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PRODUCE NOTES

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Out Of This World Donut Peaches

Featured Chef: Cory Obenour, The Blue Plate

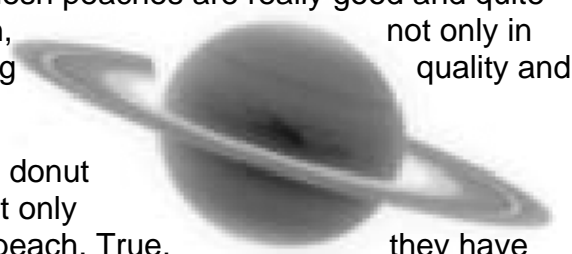
Cory Obenour,
Owner/Cook of
The Blue Plate in
San Francisco
offers this
heavenly salad
staring
Sommerfeld Farm
Saturn peaches.

Pit a sizable donut peach (2 1/2-3 1/2"), fill it with farmer's cheese, and roast in the oven at a low heat until the cheese starts to brown. Once out of the oven, dress the peach with slivered Marcona almonds and dandelion greens. Top with a vinaigrette of molasses, vinegar and pomegranate juice.

Note: Farmer's cheese, Marcona almonds, and pomegranate juice are available in most specialty and grocery stores.

As the Cassini spacecraft makes history navigating the rings of Saturn 800 million miles from Earth peach lovers are celebrating by enjoying Saturn donut peaches. These flat white flesh peaches are really good and quite different than your average peach, not only in appearance but also in their eating quality and history.

It's tempting to assume that since donut peaches have been on the market only 20-years they are a fancy hybrid peach. True, they have been bred but they are descendents of the ancient Chinese **Peento peach**, one of the first cultivated peaches. The Chinese began cultivating peaches around 2,000 BC. Apparently, the Emperor preferred the flat Peento peach because he could eat it without getting juice on his beard.



Donut peaches are some of the cleanest eating peaches you can imagine. Low acid and high in soluble sugars they are plenty sweet but not excessively juicy. Their cling-free stone is small and easily removed, and you may find these peaches hold up remarkably well. Due to their flat nature, ethylene, which starts the ripening process near the skin, doesn't concentrate as much as it does in standard round peaches, making the fruit ripe but rarely super soft. It's also less fuzzy than a typical peach.

What's with the name? When Jerome Frecon developed the first flat peach for commercial production at Stark Nursery in 1983 it was trademarked the **Stark Saturn**, after the planet that, when viewed through space, appears flattened at its poles. Newer varieties are the **Jupiter**, which comes on first in the season, and the **UFO**. Newest is the yellow-fleshed Bagel peach—will a Biscuit peach be next?



There is speculation that the **Bagel peach** contains genetically modified organisms to improve firmness. Saturn and Jupiter are not genetically engineered but plant breeders are working with peanut, tomato and melon genes to improve firmness in new varieties. For them, the ultimate peach will be hard as a nut. Maybe then it will be ready for space. Until that day, we can count on soft, delicious donut peaches that are very much of this world.

Sommerfeld Farm is our primary donut peach supplier. We will carry their fruit until their season ends by late July. Washington donuts start mid-July and run through August.

See Sommerfeld grower profile on back

Donut Peach Growers: Augie and Oi Sommerfeld

Imagine a farm that is resplendent with blossoming peach and apple trees in the spring, produces a wide variety of white and yellow peaches throughout the summer months and fabulous apples in the fall, followed by a variety of Asian root crops in the winter. You have arrived at Sommerfeld Farms in La Grange, on the Tuolumne River in the Sierra Foothills.

How did the Sommerfelds come to La Grange? In the early 70's, the City of Modesto forced the family from their almond farm so that a golf course could be built. Augie Sommerfeld's father vowed to get as far away from Modesto as possible to farm and raise his family.

They eventually purchased 200+ acres of prime virgin land along the Tuolumne River. With no money left over to build a house, the family lived in small trailers, got jobs in town and ate the food they grew. The family worked hard and slowly built the house themselves.



Farming the virgin soil was completely different from what they were used to in Modesto. The soil was rich, alive and yielded beautiful crops with no chemicals. Augie believes that the isolation of their farm keeps their crops free from devastating outbreaks of pests and disease associated with the problems that face growers in areas where conventional farms are closely packed together. Augie sees the river as the mother of the habitat on their farm and he keeps a large border to protect it.

Augie and Oi Sommerfeld credit Oi's mother and father with their good farming practices. Oi's parents farmed organically in China and inspired them to farm organically here in California.

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HOT BROCCOLI

Grow broccoli year-round in Monterey County? Or the desert? Or Nevada? All of that may be possible if R & D Agriculture can market its new heat-loving broccoli seed. Developed over the last decade through conventional breeding (non-GMO) techniques, the firm's broccoli seems to thrive in temperatures up to 90° and withstands even higher spikes. Whether or not that's good news for Monterey County, where the new hybrid was developed, remains to be seen. Monterey produces roughly half of the 937,500 tons of broccoli produced in the Golden State with a value of \$596.6 million. Coastal land, where traditional broccoli loves the 40° -70° climate, can cost \$3,000 an acre.

GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOODS BEING FLUSHED OUT OF CALIFORNIA

Citizens and farmers in Butte County California have successfully gathered enough petition signatures to place a measure on the ballot that would ban genetically engineered (GE) crops in the county. Mendocino County (CA) passed a similar measure earlier this year and Humboldt, Marin, San Luis Obispo, Sonoma, and others will likely place this issue on their November ballots as well. Join OCA's "GE Free Zones" campaign to help support these efforts. <http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge-free.htm>