



bulbs of *plenty*

BY KELLY KINGMAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PAUL DAVID O'HANLON

Two little girls are playing shop, filling paper bags with heads of garlic and dropping them on an old scale. Their parents and grandparents are supervising from the shade of their booth's awning, relaxing as the sun starts to go down. I'm at the Fox Run Garlic Festival in New York, a small festival held every year in early August on the gentle slope of a winery overlooking Seneca Lake. In the warm, late afternoon, I wander among the stragglers who peruse the mounds of white bulbs stacked everywhere. I pick out a selection of the Music variety and as I hand the youngest girl my purchase, I ask if she likes garlic. Her eyes light up and she nods vigorously. "Even our dog eats it!" Everyone laughs, and the story comes out about the time the family dog got into the shed where the garlic braids were curing and ate her fill. Grandpa chimes in, "She got a bad tummy ache, but no fleas for two years!"

The garlic festival is the perfect crossroads for the farmer and the food-lover, and often the two are one and the same.

Garlic is a versatile ingredient and a natural medicine, but among its more amazing qualities is its power to unite people. There are about 30 garlic festivals each year in the United States. Each festival features everything edible imaginable, all with the word garlic tacked on somewhere—garlic pretzels, garlic lemonade, garlic ice cream. We weren't always a garlic-loving country, but as immigrants arrived with pungent dishes from home, and soldiers returned from World War II with a taste for foods they had sampled overseas, garlic consumption took off. Now Americans eat about three pounds per person each year. Garlic's avid adorers—whom you can identify by their bulb-shaped earrings and "garlic stinks" t-shirts—likely consume a good deal more than that.

Even for those of us who don't have the space or time to grow it, garlic is available in myriad varieties. There's German Red, Italian White, Persian Star, Ozark, Legacy, Porcelain—and each grower can describe their garlic's heat and bite, and the size and number of cloves in a head. Though technically just eight genetic varieties exist, farmers will tell you that the soil and the climate greatly influence the character of the final vegetable. Scapes, the tender green shoots that hardneck garlics produce in the spring, can be found fresh in May and June at farmer's markets.

The garlic festival is the perfect crossroads for the farmer and food-lover, and often the two are one and the same. At the largest New York garlic festival—the Hudson Valley Garlic Festival—I met Rich and Wendy Seymour, who own Burdick Creek Gardens, a farm 10 miles south of the New York border in Pennsylvania. When

they met eight years ago, both had been "spare time" organic gardeners for years. They went to the Virginia Wine and Garlic festival on their honeymoon, which inspired them to grow their own. They now have five varieties of hardneck garlic on their three-acre plot. Wendy develops sauces and bread dippers to sell with their garlic at festivals.

Homemade garlic-flavored treats are everywhere. A woman calling herself Elderberry Mary offers samples of her horseradish garlic jellies; turn the corner and garlic-infused mustards, salsas, chutneys and even garlic coffee are all begging to be sampled.

Darkening clouds muted the turnout at the festival, but throngs of the faithful packed their umbrellas and dared the rain. The Garlic Goddess, one Pat Reppert, welcomed one and all with her beatific smile. Years ago, she and her husband, owners of Shale Hill Farm, opened an herb shop and threw a garden party in celebration of garlic. Little did she know that 19 years later she would be holding court as thousands of happy, garlic-breathed fans flocked to her for an autograph or a photo-op. In the early years of the garlic parties, there was just a handful of garlic being farmed in the state, especially since cold-hardy varieties have to be planted and harvested by hand. "About 10 years ago I got my seed garlic and we planted two rows," she said. "You can see the difference, taste the difference—all as a result of climate and soil—it's amazing. A big part of this festival is trying to educate people on how to grow and store garlic." Still as enchanted with the "stinking rose" as ever, Reppert is working on a new

Garlic Varieties

Although variables like soil, climate and geography can affect the taste of garlic, here's a field guide to the general qualities of the different varieties.

Music

Large bulbs, true garlic flavor—perky

German Red

Strong and spicy

Temptress

Spicy and hot, as the name implies

Sicilian Purple

Pleasantly strong flavor, but not overpowering

Hnat

Very hot and pungent

Spanish Roja

Also described as having true garlic flavor, large cloves, easily peeled

cookbook that will blend her love of cooking with garlic with an emphasis on its healing properties. The cure never tasted so good.

For more information on these fests: hvfg.org and foxrunvineyards.com

Kelly Kingman is an Austin native who now lives in Brooklyn. Her work has appeared in Metro, the New York Sun and Imbibe magazine.



Chicken Tortellini with Creamy Garlic Riesling Sauce

Yield: 2 servings • Zest Factor: Mild

Adapted from Fox Run Vineyards Executive Chef Frank Caravita.

- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 (8-ounce) skinless chicken breast, cubed
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1/4 yellow onion, sliced
- 1/2 red bell pepper, julienned
- 1/2 green bell pepper, julienned
- 1 cup Riesling, such as Fox Run
- 1/2 cup sun-dried tomatoes
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) butter
- 1 tablespoon hot sauce
- salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 cup cooked tortellini
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese
- chopped flat-leaf parsley, to garnish

In a saucepan over medium heat, warm the oil. Add the chicken, and cook for 3 minutes. Add the garlic, and cook until lightly browned, stirring. Add the onion and bell peppers, and cook for 3 minutes. Turn heat to high, add wine, bring to a simmer, and reduce for 2 minutes. Add sun-dried tomatoes and cream, and reduce until thickened. Add the butter, and stir until melted. Add the hot sauce, salt and pepper and cooked pasta. Heat through.

Spoon pasta onto a serving platter, sprinkle the cheese over the top, and garnish with parsley.



The Garlic Goddess's Garlic Mushrooms with Chile Peppers and Oregano

Yield: 15 appetizers • Zest Factor: Medium

Adapted from Pat Reppert of Shale Hill Farm. These make a delicious appetizer or light main course.

- 2 pounds large white mushrooms
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 10 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh green chiles, chopped
- chopped flat-leaf parsley, to garnish

Preheat oven to 350°. Remove mushroom stems and place them cap-side down in a baking dish. In a bowl, mix butter, onion, garlic, Worcestershire, salt, pepper and chiles. Spread mixture over the mushrooms. Bake for 40 minutes. Garnish with parsley, serve.



Curry-Glazed Chicken with Garlic and Jalapeño

Yield: 6 servings • Zest Factor: Mild

Adapted from Pat Reppert of Shale Hill Farm.

- 6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 cup peach jam
- 4 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1/3 cup diced onion
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon minced jalapeño
- 1 tablespoon curry powder

Place chicken in an oiled baking dish in a single layer, and set in the refrigerator.

In a saucepan over medium heat, add the remaining ingredients and whisk well until mixed. Remove pan from heat, and allow mixture in pan to cool completely. Pour the cooled marinade over the chicken, cover, and refrigerate for up to 24 hours, turning once.

Preheat the oven to 350°. Remove chicken from refrigerator and allow to come to room temperature, about 20 minutes.

Bake chicken for about 30 minutes in the same dish in which you marinated it, basting breasts with sauce once. Serve.



Highlights from the Festival Vendors

Luke's Pickled Garlic Scapes
Mill Creek Farm;
lukemillcreekfarm.com

Hot Pepper Garlic Spread
Sweet Garlic Pickles
Grey Mouse Farm
nynaturals.com
845-246-3405

Garlic Mustard Mizzle
Gracious Garlic Gelée
Paumanok Preserves;
paumanokpreserves.com
631-878-0619

Garlic-Horseradish Jelly
Elderberry Mary's
Homemade Jams & Jellies
518-797-3256

Bavelle Cheese
flavored with spring garlic.
igourmet.com
877-446-8763

Garlic-Champagne Mustard
Chipotle-Marinated
Garlic Cloves
Garlic Balsamic Vinegar
Natural Disorder Gourmet Foods
naturaldisorder.com

Garlic Festivals

We found garlic festivals from the Pacific Northwest to the deep South, and everywhere in between, including a surprising number in Canada. Some fests pair the fragrant bulb with rarefied partners such as Wine and Art, while others are just good old down-home parties. Be sure to check with the festival organizers before making your travel plans. For more festivals, visit garlicseedfoundation.info.

June 16-17, 2007

26th Annual Northwest Garlic Festival
Ocean Park, WA
opwa.com

July 27-29, 2007

Gilroy Garlic Festival
Gilroy, CA
gilroygarlicfestival.com

August 10-12, 2007

World's 10th Annual Elephant Garlic Festival
North Plains, OR
funstinks.com

August 11-12, 2007

Perth Garlic Festival
Perth, Ontario, Canada
perthgarlicfestival.com

August 11-12, 2007

Carp Farmer's Market Garlic Festival
Carp, Ontario, Canada
carpfarmersmarket.com

August 11-12, 2007

8th Annual South Cariboo Garlic Festival
Forest Grove, B.C., Canada
goodnessofgarlic.com

August 18, 2007

Minnesota Garlic Festival
Howard Lake, MN
sfa-mn.org

August 25-26, 2007

Hot and Stinky Garlic & Herb Festival
Drums, PA
zanolininursery.com

September 1-2, 2007

Pocono Garlic Festival
Stroudsburg, PA
poconogarlic.com

September 15-16, 2007

The 9th Annual North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival
Orange, MA
garlicandarts.org


September 28-30, 2007

Cox Arboretum & Gardens Garlic Festival
Dayton, OH
coxarboretum.org

October 13-14, 2007

17th Annual Virginia Wine and Garlic Festival
Amherst, VA
rebecwinery.com

February 15-17, 2008

8th Annual Delray Beach Garlic Festival
Delray Beach, FL
dbgarcifest.com 



Mr. and Mrs. Garlic at the Hudson Valley Garlic Festival