

K's Kitchen: Sampling the Sierra at home

By Kathryn Reed

Sampling the Sierra is something I like to do on a regular basis. With the various farmers' markets in the region and the abundance of regional wine, there really is no reason not to eat locally.



It can even be done in the winter. This takes a little more work, especially if canning is involved. I remember my parents used to can tomatoes that Mom would then use in sauces and other dishes later in the year; cucumbers that became dill pickles; peaches that have prohibited me from ever buying a can at the grocery store. I have wonderful memories of picking produce with Mom from farms in Brentwood – where some of the veggies for the Tuesday South Tahoe market come from.

Although I have never canned anything, I have cooked tomatoes down in a crock pot and then frozen them to use later. I often whip up batches of pesto to pull out of the freezer all winter. And frozen fruit is great for smoothies.

Right now, though, it's all about eating summer's bounty while it is fresh. One of my favorite summer dinners is barbecued veggies, rice pilaf (from scratch) and a bottle of white wine (shared, of course).

I seldom create the same marinade twice because I don't usually follow a recipe. Below is a concoction I came up with last weekend. One key is to make sure the vegetables (same goes for meat and fish) are able to absorb the sauce for several hours. This makes the end product all that much more tasty.

I usually chop veggies into bite size pieces or smaller, put them in a glass 9×13 dish, then pour the marinade over the veggies and let chill for the better part of the day. We use a grate that goes on the grill. It's like stir frying on the barbie.

Something to pay attention to, especially when cooking for others, is the color of the food. In other words, don't use all green vegetables. Presentation is the first step to appetizing food.

Then think about how long each vegetable takes to cook. Carrots are rather hard and will take longer. You might want to parboil them before tossing them with the rest of the veggies in the marinade.

There is no wrong combination of vegetables. It's all a matter of what you like.

Being a vegetarian, I think this works as an entrée. Many of you may find the veggies a great side dish. Leftovers, if there are any, work great heated up, used in a bean concoction for nachos, wrapped in tortillas, and mixed in with scrambled eggs. The marinade you choose will play a role in how to use the veggies for leftovers.

If you don't want to cook for yourself, consider going to Sample the Sierra on Aug. 21 on Ski Run Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe.



Our early Sample the Sierra at home last Sunday included veggies from Tuesday's South Lake Tahoe farmers' market, plus mushrooms that were in the fridge; a bottle of Sierra Vista Viognier we had bought at the winery the weekend before; and a

peach (more farmers' market) and blueberry cobbler with vanilla ice cream. Not a bad way to refuel after a 12-mile hike.

Marinade

1 bunch basil, chopped

5 cloves garlic, minced

$\frac{1}{4}$ C olive oil

$\frac{1}{8}$ C dark balsamic vinegar

1 T Dijon mustard

1 T hot chili oil

Mix all of the ingredients together. Pour over 9×13 dish filled half full with chopped veggies. Coat all vegetables. Cover and refrigerate for several hours. Stir occasionally (if you are home). Cook over medium heat on grill.