

Summer Means Alfresco Dining

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Summer means eating fresh food in the fresh outdoors. We'll talk about great cooking and eating with summer produce and fresh ingredients.

BY MAUREEN CAVANAUGH, NATALIE WALSH
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MAUREEN CAVANAUGH (Host): Summertime makes you think about food in a different way. You still want it delicious but, a little lighter, a little cooler and very, very fresh. And summer can also make even meat and potato lovers a bit more

adventurous, discovering what grilled fruit tastes like, or coming up with different pairings for salads, using herbs and vegetables in brand new ways. We'll be talking about getting adventurous with summer food and taking your calls about your favorite summer recipes. My guests are Caron Golden, food writer for [San Diego Magazine](#) and the column "Local Bounty," and author of the blog [San Diego Foodstuff](#). Caron, good to see you.

CARON GOLDEN (Food Writer): Good morning, Maureen.

CAVANAUGH: And Ron Oliver is Chef de Cuisine of the [Marine Room](#) in La Jolla. Ron, good morning.

RON OLIVER (Chef, the Marine Room): Good morning. Thanks for having me today.

CAVANAUGH: Well, we're inviting our listeners to join us. What really tastes like summertime to you? Is it a favorite salad or a dessert? Is it a grilled kabob or a special ice cream treat? Give us a call with your favorites and your questions. The number is 1-888-895-5727, that's 1-888-895-KPBS. Ron, let me ask you this first, what excites you about summer cooking?

OLIVER: Well, especially living in San Diego, we're so fortunate to have so many different farmers in San Diego, over 6,000 farmers in the region. The thing that's exciting is that every day of the week in San Diego, there's a farmers market.

CAVANAUGH: Every day of the week, you're right.

OLIVER: Monday through Sunday. And a good resource...

GOLDEN: Yeah, many farmers markets.

OLIVER: Many, yes, some on various different locations on a particular day. But about.com has a really good guide to the farmers markets in San Diego. Eating in summer, it's about light, refreshing. You know, it's hot out, you want to cool down, you want to keep it light and crisp. So there's so many different discoveries to be had out there. Even in the markets, though, just forget about the farmers market for a second, even all the different markets in San Diego like Henry's, Whole Foods, North Park Produce, the bounty is just magical.

CAVANAUGH: And, Caron, what's the exciting part about summer cooking?

GOLDEN: Not cooking.

CAVANAUGH: Not cooking?

GOLDEN: I mean, even fish, you know, that's what ceviche is all about, marinating in citrus juices so that you don't even have to cook fish if you don't want to, or you can grill outdoors. But you can take the kitchen outside and you can combine different kinds of fruits and vegetables together or with other proteins and come up with wonderful, really flavorful, you know, meals that are a little harder to come by in the winter when you sort of feel the need to cook, you know, a lot.

CAVANAUGH: Right. So, okay, let's get down to what is in season now?

GOLDEN: We're – Well, the weather – our weather has been a little crazy and so I would say we're heading into tomato season. But it's been chilly and I think – I was just at Suzie's Farm, which is down in Imperial Beach and, you know, a lot of the crops that they expected to be ready to go, I think are still trying to figure out where the sun is.

CAVANAUGH: Umm-hmm.

GOLDEN: And so we may have a little slowdown with some of these things. But as you can see from what Ron brought in today...

CAVANAUGH: An amazing basket.

GOLDEN: ...we've got corn and cucumbers. We've got stone fruit, we've got berries, we've got melons, lovely, lovely melons. All sorts of herbs, all sorts of, oh, gosh, what else have we got here?

OLIVER: Okay...

GOLDEN: ...lemon citrus, a lot of citrus.

OLIVER: A lot of citrus. Summer is a citrus time, so...

GOLDEN: Yeah.

OLIVER: ...you bring up a – She brings up a good point about the non-cooking part of it.

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

OLIVER: Gazpachos, fruit soups, even cooking with heat but cooking for a shorter period of time, so on the grill or cooking outside, higher heat and faster cooking times.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah. Tell us more about what's in this fabulous basket you brought...

OLIVER: Okay.

CAVANAUGH: ...in because it really – If we're talking about summer's bounty, that really shows us what it's like. I would imagine this is all from San Diego.

OLIVER: Yes, I brought in a basket today from the Hillcrest Farmers Market, also from Olivewood in National City, the school garden down there, and from my own garden. So we have

very interesting stuff going on. And I brought in a variety of cucumbers for you to see. And we have...

CAVANAUGH: That, yes, there's like a normal looking one.

OLIVER: This is called a straight cucumber that's kind of like a normal one.

CAVANAUGH: Uh-huh.

OLIVER: But the Armenian cucumber, it's also called a snake cucumber because it looks like a snake.

CAVANAUGH: It does, indeed.

OLIVER: It's interesting because...

GOLDEN: Isn't it beautiful?

OLIVER: It's not actually a cucumber, it's a melon. It's in the melon family but it looks like a cucumber.

CAVANAUGH: And does it taste like – What does it taste like?

OLIVER: It looks and tastes like a cucumber but you don't have the belch effect of a cucumber. Then we have...

CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Armenia.

OLIVER: Yeah.

GOLDEN: And you should describe it. I mean, this is – it's sort of long and curved and it's green, dark and light green stripes.

OLIVER: Yes, it looks corrugated.

GOLDEN: It looks sort of zebra. Yeah, it's beautiful.

OLIVER: So when you see this in the farmers market, you might be a little skeptical to buy it because...

CAVANAUGH: Right.

OLIVER: ...well, what do I do with this? Talk to the farmers. They know exactly...

GOLDEN: Yeah.

OLIVER: ...what to do with all the produce they grow.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah, I know, because is daunting sometimes. You go to a farmers market and it's filled with vegetables you don't even really know what they're called let alone not – what to do with them. So where do you start with something like that?

GOLDEN: Start with the farmers. The farmers are a really good first step. And then both Ron and I have websites. One of the things that I do on San Diego Foodstuff is, you know, talk about all these unusual fruits and vegetables that you see and I'll be doing that on San Diego magazine with the Local Bounty column, too, kind of highlighting things and things that are rather unusual. And there are a lot of great resources. Go to the web also because you'll find a lot of interesting resources there, too.

OLIVER: And at the farmers market, when the farmer's actually there, it's so nice because you can talk to them and they have so much information that you wouldn't think of. I met a guy named Dennis at Hillcrest. His farm is called Tom King Farms. So I said, well, who is Tom King? Is he the owner? And he – Dennis told me, no, that's me. That's short for Tomato King. So his wife gave him that name but he was there selling melons, cucumbers, and that's it. And the thing is, is that when you go to the farmers market, they have some stands that are just full of all these different types of fruits and vegetables and you might skip over the people who only are selling one or two things but those people are the specialists.

GOLDEN: Yeah, they really know.

CAVANAUGH: My guests are Caron Golden and Ron Oliver. We're talking about the bounty of summertime salads, cooking, herbs, vegetables, fruits, the way you can get adventurous with food during the summertime. And we're taking your calls at 1-888-895-5727, if you have questions or if you'd like to share a favorite summer salad, a favorite summer recipe of any kind. Andi's on the line right now from Hillcrest. Good morning, Andi, and welcome to These Days.

ANDI (Caller, Hillcrest): Good morning. Thank you so much for taking my call. This is such a fun program. As I said to your screener, everybody talks about the ubiquitous tomato gazpacho but I have a recipe that I love, cucumber gazpacho. And it's all fresh vegetables, there's no cooking. The base is Greek-style yogurt and it's cucumbers and cilantro and dill, a pepper and some celery, and you put it all in a blender and what I do is, I wet little short, squat barrel glasses and put them in kosher salt and then pour the gazpacho in so it kind of looks like a green martini. And it just – it's very welcoming and it's very attractive, and it's very cool.

CAVANAUGH: Okay.

OLIVER: So how do we get to your house?

ANDY: It's open this weekend, one to four.

CAVANAUGH: Thank you so much. That sounds great.

GOLDEN: You know, it's interesting, there's a cupcake place in La Jolla now called Cups, and I actually discovered that they're doing cooking classes. They have a huge classroom set up in the back of the building. And Jesús González, who used to be the chef over at Rancho La Puerta is now chef over there, and we went on a sort of field trip and cooking class, a market to table cooking class, and we walked over to the La Jolla Farmers Market, bought all sorts of interesting produce, and then came back and just riffed on – He had some ideas for some dishes. We didn't have any recipes. One of the things that I got to make was a peach gazpacho. And it was a savory gazpacho. You would think if you're using fruit it would have to be a sweet one...

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

GOLDEN: ...but, in fact, it was peaches and light coconut milk and chopped onions and some chili powder and all sorts of other lovely little things, pureed, and it was – and then you add, you know, a few ingredients, you know, after maybe some chopped onions or scallions or something to give it a little crunch. Wonderfully delicious and really, really refreshing.

CAVANAUGH: And that's probably not the kind of a thing you'd try anytime of the year except...

GOLDEN: You wouldn't even think...

CAVANAUGH: ...summer.

GOLDEN: Yeah.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

GOLDEN: Well, you couldn't really because...

CAVANAUGH: Right, right.

GOLDEN: ...you wouldn't have the ingredients necessarily.

CAVANAUGH: Exactly. Ron, I'm wondering, now we know that all of this bounty exists at farmers markets and other stores around the county but what – Do you have any tips on how to really look for the best fruit? I mean, the freshest fruit. What – Do you feel it? Do you smell it?

OLIVER: Yeah. Yeah, when you're looking for produce, there's a couple of things in general that you look for. One that almost applies to every single item is that if it feels heavy for its size, that means that it's nice and juicy inside. Another one is the smell, just you have to use your senses. So if you pick up a melon and it really talks to you, it's like, hello, buy me, take me home, that aroma will come up at you and it'll talk to you. So that's another one. And you look for stuff that is also firm, for the most part. Eggplants that are just picked are really firm. I picked an eggplant yesterday at Olivewood Gardens and it was so firm, it was like – almost like a rock, and I just went, yeah, this is good. And cucumbers the same way.

GOLDEN: And one of the biggest mistakes that people make when they shop at a farmers market is that they shop the way they shop at a conventional market. So you can't buy things at a farmers market unless the farmer tells you it needs a couple of days to sit out and, you know, ripen. You need to use it when you buy it. You can't just let it sit around because normally when we go to a Ralphs or an Albertsons we're getting fruit that wasn't picked ripe. It was picked so that it would be, you know, transportable and then we end up letting it sit for a few days. If you do that at the farmers market, the food is going to rot and you're going to be very upset that you spent all this money on stuff and why didn't it, you know, last as long as it should? Well, it didn't last as long because it was picked when it was ripe and ready to eat. So be sure to really keep things on the counter so that you see it and visually you're tempted to use it and it doesn't go bad on you quickly.

CAVANAUGH: That's a very good point. We're taking your calls at 1-888-895-5727 if you'd like to share a summer recipe or if you have questions about how to use the bounty of summertime here in San Diego. That's 1-888-895-KPBS. Now, Ron, Caron told us about some of her – one of her newest recipes that she just came up with, using that peach, what was it?, a peach...

GOLDEN: It was a peach gazpacho.

CAVANAUGH: ...gazpacho. What, Ron, do you have any recipes you'd like to share?

OLIVER: Oh, yeah, I...

GOLDEN: He's a magician.

CAVANAUGH: She asked.

OLIVER: Do we have another hour? Yeah. Yeah, I have a lot of recipes that are good for summertime, actually. Summertime's a really nice time to cook because, like I said, everything is really refreshing and you get that balance between feeling hot and then eating something cold and refreshing and it feels really good, so I like the summertime. One thing is to keep it simple, as simple as taking some grapes and putting them in the freezer. They get frozen and when you eat them frozen, it's so refreshing. I like to give that to my kids when they come home from school.

CAVANAUGH: Frozen grapes.

OLIVER: Yeah, instead of like ice cream or a pop or something like that.

CAVANAUGH: I wouldn't have thought of that. I would think that they – something would happen to the grapes in the freezer. No?

OLIVER: They become delicious.

GOLDEN: No, frozen grapes are wonderful.

OLIVER: Yes. We also freeze strawberries and then use them as ice cubes in the summertime. So that's fun, too.

CAVANAUGH: That's very good, very good.

OLIVER: So recipe-wise, I put a lot of recipes on my website that are summer related and a couple of them – Let's see, I just did – I made a lavash. And lavash is fun because you take the seeds of summertime and you sprinkle them onto the lavash and it's fun for the kids because they can go in the garden and the celery tops that have dried and are seeding, the poppy seeds that are just about ready to be dried up and have the seeds, you can shake them out of the flowers and then put them on the lavash and it's really fun for them.

CAVANAUGH: That sounds...

OLIVER: So I like to do that.

CAVANAUGH: That sounds delicious. We have to take a short break. When we return, we'll continue to talk about summer cooking and summer eating, and we're going to be talking about getting the most out of grilling food this summer. If you'd like to join our conversation, our number is 1-888-895-5727, that's 1-888-895-KPBS. You're listening to KPBS – These Days on KPBS.

CAVANAUGH: I'm Maureen Cavanaugh. You're listening to These Days on KPBS. We're talking about summer food and my guests are Caron Golden, food writer for San Diego magazine, and author of the blog San Diego Foodstuff. And Ron Oliver, Chef de Cuisine of the Marine Room in La Jolla. We're taking your calls about summer cooking if you'd like to share a favorite recipe or if you have a question about the – your garden and this crazy kind of southern – summer weather we've been having lately. Any kind of fun salads you like to make? Give us a call and let us know. 1-888-895-5727, that's 1-888-895-KPBS. Now, on to grilling. Now this is not necessarily a grill show but if you're talking about summer food, you have to talk about grilling. So what have you been doing, Caron, on the grill.

GOLDEN: On the grill. One of my favorite and very easy recipes comes from Deb Schneider, who has been on the show. She's a chef, she's now in Newport Beach but she still lives here. She wrote a book a couple of years ago "¡Baja! to the Edge," (sic) and it had a recipe in there that's very basic and I just love it and use it not just for chicken but for most proteins, pork and other

things. And you just basically take chipotle in adobe, you know, the cans?

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

GOLDEN: And you empty that in a food processor with some garlic cloves and olive oil and a little salt and pepper and puree that and then take chicken and put it in a big plastic bag and pour the sauce into it. And you would think it's chipotle, you'll never be able to eat it, it'll be too hot, but it does mellow overnight. And then you put it on the grill and the flavors are just wonderful, and it's just one of these no muss, no fuss things.

CAVANAUGH: It sounds great.

GOLDEN: I love it.

CAVANAUGH: It sounds easy, too.

GOLDEN: It's very easy and you can, you know, make some corn on the cob to go with it and maybe some, you know, beans and a salad and you're set. Another thing I love to do is, for appetizers, I'll take grape leaves, which you can find in the jars in the brine, and dry them out, and mix up some – well, what I use is goat cheese, and I toast some pine nuts and maybe add some minced garlic and, you know, whatever other herbs and spices are around that are inspiring to me at that moment. Stuff the – you know, put about a tablespoon in the middle of the grape leaf, roll it up like a little burrito, it looks like a little doma, and you can grill them. Just kind of put a little bit of olive oil on them, brush them with olive oil, and put them on the grill and the cheese melts a little bit and the outer part of the grape leaf gets a little bit crunchy and it's really nice.

CAVANAUGH: That sounds fabulous. We're taking your calls at 1-888-895-5727. Let's hear from John. He's calling us from Golden Hill. Good morning, John, and welcome to These Days.

JOHN (Caller, Golden Hill): Morning. I had a question for Caron. Since you're out and about at the markets all the time, I was curious if you had any kind of favorite other things that you've found from people that make sauces or just other little intricacies around the markets.

GOLDEN: Oh, yeah. Oh, there are so many interesting things going on. We're getting a lot of wonderful prepared foods now. If you like chiles, Ricci's Chiles goes and he will already grill the chiles and you can have them to use to make your own sauces. He also makes these really interesting jams and jellies. And I've gotten like a habenero pomegranate jelly, which is really good. The one – There's a business – They actually have a business on Adams Avenue, I think, called Viva Pops but they're at a lot of the farmers markets now. And if you want a really delicious, unique fruit popsicle, this is the place to go. I've had some really interesting flavors and I'll tell you, I'm – I'm looking here to see where they are. They have a peach cobbler, cucumber chile, salted carmel ice cream, and strawberry cucumber with mint. It's inspired by these Mexican paletas which are the popsicles that you find in Mexico.

CAVANAUGH: I see. And that's in farmers markets?

GOLDEN: There are farm – They have stands in farmers markets.

CAVANAUGH: Wow.

GOLDEN: They're wonderful. You can get very interesting tamales at – Valdivia Farms actually has a tamale stand also and wonderful things there. SoNo Trading Company makes these wonderful sweet and hot pickles, and they make a – four different kinds of mustards. And I used one of them, their champagne and garlic mustard that I thinned out a little bit with some olive oil and I slathered on top of some chicken and then put panko crumbs on top of the chicken...

CAVANAUGH: Oh, wow.

GOLDEN: ...and baked the chicken and it was just delicious. So, I mean, I could go on and on and on. This is the fun part of my life is – is doing that.

CAVANAUGH: Well, and, Ron, in this basket you brought in, you also found a rare form—in a farmers market—a rare form of walnuts...

OLIVER: Yes.

CAVANAUGH: ...that I thought originally might be cranberries. Tell us about that.

OLIVER: Yeah, it looks like cranberries, doesn't it? This is the red walnuts from Terra Bella Farms and they – I've seen them at the Hillcrest farmers market, in La Jolla, and also Saturday at Little Italy farmers market. But the red walnut is so nice because it has this beautiful red color on the outside. They take 8 to 10 years to bare fruit. A regular walnut tree takes two.

CAVANAUGH: Wow.

OLIVER: Also, all these walnuts have to be hand-cracked. So they're really prestigious, they're expensive. But you just buy a few and you could put them on a cheese plate. For example, in salads, they look really nice because they have the red color. One thing that I've done, at a Mexican theme, was I took the red walnut, dipped it in white chocolate and then dried some tarragon and dipped the white chocolate in the tarragon, so you had the red, white and the green.

CAVANAUGH: Oh, that's so...

OLIVER: It's real...

CAVANAUGH: Well...

OLIVER: ...real easy to do actually.

CAVANAUGH: And if you're going to buy such an extravagant walnut, right, why not treat it right?

OLIVER: Yeah, do it up right.

CAVANAUGH: We're taking your calls at 1-888-895-5727 if you'd like to join our conversation. Patty is on the line from San Diego. Good morning and welcome to These Days.

ADDY (Caller, San Diego): Hi, this is Addy from San Diego.

CAVANAUGH: Yes, hi.

ADDY: I just had a couple of comments. Thanks for taking my call.

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

ADDY: The first one is that, you know, summer's a great time to go vegetarian if you're not. And I'm really happy that you guys are sharing so many vegetarian recipes. And, you know, I think

it's a, you know, vegetarianism is something that could be a great way to go in summer.

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

ADDY: You've got all of your nutrients right here.

CAVANAUGH: You're absolutely right. Do you have any recipes you'd like to share?

ADDY: In fact, I do. That was the second point I was going to make. So Ron brought in what town's – he called it an Armenian...

CAVANAUGH: Cucumber.

ADDY: ...cucumber?

CAVANAUGH: Umm-hmm.

ADDY: Yes.

OLIVER: Yes.

ADDY: From the sound of it, it almost feels the same as – there's a veg – So I'm originally Indian and there's a recipe – or, there's actually a vegetable that we use in India. We call those snake gourds but it could be the same thing because it is essentially a melon and it's long and it does – it's long and thin and it's got generally the same colors.

CAVANAUGH: Uh-huh.

ADDY: What we do with it in the summer is we chop it up and do, you know, about – cubes about half an inch, sauté them in a little bit of oil, mustard seeds, and cumin and then we mix it up in cold yogurt.

CAVANAUGH: Oh.

ADDY: And that's a great salad.

CAVANAUGH: That sounds wonderful.

OLIVER: Yeah.

CAVANAUGH: Addy, thank you for the call. That sounds wonderful.

GOLDEN: Cucumbers and yogurt are made for each other. I make a cucumber bisque with yogurt.

CAVANAUGH: Uh-huh.

GOLDEN: And it's just – it's a wonderful, really refreshing thing. The other thing that you can do with cucumbers, which requires no cooking and I do this when it's hot and I just need a snack, and I'll slice up cucumbers. I like the Persian cucumbers for this, and they're smaller and, I don't know, about 3 or 4 inches long, and – but you could use the hothouse cucumbers, too. Slice them up real thin, put them in a little bowl, smother them in rice vinegar, then – and let them marinate in the refrigerator for maybe, I don't know, half an hour or so, and then take them out, add some toasted sesame seeds and a little red pepper flakes and just grab some chopsticks and have a little snack. It's really refreshing and really delicious.

CAVANAUGH: That's great. Now, Ron, I don't want to get away without asking you about the grill because I imagine you have some ideas about that.

OLIVER: Yes. Okay, first of all, just starting off basic, hamburgers.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

OLIVER: Oh, man, in the summertime, hamburgers is the best thing to do. But also with hamburgers, I like to make my own buns, my own hamburger buns. So I have a recipe on my website how to do that.

CAVANAUGH: Okay.

OLIVER: It's really easy to do.

CAVANAUGH: What makes them different from – besides your wonderful ingredients? But I mean, what adds – what does that add to the experience?

OLIVER: What it adds to the experience is, well, it's all – it's well-rounded, you made everything yourself.

CAVANAUGH: Aha.

OLIVER: So it's just a fun experience to do with the family in summertime, bake your own buns and then grill the hamburgers. Just kind of completes the experience.

CAVANAUGH: I can see that, yeah.

OLIVER: And, again, like I talked about with the lavash with all the different seeds you can put on top, you can do the hamburger buns, you can make four buns and you could make each one different. So it's fun so, you know, people will fight over the onion one or something.

CAVANAUGH: Your individual buns.

OLIVER: Yeah, exactly. Catering to everybody's desires. Also, the fun thing about hamburgers in the summertime is you're using the fruit and the vegetables on the hamburger. So avocados in the summertime are just phenomenal. Put avocados and the beautiful tomatoes that we were talking about, and the lettuces that are coming out, so it becomes a very, like I said, a well-rounded experience. You just – you don't really think of hamburgers in that way...

CAVANAUGH: Right.

OLIVER: ...but they are.

GOLDEN: And what kind of meat do you use?

OLIVER: Well, I like to use the ground chuck or sirloin. But I like to find meat from – Whole Foods sells a nice ground, grass fed beef.

GOLDEN: They also sell really good bison.

OLIVER: Yes. Yeah.

GOLDEN: Bison is so delicious.

OLIVER: Umm-hmm.

CAVANAUGH: For a hamburger?

GOLDEN: For a hamburger. You can get ground bison. Oh, and you know who else is selling ground meat, and it is so ridiculously good. Phil Noble of Sage Mountain Farms...

OLIVER: Yeah.

GOLDEN: ...now has Sage Mountain Pastures, and on Sundays at the Hillcrest market, I'm not sure if he's doing it at the other markets yet, he's selling his cows that he raises in Hemet. And you can buy, you know, a half a cow or a quarter or an eighth, which is much more than most of us can manage. But he's also selling ground beef.

CAVANAUGH: Wow.

GOLDEN: And that, you can manage, a pound of ground beef.

CAVANAUGH: Right, right.

GOLDEN: You can certainly manage that. I've made burgers out of that and I also added it to the pasta sauce that I wasn't really thrilled with and had put in the freezer thinking I'll deal with it later, and I took it out and I added his ground beef to it and made this ragu which was just heaven. It transformed that whole thing. But the burgers are really good.

OLIVER: Yes, and then what you can do also is if you have a vegetarian in the family then you just grill a Portobello and then everybody's satisfied.

GOLDEN: Absolutely.

CAVANAUGH: And everybody's happy. I want to remind our listeners, we're taking your calls at 1-888-895-5727. Zak is calling us from North Park. Good morning, Zak. Welcome to These Days.

ZAK (Caller, North Park): Good morning. How are you? Hi, Caron.

GOLDEN: Hey, Zak.

ZAK: I was just listening. Caron just mentioned our – we have a mustard company but we're at the farmers market. We have a stand there for the last about 4 or 5 months and I just – I haven't been to a regular grocery store in months because we end up just trading with all the farmers and how wonderful that is to just eat really, really lovely fresh fruit and vegetables and meat as well from the people that raise it. And it's been – it's sort of transformed the way I eat, which has been really lovely.

GOLDEN: By the way, Zak makes this garden burger, speaking of vegetarian...

OLIVER: Yeah.

GOLDEN: He made it at Olivewood Gardens for the kids and this was one of the best things I've ever eaten. I think I had three of those little ones the day that I was there that you were doing the cooking. They were so phenomenal. And we've got to find a way to post the recipe.

CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Zak, for the call. I appreciate it. We will find a way to post the recipe. Now, the thing – I don't want to leave grilling until – because you mentioned something I think that is very important, Ron, and that is that summertime gives us a lot of opportunity to actually cook with kids.

OLIVER: Right.

CAVANAUGH: And introduce kids to vegetables and fruits that perhaps they don't normally like because you can grill them.

OLIVER: Yes.

CAVANAUGH: I mean, everybody likes grilled vegetables, right?

GOLDEN: Well, it changes the flavor...

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

GOLDEN: ...of, you know, the vegetable and to – it carmelizes those sugars and so, yeah, I...

OLIVER: They become...

GOLDEN: Ron's the one who has kids so you can talk to him.

OLIVER: They become roasty and smoky...

GOLDEN: Yeah.

OLIVER: ...and the kids like to peel that – like when you put the peppers on the grill, the kids like to peel the peppers. The cool thing about grilling, though, in summertime, is you can put everything on the grill at one time. You could even – a lot of people don't think about this. You could even put a pot on the grill and cook a sauce right on the grill as you're grilling all the vegetables and the meats.

CAVANAUGH: I wouldn't have thought about that. That's very interesting.

OLIVER: Yeah, so that's fun.

CAVANAUGH: So that's what you do?

OLIVER: Yes, and I like to grill bananas, whole, especially plantains. Put the plantain right on the grill and as soon as they're all black and charred on the outside, you'll find a nice jewel on the inside, nice and moist and so that's really nice, too.

CAVANAUGH: We're taking your calls at...

OLIVER: Yeah.

CAVANAUGH: ...1-888-895-5727. Let's hear from Zora calling us from Kearny Mesa. Good morning, Zora. Welcome to These Days.

ZORA (Caller, Kearny Mesa): Good morning. I think I have a problem because I don't have a grill.

CAVANAUGH: Ohh...

ZORA: I have a bag of cooked Colossal shrimp that I don't want to use for shrimp cocktail. Can you give me an idea, something I can do without a grill in my house.

OLIVER: So you would like to cook the shrimp, is that what you – You would like to cook the shrimp?

ZORA: I want to cook the shrimp, yes.

OLIVER: Okay, if you don't have a grill, I would suggest being that they're already cooked, put them in a sauté pan and you don't want to cook them necessarily, just heat them up in a little bit of oil. You'll brown the outside a little bit. And the fun thing to do with shrimp is to put them on top of salads once they're cooked.

CAVANAUGH: And it's important not to cook shrimp too long, right?

OLIVER: Yes.

CAVANAUGH: They get hard and tough.

GOLDEN: Are your shrimp already cooked? Or they're raw?

ZORA: They are already cooked.

GOLDEN: Okay.

ZORA: But they're huge. They're really very large.

GOLDEN: You know, there's this guy at the farmers market, he's got a stand called Poppa's. His name is Mark Lane. And he makes these ceviches and I'm just wondering, one of the things he made which I really loved was a shrimp ceviche with watermelon. Watermelon and red peppers and all sorts of different ingredients. I'm wondering if you, since you already have the cooked shrimp, if you just chopped the shrimp up and added some other ingredients to it to make like a shrimp salad, that that wouldn't be nice and refreshing also.

CAVANAUGH: So, Zora, you have some suggestions.

ZORA: What?

CAVANAUGH: You have some suggestions now?

ZORA: No, I don't want to make a salad. I want to use it...

OLIVER: She wants them cooked.

ZORA: ...as a cooked item.

CAVANAUGH: Okay, then we...

ZORA: With, you know, something Chinese-y maybe? Or...

OLIVER: Okay, now you're talking.

ZORA: Yeah, that...

OLIVER: All right.

ZORA: Yeah.

OLIVER: So how about you'd put them in a sauté pan and stir fry them but you want to stir fry them really fast because they're already cooked.

CAVANAUGH: Or put them on pasta.

OLIVER: Yes, that'd be a good idea.

CAVANAUGH: Zora, thank you so much for the call. I hope we helped out just a little bit. Now, we have to take a break soon but I want to transition to talk about salads because even though Zora doesn't want to make them, I know so many people want to make them during the summertime. So what is a new, fresh way to approach a salad. You know, a lot of us just sort of default into the lettuce is the base, and then, you know, that kind of thing. Tell us a new approach.

GOLDEN: Okay, two ideas. Taking something traditional and kind of changing it up. We were just talking about grilling. Grilling romaine lettuce, the head of the romaine. Just trim it to the point where you've got the nice heart of the romaine. Brush it with a little bit of olive oil, and put it on the grill. And then make up a sort of a nice vinaigrette with garlic and anchovies if you've got anchovies, if you like anchovies, and don't groan out there. Some of us really love anchovies. You can make – And make some croutons, which is just a matter of slicing up some bread, brushing with olive oil, rubbing it with a little garlic, and putting it in the toaster for a little bit. You can make a wonderful grilled romaine salad that way. The other thing I just made for a picnic was coleslaw but instead of the traditional way of making coleslaw, I used a friend of mine, Kalyn Denning (sic), who has a wonderful website called Kalyn's Kitchen, and she's got this sort of Mexican style slaw with cabbage and cilantro and sliced green onions and then you make a sauce with mayonnaise and lime juice and some Sriracha chile sauce. Mix that up, combine the two, and it – just let it sit in the refrigerator for a couple of hours. It is really wonderful. It's a wonderful kind of tart and crispy dish.

CAVANAUGH: We have to take a break. When we come back, I'll get your salad recommendations, Ron.

OLIVER: Okay.

CAVANAUGH: I would never – Even though I said I would never have thought of grilling lettuce.

GOLDEN: Yeah. Lettuce is wonderful grilled.

CAVANAUGH: My good – You can really grill anything. Okay, we're going to be taking your calls at 1-888-895-5727 when we return. You're listening to These Days on KPBS.

CAVANAUGH: You're listening to These Days on KPBS. I'm Maureen Cavanaugh. I'm here with Chef Ron Oliver and Caron Golden. We're talking about summertime food, everything from main meals to salads and we're going to be moving on desserts and wines and beers in just a moment. If you'd like to join the conversation, 1-888-895-5727. What do you enjoy eating during the summertime? What tastes particularly good when the weather is warm? 1-888-895-5727. And, Ron, I said I would come back to you and your salad recipes.

OLIVER: Okay.

CAVANAUGH: Caron gave us a couple of really unusual ones.

OLIVER: Yes, wonderful ideas. I wrote those down as she was talking, actually. Here, look at this. This is a rond de Nice squash and...

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

OLIVER: ...I'll explain it for the people.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

OLIVER: It looks like an eight ball in pool.

CAVANAUGH: It does.

OLIVER: It's green like a zucchini. What can you do with this is stuff it. This is beautiful. And then here's the yellow version.

CAVANAUGH: It comes in green and yellow.

OLIVER: Yes. But actually the green one is called rond de Nice, which means round from Nice, France. And then the yellow one they call eight ball squash. So you can cut off the tops, scoop out the inside and then put an orange lentil salad in the middle.

CAVANAUGH: Oh, I see.

OLIVER: Yes.

CAVANAUGH: That's a wonderful way to do salads in the summertime. Just have them in their original packaging.

OLIVER: Right.

GOLDEN: Absolutely. And, you know, clearly you can do this with tomatoes if you can't find the round squash.

CAVANAUGH: Right, right.

OLIVER: This recipe is in our cookbook, "Flying Pans," that I wrote with Chef Bernard, as you know.

CAVANAUGH: Fabulous.

OLIVER: So it's on the squid recipe. This is one of the side recipes. So that's a really fun one. Another one that I have on my website is a banana flower salad. I discovered this in Vietnam. And this is such an amazing salad. The banana flowers, I found them in North Park Produce but you can substitute red cabbage, too, if you can't find the banana flowers. So it's dressed with coconut milk and fish sauce and a little bit of soy sauce and some palm sugar or brown sugar and the flavors in the summertime are so welcoming, so crisp and refreshing. I like that.

CAVANAUGH: It sounds so unusual and so good. Now, I'm wondering, how do you make a salad into a whole meal for summertime? Do you finish it off with some bread? Or do you need some cheese? What do you normally do?

GOLDEN: I think it depends on what your ingredients are and that will dictate it. Clearly, with the salad that Ron was just talking about, you're not going to serve cheese or, you know, things like that.

OLIVER: Yes, but the shrimp, the cooked shrimp can go on top of that.

GOLDEN: There you go. There you go.

OLIVER: Yes.

GOLDEN: We're going to find a way for her to use that shrimp if it kills us.

OLIVER: I wanted to bring up really quickly the potato salad in summertime.

CAVANAUGH: Yes, yes.

OLIVER: I brought some potatoes for you, too. They're picked from Olivewood Garden.

CAVANAUGH: And...

OLIVER: And I have them in a bag. They still have the nice, fresh dirt on them.

CAVANAUGH: Nice, fresh dirt, yes, indeed. They look great. This...

OLIVER: Potato salad with grilled meats, like a grilled New York steak and then the next morning what you'd do with the leftover steak is you make Korean pancakes.

GOLDEN: There you go.

CAVANAUGH: I'm not – Nothing goes to waste.

GOLDEN: And you can make grilled potato salad.

OLIVER: Yes.

GOLDEN: And there's no reason why you can't take those potatoes and put them on the grill...

CAVANAUGH: And...

GOLDEN: ...for a while and let them cook and you get that nice smoky flavor from the potatoes and then make your potato salad.

CAVANAUGH: Wonderful idea. Let's take a call. We're taking your calls at 1-888-895-5727. Laura is calling us from Fallbrook. Good morning, Laura. Welcome to These Days.

LAURA (Caller, Fallbrook): Good morning. I was trying to help with the – I have a shrimp recipe for the woman with the jumbo shrimp.

CAVANAUGH: And we're so happy you do.

LAURA: I do something pretty wonderful and what you do is you should devein that shrimp, split it down the middle, and you buy – I get Goya figs. It's a brand that comes in a jar in sort of a syrup. You can get it at D.Z. Akins, I know that, and different markets, maybe even North Park Produce. And cut them in small slices, and you stuff the shrimp with the figs and then you wrap it with big basil leaves prosciutto and I grill it, but she doesn't have a grill. I've done it under the broiler. And you mix a little bit of balsamic vinegar with some of that syrup and let the shrimp

marinate maybe 15, 30 minutes before you do that and it's the most amazing combination of flavors, and people just rave about it whenever I bring it anywhere.

CAVANAUGH: Well, you...

GOLDEN: She wins!

OLIVER: Yeah.

GOLDEN: That's it. We're done.

LAURA: And then I had a question.

CAVANAUGH: Sure.

LAURA: Calvin Trillin spoke of his list of deprivation things you've eaten in other countries that are so amazing. And one of the things he mentioned, and I found them but they're difficult to find, is padron peppers that you quick fry...

GOLDEN: No, they're not.

LAURA: ...in olive oil and salt. And I wondered if you knew if anyone carries padron peppers because I've even tried to grow them but they seem to germinate poorly.

GOLDEN: I – I'm going to make you a very happy person. Padron peppers are available. Suzie's Farm grows them so if you go to the farmers markets that Suzie's Farm is at, she has them – they have them there. The other place that buys them from Suzie's Farm is Specialty Produce and you can get them there. Padron peppers are just marvelous and I actually wrote down here padron peppers here, and...

CAVANAUGH: She did.

GOLDEN: ...what you want to do with them is toss them in olive oil and some sea salt and then put them on the grill. Better to do that so you've thoroughly coated the peppers before you put them in the heat than to add them to oil in the heat. It just works better that way.

LAURA: Okay.

CAVANAUGH: Laura...

LAURA: Oh, my hero.

GOLDEN: Yea!

OLIVER: Yea.

LAURA: Thank you guys.

CAVANAUGH: Thank you. Thank you so much for the call. You know, before we leave the topic of farmers markets, we've been talking so much about and you made the important point, Caron, that some of this produce spoils more rapidly than if you would get it in the supermarket. Ron, is the attraction to this new kind of buying of food also leading to people wanting to preserve their – more food? Is that what you're into?

OLIVER: Yes. Especially when you grow food in your own garden and you have an abundance. It's important to know how to preserve it. But the first way to preserve is to share.

CAVANAUGH: Uh-huh, yeah.

OLIVER: So give away what you can to your friends, family and neighbors first. Then when you have leftover, it's really fun to make preserves. And that goes back to the old concept of preserving items that are abundant in the summer for the leaner times in the autumn and the wintertime.

CAVANAUGH: Certainly. Yeah, something that we've kind of gotten out of here.

OLIVER: Right, so my wife preserves the nasturtium seed pods, and they're called poor man's capers.

GOLDEN: Umm-hmm.

OLIVER: And they taste just like capers. We actually opened them up yesterday. Nasturtiums usually grow in the springtime but at the end of spring, the flowers dry and the seed pods are left and you can pickle those and it's real easy to do. And another thing that we make is rosebud jam because the rosebuds are so plentiful on the – just on one plant alone. So to make rosebud jam is fun, and it lasts for, you know, two or three months.

CAVANAUGH: So this is a way to – for a – in a number of different fruits and vegetables...

OLIVER: Yes.

CAVANAUGH: ...to try to save some of the stuff that's going to just sort of rot.

OLIVER: Exactly. And there's one more thing is beans, dried beans...

CAVANAUGH: Dried beans.

OLIVER: ...because you dry the beans right on the plant. You don't have to do anything but just let them sit there. So, yeah.

CAVANAUGH: That's interesting.

OLIVER: Growing your own produce is fun. Herbs, dry – You can dry herbs. Put them in usually about a 200 degree oven for a couple of hours and they stay that nice color. I like to take mint and dry it.

GOLDEN: I do dill.

OLIVER: Yeah, and then you put it in a coffee grinder and you make a powder and you can put that on the rims of your cocktails.

CAVANAUGH: I think that's so important now that people are so much more into home gardening, to be able to preserve that.

GOLDEN: There are a lot of good books, you know, out on preserving and there are some cooking classes. And, in fact, Chef Melissa Mayer and I were talking about some pickles that she had made. She took these lovely little – they're cucumbers but they look like miniature watermelons and I can't think of what the name...

OLIVER: Oh, yes.

GOLDEN: ...of them is. But she – We were at a party and she had made these pickles and I just thought they were fabulous and we were talking about this whole thing that a lot of us, our grandmothers did it...

CAVANAUGH: Umm-hmm.

GOLDEN: ...but we don't know how to do it anymore. And I do it but I don't do it well and want to learn how to do it better. And I think she's going to teach a pickling class at Suzie's Farm at the end of the summer.

CAVANAUGH: That's right.

GOLDEN: Because at the end of the summer is when you've got all that bounty and, you know, what are you going to do with all those tomatoes and, you know, canning would be a wonderful thing for, you know, winter sauces.

CAVANAUGH: I want to move on in the minutes that we have left to talk about desserts. I can't believe that we've stopped ourselves up until now to speaking about desserts. Of course, you know, we think immediately of ice cream when you think about a summer dessert. So is there anything, a new approach, to ice cream? I know that there are so many really high end, delicious ice creams around now.

OLIVER: Okay. Yeah, I have one ice cream that I like to do is a corn ice cream.

CAVANAUGH: A what?

OLIVER: It's like huh? What? Corn ice cream? Yeah.

CAVANAUGH: Corn ice cream?

OLIVER: Corn takes so well to making ice cream out of it because it's...

GOLDEN: It's sweet.

OLIVER: ...naturally sweet and it has that flavor. And I brought a corn to show you.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah.

OLIVER: I'm going to peel it back right here.

CAVANAUGH: Great sound effect.

OLIVER: See that? Look. Look how that...

GOLDEN: Look at that, isn't that beautiful?

OLIVER: So that's a red corn. These are available at Specialty Produce, like Caron mentioned, Specialty Produce. Red corn, available for a very short time.

GOLDEN: I even saw some at Albertsons.

OLIVER: Oh, really? Yeah.

GOLDEN: Yeah. Yeah.

OLIVER: So to make an ice cream out of this is fabulous.

CAVANAUGH: Oh, it sounds – it sounds so exotic.

OLIVER: And avocados. Avocado ice cream.

GOLDEN: I was going to say, avocado ice cream. And there are also things that you can do with watermelon and strawberries. You can make what's called grenata. A lot of us have ice cream machines but for some of these you don't even need to do that. If you can make a simple syrup and combine the fruit with the simple syrup and put it on like a baking sheet in your freezer, and every couple of hours take a fork and run it through it and you'll get kind of ice crystals.

CAVANAUGH: Umm-hmm.

GOLDEN: And just let – keep going until everything is really frozen and you can scoop it up and put it into a container and it's a really simple way to make something that's very refreshing.

OLIVER: You can do that with melons, too.

GOLDEN: Yeah.

OLIVER: And if you buy the small sharente melons, actually Tom King at Hillcrest sells these really nice, small sharente melons. And if you scoop out the melon, make the grenata, then you serve it back into the melon shell.

GOLDEN: Put it back in the...

CAVANAUGH: Oh, that's lovely.

GOLDEN: Yeah.

OLIVER: It's very nice.

CAVANAUGH: And any tips about wine or beers? Nice summer wines or beers that are going to complement a lot of the recipes that we've been talking about, Ron?

OLIVER: Yeah, wines in the summertime, typically, just like with the food, you want something that's light, low in tannin, crisp. So with white wine, a pinot grigio goes really well. Moscato d'Aste from Italy. Austria does a great wine called Gruner Veltliner that's great for summertime, just sipping by the patio or with your cuisine. It's very light and crisp. And then bubbly is good in the summertime, too...

CAVANAUGH: Yes.

OLIVER: ...like Prosecco.

GOLDEN: Prosecco's wonderful. I like – and you could – ten years ago, you couldn't get these but now you can. The – Just the simple French rosés, the table wines, which I love when I go to France. And I would come back here and you would find really sweet, icky zinfandels. But now you can find some really nice rosés that are very reasonably priced and in the summertime they're just marvelous chilled.

CAVANAUGH: We have time for a quick, short call from Earl in Pacific Beach. Good morning, Earl. Welcome to These Days.

EARL (Caller, Pacific Beach): Good morning.

CAVANAUGH: Hi.

EARL: I grow my own food and I have a vegetable garden. And one of the things I get a lot of and nobody wants is squash and zucchinis so I started making a zucchini cake with a lot of lemon zest and poppy seeds...

CAVANAUGH: Umm-hmm.

EARL: ...and it's a big hitter with all my friends and it's one of my summertime favorite desserts. So I thought I'd share that with y'all.

CAVANAUGH: I do appreciate it. Yes, you know, there's nothing like a coworker to bring in a whole bunch of zucchinis. Now is making zucchini bread a good – I mean a zucchini cake like that a good idea? Is that a good thing to do?

GOLDEN: Sure. I mean, it can take up a lot of zucchinis, which is a good thing. And – But, you know, that means, for me, I'm turning on the oven and I don't know that I really want...

CAVANAUGH: Ahh...

GOLDEN: ...to do too much of that in the summertime. What else could you do with zucchini that is like...

OLIVER: Going back to pickling.

GOLDEN: Yeah.

OLIVER: If you pick the zucchinis when they're smaller, say like the size of your finger and pickle them, then you could use those as a garnish for your Bloody Marys on Sunday in the summertime.

CAVANAUGH: This is an option that we – I don't usually think about, using preserves to garnish your cocktails.

OLIVER: Cocktails, because cocktails are great for sum...

GOLDEN: And to chop into salads.

CAVANAUGH: Yeah, exactly.

GOLDEN: You know, I mean, there are a lot of different things you can do with them.

CAVANAUGH: Now I don't want to leave, Caron, before we mention the Food for Kids program that you've been involved in. Tell us about that.

GOLDEN: Yeah, we – The San Diego Food Bank has a program called the Food for Kids Backpack program, which is geared for kids who normally during the school day would be getting subsidized food at the school. What happens is a lot of these kids, come weekend, don't have anything to eat, and same with school holidays. So the Backpack program provides them with a backpack and on every Friday they are discreetly called to maybe the nurse's office or somewhere and the backpack is filled with kid-friendly nonperishable food. Kid-friendly because we also aren't sure that there are parents at home who can actually help them so you don't want to give them a can of Spaghetti-Os or something and they can't use a can opener or whatever. So a group of us did this last holiday season. Alice Robertson, who has the blog, Alice Q. Foodie, and I, and we've got a group of committee members, and we're doing a second fundraiser and it's from now through the end of the month, end of August, rather. And it's got three components to it. One is we've got a donation page at www.firstgiving.com/food4kids. Then we've got collect backpacks and put food in them and take them to the Little Italy Mercado on August 21st. And the third, which is a really fun component, is the month of August we have a Dollar-A-Dish program. We've got over 40 restaurants participating. You can read about it on San Diego Foodstuff, and it'll give you the list of all the participating restaurants and the dish that they're featuring. They give us a dollar for every dish that you order.

CAVANAUGH: And we'll also have a link to that on our website, KPBS.org/thesedays. Caron Golden, Ron Oliver, thank you so much for all the information that you've given us today. It's made me very hungry.

OLIVER: My pleasure.

GOLDEN: A pleasure.

CAVANAUGH: You've been listening to These Days on KPBS.