

## **Late Season Garden Picks**

Being frugal has always been an admirable trait and who would have imagined all of the delicious food recipes that we now enjoy specifically because of the desire not to waste anything. In the old South, most of those great food creations fell under the collective category of “soul food” and were the direct result of working with produce, livestock or poultry cuts that no one wanted. They were available therefore for little or no money.

Before the creation of the now famous “Buffalo Wings” dish those chicken wings sold by your butcher could be had for next to nothing. The same can be said for wild greens, pork neck bones, and, of course, those bright green tomatoes still on the vine at the end of the year. As you may know, something has to happen with those late ripening dandies before the first frost or they’ll be destined for the compost pile.

I’ve served fried green tomatoes every year for the past decade and even used them for special dinners in our restaurant with great results. My take on this dish is really very traditional with the exception of the homemade sauce I serve them with, which is made with wasabi, Japanese green horseradish.

### **Fried Green Tomatoes**

(Serves six)



4 large firm green tomatoes (sliced into ¼ inch slices)

Sea salt

1 ½ cups self-rising flour

½ cup ground cornmeal

2 cups peanut or vegetable oil (for frying)

1-cup buttermilk

Salt & pepper (to taste)

Place your tomato slices on a shallow baking pan and sprinkle them with sea salt. Transfer the slices into a colander and allow them approximately 30 minutes to bleed.

This is when the salt is allowed to pull out the excess water, which reduces some of the acidity along with helping the tomatoes maintain a nice texture when fried.

Dip each tomato slice in buttermilk and dredge them through a flour and cornmeal mix. Your oil should have been heated to medium high in a deep fry pan. (I use cast iron.) Deep-fry your slices in batches until golden brown. If you are not serving them immediately do not hold your cooked slices in paper towels; it will make them soggy. Your best means of holding them is in a warm oven after they have drained using a roaster rack to hold them elevated or laid out on crinkled aluminum foil in a roaster pan.

### **Wasabi Mayonnaise Sauce**

(Makes enough for 6 servings.)

Combine in a blender at slow speed until well mixed:

½ to 1 teaspoon Japanese wasabi horseradish

½ cup whole buttermilk

1-cup mayonnaise

½ cup sour cream

½ teaspoon Tobasco (optional)

Allow to chill in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour before using. Drizzle over the fried green tomatoes right before you serve or keep on the side for each diner to use as desired.

Japanese wasabi horseradish is available in most major chain supermarkets in the oriental food section. It normally comes in a powder form and is reconstituted by adding water until you have a paste the texture of soft wood putty. If you've never used wasabi, use it sparingly...it is quite strong.

Another garden item that many out there still have in abundance is Jalapeño peppers and one of our favorite ways to use them is for homemade poppers. A dear friend recently boiled his peppers before stuffing and nearly wiped out his family with the fumes. Here's a recipe that will give you good results and not require temporary relocation as your house is aired out:

### **Jalapeño Poppers**



24 medium to large Jalapeño peppers  
two 8 ounce blocks cream cheese at room temperature  
1 ½ cups finely shredded sharp cheddar cheese (can use a Mexican blend)  
3 cups peanut oil for deep-frying, heat to medium high (375°F)

Using a sharp paring knife (wearing kitchen prep rubber gloves!) prepare each pepper by slicing a strip ¼ inch wide from the pointed tip to the stem leaving the strip attached at the stem. (Like creating a small lift up door.) Gently raise the strip so that you can remove the pulp and seeds from the pepper, rinse in cold water and set it aside. Continue until all of your peppers are ready to be stuffed.

Mix your softened cream cheese with your shredded cheese in a bowl. Use your same paring knife and gently pack your peppers full of your cheese mixture until the cheese is nearly overflowing. Close the flap of the pepper and wipe away any excess cheese. Continue until all of your peppers are stuffed. Place the peppers in a bowl and put them in the freezer for 30 to 45 minutes...long enough for the cheese to harden.

Prepare your batter by combining:  
2 cups all purpose flour; sifted into  
1 ½ teaspoons salt  
4 eggs  
1 cup milk  
2 tablespoons corn oil

Beat with a mixer at low until smooth. Dip each of your very cold poppers into the batter and fry them in batches in your hot peanut oil. Remove to drain on paper towels. Poppers will require 4 or 5 minutes to come out golden brown. Allow your oil to come back up to temperature between batches and keep your poppers cold until ready to fry.

My wine pick this week was originally recommended to me by a friend and professional in the wine industry who suddenly passed away this past week at the young age of 39. We're going to miss those lively wine conversations and tastings, Pete!

The 2001 Jakoby-Mathy Kinheimer Rosenberg Riesling Auslese is a wine so filled with mouth-watering fruit that it's almost a sin to try to enjoy this one with any food. The ultra ripe granny smith apple flavor is further elevated by traces of ripe peach, unctuous tropical fruits and near perfect levels of fresh fruit acidity. It's a German masterpiece and would be my top choice as a sipper for a quiet evening on the porch this fall admiring the change of leaves with a warm sweater and my even warmer lovely wife.

This wine is the perfect choice for a romantic evening, good conversation and a bit of time set aside from your busy schedule to marvel at all the blessings in your life. All of us need to do that from time to time, you know.

Let us know if you have any questions or comments. Call us at 888-288-0668 or visit us online at [www.winedog.com](http://www.winedog.com). Many of you stopped by to visit us at the Morrow Wine Festival this past weekend. We appreciate your support and a chance to meet all of you!  
Cheers!