



Celebrating Food, Art & Culture

Americans With Disabilities

Capturing Photos Without Sight Disability, Yoga, Transformation
Former Black Hawk Commander
Tammy Duckworth

Eating for Health

A Focus on Sustainable And Organic Foods



the movie The Real Dirt on Farmer John



Artist and Muralist Kong Ho



Yoga Therapist Barbara Newborn



"Blue Wings" by Kong Ho



Christine Keff (right) of the Flying Fish Restaurant

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Wounded Soldier Carries On A Tradition of Service

Tammy Duckworth recently received the 2007 Hubert H. Humphrey Civil Rights Award — the civil rights community's highest honor — for her long-standing public service, outstanding leadership, and dedication to serving the country. She was one of three prominent figures receiving the award given by the Leadership Council on Civil Rights: President Clinton and scholar John Hope Franklin were also recognized at the gala event held in Washington, D.C.



Tammy Duckworth

For those unfamiliar with Duckworth's story, she served as a major in the Illinois Army National Guard and commanded a 15-ship, UH-60A Black Hawk helicopter company, supervised the training of crew members, and oversaw the maintenance of more than \$50 million in equipment. She was a battle captain and assistant operations officer who helped plan, assign, and track the combat missions of a 500-soldier aviation task force in Iraq, and she flew more than 200 combat hours as a Black Hawk pilot.

On November 12, 2004, Duckworth was co-piloting a Black Hawk helicopter north of Baghdad when a rocket-propelled grenade struck the cockpit of her aircraft and exploded. Focused on the safety of her crew, Duckworth was determined to land the helicopter not realizing she had been severely injured and that the other pilot was already at the controls. It wasn't until the helicopter landed that she passed out. Ten days later, when she woke up at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., she learned that the explosion cost her both legs and shattered her right arm.

Since coming home, Duckworth has remained active in the public arena, regularly speaking to veterans' groups, testifying before Congress on issues of medical care for returning veterans, and running for a U.S. Congressional seat. In November 2006, Illinois Governor Rod R. Blagojevich appointed Duckworth to director of the Department of



2007 Hubert H. Humphrey Awards ceremony
(Tammy Duckworth center in red jacket.)

Veterans' Affairs. She was confirmed by the Senate in March 2007, and since her appointment has made an immediate impact on the veteran community.

"I am very honored to receive this award. It is a privilege to serve the veterans of this great country as Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs. I wake up every day with a renewed commitment to the mission of caring for the men and women who served our country. My buddies saved my life in Iraq and I will do all I can to honor their bravery every day through my work with veterans," says Duckworth. The Hubert H. Humphrey Award, named after the U.S. vice president, senator, and civil rights leader who changed the face of America, is presented to outstanding individuals who best exemplify "selfless and devoted service in the cause of equality".

Duckworth was born in Thailand and grew up in several Southeast Asian countries where her father worked for the United Nations and international companies. Her career follows a long family tradition, going back to the Revolutionary War, of serving in the military. Her late father fought as a Marine in World War II and Vietnam.

It's Not Easy Looking This Good

Roger Pearce, an executive vice president at Wachovia in Charlotte, N.C., has worked his way up the corporate ladder for more than 20 years. It has been a stellar career that wasn't accomplished easily. One of the problems? Finding sharp, professional clothing with a good fit when you sit in a wheelchair. Needing an executive, business-minded look, Pearce turned to adaptive clothing after an accident that paralyzed him from the waist down. "Having my clothes specially tailored gives me the comfort and fit that I need, and they are often more durable than off-the-shelf garments due to their construction and fabrics," says Pearce.

Thanks to the Internet, Pearce and millions of others with disabilities have found it easier to build a wardrobe that is comfortable and business-oriented, not to mention stylish. Years ago, the options were more limited. They were also more expensive and lacked any indication of intending to look good. Today, there are hundreds of Web sites offering solutions for wheelchair users as well as people with limited dexterity, diminished motor skills, prosthetic limbs, and challenges due to advanced age. Functionality has always been a motivation for adaptive

clothing designers, but the latest trends are toward clothing that is hip and wearable in both corporate settings or for a night on the town. Several manufacturers offer designer jeans, tops, and undergarments that are actually fun to wear.

"Basically, everything I wear from the waist down is designed for all-day sitting. Most people don't realize that pants are made for standing, not sitting," Pearce goes on to explain. "For wheelchair users, trousers have an extra-long inseam so the cuffs don't rise; the waistband is higher in the back and lower in the front so the fabric doesn't gather up in your lap; and there are other adjustments that make them very comfortable, and that is extremely important." Even socks and shoes have been specially designed for people with a lower-limb paralysis. They work to increase blood circulation and prevent pressure points from turning into sores — problems that people who can constantly move and adjust generally do not have.

Looking good is not always so easy, but it is a vital part of recovery and establishing a fulfilling life for people who have disabilities. For a related story, visit lookgoodfeelbetter.org, a Web site that addresses the concerns of women recovering from cancer or chemotherapy treatments.

Harmony of the Cosmos

Painterly drips and splatters ... held in check by subtly controlled washes of glaze ... exacting trompe l'oeil objects ... these artistic techniques exemplify Kong Ho's most recent body of work, the "Spiral Series." Using the nautilus shell and the circular Chinese ancient jade form of a pi, Ho presents a powerful use of pure colors and asymmetrical composition. There is even, within the confines of two dimensions, a feeling of dramatic motion inspired by backgrounds of sweeping DNA-like ribbons, flower petals, waves, smoke, and clouds. Closer inspection reveals a sense of fundamental transformation for which no beginning or end can be discovered.

Life is full of contradictions and so is art. Just as with everything else in life, the images in Ho's art appear to have fluid meanings and even to take on different physical characteristics when one looks carefully at the structure of the work and contemplates the image as a whole. On another level, Ho's paintings can be considered visual interpretations of Tao, or the "Way." They reflect the essence of the Taoist belief that there exists a harmonious wholeness and eternal order connecting human beings to nature — the yin and yang forces that govern the cosmos.

About the Artist

Kong Ho is professionally trained in both Chinese and Western painting. He is currently an associate professor of art and program director at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, Pa. Born and raised in Hong Kong, Ho holds a master of fine arts degree in painting and drawing from Texas Tech University and a bachelor's degree in fine arts from The Chinese University of Hong Kong. In addition to his paintings, Ho is an accomplished muralist, despite his limited mobility as a result of polio. In 1997, he founded the Hong Kong Mural Society, a nonprofit art organization promoting mural art.

He derives much of his imagery from his Chinese cultural heritage, and his interest in science and nature. The resulting image instills a sense of tension, integrating the visual concepts of order and disorder. "My art is not for short attention but for a more meditative approach," says Ho.



Pictured left to right: "Copper Wings" and "Silver Wings" from the "The Spiral Series." Pictured below: In 2004, Ho completed a four-story high and 3,300-square-foot heritage mural in Mount Jewett, Pa. All images courtesy the artist. © 2007 Kong Ho.



A Shot in the Dark

You can't fully appreciate Kurt Weston's fine art photography if you are blind, or if you didn't know Weston is blind. Weston's left eye does not respond to light and is totally visionless. His right eye functions only to perceive shapes and motion in his peripheral vision. "My vision is similar to seeing the world as an Impressionist painting," Weston describes over the phone. "I don't really see faces, just a mass of skin tones." Which intuitively begs the next question: How does an artist work with a medium that demands keen focus and a sixth sense for light as it falls on everyday objects?

Weston uses a war chest of extra gear like monocles and magnifiers to get perfect shots. And he trusts his instincts, which were honed as a fashion photographer before his vision began to deteriorate. In fact, photographing models looked like a promising career for Weston, and his work once adorned the pages of top fashion magazines. When disaster struck in the late 1980s, he assumed his career was over. Weston wasn't born with a visual genetic defect. In 1994, cytomegalovirus retinitis set in and destroyed his vision.

The work in Weston's "second" photography career is earning showings at several prestigious venues, including a recent exhibition

at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. His prints were among 23 winners of an international competition titled "Transformations."

Below: "A Chair Is Still a Chair" and "Canine Column." Weston used a caulk outline so viewers with vision disabilities can feel the scale and composition of the artwork.



Locally Produced, Locally Consumed

How to Get Involved in Community-Supported Agriculture

It can be more challenging than rocket science. How do busy people find ways to eat healthy, protect the environment, reduce chemicals in food, and save rural farm life? It's difficult because the answer requires a strong volition and actions that alter convenient routines — in other words, a lifestyle change. Yet increasingly, Americans are taking up the challenges and meeting those goals through a farming system called Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). It's not a new way to get food from farm to fork, but its viability and effectiveness in the United States

is newly established after more than 20 years of hard work by conscientious consumers and farmers. A recent estimate of CSAs operating in North America totals more than 1,500, and the chances are excellent that an established CSA is operating in your community, albeit under the radar.



CSA members typically receive baskets, bags, or boxes of fresh produce once a week from late spring through early fall.

In a nutshell, a CSA is a local partnership that allows farmers and consumers to work and eat together, share the risks involved in each growing season, give small farmers an appetizing financial proposition, and provide consumers a steady supply of delicious, home-grown foods. Variations on the partnership structure can be creative, but invariably a core group of consumers agrees to purchase shares in the farm's harvest, and every couple of weeks they receive baskets or boxes full of items in season. And what CSA subscribers receive is the real deal — no polish or waxes, no spray-on food coloring, and no throwing away cosmetically challenged produce. In most cases, CSA farmers are committed to organic or biodynamic growing practices, so what ends up on the table is food the way it is supposed to be — fresh, pure, and delicious. In some partnerships, consumers also “pay up” by working on the farm several hours each month.

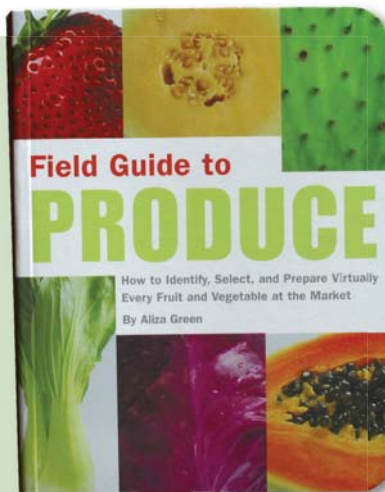
As the CSA model has been expanded and refined, more products have entered the mix. Today, consumers can also purchase flowers, herbs, meat and dairy products, honey, eggs, spices, or just about anything that can be grown down on the farm. Restaurants, too, have gotten into the act and are increasingly big supporters of CSAs.

A good place to investigate CSAs in general or those located in a specific community is the Web site localharvest.org. Maps and search tools allow you to find CSAs, farms, farmers' markets, and restaurants that promote organic foods. The USDA also has a useful site for finding CSAs and learning more about the concept: Visit nal.usda.gov.

A Field Guide for Your Pocket

This Handy Book Is Perfect for Visits to The Farm or the Farmers' Market

You're staring at the sign: Loquats, \$3.99 per pound. The fruit looks familiar, but what are they? Are they fresh? Are they local? Aliza Green's handy little book, *Field Guide to Produce*, will let you know these are Japanese plums, they are fresh picked in July and August in the Northern Hemisphere, and they are best locally-grown because they bruise easily. Perfect for carrying in a large pocket or small purse, Green's book is a great companion on visits to the market, with vital information on hundreds of fruit and vegetables. Buying tips, preparation and storage tips, and flavor affinities are also included.



The Real Dirt on Farmer John

Meet Farmer John, a man who will turn every idea you ever had about what it means to be an American farmer on its head. Farmer John's inspirational story is told in the unique film *The Real Dirt On Farmer John*.

Director Taggart Siegel made the film in a most unusual way — shooting farmer John Peterson over 25 years of their evolving friendship — allowing him to capture his alternately humorous, heartbreaking, and spirited life with raw drama and intimacy. Along the way, Siegel charts Peterson's astonishing journey from farm boy to counter culture rebel to the son who almost lost the family farm to a beacon of today's booming organic farming movement. The tale ebbs and flows with the fortunes of the soil and mirrors changing American times.

In the 1980s the farm, the nation, and Peterson were undergoing major changes. It was a grim era for the American farm, as families across the Midwest, under intense economic pressures, lost lands that had been passed down from fathers to sons for generations. Peterson's land was no exception, but he reinvented himself and rebuilt the farm from the soil up. He found himself at the leading edge of another major American change — the trend of going organic — and became a pioneer in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). *The Real Dirt On Farmer John* provides an eye-opening look at what organic farming is all about and a glimpse into CSA farming.

Peterson notes, “Nowadays, you have people coming out to the farm with their children saying, ‘Look, this is where your food comes from.’ This can have a profound impact on our culture because people are starting to have personal relationships with farms again.” For Peterson, that's what the “real dirt” is all about — the spiritual uplift of the land, the wonders of free thinking, and the ability to pursue your dreams ... no matter how different you are.

The Season of the Root

By Ramin Ganeshram

Hardy enough to grow in to mid-autumn and easily stored for many weeks in a cool dry place, root vegetables like carrots, rutabagas, beets, parsnips, and turnips were once a staple winter food in cool weather climes. In modern times, these bulbous and earthy-tasting vegetables hardly made their way to most dinner tables. But in the drive for eating locally sustainable and seasonal foods, more home cooks are following the lead of top chefs nationwide and using these earthy, rich flavored vegetables in everything from soups to side dishes.

I've often found that one of the biggest roadblocks to using root vegetables is the difficulty in peeling them. It wasn't until I went to culinary school that I learned a better way: Cut the vegetable into pieces that can be securely held with one hand — roughly about the size of a large



apple. Hold the piece firmly on the cutting board, cut side down. Using your knife, pare away the tough skin from the top of the piece down. This is the safest and most secure way to peel this knobby produce.

The short primer below on root vegetables with tasting notes and a recipe will help you incorporate these vitamin- and nutrient-rich delectables into your diet, too.

Beet: Familiar as a deep red, the beet also comes in a light orange color that is more delicately flavored. It is good roasted as a side dish, or it is often boiled, cooled, and sliced in salads.

Carrot: The good old carrot can add complex sweet notes to vegetable medleys and soups. Great as a puree as well. Parsnips, which resemble white carrots and have a similar taste, are harder in texture but can be used as you would carrots.

Celeriac: Closely related to and with a similar flavor as celery, this large and bulbous root is excellent in stews. Try grating it for salad or slaw, too.

Jerusalem Artichoke: Part of the daisy family, this little tuber is sugary and best used roasted. Salsify, a fellow daisy member, has a taste akin to oysters and is quite good in a puree but best used alone rather than in a medley.

Rutabaga: This weighty vegetable is most often used in soups. Its dark yellow flesh is delicately flavored.

Sweet Potato: Like other potatoes, the sweet potato has hard flesh that becomes quite soft when cooked. Naturally sweet, it is excellent on its own or as a side dish or soup base.

Turnip: Another denizen of the traditional soup pot, the turnip is a prehistoric vegetable. Both the leaves and flesh are edible. There are multiple varieties of turnip, which can be used mashed, boiled, roasted, or puréed.

Root Vegetable Puree or Soup

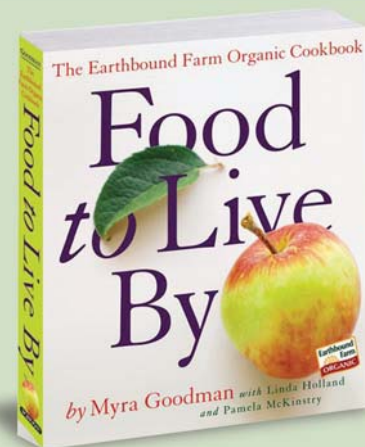
From Ramin Ganeshram, serves 4

You can use a single root vegetable or a combination to create a puree that is great with roasted meats. For another twist, add 2 cups of boiling chicken or vegetable stock to the puree and you have a creamy, fall soup.

- 2 cups of your favorite root veggies, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
- Pinch of coarse salt
- 1-3 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temp
- 1/16 teaspoon nutmeg
- Freshly ground black pepper

In a medium saucepan, combine root vegetables and salt, and cover with water by about 2 inches. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook until the vegetables are tender, about 30 to 40 minutes.

Drain the vegetables in a strainer, then return them to the saucepan to dry out over medium heat for 2 minutes. Transfer to a food processor and pulse to a smooth paste. Add the butter, nutmeg, salt, and pepper to taste, and reheat if necessary before serving.



Food to Live By

The Earthbound Farm in California is operated by Myra and Drew Goldman, and their beautiful cookbook brings to life recipes for wholesome organic cooking. Here is a great winter recipe.

Roasted Root Vegetable Medley

Serves 6 to 8

Roasting root vegetables at a high temperature brings out their inherent sweetness. This recipe is a great jumping-off point for creating your own medley. Fennel, turnips, or shallots would be great additions (if you want to add beets, roast separately to avoid turning everything red). During winter, when fresh herbs are hard to find, dried herb blends will work just fine.

- 3 medium parsnips, peeled
- 3 medium carrots, peeled
- 1 medium Yukon Gold or waxy potato, peeled
- 8 small cipollini onions, peeled, or 2 small yellow onions, peeled
- 1 small rutabaga, peeled
- 2 to 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper for easy cleanup and set it aside.

Cut the parsnips, carrots, potato, onions, and rutabaga into 3/4-inch cubes or wedges so they will all cook in the same amount of time. Place all of the vegetables in a large bowl. Add the olive oil, thyme, rosemary, salt, and pepper, and toss to coat the vegetables. Spread them in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet.

Bake the vegetables until they are tender and caramelized, 35 to 45 minutes. As they bake, shake the baking sheet or stir the vegetables occasionally so each piece develops a crisp crust on all sides. Serve immediately.

Flying Fish Is Flying High on Organic



Chef Christine Keff

Try preparing an organic meal at home and you will discover how difficult it is to create a balanced menu with great flavor and on a budget. Afterward, you would better appreciate the substantial risk Chef Christine Keff took when she decided to throw out a highly successful menu at her restaurant and replace it with one featuring organic foods — all day, every day, forever.

Keff's Flying Fish in Seattle had long surpassed the average three-year life span of a restaurant and was entering its 11th year of business when she eighty-sixed the menu. At stake were not just the dependable, local customers but also patrons from around the world who had read about Flying Fish in *Bon Appétit*, *Wine Spectator*, *The New York Times*, and *Gourmet* magazine.

It's one thing to talk about going organic — lots of chefs have done that — it's something altogether different to make the decision to change and never look back. Conventional thinking is rather rigid: There are too many challenges to meet, operations would be crippled by limited supplies, creativity in the kitchen would be lost, and the increase in food costs would drive away the customers.

Well, that was the thinking, anyway.

Today, nearly two years after the big change, Keff can almost laugh at the hysteria that gripped her employees (one of her top chefs actually quit in an emotional moment) and the skepticism of her peers. The restaurant is doing just fine. Keff has proven to the industry that an organic menu is not only doable, but it can also be profitable.

Success notwithstanding, Keff would be the first to admit that going organic is not for the faint of heart. There are serious challenges to meet and success boils down to commitment and patience. "We're not 100 percent organic," Keff made clear in a phone interview. "There are some products that lack documentation, such as a few of our Asian ingredients, and sometimes we have to freeze items due to seasonal constraints. Some things, like organic green papaya, are impossible to find, so we just don't use it. And,

customers have learned that organic doesn't always taste better."

Regarding the perception of exorbitant costs, Keff says that has not been an issue for her business. The average check per person went up \$2, and customers paid it without complaint.

Asked if organic could be implemented on a large scale, she said, "That's a good question. Bon Appétit [a company providing food service to corporations, colleges, and universities] is showing that it is possible." For chefs wanting to give organic a go, Keff recommends changing the menu gradually and sticking to a well-thought-out plan.

For additional information on Chef Keff or to make reservations, visit flyingfishrestaurant.com.



Shopping at Whistling Farms, a key supplier of locally grown, organic produce. Suppliers have taken up the challenge as well, shifting some responsibilities away from the restaurant. Photo by Mark B. Bauschke.

Foods are organic when growers do not use synthetic pesticides, generic modification and irradiation; biosolids are not used as fertilizer; the land has been free of chemical applications for three years or longer; and audit trails are kept for documentation.

Grilled Weathervane Scallops With Lemon Basil Pesto

From Chef Christine Keff, serves 4

- 1 cup loosely packed fresh lemon basil leaves
- ¼ cup (1 ounce) pine nuts
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 16 large sea scallops
- 2 tablespoons canola oil

For the pesto:

Process all of the ingredients except the scallops and canola oil in a food processor (or blender) until the mixture is a coarse purée. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

For the scallops:

Heat the canola oil in a sauté pan until just below smoking point. Add the scallops, flatside down, and reduce heat to medium. Cook for 2 minutes, turn and continue cooking for another minute.

Remove the scallops to a serving platter and drizzle the pesto over all.

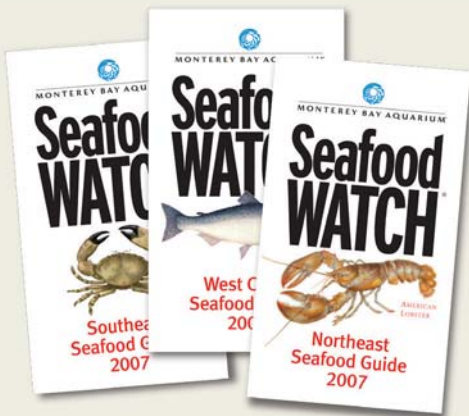


Pictured above: Weathervane Scallops with Lemon Basil Pesto. "Organic livestock" means animals have access to pasture, are not given growth hormones or antibiotics, and are fed organically grown feed. With no legal standard for organic seafood, the Flying Fish menu also includes foods that are "harvested in the wild."

Still No USDA Labels for Organic Seafood

Choosing to go organic is not an easy task, particularly when it comes to seafood. “There is no official certification label for seafood available from the USDA’s National Organics Standards Board, mostly because of a debate on open-water pens and the types of feed appropriate for farm-bred seafood,” says Buffy Baumann of Food and Water Watch, a nonprofit that works to educate consumers. But there are ways to shop smart. Below are a few tips offered by the Monterey Bay Aquarium in Monterey, Calif.

Download a pocket guide from seafoodwatch.org, the aquarium’s Web site. Pocket guides list suggestions for which types of seafood are best to buy, which ones are good alternatives, and which ones should be avoided:



Learn about the various kinds of fishing methods, how they impact the environment, and how unintended catch like sea turtles can be affected.

Help businesses in your community understand that there’s a demand for ocean-friendly seafood. Action cards are available to leave with your favorite restaurants, fish markets, and grocery stores.

A Seafood Watch Training Program produced by the Monterey Bay Aquarium is available online. To view the program and learn more about sustainable seafood, visit seafoodwatch.org.

How Fish Are Caught or Farmed

From the Monterey Bay Aquarium

Commercial fisheries use a variety of methods and gear to catch the fish we eat, for example dredging, gillnetting, harpooning, longlining, purse seining, trawling/dragging, and trolling. Fish farming, also known as aquaculture, uses a variety of methods to grow or breed fish or shellfish in marine or fresh water. Fish farms currently provide one-third of all seafood. However, this amount will increase in the future. Popular seafood items such as tilapia, catfish, and mussels are almost always farm raised. Learn more about aquaculture at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Web site.

A few fishing methods, clockwise from top left:

Trawling: Trawlers tow a cone-shaped net at various depths. Midwater trawlers catch schooling fish and bottom trawlers catch fish that live on or near the seafloor. Trawl nets catch everything in their paths and can seriously damage the seafloor.

Trolling: A hook-and-line method that tows fishing lines behind or alongside a boat. Trollers catch fish that will follow a moving lure or bait, such as salmon, mahi mahi, and albacore tuna. Trolling is an environmentally responsible fishing method.

Ponds: A farming method that encloses fish in a coastal or inland body of water. Shrimp, catfish, and tilapia are the most common species raised in ponds. However, pond construction in sensitive areas can destroy important coastal habitats.

Gillnetting: A gillnet is a curtain of netting that is almost invisible to fish as they swim into the gillnet. Gillnets can entangle marine mammals and sea turtles in addition to other marine life, resulting in a significant amount of bycatch.

Pan-Seared Tuna With A Fennel-Coriander Crust

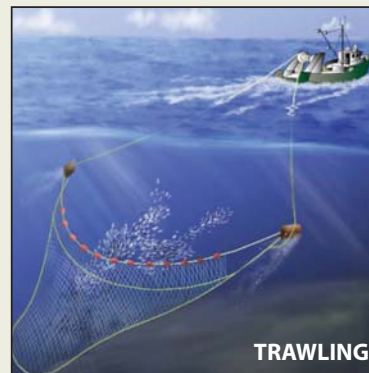
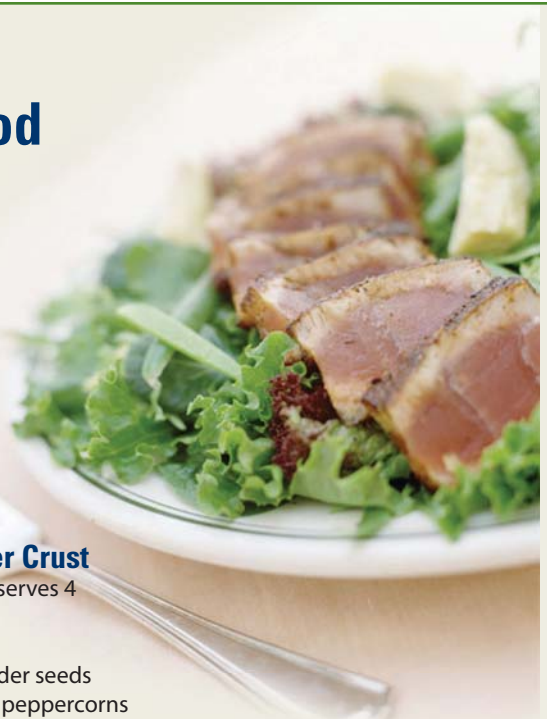
From *Food to Live By*, serves 4

- 1/4 cup fennel seeds
- 3 tablespoons coriander seeds
- 2 tablespoons whole peppercorns
- Coarse (kosher) salt
- 4 each 6-ounce tuna steaks, 1/4-inch thick
(look for troll or pole-caught bigeye, yellowfin, or skipjack tuna)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Place the fennel, coriander, and peppercorns in a spice mill or clean coffee grinder and grind to a fine powder. Spread the spice mixture on a plate.

Sprinkle salt on both sides of the tuna steaks. Dip each tuna steak in the spice mixture, lightly coating it all over.

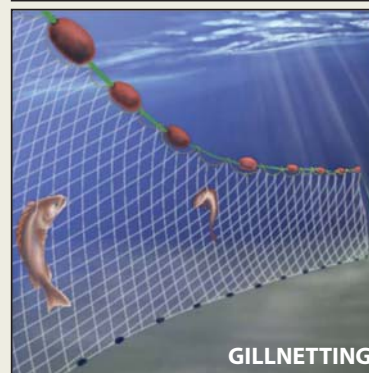
Heat the olive oil in a large, nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the tuna and cook, turning once, until cooked to taste, about 2 minutes per side for medium-rare. Serve warm.



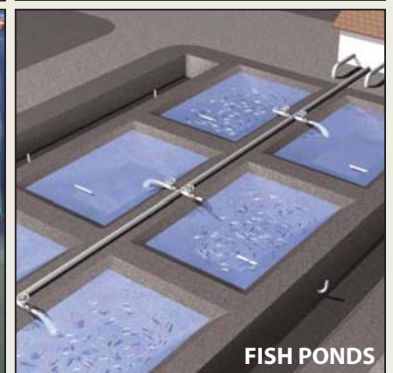
TRAWLING



TROLLING



GILLNETTING



FISH PONDS

Disability, Yoga, and Transformation

As a stroke survivor, yoga transformed me. At 21 years of age I had a devastating stroke that paralyzed my right side. I lost the ability to think and express myself in words. I did not know who I was anymore. During the darker moments, I lost my connection with everything and everyone. For me, today and tomorrow were the same exact day, filled with 14 hours of rehabilitation. Deep into the fifth month, my fate started to change. In therapy as usual, I tried to move my flaccid arm. It would not budge. I had to find a way to calm down. Taking one long breath, I shut my eyes and concentrated on the electric current running through my arm. As time stopped, my mind connected with my arm's energy. In slow motion my arm became aware of this signal and hesitantly moved an inch. I was amazed and thrilled at the impact of this magic. The next several months a whole new world opened up for me.

The next few years brought constant discovery, and I found myself exposed to my first yoga lessons. Yoga offered me an environment where I could belong again and be with people. Breathing deeply into my own creative poses I learned to flow and to adjust each posture to meet the comfort and challenge needs of my body. I learned to be creative and move my body in ways I had never dreamed. The opportunity opened up for me to go to India to be trained further in yoga. I arrived back in the United States to start teaching yoga and working as a rehabilitation counselor for young adults with head injuries and strokes. My clients were psychologically lost and in need of hope, much like I had been. They did not know what to do with their lives. Through the transforming power of yoga, within a year many of these clients were not only physically better but mentally and emotionally improved as well. The following are a few of the invaluable benefits offered by yoga, not only to people with disabilities but to everyone.

Letting Go of Stress. With practice, each movement and pose of the students is done with ease and little muscular effort. Students, particularly those with disabilities, should relax whenever they feel

tension, as stress often makes the body become more rigid.

Emphasizing the Spine. Proper alignment does not refer to anatomically correct poses, rather to a feeling of ease and equilibrium. The correct spinal alignment comes from long-term practice and evaluation. When the functions of the spine improve, a stable foundation for the entire body is created.

Foundation and Grounding. Students of disability often lose their balance and coordination after injury or illness. Balance that comes from a strong foundation helps correct posture and make movement more comfortable and free.

The Breath. Conscious breath is the gateway to the nervous system, which leads students to more personal control and physical recovery. By learning to control their breath, they learn the process of healing both their bodies and minds.

This article was originally printed in the International Journal of Yoga Therapy. Author Barbara Newborn, M.A., C.R.C., (pictured above) is a lecturer and a certified private rehabilitation therapist for people with disabilities, specializing in therapeutic yoga practices. To read the full-length article, visit gardensofyoga.com



Working Out for Mental Health

Gym rats have claimed for decades that working out makes their minds sharp: They claim more confidence, happiness, and mental stamina. But are those claims supported scientifically, or are they purely imaginary?



A growing body of scientific research is bolstering the factual evidence supporting exercise as a tool to improve mental health, especially for those diagnosed with severe cases of mental illness. For example, in a recent study at the University of Florida College of Nursing at Gainesville, researchers studied the effects of aerobic exercise on people with schizophrenia. After four months of working out three times a week, the

exercisers had fewer psychiatric symptoms like social withdrawal and paranoia when compared with a control group of sedentary patients. Researchers at McClean Hospital in Belmont, Mass., and the Boston School of Medicine recently concluded a study showing that yoga can elevate gamma-aminobutyric (GABA) levels (the brain's primary inhibitory neurotransmitter) and is a possible treatment for depression and anxiety, disorders associated with low GABA levels. The study used magnetic resonance spectroscopic imaging to measure GABA levels in two groups of people: one group practiced yoga for one hour while the other read. A 27 percent increase in GABA levels was measured in the yoga practitioners while none was measured in the reading group.

According to researchers at McClean Grmore than 100 studies have been conducted worldwide that support the link between exercise and improved mental health. "We now have evidence to support the claim that exercise is related to positive mental health as indicated by relief in symptoms of depression and anxiety," writes Daniel M. Landers, a researcher from Arizona State University in his report, "The Influence of Exercise on Mental Health." Read more at fitness.gov.

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