

# LIVING NATURALLY

a community newsletter

**A COOKIE  
RE-IMAGINED**

**FRUIT AND VEGGIE  
GRILLING GUIDE**

**BACK TO SCHOOL  
LUNCH BASICS**



**Valley** NATURAL  
FOODS™

**SUMMER 2022**





## LIVING NATURALLY SUMMER 2022

Nick Seeberger  
CEO

Ashley Greywitt  
Marketing Brand Manager

Susie Hessburg  
Communications Specialist

Brienna Schleusner  
Community Relations &  
Marketing Specialist

**Store Hours**  
8 a.m. – 9 p.m. Daily

**Drive-Thru Window Hours**  
7 a.m. – 7 p.m. Daily

Valley Natural Foods Co-op works in partnership with the South Metro community to support health and well-being through education and expertise in local, sustainable food and wellness services.

— Valley Natural Foods Mission Statement

# CO-OP HAPPENINGS

Wed., July 13, 4 – 6 p.m. | Summer Concert Series | VNF Community Patio

Sat., July 16, 7:45 a.m. | Morning Yoga | VNF Community Patio

Mon., July 18, 5 p.m. | Virtual Class with Robin Asbell

Thurs., August 11, 6 p.m. | Class with Jackie Mart, Education Room

Tues., August 16, 4 – 6 p.m. | Summer Concert Series VNF Community Patio

Mon., August 22, 7:45 a.m. | Morning Yoga, | VNF Community Patio

Tues., September 13, 5 – 6 p.m. | Virtual Annual Meeting

Thurs., September 15, 5 – 7:30 p.m. | Celebrate Local Festival

Scan QR Code for event details or visit  
[www.valleynaturalfoods.com/events-classes](http://www.valleynaturalfoods.com/events-classes)



## CEO UPDATE Nick Seeberger

In early June, I had the opportunity to attend the Consumer Cooperative Management Association (CCMA) conference which brings together natural foods co-operators from across the country. It is always inspiring to hear the good work happening at co-ops nationwide and to be reminded that as community-owned businesses, our focus is on making the communities we serve better places to live, shop and work. At Valley Natural Foods we meet this commitment through our purchasing from local producers, our support of local non-profits with time and resources and by hosting events, such as our recent Community Dinner in May and our in-store concert in June, which allow people to gather around good food or interesting topics. All of this makes the co-op a pretty cool place!

Are you interested in being more engaged at your local co-op? Every year we look for member-owners interested in moving their engagement beyond shopping and into service on our board of directors. If you would like to learn more about our board, or are ready to commit to running for the board, please reach out at [board@valleynaturalfoods.com](mailto:board@valleynaturalfoods.com).

It has been impossible to ignore rising costs across seemingly every part of the economy. My family and I don't dine out a ton, but I definitely notice it when we do. Even at times of rising prices, the co-op is a great place to get value on the highest quality foods available for you and your family. We collaborate on purchasing agreements with co-ops across the country to receive competitive prices on packaged, frozen and bulk products. Our produce buyers form relationships with local farmers and plan our purchasing for the year so you will have access to the best produce being grown near our area. Our deli makes from-scratch baked goods, soups and prepared foods for quick, easy and delicious meals. Our member-owners see additional savings through a monthly 5% off discount and member-only sales throughout the store. Take advantage of your membership to save money at the co-op!



In other co-op news, we are installing four self checkout lanes in early July. Our goal is to provide a quick and easy process for lunch shoppers and those who feel more comfortable with self checkout. For those who love interacting with our cashiers, we will continue to offer full-service lanes and our customer service desk will also remain staffed.

Finally, I'm excited by the co-op's recent announcement that we have acquired the assets of Kakookies, Ltd. Valley Natural Foods owns and operates Valley's Own Bakehouse, which produces gluten-free baked goods for wholesale purchase. We are excited to provide Kakookies to our VNF member-owners and customers, at stores in the upper Midwest and nationwide. Look for the Kakookies entire line of wholesome treats here at Valley Natural Foods!

In Co-operation,

Nick Seeberger



# LETTER from the board



Bryan Root

As a native New Mexican, the best guacamole is one I got from an old friend: Two avocados mashed, one tomato chopped (I prefer Roma tomatoes), one or two 4 oz. cans of chopped green chiles (mild or medium), ½ finely chopped onion, one lime squeezed in, ½ teaspoon of salt and one teaspoon finely minced garlic. Mix in the ingredients in the order listed, and then, here is the secret ingredient: cover the bowl with wax paper and make sure the paper is firmly touching the guacamole to keep it from turning color, then let it sit in the fridge overnight to fill out the flavors. Dip in with blue corn chips or baby carrots and celery. Smother a hamburger or a brat with the guacamole for an explosion of flavor.

Did you know the brats at the co-op are made in the deli? That is as fresh as it can get! Our family grills the brats with bell peppers, carrots, and string beans alongside in a grill pan. For a real treat, marinate peach halves or pineapple slices in coconut milk and cinnamon overnight and then grill them for a fruity side dish or dessert.

In Minnesota, the summers come too late and end too soon, so let's all make the most of outdoor get-togethers with the help of our community partner, Valley Natural Foods.

Have an idea or questions for the VNF Board? Send us an email at [board@valleynaturalfoods.com](mailto:board@valleynaturalfoods.com)

The mission of Valley Natural Foods is to strengthen the community by providing healthy food, education, and wellness. To that end, it is exciting to know that the Co-op is community owned! That's right! The co-op members own Valley Natural Foods, and each year at the annual meeting, members elect a board of directors. Have you ever wanted to do more to help VNF? Consider running for the board! Not sure what it takes to be on the board? Sit in on a meeting this summer to get an idea. We love having visitors! Contact the board at [board@valleynaturalfoods.com](mailto:board@valleynaturalfoods.com).

As we fly through the summer months, it is always fun to think up healthy new meals and snacks to fuel the family activities. A go-to snack for us is homemade guacamole. It is the best tasting and healthiest snack I know of.

CALL FOR  
BOARD  
CANDIDATES

Share your talents and serve our cooperative community as a member of the Valley Natural Foods' Board of Directors!

- ▶ July 6 – 22 | Board applications are open and available online at [www.valleynaturalfoods.com/board-of-directors](http://www.valleynaturalfoods.com/board-of-directors)
- ▶ August 24 – September 12 | Vote!
- ▶ September 13 | Election results (announced at the virtual Annual Meeting)

For the most up-to-date information on happenings at the co-op, subscribe to our newsletter at [valleynaturalfoods.com](http://valleynaturalfoods.com)

# COMMUNITY IMPACT

A LOOK BACK AT SHOPPER CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR PREVIOUS QUARTER

June



\$3,361

OutFront MN envisions a state where LGBTQIA+ individuals have equal opportunities, protection and rights. OutFront MN is working toward the day when all Minnesotans have the freedom, power and confidence to make the best choices for their own lives.

May



\$3,951

Midwest Food Connection brings food education to students and their families — teaching hands-on lessons that empower youth to make healthy choices for their bodies, their communities, and the land.

April



\$4,186

Every Meal works to fight hunger in our community by filling the gaps in food access that children face during weekends, summers, and extended breaks. [www.everymeal.org](http://www.everymeal.org)

## IT'S EASY TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR MONTHLY REGISTER ROUND-UP RECIPIENTS!

- At the registers, shoppers have the opportunity to round-up their grocery bill to to the next dollar (or any amount they choose).
- Shoppers who bring in reusable bags for packing up their groceries have the option to redeem or donate the 10¢ rebate earned per reusable bag.



Food Donations  
505 lbs.

Food donations were collected throughout the months of April, May and June for 360 Communities Food Shelves.

THANK YOU VNF MEMBER-OWNERS AND SHOPPERS,  
FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY!



# Let Us *Lettuce* Your Shopping List

Reprinted by permission from grocery.coop. Find more recipes, plus information about your food and where it comes from at grocery.coop.

By: grocery.co-op

In our books, kale will never be a #fail. But come summer, it's time to swap some standbys for the fresh flavors of a new season. Here's a list of some lean, mean, fabulous greens to pick up from your local co-op. Spice up your summer salad AND impress your friends! Experiment with combining textures (crunchy!) and colors (red leaf, anyone?).

## *Dandelion Greens*

A wild and exotic green, dandelion greens are packed with nutrients. With more calcium, vitamins, and iron than most greens, dandelions are great for a detox and they add a roarin' flavor to salads and sautees. The bitter, strong taste of dandelion is best served up with a bold vinaigrette. Don't be afraid to feed on this weed.



## *Arugula*

A richly flavored, nutty green that's versatile for cooking, arugula makes a perfect pizza topping and is great on a grilled burger or steak. Major culinary snaps if you pair it with mozzarella and garden fresh tomatoes at your next picnic or party. Plus, it's fun to say. Arugula!



## *Mustard Greens*

Less bitter than its cousin kale (but trust us, just as "in"), and more peppery than arugula, mustard greens are a fab addition to Chinese, Japanese, and Indian cooking. These greens play well with strong and silent types, like ginger, garlic, and chilies. Slow-cooking mustards with collards and kale coaxes out a yummy mild flavor that is a staple for American southern cuisine.



## *Radicchio*

Not to be confused with red cabbage, radicchio is a brilliant red leaf with white veins. Radicchio has a bittersweet bite and juicy crunch eaten raw, and its kick mellows nicely when grilled or roasted.



## *Bibb*

This sweet little head lettuce has soft, round, floppy leaves that look just like a baby's bib. Tender, buttery and delicate, Bibb lettuce makes a wonderful bed for soft meats like tuna or crab. Like all good things in life, Bibb doesn't last long, so eat it up while it's fresh!

## *Frisée*

Frisée is indeed a frizzy little fella. This spiky, crunchy ball of pale green and white lettuce is often used in salads for texture and color, but can also stand on its own with a strong dressing and a pair of chopsticks.



## *Iceberg*

The most popular lettuce in salad bar history is a favorite for its mildness and satisfying texture. Major crunch action here! If you grew up in the Midwest, this is also known as "Taco lettuce." Ole!

## *Red leaf*

We all know redheads know how to have fun. Bringing more than a splash of beautiful bronzy color to your salad, this frilly red leaf lettuce is full of antioxidants and boasts a sweet, tender flavor.



## *Romaine*

Iceberg for grownups, Romaine lettuce has an elongated central rib that brings the ultimate crunch. Its dark, leafy green shade also makes it the most nutritious of all lettuce varieties. Bonus! You may recall Romaine from salads such as: every Caesar salad ever made.

Stop by our produce area throughout the summer and let us show you what's local and in season!





# **kakookies®**

## **A COOKIE RE-IMAGINED**

Kakookies (pronounced kah-cookies) and named after the founder, Sue Kakuk, has recently become a Valley Natural Foods brand!



Valley Natural Foods' recent acquisition of a uniquely creative cookie company has brought some seriously nutritious, tasty treats to our co-op family of brands!

Last year our certified gluten-free baking facility, Valley's Own Bakehouse, was introduced to Kakookies' line of products. The relationship began when the company was searching for a dedicated gluten-free production space for their energy snack cookies. Valley's Own Bakehouse was the natural next step for fulfilling that need – and for the past year, the bakehouse has been serving as the manufacturer for baking and packaging Kakookies.

So, what exactly is a Kakookie? It's a re-imagined cookie! And it's a treat you can always feel good about eating. The goal was to combine the delicious comfort of a cookie with the nutrition of an energy bar into a grab-and-go snack. The result? An exquisitely crafted product using purposeful, nutrient-dense ingredients – including whole grains, superfoods, and plant-based protein – while preserving the taste and texture of a delicious freshly baked cookie! All the Kakookie recipes were created to help fuel folks with busy and active lifestyles.

Our bakehouse will continue to follow the same recipes for all five gluten-free, plant-based cookie varieties, so customers can expect the same superior quality from the Kakookies brand that they've relished since day one.





# The Fruit and Veggie Grilling Guide

Giving fresh vegetables, stone fruit, and even lettuce a turn on the grill will intensify their flavor, with delicious results.

By Tara Duggan

While most people associate outdoor grilling with burgers, hot dogs and steaks, the grill imparts big flavors to fruits and veggies, too. A wide array of produce paired with spice rubs, marinades and sauces galore will keep your patio table overflowing with delicious additions to your grilling repertoire.

Seasonal summer vegetables just happen to be perfect for grilling: zucchini, eggplant and bell peppers are naturally tender and become even sweeter on the grill. Slice these vegetables about 1/4-inch thick and toss them in an easy marinade for 30 minutes (or better yet, overnight) before grilling for a few minutes per side.

A simple combination of wine vinegar, olive oil, chopped garlic and herbs, and salt and pepper are all you need for a tasty marinade. This easy mix will turn grilled vegetables into Italian antipasti to serve with bread, olives and cheese.

Or change the blend to vegetable oil, sesame oil, soy sauce, rice vinegar, and chopped garlic and ginger for Asian-flavored vegetables that are delicious with rice. Store-bought dressings with a vinegar base make wonderful marinades as well.

Summertime peaches, apricots, nectarines and figs are delicious grilled. Cut fruit in half and remove any pits, then coat lightly with oil. For a sweet-savory side dish to grilled pork, chicken or lamb, sprinkle on a little salt, pepper and balsamic vinegar, then grill for a few minutes per side. And

for dessert, dust with brown sugar, then place the halves on a clean part of the grill for a few minutes per side before serving with ice cream or pound cake (or both).

## Grilling tips

Use moderate heat, not high.

If it's a charcoal grill, move the charcoal to one side and grill your fruits and veggies on the other side, over indirect heat.

Oil your grill thoroughly.

Fruits and vegetables are high in natural sugars, which means they can easily burn and stick to the grill. Before you begin cooking, clean the grill well, preheat it, and then use several layers of paper towel dipped in vegetable oil to grease it.

Cut vegetables into the largest possible pieces.

This will prevent them from falling through the grill grate and avoid extra time spent flipping more pieces. For example, cut zucchini in slices along the length of the vegetable, rather than slicing into small rounds.

Give corn on the cob a head start.

Blanch it in boiling water for a few minutes, then grill for 5 to 10 minutes to finish cooking and add smoky flavor.



## Grilled Pluots

Servings: 4 . Total time: 25 minutes.

- 4 pluots
- 2 teaspoons water
- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons orange marmalade
- 1 cup vanilla ice cream
- 1/4 cup cinnamon-flavored granola (optional)

1. Heat the grill to high.
2. Slice the pluots in half lengthwise, then twist to open and remove the pit. Set aside.
3. In a small bowl whisk together the water, cinnamon and marmalade until well blended, then brush the mixture onto each pluot half. Place the pluots, flesh side down, on the hot grill and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, brushing occasionally with more marmalade. Turn the pluots skin side down, brush the flesh with marmalade and grill 2 more minutes until tender and caramelized. Remove from the heat, place the grilled pluots on a dessert plate, top with ice cream and sprinkle with granola.

Reprinted by permission from grocery.coop. Find more recipes, plus information about your food and where it comes from at grocery.coop.





### Grilled Fruit Kebabs

Servings: 6. Total time: 20–30 minutes.

- 1/2 cup ginger ale
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme, stems removed
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of cayenne pepper (optional)
- 1 pound fresh ripe peaches and/or plums, pitted and cut into quarters
- 1 small pineapple (2–3 pounds), peeled, cored, and cut into 2-inch cubes
- 6 metal or bamboo skewers (soak bamboo skewers in water before using)

1. Prepare and heat the grill.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the ginger ale, honey, orange juice, oil, brown sugar, allspice, thyme leaves, salt and cayenne pepper, if using.
3. Thread the fruit onto the skewers and place them on a rimmed sheet pan. Brush the fruit with some of the marinade. When the grill is hot, put the skewers on and grill on each side for 3 to 4 minutes, glazing the fruit with more marinade every couple of minutes.



### Grilled Marinated Zucchini

Servings: 6. Total time: 50 minutes; 20 minutes active.

- 1 pound zucchini
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- Zest from 1 lemon
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)

1. Remove the ends from the zucchini and slice them lengthwise into halves or thirds.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, garlic, lemon zest and juice, vinegar and spices. Place the zucchini in a large dish or on a rimmed sheet pan and pour the marinade over the zucchini. Let sit for 30 minutes or more, stirring occasionally.
3. Heat grill to medium-high heat. Grill the zucchini slices for 3 to 4 minutes on each side, basting with any remaining marinade when flipping. Serve warm.

**Toss the zucchini with chunks of fresh tomato, feta cheese and cooked couscous for a light Mediterranean salad.**

### Grilled Romaine Salad

Servings: 4. Total time: 25 minutes.

#### Dressing

- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

#### Salad

- 1 ear corn
- 2 slices day-old bread
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 large head romaine lettuce
- 1/4 medium red onion, thinly sliced
- 1/2 avocado, chopped

1. Make the dressing by whisking together the cheese and lemon juice in a small bowl. Add the olive oil, balsamic and black pepper and whisk again until incorporated. Set aside.
  2. Heat an outdoor grill or stove top grill pan to medium-low, about 350°F.
  3. Place the corn on the grill and grill for about 4 to 5 minutes per side until the kernels start to char. Remove from grill once the whole ear is slightly charred, cut the kernels off the cob and set aside.
  4. While the corn grills, drizzle the bread with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and place on the grill for about 1 to 2 minutes per side until just slightly toasted and grill marks appear. Remove from the grill and cut into cubes.
1. Cut the head of romaine in half lengthwise, keeping the core intact. Wash each half thoroughly, gently shake off any excess water and dry well.
  2. Drizzle both halves of romaine (cut side) with the remaining tablespoon of olive oil.
  3. Place the lettuce halves on the grill, cut side down and grill for 1 to 2 minutes per side until the outer leaves just start to wilt and the core has some nice grill marks.
  4. Plate the grilled romaine on a serving platter, top with the grilled corn kernels, sliced red onion, chopped avocado and grilled croutons. Drizzle the dressing on top and serve warm.





# Back to School Lunch Basics

Teaching kids the basics to healthy eating is essential, and can help with their eating patterns later in life. For this back to school season, here are some tips for putting the fun in fundamentals of a healthy meal plan for kids!

## 1. Nutrition Basics

Teaching your kids the nutritional basics is a great start. It is important to note that no food is bad food, but moderation is key. You want your children to have a healthy relationship with food. Teach them about nutrients, differences between processed and non-processed foods, how to read ingredients & food labels, and what a daily value of each food group they should be getting! Visuals are a great tool!



## 2. Make it Fun!

As a parent, you know your kid best. What will make learning about food interesting to them? Anything from a cartoon, to resources from your child's school or your local library. What other ways will they like a fruit or veggie? Hidden in a smoothie, cooked with lots of seasoning? Experiment and find what they like!



*Note: The author of this article is not a medical professional. Consult your family doctor before making major changes to your diet.*

## Did You Know?

Every time you shop with your kiddos 12 and younger- they can get a free piece of fruit from our free fruit display. Look for it in our produce department!



## 3. Get Them Involved!

Getting your kids involved in their meal planning is the third step to tie this all together. Planning dinners? Ask them for help on a side or what they have in mind for a meal. Cooking? Assign them a task.

Lastly, letting your kids have the responsibility of planning their own lunches can be a fun and exciting way for them to be introduced to healthy meal planning.

Cut this list out or use it as a guide, and have your kids take it with them to your favorite food co-op. Have them think about and write down what they may want. If they aren't sure, let them explore that category in-store, and as a reward for filling out the list, they can choose their treat for the week at the end!



Lunch this week

☐ Fruit

☐ Side

☐ Main

☐ Snack

☐ Treat



# SAVE THE DATES!

**7/6  
&  
8/24**

JULY 6 – 22

## Call for Board Candidates

AUGUST 24 – SEPTEMBER 12

## Board Elections - Vote!

**9/13**

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

## Valley Natural Foods Virtual Annual Meeting

**9/15**

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

## Valley Natural Foods Celebrate Local Festival



Be sure you subscribe to our e-newsletter for the most up-to-date information on events and happenings at the co-op