

COMMENT

Florida trip is a recipe for good food

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What's Cookin'

Gerry is writing today...

Here's my annual 'just returned from Florida' story for you. We were pleased to return home after a month south on Good Friday to sunny above seasonal temperatures, after basking in 25-30 degree Celsius, then one day later it snowed! What kind of an Ontario welcome was that?

Here are my memorable and worth mentioning food moments to share.

- In a St. Pete's Beach restaurant, new to us, above each table was a chain which suspended a hanger holding a roll of paper towels! How ingenious, never seen that before!
- Most of the pounds of butter in stores come in four sticks. But I also saw eight sticks per pound, great for baking and people living alone.
- A neighbour at the condo we were at offered us some fresh caught red snapper—he had just landed it that morning. They were 10 small fillets, so delicious and so fresh. We had them lightly sautéed.
- At the local grocery store/deli/butcher, one and a half blocks from us, several times I popped in and had them cook up some Gulf shrimp, jumbo size of course, served cold with cocktail sauce. Peel n' eat at its finest!
- At Jackie's on Corry Ave in St. Pete's Beach the potato of the day was smoked gouda mashed in puff pastry. How decadent and delicious!

• Jackie's also had an art creation on the wall by Jackie herself—3 stainless steel arcs with ladles hanging down to resemble a treble clef. Very cool.

• We were invited to a Florida friend's home for a St. Patrick's Day cocktail party where the guests were asked to review the foods she was tasting to cater the Women's Club fashion show in April. All were delicious and creative—she is a caterer.

• Fresh Florida tomatoes purchased from Ruskin from a market. Purchased red and ready to eat—made a great bruschetta and BLT's.

• A condo neighbour served a German pancake for brunch and I'll share that recipe soon.

• A stop at Parkedale Strawberries in Plant City in peak season. I enjoy checking out produce crate to see where our imported and Canadian produce comes from.

• Had delicious, well-made tortilla soup twice. Gotta make that soon!

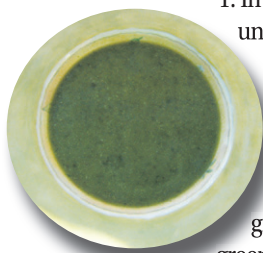
• Key lime pie from The Beachcomber restaurant in Clearwater Beach—the best I've ever had. This is Dave's all-time favorite restaurant.

Seems like we ate out a lot, but only 25 per cent of the meals. Even on holiday, I love my kitchen and what comes out of it. Have fun and keep cooking!

Wild Leek Soup

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 3 cups chopped wild leeks, stems only, reserve greens
- 1 regular leek, chopped (white and light green only)
- 2 cups chopped Yukon Gold potatoes
- 6 cups chicken stock (or vegetable stock)
- salt and pepper to taste



METHOD

1. In a large pot, add oil. Add leeks and cook until softened.
2. Add potatoes and continue to cook for a few minutes.
3. Add chicken stock and cook until potatoes are soft (about 30 minutes).
4. Turn off heat. Add all wild leek greens to pot and stir. Leave to sit until greens have softened.
5. Using an immersion blender, puree the soup.
6. Salt and pepper to taste.

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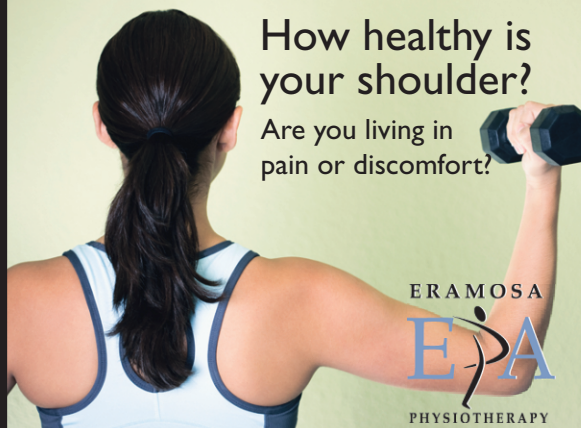
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