlers arrived in the first quarter of the seventeenth century and we can still easily find the valley's many Dutch connections—for instance, in its place names, such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, or even Fishkill (the word *kill*, *kil* in Dutch, means stream). Dutch barns still dot the landscape, as does the typically Dutch architecture of houses such as Van Cortlandt Manor in Croton-on-Hudson. Local museums and historic homes are filled with Dutch artifacts. Some of the recipes in *Summer Pleasures*, *Winter Pleasures* reflect that Dutch heritage.

As the title indicates, the book celebrates the summer and winter seasons in the Hudson Valley. Whether you sit on your patio and enjoy your yard while the birds are singing and the chipmunks playing or you are out and about on your boat, in a cabin in the woods, or driving your RV along one of the many valley byways, this book is for you. The recipes collected here will help you make mealtime easier; they produce good food without much fuss. Every one of them has been tested repeatedly.

New ideas for breakfast or for take-along sandwiches are always welcome. Soups and salads that use the valley's vegetable bounty are great additions to meats from the grill. What's nicer than to relax at

the end of the day with a cool drink and a few nibbles, whether it is herring spread on a cucumber slice or a little more sinful cracker with blue cheese? Simple main courses followed by delicious fruit desserts are the kinds of foods that make summertime so enjoyable.

A pantry shelf stocked with some handy items will make life easier. Here is a short list of foodstuffs that are helpful to have on hand: nuts of any kind; spices, such as ginger, nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon, and especially curry powder; bouillon cubes; pasta, short and long; canned black, white, and kidney beans, as well as canned beets; Hudson Valley mustards or chutneys; canned salmon and pouches of tuna; grains such as couscous, brown rice, or wild rice; dried cranberries, raisins, currants, and apricots.

Day trips to the valley's many special destinations make you feel you have been away for a week and you'll always find some food (or drink) to bring home to make the memories last. The Hudson Valley and Catskill area can boast of at least forty wineries that make wines from grapes and other fruit or produce cider. There are also many microbreweries in the valley, and Tuthilltown Spirits in Gardiner is New York's only whiskey distillery. Plan a visit and combine a winery trip with some local antiquing, a stop at one (of the many) area's historic homes, and finish with a great meal in a local restaurant. Be sure to pick up along the way a complimentary copy of *The Valley Table*, the magazine of Hudson Valley farms, food, and cuisine, to get an update on the latest agricultural and culinary news.

Whether it is a day-trip to Millbrook with its antique shops, winery, and castle; to Kingston with the Senate house, Saturday farmers' market (the best in the valley, in my opinion), and the Rondout waterfront; or a trip to Albany with the New York State Museum and its dioramas of the valley's first inhabitants, various historic homes, and a stop at the city's award-winning microbrewery, the Albany Pump Station—all of these and so many more sightseeing opportunities will leave you with a sense of adventure and a feeling of relaxation and well-being.

Enjoy the season and celebrate with great food!

I Breakfast foods that make a difference

When we're away on our boat in the Hudson, there is time for a leisurely breakfast, particularly when we're anchored in the recreation area east of Houghtaling Island, opposite New Baltimore, New York. I call the spot my magic kingdom because we can sit in early morning and watch heron and eagles fish for their breakfast while I make ours. Time just floats away in this enchanting place and it is noon before you know it.

Picking our own summer fruit has become a tradition in my small family. Every year we go to Greig Farm in Red Hook or Lawrence Farms Orchards in Newburgh to pick whatever is in season. There are so many wonderful orchards and fruit farms up and down our valley and visiting them makes for a great summer outing.



Baked eggs in toast cups or hollowed-out tomatoes

4 tablespoons butter, melted

6 thin slices bread

A few slices finely cut sandwich ham, optional

6 eggs

Some finely chopped parsley and chives

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Brush bread slices with melted butter. Press the slices in the cups of a muffin tin. Sprinkle with some of the ham, if used, and break an egg into each cup and top with a little of the herb mixture. Bake for 10–15 minutes, or until the eggs are set. Using the same method, substitute tomatoes for the bread. Hollow out one tomato per person. Turn it upside down to drain. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and minced fresh herbs (or dried oregano), then break an egg into each tomato. Set each egg-tomato in a custard cup or small ovenproof dish and bake for about 15 minutes or until the egg is set. Sprinkle with more minced herbs, if you have them.



Blueberry/peach coffeecake

- 1¾ cups all-purpose flour, divided
- 1 cup sugar, divided
- ¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 stick (½ cup) butter, melted and cooled, divided
- 1 teaspoon EACH baking powder and baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 egg, beaten with ½ cup milk
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 4 medium peaches, peeled, quartered, and thinly sliced across, divided (2 cups)
- 2 cups blueberries, divided

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 9-inch square baking dish.

To prepare crumb mixture: In a small bowl, combine ½ cup flour, ¼ cup sugar, the nutmeg, and 2 tablespoons of melted butter and set aside.

To prepare batter: In a large bowl, mix remaining flour, ½ cup sugar, baking powder and soda, and salt. Add remaining melted butter, milk/egg mixture, and lemon zest. Stir until just blended, then gently stir in half of the fruit and spoon into the prepared pan. Sprinkle with half of the crumb mixture. In a small bowl, mix remaining fruit with ¼ cup sugar and spoon on top and sprinkle remaining crumb mixture over fruit. Bake 50–55 minutes or until golden. Serve warm or at room temperature.

High-bush blueberries are easy to pick and easy to freeze. Usually the four of us get the “most-picked-in-one-day” award with some 40 pounds of fruit, but Jason Harris, our daughter’s husband, gets the “neatest picker” prize because, as he picks, he removes all the little stems from the berries. I adapted the coffee cake from a pamphlet by the North American Blueberry Council. The recipe might seem a bit fussy, but it is worth the effort. This moist coffee cake makes a great summer breakfast or a treat anytime.

Fruit scones

NOTE:

When you want to make blueberry scones, use frozen berries—that way they will not get squashed in the kneading and color the dough.

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons butter
- 2 eggs
- ⅓ cup milk
- 1 cup chopped nectarines, plums, peeled peaches, whole blueberries, or halved cherries.



Preheat oven to 450 degrees. In a large bowl, sift flour/cornstarch, sugar, baking powder, and salt. With a dough blender or two knives, cut in butter until fine crumbs form, rubbing the crumbs between your fingers to incorporate the butter into the flour mixture. In a small bowl, lightly beat eggs and milk until blended; set aside 1 tablespoon for brushing on finished triangles. Stir remaining egg mixture into flour, mixing with a fork until dough forms, then carefully but with a light touch incorporate the fruit. On a lightly floured surface, knead lightly a few times. With floured hands (dough is sticky) pat dough out into a 6-inch square. Cut into 4 (3 × 3 inch) squares. Cut each of those squares into 2 triangles. Brush with reserved egg mixture and, if you like, sprinkle with some sugar. Place on greased baking sheet and bake for 15 minutes or until golden. Serve warm with butter and preserves (lemon curd is particularly nice). This recipe makes 8 scones.

Scones are easy to make and yet the result looks like you “fussed.” This recipe can be made with whatever summer fruit you have on hand, but you can also use dried fruit, such as cranberries or cherries. Trader Joe’s sells a dried “golden berry mix” that makes a nice fruit filling for scones.

Great-grandma's applesauce cake

½ cup butter, softened
½ cup sugar
1 cup applesauce (see below)
1 cup currants
1 cup chopped walnuts
1 cup blueberries (frozen; see note in previous recipe),
optional
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon EACH baking soda and cinnamon
½ teaspoon cloves
¼ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9-inch square dish or a 6-cup fluted mold.

In an electric mixer, beat butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the applesauce. In a small bowl, combine currants, walnuts, and frozen blueberries, if used, with 3 tablespoons of the flour and set aside. Add remaining flour, baking soda, cinnamon, cloves, and salt to butter mixture and combine to make a homogenous batter. Stir in the prepared fruit and nuts and spoon into pan. Bake about 40 minutes or until a knife inserted comes out clean.

Over the years I have tried many applesauce cakes, but this old-fashioned version gets my vote for number one. It is best made with your own applesauce, which is easy to do as follows: peel, core, and quarter 3 apples such as Golden Delicious, Jonagold, or Ida Red (each imparts its own distinctive flavor). Cook with ⅓ cup water until soft and mash.

Sunshine eggs

5 slices, at least $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, of multigrain or Italian bread

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese

Cooked and crumbled breakfast sausage

(or use chopped ham), optional

5 eggs

1 cup milk

1 tablespoon coarse grain mustard

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup minced chives or scallions with greens

Handful of chopped parsley and leaves of 2 sprigs fresh

marjoram, if available (or $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried marjoram)

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon EACH salt and freshly ground pepper

Grease a 1-quart baking dish. Cut bread into cubes. Toss with the cheese and meat, if used, in the baking dish. Use a whisk to thoroughly beat together the eggs, milk, mustard, salt, pepper, and all the herbs and pour over bread mixture.

Cover and refrigerate for several hours or overnight. To bake: preheat oven to 350 degrees. Bake covered for 45–50 minutes or until golden brown.



When you have company staying overnight, knowing that breakfast is taken care of before you go to bed makes you sleep better, I think. This recipe is a great way of using up stale bread and a nice change from French toast. Add some summer fruit and a good cup of coffee or tea and leisurely enjoy yourself.