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Greenlight Long Island Magazine provides information about where to 'GO' on Long Island for residents, businesspersons, merchants, colle and all visitors. Combining the format of a magazine with that of a weblog, it is a guide to the culture, people, places and history of the L The magazine features area news briefs, human-interest stories, a dining guide, interviews, lists and links to local resources.

June 3, 2005

Cooking with Chef Lia

"Cooking in Season"

Written by Lia Soscia for [Greenlight Long Island Magazine](#)

One of the greatest gifts the earth gives to a cook is being able to prepare meals with the vibrant colors and delicious aromas of fruits and vegetables in season. Now that the weather is starting to warm up, we will see an abundance of fresh produce filling up our grocery stores from our own Long Island farms. We have seen, over the last 10 years, a growing source of "out of season" vegetables appearing year-round due to imports and scientific farming advances, but nothing beats the fresh taste of locally grown produce. And, as Long Islanders who love to cook, we should rely heavily on produce from our local farm stands.

Produce that comes from other countries, although a good substitute, is usually weeks old by the time it makes it to your local supermarket. If you haven't had the chance to visit your local farm stand, you really need to. Once you've tasted a pie or shortcake or even fresh corn right off the cornstalk, there is no going back to produce substitutes.

Many cooks will take a stab at growing their own produce in their backyards. And, if you spend enough time, the culinary rewards are memorable. Years ago, I grew my own corn and other vegetables in the backyard of my first house. It was a good summer. The stalks grew 10 feet high and I had many ears of corn and other assorted vegetables to enjoy. After picking some corn right from the stalk, I stuck them for a few minutes in a pot to boil, added some salt and butter and I was in taste bud heaven. The kernels were popping with sweetness and the butter and salt topped it off!

Another fond fresh vegetable memory is the day my daughter was born. Has it been 14 years already! I had so many eggplants that I decided to cook them up and freeze them for later use. Needless to say, my husband was eating eggplant for many nights after we came home from the hospital. Maybe that's why he doesn't like it anymore?!

Although we have a fairly short growing season on Long Island, our farmers have much to share with us this summer and fall. To give you a head start in your search for your favorite farm stand, you need to visit [The Long Island Farm Bureau website](#). Here you will find all



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the information you need regarding Long Island's farming community, such as popular crops of Long Island, the harvest calendar, and a detailed list of all the farm stands in Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

There are many benefits to cooking in season. Just-picked produce contains more vitamins and minerals and the taste is unmatched. To see what I mean, just take a few fresh tomatoes, cut them into bite size pieces, toss with some fresh minced garlic and basil, put a dash of good quality olive oil, and balsamic vinegar and salt and pepper to taste. You too will be in taste bud heaven!

Chef Lia Soscia is a personal chef and owner of Home Cooking Consultant Personal Chef Services on Long Island. She has been cooking for almost 30 years for friends and family. Lia's Personal Chef Services include home meal preparation, cooking lessons & parties, recipe research and more.

If you have any questions or need help finding more recipes that take advantage of produce in season, please visit Chef Lia at www.ChefLia.com or write her at Lia@ChefLia.com. She looks forward to hearing your comments and questions. And continue to check back for more "Cooking With Chef Lia," only in Greenlight Long Island Magazine.

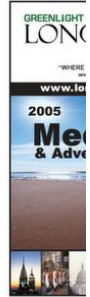
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Adirondack Grill	64 Forest Avenue	Glen Cove	American