Details about Menu, Farmers, Venue and Chef for the First Iowa Farm to Table Dinner

Details about the first entry in the Iowa Farm to Table Dinner Series are now available. Created by The Iowa Tourism Office and Choose Iowa in partnership with the Iowa Restaurant Association, this dinner series highlights the connection between Iowa's agricultural diversity and its culinary talent. The first dinner will take place on October 29 at Wilson's Orchard & Farm in Iowa City. Tickets are now on sale at www.iowafarmtotable.org.

Menu

BREAD SERVICE

WILD YEASTED SOURDOUGH

roasted radish butter

COURSE 1

BEET AND GOAT CHEESE TART

poached pear, hazelnut, horseradish cream with smoked salmon roe, dill

COURSE 2

PRESERVED MUSHROOM GARGOUILLOU

autumn greens, crispy La Quercia prosciutto, hen's yolk, champagne and mustard vinaigrette, tarragon

COURSE 3

MAFALDINE PASTA WITH SPICY PORK AND PUMPKIN RAGU

aged Milton Creamery cheddar, extravecchio balsamic vinegar, toasted pumpkin seeds

COURSE 4

DUO OF PASTURED LAMB

roasted saddle and lamb shank pavé, robuchon style potato, glazed carrots, red wine pearl onion, sauce bordelaise

DESSERT

WILSON'S CARAMEL APPLE

caramelized white chocolate ganache, textures of apple, snickerdoodle crumble, salted caramel gelato, peanut

The Farms

Camp Creek Organic Produce of Kalona, Iowa

Camp Creek is an organic farm located in Kalona, Iowa. Grown by a group of passionate young farmers and led by James Nisly & Corbin Scholz, they aim to teach and grow with the community, providing an opportunity for people to be more involved in where and how their food is grown. They are certified organic through the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and care for 40 acres of diversified vegetable production. Learn more in their Choose Iowa profile.

Dan and Debbie's Creamery of Ely, Iowa

Dan and Debbie's Creamery is an extension of the family dairy farm where Dan & Debbie Takes have been milking cows for nearly twenty-five years in Iowa. Taking their milk and turning it into high quality dairy products and selling it direct allows them to maintain control over all aspects from farm to table. Their Creamery location in Ely, Iowa, is the perfect spot to purchase some of their butter, cream, cheese or milk as well as enjoy their delicious ice cream. The creamery carries numerous items from other Iowa producers for purchase as well. If you wish to learn more about how they produce their dairy products, their viewing area allows you to see and learn about the entire process from farm to table. Learn more in their Choose Iowa profile.

Sweet Doe Company of Keota, Iowa

The beginning of Sweet Doe Company goes back over 20 years ago when Linda Ahrens bought a milking goat for her son, Caleb. At the time, Caleb was unable to digest regular cow's milk but could enjoy goat's milk. This small action snowballed into a small herd of goats. After many years of pondering the idea of a creamery, the family made plans in June 2023. By the next year, the parlor was running, and their cheese was made available to the public. Now, you can enjoy their small-batch goat cheese and other cheese all over Iowa. Learn more in their Choose Iowa profile.

Lamb's Quarter Livestock (Rhubarb Botanicals) of Linn County, Iowa

Jeremy Wilhelm and Emma Barber are the farmers and owners of Lamb's Quarter Livestock and Rhubarb Botanicals. They operate a diversified farm in Linn County, Iowa where they raise sheep on perennial pasture, run a cut flower farm, and grow culinary and medicinal herbs for herbal apothecary products. Protecting and restoring their soil is the main goal for their sheep operation. Raising sheep on pasture offers the opportunity for mutual flourishing of both land and animal, while also producing a high-quality, nutrient-dense, & sustainable source of meat. Learn more in their Choose Iowa Profile.

Additional ingredients come from Wilson's Orchard & Farm, Milton Creamery, Kroul Farms, Rots Bounty and La Quercia.

Venue - Wilson's Orchard & Farm in Iowa City, Iowa

Wilson's Orchard & Farm is a family-owned food and farm business founded in 1980. Their mission is to help develop local, ethical, and regenerative food and farm systems in their communities.

Wilson's currently operates a farm in Solon that is not open to the public, as well as two direct-to-community supported farms that are open to the public – one in Iowa City, and a second in Des Moines that just opened this past spring. On their community supported farms, they grow about 10 crops and over 100 varieties of fruit and flowers. These farms also each feature a Ciderhouse Restaurant & Tasting Room, Bakery, Event Venue, and Farm Market.

Chef Ben Smart

After receiving his degree in Geoscience from the University of Iowa, Chef Ben decided to change directions, going back to school to study Culinary Arts at Kirkwood Community College. After graduation, Chef Ben spent time in Kansas City at the American Restaurant, under James Beard award winning Chef Celina Tio. Following his stint in Kansas City, Ben moved just outside of Seattle, Washington. There, he spent nearly six years at the 5-diamond restaurant, The Herbfarm, where he served as Sous Chef for the majority of his tenure. After his time at The Herbfarm, Ben returned home to Iowa where he was the opening Executive Chef of Big Grove Brewery. In the 10 years since Big Grove opened, Ben has partnered in the business and helped expand it to Iowa City, Des Moines, Cedar Rapids and a location opening in the Omaha area soon. Additionally, he partners on several other Iowa City area restaurants, including Pullman Bar & Diner, Saint Burch Tavern, The Iowa Athletic Club, and Barrett's Quality Eats. In 2016, he was named one of "30 Chefs to Watch" by Plate Magazine. In 2018, he was awarded Restaurateur of the Year by the Iowa Restaurant Association. He currently lives in Iowa City with his wife and two children.

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