

The Farm Crawl Report • Co-op Strategic Plan • Winter Warmers • Cornbread • Lentils

MORSEL

www.neighborhood.coop

Winter 2026



FREE



MORSEL

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FROM NEIGHBORHOOD CO-OP GROCERY

CONTRIBUTORS

Co-op General Manager FRANCIS MURPHY
 Co-op Board Member LISA SMITH
 Co-op Brand/Design Manager EMILY YATES
 Co-op Bulk Foods Buyer DYLAN CARAKER
 Rooted in Foods NIKI DAVIS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lauren Bonner Allegra Frazier Erika Peterson
 Quiana Enge Barbara James Lisa Smith
 Amy Etcheson Donna Margolis Richard Thomas

Generally, meetings are held in the Co-op Community Room once a month. Contact the Board at: boardlink@neighborhood.coop

EDITORIAL POLICY

Morsel is a quarterly magazine produced by Neighborhood Co-op as a means to share news from the Co-op, promote local food, celebrate the seasons, and inspire our owners and patrons to enjoy a healthy lifestyle full of delicious and nutritious food. The views expressed in Morsel are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Co-op's directors, staff, or ownership. Health and nutrition articles are for informational purposes only and do not constitute medical advice.

SUBMISSION POLICY

Morsel accepts submissions on an ongoing basis. Letters, articles, artwork and ideas are all welcome! We reserve the right to edit content for brevity and clarity. Please send inquiries and submissions to info@neighborhood.coop.

OUR STORE

1815 W Main Street, Carbondale, IL 62901
 Neighborhood Co-op is a cooperative grocery store owned by members of our very own community. Most of our staff are even owners! We are a founding member of the National Co-op Grocers, a network of more than 200 cooperative grocery stores all across America. We combine our buying power to bring you the best food at the best value while staying locally governed. We work hard to support our community and improve our local food system.

OUR MISSION

Neighborhood Co-op Grocery aims to serve the needs of its owners and patrons by providing wholesome foods, economically, in the cooperative tradition and in ways that best promote the health of the individual, the community and the earth.

QUESTIONS/ADVERTISING

Contact us at 618.529.3533 or info@neighborhood.coop.

ECO PRINTING

This magazine was printed by ModernLitho. They are certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) and by the Forestry Stewardship Council® (FSC®) for their efforts in utilizing papers originating from a sustainable, ecological source and for maintaining rigorous processes, procedures and training to ensure their standards of excellence and environmental responsibility.



Co-op Throwback

CONTENTS

- 4 The Farm Crawl Report**
Community Connections
- 6 Growing Together**
Co-op Strategic Plan for 2026-2028
by Francis Murphy, General Manager
- 8 Cornbread**
News & Views - From the Co-op Board
by Lisa Smith, Co-op Board Member
- 10 Learning to Love Lentils**
Store Feature - Bulk Department
by Dylan Caraker, Bulk Foods Buyer
- 12 Bowl Season**
Winter Warmers to Keep You Going
by Niki Davis, Rooted in Foods

Co-op Strategic Planning

Neighborhood Co-op's board and management have been doing strategic planning since at least 1999. In October, 2002 Co-op board members, staff, and owners held a Future-Back planning retreat with SIU professor Ron Mason. Out of this planning process came a report, "The Co-op in 2010", which led directly to the creation of the current store in 2005-2006.

Sales & Events

WINTER 2026

For our most up-to-date information, visit neighborhood.coop/events or follow us on social media.



JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Nat'l Soup Month: Warm up with tasty natural & organic soups

- 7 Wellness Wednesday**
10% off all wellness items
- 1-20 Wellness Rise & Shine Event!**
BOGO Deals in Wellness
- 4, 11, 18, 25 Saluki Sundays**
All students with college ID get 10% off their purchase
- alternate Mon./Tues. Double Days**
Co-op Sale Flyers overlap - Deals from both - double savings!

FEBRUARY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Black History Month: Shop local & national minority-owned products

- 4 Wellness Wednesday**
10% off all wellness items
- 1, 8, 15, 22 Saluki Sundays**
All students with college ID get 10% off their purchase
- alternate Mon./Tues. Double Days**
Co-op Sale Flyers overlap - Deals from both - double savings!

MARCH

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Owner Appreciation Month: 10% off coupon for single transaction

- 4 Wellness Wednesday**
10% off all wellness items
- 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 Saluki Sundays**
All students with college ID get 10% off their purchase
- alternate Mon./Tues. Double Days**
Co-op Sale Flyers overlap - Deals from both - double savings!

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Neighborhood Co-op Grocery Farm crawl 2025 - Report

The Co-op has sponsored the **annual Farm Crawl** supporting **Food Works** - a local non-profit facilitating the development of a regional food economy in southern Illinois - since 2012 and last September's edition was especially fruitful. The Farm Crawl connects community members to local food sources and educates consumers on resources in our region; connecting how purchasing local creates a sustainable environment for local businesses and the importance of healthy food and products based on healthy soil and practices.

This past fall, attendees had access to local southern Illinois farms and producers learning about each farm's history and seeing first hand how they grow food, raise livestock, and bring locally-grown, locally-sourced products to market. Activities included on-site tours, demos, kid activities, food and product sampling and more.

This year, farms were located east and west along the Route 13 corridor near Marion and Carbondale in southern Illinois. Individual farms hosted over 200 visitors on the weekend, each afternoon from 1 pm to 6 pm on Saturday and Sunday.

We had four farms in the **Western Region**, available for tours on Saturday, located in the surrounding Carbondale area a few miles off of Route 13. Participating farms in this region offered viewing and feeding heritage breed hens - Rhode Island Reds, Bresse, Ayam Cemanis, Katahdin hair sheep, feeding walnuts to Mulefoot and Red Waddle pigs, Brown Swiss and Jersey cows, eggs, local honey, seasonal fruits and vegetables - picking pears from the tree, grass-fed lamb, chicken and pork, chick hatchery and poultry processing plant tours, as well as sampling many farm products, including free smoked chicken for all to try. We also learned about farm/garden education projects for 2nd and 3rd grade students at Thomas Elementary in Carbondale.

The four farms and producers in the **Eastern Region** were located near Marion along Route 13, with one further afield near Creal Springs, all open for tours on Sunday. Farms in this region offered grape tastings, vineyard tours, pygmy goat petting, u-pick pumpkins and gourds, fresh eggs, local honey, local infused & shrub drinking vinegars, hot sauces, pickles, jams, jellies, elderberry syrups, product sampling and more!

The majority of participating farms in 2025 had never been included in our Farm Crawl before, giving car pass purchasers new, fun places to explore! We had Farm Crawl event t-shirts and stickers available for purchase online and in store.

The 2025 Farm Crawl raised \$3,000 for Food Works and their mission!

Learn more at: www.fwsoil.org
www.neighborhood.coop/farm-crawl

Save the Date for Farm Crawl 2026 & get your car passes!
Saturday & Sunday September 12 & 13, 2026





GROWING TOGETHER

by Francis Murphy

Neighborhood Co-op Grocery's Strategic Plan for 2026-2028

For 40 years, Neighborhood Co-op Grocery has been more than a place to shop—it has been a gathering space, a champion of local farmers, and a steadfast supporter of democratic community ownership. As Southern Illinois continues to evolve, the Co-op is launching its 2026–2028 Strategic Plan, a roadmap for strengthening the local food system, deepening community relationships, and ensuring the Co-op remains vibrant and resilient for years to come.

At the heart of the plan is a simple but powerful purpose: to make sure the people of Southern Illinois have access to meaningful food, a strong cooperative economy, and a deeper understanding of how our food systems shape the health of our communities.



Building a More Engaged and Welcoming Community

The Co-op has always been known for its sense of community, and in the coming years it aims to broaden and deepen that connection. One major focus is welcoming new owners—150 each year—who share a passion for local food, cooperation, and sustainability. But ownership alone isn't enough. The Co-op is committed to creating a truly welcoming environment where shoppers and staff alike feel valued, respected, and supported.

To strengthen the workplace culture, the plan sets out clear goals: maintain employee turnover below 30%, ensure every full-time employee earns a local livable wage, and continue improving employee engagement. A healthy, supported staff leads to a better shopping experience and a stronger cooperative.

Deepening Support for Local Farmers and Sustainable Practices

Supporting local farmers has always been central to the Co-op's identity. As part of the new plan, the Co-op is committed to increasing both purchases and sales of local products every year. This means more local produce, more locally made goods, and stronger partnerships with area growers and producers. Sustainability also plays a key role. The Co-op plans to invest in at least one energy efficiency project each year—upgrades that reduce environmental impact and lower long-term operating costs.

Replacing aging refrigeration and other equipment with high-efficiency models ensures the store remains both environmentally responsible and financially strong.

By supporting local agriculture and improving resource efficiency, the Co-op helps build a resilient local food system that benefits the entire region.

Increasing Access to Meaningful, Affordable Food

The Co-op's product philosophy is rooted in quality, values, and access. Over the next three years, it will expand its Co+op Basics program to make everyday staples more affordable for more people. It will also work to increase the average basket size and better meet shopper needs by refining product selection using SPINS data—industry insights that help co-ops understand trends and opportunities.

The Link Match nutrition incentive program will continue to grow as well, helping customers stretch their food dollars while supporting local farmers. Fresh, local, organic, and fair-trade products will remain essential elements of the Co-op's identity, and new investments in the Bulk department will help the store offer more ready-to-eat and made-from-scratch options.

Strengthening the Co-op's Cooperative and Financial Foundation

A thriving cooperative needs a strong financial foundation. The 2026–2028 plan emphasizes efficiency, operational excellence, and long-term stability. One key strategy is continuing to use Sales Per Labor Hour as the primary measurement for increasing productivity across departments. The Co-op will also work with National Co+op Grocers' retail specialists to boost sales and refine store operations.

Financial resilience is another priority. The Co-op aims to increase owner equity by at least 6% each year, transition to QuickBooks Online for more efficient accounting, and complete preparations for a successful general manager transition in 2026.

Ensuring strong leadership well into the future is essential for the Co-op's continued health.

Educating and Inspiring the Community

Finally, the Co-op remains dedicated to its role as an educator and community connector. Over the next three years, it will expand its food-system education through *Morsel* articles, digital content, in-store information, classes, workshops, and farm tours. The goal is simple: help more people understand where their food comes from, how it's grown, and why local food systems matter.

As Southern Illinois faces ongoing economic and demographic changes, the Co-op's strategic plan positions it to adapt, grow, and continue serving as a stabilizing force in the community. Through cooperation, sustainability, and thoughtful planning, Neighborhood Co-op Grocery is moving confidently toward a future where thriving farms and engaged communities grow together.



ATTENTION CO-OP OWNERS:

Has Your Information Changed?

Have you moved? Has your name, email address, or phone number changed? Have you had a change in who constitutes your household members?

Keep your membership data up to date by letting us know what has changed. We want to keep our owners informed with the latest news about our Co-op, and we appreciate your help.

Update your info at bit.ly/OwnerInfoUpdate or scan here:




by **Lisa Smith**

Growing up in middle Tennessee at my Grandma Mag's house, there was one constant you could set your clock by: a hot skillet of cornbread sitting on the table at every single lunch and dinner. Later, when I did the math—counting from the day my grandparents married until the day Grandma Mag passed—I realized she had baked well over 20,000 skillet. Twenty thousand. So I feel confident I learned at the apron strings of a master.

But my Grandma Mary was no slouch either. She didn't make cornbread every day, she had neither the time nor the desire, but what she lacked in repetition she made up for in flair. Holidays sometimes brought our big families together, and with them came a gentle, good-natured rivalry over whose method you were using and which grandmother might be sitting close enough to you to notice.

Because Grandma Mag and I were especially close, I spent countless hours underfoot in her kitchen, absorbing every nuance: the tilt of her bowl, how she cracked the egg (flat on the table not the edge of the bowl), the rhythm with which she stirred the batter (a surprisingly important step), and the sharp, satisfying sizzle when the cold batter hit the blazing hot skillet. When she passed, I inherited her well-seasoned cast-iron skillet and the aluminum mixing bowl she used—a humble little bowl that I'm fairly sure once topped a long-lost double boiler. Both pieces are priceless to me now, far more meaningful than any new or shiny kitchen tool I've acquired since.

Years later, after I married and moved north, my family would sometimes travel to my house for Thanksgiving. I'll never forget the year Grandma Mary came rushing into the kitchen the moment I mentioned I was about to make the cornbread for dressing. She wasn't there to help—she was there to warn me, with absolute seriousness, not to add sugar. Living north of Tennessee, she feared, might have corrupted me into committing a true southern sin of sweet cornbread. (Rest assured, it had not.)

Both of my grandmothers used cornmeal mix—Martha White, to be exact. Eventually, as I learned more about food, farming, and genetically modified crops, I started searching for a way to capture that same moist crumb and thin, crisp crust without using a mix. What I love about the recipe I adapted over the years is that it doubles beautifully for a larger skillet, and it lets you explore heirloom cornmeals like Jimmy Red and varieties with more character and depth of flavor than Martha White ever dreamed of.

Every time I heat a skillet or hear that familiar sizzle, I'm right back at my grandma's kitchen table talking through articles in Women's Day magazine and waiting for the cornbread to come out of the oven.

More cake-like results?
For a moister, more cake-like cornbread, substitute 1/4 cup flour for 1/4 cup cornmeal.

Buttermilk Cornbread

(from scratch without self rising cornmeal and baked in a cast iron skillet)

- 1 ½ cup corn meal (**Bob's Red Mill** non-GMO Preferred)
- ½ cup all purpose flour
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt or table salt
- ¼ cup melted bacon fat or clear oil like canola
- 1-2 Tablespoons bacon fat or clear oil like canola – set aside for skillet
- 1 egg
- 1 ½ cup buttermilk

No buttermilk?
If you do not have buttermilk, add 1 Tablespoon of vinegar or lemon juice to your milk or milk substitute. Stir to combine and allow to sit for 5 minutes.

For a crunchy exterior and moist interior:

Add 1 heaping Tablespoon bacon fat or a neutral oil to your cold (seasoned) cast iron skillet. Using the rack in the center to lower third of the oven, place the skillet in the oven and allow to preheat with the oven to 425 degrees F. Once the oven is preheated, wait an additional 5 minutes before you remove the skillet so the oil is very hot. (Be careful.)

In those 5 minutes, prepare the batter:

- In a medium bowl add cornmeal and flour.
- Using the "pinch-in" method, add the other "dry" ingredients: baking soda, baking powder, and salt. Note, when you measure the baking soda and baking powder be sure to level the top of the spoon before pinching, because you want this measurement to be precise or the texture of the bread will be overly aerated. (*Pinch-In Method*: you cannot use a sieve to combine dry ingredients like you normally would because cornmeal is somewhat coarse, so you will need to "pinch" the baking soda and and baking powder between your fingers to ensure there are no bitter lumps in your finished cornbread).

-Pinch it all into the bowl of flour. Then add the sea salt. Whisk to combine all the ingredients until it looks evenly distributed and set aside.

- In another bowl or measuring cup add the buttermilk, oil and egg . Whisk to thoroughly combine and set aside.

- Push the dry ingredients to the edges of the bowl, creating a well to pour your wet ingredients into.

- Pour the wet ingredients into the well and gently fold the ingredients together using a rubber spatula. (Move the spatulas around the edges of the interior of the bowl and then up through the middle of the batter. Continue to do this, very gently, until it looks a little lumpy, but thoroughly combined with no pockets of dry ingredients. If you still have lumps and are afraid to keep stirring, gently mash the lumps with the spatula and then gently stir them in. When it is almost combined go to the next step.

- Remove the skillet from the oven. Be sure to close the oven door while you work.

- Pour the hot oil from the skillet into the almost thoroughly combined batter. Gently fold the new oil into the batter a little. The oil does not have to be thoroughly incorporated.

- At this point you have a choice: Grandma Mag's Technique: Immediately pour the batter into the hot skillet and return to the oven...Or Grandma Mary's Technique with extra crunch in the crust: Sprinkle a teaspoon of cornmeal evenly into the bottom of the hot skillet, which still has some oil left in it. For Both: Bake for about 30-35 minutes. It should be a beautiful golden-brown color on top and bounce back a little when you tap the top with your fingers (or when a toothpick comes out clean.)

The batter just after the hot oil is poured in. The oil will be gently stirred in just before baking.



The batter poured into the hot skillet. Notice the sizzling oil at the edges.



A cast iron skillet with the residual hot oil gives you a crisp crust that bakes up to a rich golden brown. You just cannot get that same crust with glass or aluminum.



There were even differences in how the cornbread was cut, too. At Grandma Mag's, the crust was gold - highly prized. Out of respect, we always waited for Grandpa to make the first cut, which was taken from the side, never wedges. If you wandered to the table late, all that was left was the soft, octagon-shaped center with barely any crust. At Grandma Mary's, things were more egalitarian. Everyone got a wedge. Personally, I'll take an edge piece every time, if I can!



Fun Add-ins:

Add all as "dry ingredients", tossing with the flour mixture before incorporating.

- ½ cup of lightly packed chopped scallions/green onions, green ends only, to the batter. Only have wild onion greens or chives? Use 1/4 cup instead, because they are finer.
- 1 tsp Old Bay seasoning and ½ freshly shredded cheddar cheese to the batter.
- ¼ cup canned green chile (well drained) and ½ cup of cheddar cheese.
- ½ cup fresh roughly chopped basil and ½ cup frozen corn kernels.
- 2 tsp freshly grated/finely minced garlic and 2 tablespoons of honey.

Learning to Love Lentils

by Dylan Caraker, Co-op Bulk Buyer

Ahh, lentils... not quite peas, not quite beans, they are a flavorful, fiber rich, protein packed powerhouse. Originating in Southwest Asia, lentils are one of humanity's oldest cultivated crops. Tolerant of cool weather, drought, and poor soil, lentils have become a staple food in many cultures. Combined with the many varieties, opportunities for tasty recipes are manifold, from soups, stews, and gravies, to salads, pilafs, and sweet desserts.

Neighborhood Coop carries **five varieties** of lentils. Tiny, rich tasting **Black/Beluga** lentils, and firm, peppery **French Green** lentils take longer to cook, but hold their shapes exceptionally well, making them suitable for salads, pilafs and grain dishes, and gourmet dishes where appearance is important. Our **EDLP Green** lentils, earthy and peppery, hold their shape well, and are best in salads, grain and pilaf dishes, and soups. **Brown** lentils, highest in Folate, are mildly earthy, and mushy when cooked, and are best used in soups, stews, and veggie-burgers. **Red Split** lentils, the mildest, and quickest cooking, are best in soups and curries, as they readily dissolve. They are also the easiest to disguise, and can be added to sauces and casserole dishes to boost protein, fiber, and vitamin content.

Chocolate Banana Protein Brownies

- 2 ¾ cups cooked lentils (**brown or green**)
- ¼ cup honey
- 1/3 cup coconut oil, melted
- ¼ cup coconut sugar
- ¼ cup cocoa powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- ¾ cup chocolate chips
- 1 large banana, sliced (optional) ½ cup pecans, coarsely chopped



Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350°F, line 8x8 square pan with parchment paper or grease well. Set aside.

In a food processor, blend lentils, honey, coconut oil, and coconut sugar. Add vanilla, salt, cocoa powder, and baking powder. Process mixture until combined and smooth. Add eggs. Process mixture until combined.

Stir ½ cup chocolate chips, and a portion of the banana slices (reserve some slices for decoration) into the batter. Pour mixture into prepared pan. Smooth the top. Arrange reserved sliced banana on top. Sprinkle with ¼ cup chocolate chips (and pecans if using). Bake 30-35 minutes, until brownies are firm in the center. Let cool before slicing.

Adapted from: <https://yummyaddiction.com/chocolate-lentil-brownies/>

Beluga/Black	Protein 13g	Fiber 9g	Iron 20%	Folate 90%
French Green	Protein 12g	Fiber 7g	Iron 15%	Folate 58%
Green(EDLP)	Protein 8g	Fiber 9g	Iron 17%	Folate 58%
Brown	Protein 9g	Fiber 5g	Iron 17%	Folate 58%
Red Split	Protein 11g	Fiber 9g	Iron 34%	Folate 30%

Mujadara

- 1 cup **brown or green** lentils
- 1½ cups of rice (long grain white is traditional, long grain brown is also delicious)
- 1 TB ground cumin
- 1 TB ground coriander
- 1 TB ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp chili powder
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 medium white or yellow onions (red onions work too)
- 2 tsp salt, separated
- 4 TB oil (total)
- ½ bunch of parsley (chopped) for garnish

Instructions:

Mince garlic. Dice one onion finely. Slice other onion into half-moons. Set aside. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large, heavy pot. Add cumin, coriander, cinnamon and chili, toast lightly. Stir diced onion and garlic into spices, and sauté on low heat until golden, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes.

To the pot, add 1 cup lentils, enough water to cover them, plus 1 cup of water and 1 tsp salt. Raise heat to medium-high, cook for 25-30 minutes, until lentils are cooked through.

Add rice, 1 tsp salt, 2 cups of water to the same pot (if using brown rice, use 2 & 1/2 cups water). Cover with a lid, raise heat to medium high, bring to a boil.

Once dish is boiling, adjust heat down to Very Low/ Low Simmer, and let cook until rice is done (about 25 minutes for white rice, 30-40 minutes for brown). Fluff rice with a fork, cover with lid, and let rest 10 minutes.

While rice is cooking, heat 2 TB of oil in a pan. Add the sliced onion half-moons. Let cook, stirring to prevent sticking, on low-medium heat until onions caramelize.

Chop parsley finely while rice/onions cook. After rice rests, pour contents of pot onto a large platter. Mix lightly. Top with chopped parsley and caramelized onions.

Adapted from: <https://immigrantstable.com/mujadara/>

Now Available for EECA Consumer-Members!

Electric Vehicle & Generator Rebate Program

EECA is offering a **\$100 bill credit** to residential consumer-members who install, or have installed, the following qualifying equipment at their residence.

- Level 2 Electric Vehicle Charger
- Whole-home Generator with proper transfer switch or interlock kit

Learn more & sign up at eeca.coop



BOWL SEASON

Winter warmers to keep you going

Recipes by Niki Davis, Rooted in Foods

Classic Beef Stew

Serves 4

Beef stew was a staple in my house growing up. It is very filling and can be adjusted based on the preferences of your family. You can also pack it with more vegetables, add extra beef stock, and stretch the dish to cover more than one meal. Serve smaller portions of leftover stew with buttered egg noodles to stretch this even further.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 pounds **Dakota Ranch Highlands sirloin**, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 large celery stalk, chopped
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 2 medium russet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 3 medium carrots, peeled and diced
- 1 quart beef stock
- 1/2 cup **Hickory Ridge Winery Norton** or other dry red wine
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

Heat the olive oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Brown the meat on all sides, this will take about 8 minutes. Add the onion, celery, thyme, salt and pepper and cook until the onions begin to wilt, stirring occasionally. Add the potatoes and carrots followed by the liquids and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cover. Cook the stew for 1 hour, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking. The liquid will reduce by about one-third, leaving you with a slightly thick stew.

The starch from the potatoes will help thicken the stew. However, you can stir in a slurry of 1 tablespoon cornstarch to equal parts water, stock or wine and bring to a low boil until the stew is thick.

***Bold** indicates a local or Co-op only ingredient.



Potato Leek Soup

Serves 4

This recipe is inspired by those with French and Irish roots. Potato leek soup is often served puréed with a swirl of cream as a garnish and can be served warm or chilled. On a cold winter night, however, the chunky version of this soup served with buttery crusty **bread from the Neighborhood Co-Op Grocery** will keep you cozy.

- 2 leeks about 12 inches in length
- 6 slices bacon
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 4 medium russet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 2 teaspoons **The JAY Effect Garlic and Herb Seasoning**
- 1 quart **Field Day chicken or vegetable stock**
- 1/2 cup **Prairie Farms cream**

To clean the leeks, cut the root end off each and remove any tough outer leaves. Slice into the white part of the leek in 4 places (quarters) without cutting the leek completely apart. This will create a “fan” effect. Rinse under cold water and gently use your fingers to remove any dirt or debris from the inside of the leek. Chop into small pieces and set aside.

Chop the bacon into small pieces and fry them in a Dutch oven over medium heat until they are crispy and have rendered their fat. Remove the bacon to a plate and set aside.

Add the leek, carrot, and celery to the remaining bacon fat and cook until the leeks begin to wilt. Add the potatoes, stirring to coat them in the bacon fat. Stir in the seasoning and stock and cook for about 20 minutes or until the vegetables are tender.

Stir in the cream and cook long enough to bring the soup to a low simmer, then remove the soup from the heat. Serve topped with the crumbled bacon.

You can substitute 2 tablespoons of olive oil in place of the bacon. If you prefer to omit the cream, you can still achieve a creamy texture by removing about 1 cup of soup, puree it, and stir the puree back into the soup.



Corn Chowder

Serves 6

Corn chowder is versatile and can be altered to fit various flavor profiles. This recipe gives you a mild, thick chowder. You can easily shift this to Tex-Mex by adding a diced jalapeño (or two) and swapping **The JAY Effect Original seasoning** for their **Taco seasoning**.

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onions, diced
- 1 medium bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 stalk celery, diced
- 1 teaspoon **The JAY Effect Original Seasoning**
- 1 cup diced cooked ham or chicken
- 1 tablespoon **Prairie Farms butter**
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1 quart **Field Day chicken stock**
- 1 cup peeled, diced potato
- 1 can (15 ounces) **Field Day Organic sweet corn** with liquid
- 1 cup **Rolling Lawns Farm half & half**

Warm the olive oil in a large soup pot over medium heat. Sauté the onion, pepper, and celery with the seasoning until the vegetables begin to soften. Add the ham and cook until it begins to brown. Melt the butter in the pan, stir in the flour - you shouldn't see any lumps from the flour - and cook for about 1 minute. This will help your chowder thicken as it cooks.

Pour in the stock then add the potatoes and corn, bring to a low boil and cook for 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Stir the soup occasionally as it cooks. When the potatoes are tender, reduce the heat to low and gently stir in the half & half. This will cool the soup slightly, so let it sit on low long enough to return to a low simmer before serving.



Venison Chili with Beans

Serves 8

Venison is a very lean meat and needs a little added fat when cooking to prevent it from drying out. You can also make this chili with ground beef or bison. You can keep the fat in the recipe or remove it based on your own preference. The dark beer adds a rich, malty flavor to the chili and helps darken the color. However, you can substitute a rich beef stock in its place. If you use very hot peppers, wear food-safe gloves while cutting them to prevent the capsaicin from burning your fingers - anything hotter than a jalapeno probably warrants gloves.

2 tablespoons bacon fat or olive oil
2 pounds **Force of Nature Grass Fed Ground Venison**

1 medium onion, chopped
3 garlic cloves, minced
2 green peppers, chopped
2 hot peppers, diced
2 cans (15 ounces) chili beans
1 can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes
1 can (4 ounces) Hatch green chiles
2 tablespoons chili powder
2 tablespoons paprika
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon onion powder
12 ounces **Scratch Brewery Historic Porter** or other dark beer

Brown the ground venison in a large Dutch oven, breaking it up as it cooks. While the venison is cooking, add the onions and peppers and continue to cook until they are tender.

Stir in the beans, crushed tomatoes, green chiles, and spices then add beer. The beer will foam when it hits the heat, keep stirring and the foam will dissipate. Cover and simmer on low-medium heat for about an hour, stirring occasionally to prevent anything from sticking to the bottom of the Dutch oven.



Cabbage Kielbasa Soup

Serves 6

Cabbage and sausage soup is a staple in German communities. This variation uses our local **The JAY Effect Original seasoning** in place of the traditional spices. For a more complete German flavor profile, you can add 1/2 teaspoon each of crushed caraway and thyme.

1 pound kielbasa
1 tablespoon olive oil
3 garlic cloves, minced
3 medium russet potatoes, cubed
1 medium turnip, peeled and chopped
1 tablespoon **The JAY Effect Original seasoning**
2 quarts **Field Day vegetable stock**
1 small cabbage head, cored and chopped

Slice the kielbasa into half-inch rounds and brown it in a Dutch Oven over medium heat until it begins to render its fat. Add the olive oil to the pot and let it heat, then add the garlic and cook just until you can smell it. Add the potatoes, turnips and seasoning and stir until everything is coated in the fat rendered from the kielbasa. Pour in the stock and bring to a simmer. Add cabbage a few handfuls at a time and let each cook down a bit before adding the next. This will result in a variety of textures as the cabbage continues to cook. Once all of the cabbage has been added, cover and simmer for 20 minutes or until the potatoes are tender.



Butternut Squash Soup

Serves 4-6

Served with a hearty salad and hunks of toasted **Neighborhood Co-op Grocery French bread**, this soup makes an easy and hearty meatless meal. Garnish with pepitas or, for a slight kick, crushed red pepper flakes.

2 tablespoon olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
2 garlic cloves, minced
3 carrots, diced
2 celery stalks, diced
1 potato, peeled and diced
1 butternut squash, peeled, seeded and diced
1 quart **Field Day vegetable broth**
1/2 cup **local honey**
1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper

Heat the olive oil in a soup pot over medium heat. Sauté the onion with the thyme and garlic until the onions begin to soften then add the carrots and celery. Continue cooking until the celery becomes tender. Add the potatoes, squash, broth, and honey and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes. Season with the salt and pepper. Use an immersion blender to purée the soup prior to serving.



Hi, I'm Niki Davis, and I'm a local foodie. My interest in food and culture started at a young age as I learned to cook standing next to my mom and grandma.

Those early lessons were shaped by home gardens, wild game, and simple ingredients and they led to a love of cooking and sharing food with others. My food philosophy is the core of my website, **Rooted in Foods**, and has shaped my food and recipe writing which I further developed through a certificate program at Le Cordon Bleu.

Beyond writing, I've been actively involved in our community through cooking. I've organized classes for the Jackson County 4-H and led demonstrations at our local farmers' markets. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I partnered with Food Works of Southern Illinois to create recipes that encouraged people to shop locally and support our regional farms. Teaching people how to cook and fostering a love for local food are important to me.

As a long-time tourism educator and culinary tourism advocate, I enjoy telling the stories of how food shapes our lives. Food and cooking connects us to each other. Eating locally sourced foods connects us to our community and helps support families that are also our neighbors. I am excited to share my favorite recipes using local ingredients available right here at the Neighborhood Co-op Grocery and I hope you grab your apron and cook along!

Connect with me on www.rootedinfoods.com or **Rooted in Foods** on Facebook.





Neighborhood Co-op Grocery

1815 West Main Street
Carbondale, IL 62901

NOW HIRING



GENERAL MANAGER



Neighborhood Co-op Grocery is looking for our next general manager as our beloved General Manager of 28 years retires. Our next GM will inherit a busy, financially successful store that serves as a community gathering place for Carbondale. We're looking for candidates with extensive experience in financial management, business planning, and building and leading teams, with a strong commitment to cooperative values, and justice, equity, diversity and inclusion.

- Experienced leader in financial management and business.
- Skilled in building strong, collaborative teams.
- Salary \$80,000–\$100,000, plus health, dental, vision and life insurance, PTO, 401(k) match, and staff discount.

If you're excited about this opportunity, please submit a cover letter and résumé to gmhiring@neighborhood.coop. In your cover letter, let us know what attracts you to leading a cooperative business.



Scan to see full job description & apply

bit.ly/Co-opGM