



RESTAURANTS

Think seasonal, eat local

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This is a wonderful time of year for eating. The piles of tomatoes, squash and corn at local farmers markets and produce stands are so beautiful and fresh, they need little preparation to enhance them. Local chefs feel the same way and proudly promote local producers on their menus. Here are 11 of the many spots where you can enjoy the fruits of their labor.

When chef-owner Dave Starkey buys local produce for his restaurant, **Tomatillo in Dobbs Ferry** (13 Cedar St., 914-478-2300), he buys exclusively from Stone Barns Center for Food & Agriculture in Pocantico Hills. "I pay \$8 a pound for spinach and mixed greens," says Starkey, "but not only are they beautiful and flavorful, they last and last. Instead of wilting from two weeks' storage and travel from California, they were picked that day. The freshness can't be beat." Starkey is proud of the purple tomatillos in his tomatillo sauce, the heirloom tomatoes in his pico de gallo and a simple salad he composes of 11 different greens.

At **Blue Hill at Stone Barns in Pocantico Hills**, (630 Bedford Road, 914-366-9600), chefs Dan Barber and Michael Anthony let the farm's organic produce speak for itself. The best salad greens of the moment are topped with a free-range egg with a yellow-orange yolk. Perky turnips are simply halved and lined up on a rectangular plate. "The turnips come straight from the field, with greens attached. There are no interruptions from the chef. Their simplicity is a great way of showing off the farmer," says Barber.

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At **Valley at the Garrison in Garrison** (2015 Route 9, 845-424-2339), chef Jeffrey Raider takes guests right into the garden, which has been set up like a private dining room. You and five to nine guests can enjoy heirloom tomato and basil salad while you're sitting in the basil patch. Wines are matched to each tasting course. "Most of our dishes incorporate produce from the gardens," says Raider. For example, Raider's lobster salad uses microgreens, herbs, cucumbers and tomatoes from the two restaurant gardens and his housemade ice creams, served in miniature ice cream cones, feature Valley's own fresh mint, raspberries and even thyme.

The raison d'etre of **The Flying Pig Cafe in Mount Kisco** (2 Depot Plaza at the Mount Kisco train station, 914-666-7445) is promoting the small, independent organic farms of the Hudson Valley. Salad greens and other seasonal vegetables, pork and sometimes beef or trout comes from Cabbage Hill Farm just a few miles away. The grass-fed sirloin burger is wonderfully meaty on rustic bread; the avocado-cheddar sandwich snuggles in ultra-ripe local tomatoes.

Crabtree's Kittle House in Chappaqua (11 Kittle Road, 914-666-8044) is committed to locally raised and organically grown products as well. Mesclun salad, foie gras, quail eggs and free-range chickens from the Hudson Valley are transformed nightly, and heirloom vegetables, such as carrots, tomatoes and corn, are featured at the height of their glorious flavors.

At **Cafe Mezé in Hartsdale** (20 N. Central Ave., 914-428-2400) Mark Filippo looks for microgreens from McCumber Farms in the Catskills, arugula, tomatoes, beans and zucchini flowers from Mountain Sweet Berry Farm in Roscoe and herbs from Sunfrost Farm in Woodstock. At this time of year, Satur Farm and Sepp's, both on the North Fork on Long Island, furnish him with beautiful corn, tomatoes, peppers and cauliflower twice a week. These local raw materials help his Mediterranean imagination soar.

Peter X. Kelly assembles a trio of heirloom tomatoes at **Xaviars at Piermont** (506 Piermont Ave., 845-359-7007) from Blooming Hill Farm and from his friends Brian and Sue Griffen's farm, both of which are in Orange County. He uses Congers' own Dr. Davies' Silver Queen corn for the succotash that accompanies the seared salmon at **Freelance Cafe** next door (845-365-3250). "From rhubarb, to squash to berries and corn, this time of year is when we have the greatest array of Hudson Valley products available," says Kelly. "Getting the products from as close to the source as possible is always best." Kelly even grows his herbs on site at the restaurants.

At **Peter Pratt's Inn in Yorktown** (673 Croton Heights Road, 914-962-4090) chef John-Michael Hamlet uses rabbit raised "Around the Corner," as the dish is called, at Hemlock Hill Farm in Cortlandt Manor. The rabbit is prepared three different ways, "four if you count the sauce," says Hamlet. "Local products are so fresh, the vegetables reach me five minutes out of the fields," he says. "They haven't been in three different trucks by the time they get to the door. The shelf life of the lettuces and arugula is so much longer." Hamlet stops at The Meadows farm stand in Yorktown daily on the way to the restaurant and gets a delivery twice a week from Cabbage Hill Farm in Mount Kisco.

David Anderson, the chef at **Strega in Pleasantville** (2 Broadway, 914-769-4040) is a Westchester native and feels that using local products is community minded. His duck and chicken come from Stone Church Farms in Dutchess County, venison from Millbrook Farms in Dutchess and goat cheese from Coach Farm in Colombia County. The radishes he turns into a marinated salad come from Blooming Hill Farm in Orange County and he loves their spinach, beets, purple fingerling potatoes and baby watercress as well.

Chef-owner Matthew Karp of **Plates in Larchmont** (121 Myrtle Ave., 914-834-1244) wants "to take full advantage of this time of year. I wish it was like this year around." He is enthusiastic about local fish, such as fluke, wild striped bass, scallops from nearby New Jersey and tuna from Montauk. His mesclun and herbs come from Rainbeau Ridge in Bedford Hills and often and the stone fruits he uses in luscious fruit crisps come from Satur Farms on Long Island.

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