

Whether you're looking for something to go alongside a weekday meal or a weekend feast, vegetable-based side dishes are often so delicious they become the main attraction. Here are some flavour-packed recipes that just might steal the show.

Meet Joan and Harpreet

Troy, Ontario



**On the J. Collins & Sons farm,
they're growing more than
vegetables, they're growing
a community.**



Feels like home

"I grew up in India on my father's farm and at 19 I came to Canada with my parents. I started at the J. Collins & Sons farm in 1982. Back then it was a part-time job, but I liked it so much I've been here my whole life," says Harpreet Cheema, farm manager.



Building a community

There's a large Punjabi community in Brampton, about an hour away from the farm. "When you think about the number of people in the world who help produce or grow food, you realize it's not that many. I think our community, and the people here on this farm, contribute a lot in that respect," notes Harpreet. "This is an old generation that loves to work on the farm."

As word got out to the community that "people came in happy and went home happy at the end of the day," more and more people came to work on the farm. Joan Beck, owner of J. Collins & Sons, is equally appreciative saying, "I love the people that we work with as well as the energy and the willingness to do hard work; it's a good feeling."





Coming home

Joan grew up on her family's vegetable farm in Woodbridge, Ontario. After heading to university, where she trained as a dietician, and working in Toronto for 10 years, she came back home: "It's the rural life that I'm used to. I had a very nice childhood with lots of fresh air and space. If you like to be outdoors, it's an ideal life."

"I'm not sure there is a regular day," says Joan, a fifth generation farmer. "That's one thing about the job, things are always changing and you have to be able to revise your plans, drop what you're doing and come back to it later. It's not just one job at a time."

From the ground up

The J. Collins & Sons farm grows bunched vegetables—carrots, radishes, parsley, cilantro and dill—items that involve a lot of hand labour.

Harpreet takes pride in knowing their farm is having a local impact. “Our produce goes to the local GTA (Greater Toronto Area) market. We work with the big players in the food industry and the Ontario Food Terminal,” he comments.

It’s a contribution the whole community can be proud of.





Lentil Soup with Sweet Potato

Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, chopped
1 rib celery, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tsp curry powder
1 tsp minced fresh ginger
¼ tsp each ground coriander,
ground cumin & pepper
1 pkg (900mL) vegetable
broth, sodium-reduced
1 can (796mL) no-salt-added
diced tomatoes
2 cups diced peeled sweet
potato (about 1 large)
⅔ cup dried green lentils,
rinsed
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
½ tsp salt

Directions

In a dutch oven or large heavy-bottomed saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Cook onion and celery, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 1 minute.

Add garlic, curry powder, ginger, coriander, cumin and pepper. Cook, stirring until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in broth, tomatoes, sweet potato and lentils; bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until lentils are tender, 15–20 minutes. Stir in cilantro and salt.

Tip: To make this soup with meat, use chicken broth and add boneless skinless chicken breasts.

Notes

Joan Beck
Troy, Ontario

Meet the Lees Family

Arcola, Saskatchewan



Home is where the heart is for Valerie and Duncan who have raised cattle, a family, and a lot of love on their century-old family farm.

45 years and counting

After 45 years of marriage, Duncan and Valerie have been through a lot together. Not only have they run a farm and raised a family, but Valerie was also a full-time teacher. But even as they each had individual responsibilities on and off the farm, they always understood the importance of sharing responsibilities at home—including raising their four boys. According to Valerie, the secret to a successful relationship is patience. But if you ask Duncan, a lot of it comes down to “stubbornness.” What they do agree on, however, is that they are always there for each other.





Loving what you do

As a sixth generation farmer, Duncan has spent a lifetime on the land. And, just as his father passed the tradition onto him, he is passing it on to his own son, Jeff, who now runs the family farm. "I think every father would want his son to enjoy what he did. I think if your father enjoyed his work, he'd want his son to enjoy it the same way. We are a natural cattle people. We've done it for a long time."



Local and fresh

For the Lees family, there's nothing like homegrown food, whether it's from your own garden or a local farm. As Valerie says: "The produce that you get, for example fresh cabbage, is so tasty compared to commercially bought produce. It's picked ripe, instead of green and shipped." But if you ask Duncan, "I find that homegrown pork is the biggest difference. There aren't many people that run their own pigs anymore, but if you can get them from a farm it's much better. It's just a different taste."



Raising cattle

The Lees raise Hereford cattle (they have about 450 heads), which are “one of the heartier beef breeds,” explains Duncan. “They are distinctive with their white face and their body hair is what we call ‘red.’ Red with white face.”

Over the years, the Lees family has shown Hereford cattle not just locally, but across the country and have even sold purebred stock to places as far away as England, Japan, Russia and Kazakhstan. Also a livestock judge, Duncan knows how to work with the animals to get them socialized. “By the time we get them ready for a show, our animals are very tame,” says Duncan.

After raising cattle, a family and a life together over the past 45 years, it’s obvious Valerie and Duncan wouldn’t trade this life for anything.





Baked Potato Casserole

Ingredients

8 large potatoes,
cut into cubes
1 tsp salt
1 cup sour cream
1 cup mayonnaise
1 cup shredded
cheddar cheese
3 green onions, chopped

Directions

Boil cubed potatoes in salted water for 10 minutes. In a mixing bowl, add sour cream, mayo, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the shredded cheese and green onions. Drain the potatoes and add into the mixed ingredients.

Grease a 9 × 13" pan and add in mixture. Top with reserved $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cheese.

Bake at 350°F for 20 – 25 minutes. Can be frozen.

Notes

Valerie & Duncan Lees
Arcola, Saskatchewan

Meet the Berry Family

Glenboro, Manitoba



With potatoes as far as the eye can see, the Berrys have created their own field of dreams.



A family business

Doug and his brother, Bruce, run a family operation—working alongside them are each of their respective sons.

“My brother Bruce and I have always been partners,” says Doug. “We’ve worked together since we were kids. And now with our kids, we have a meeting each morning and make sure everyone is part of every decision.”

“All of them have key areas that they deal with. With each of them having such great experience, it makes for a fabulous family unit,” adds Cheryl, Doug’s wife. “Looking at them and how successful they’ve been over the years, there’s a lot to be proud of with how they’ve managed everything. I just know how proud his parents would be of him, Bruce and the grandsons. It’s amazing.”





Beauty in your own backyard

Living where they do, the view is something the Berrys never get tired of, even after all these years. For Doug, it's the drive to the farm every morning. "It's amazing!" he says of the morning sky. "And every season is special in its own way. Everyday there's a new picture every where you turn."

For Cheryl, it's a reminder to take the time to look around. "There are so many beautiful things to see and enjoy. When you're out in the country you can see the sunrise and the sunset. It can be pitch black out and the stars are amazing because we don't have any city lights to interfere. Sometimes the sky just looks like it's endless."






Growing opportunities

Their visionary father taught Doug and Bruce about the value of money from an early age. At 16, Doug borrowed \$10,000 to purchase his first property. "My dad gave us a great opportunity to be managers at a young age, and I've given that same opportunity to my boys," says Doug. It's a lesson passed through generations; in farming, if you can't borrow money you're never going to make money.



A close-up photograph of a person wearing a brown, heavy-duty work jacket with brass buttons. The person is holding several golden-brown, slightly wrinkled potatoes in their hands. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the textures of the jacket and the potatoes.

Feast for a crowd

About 20 years ago, to help keep morale high, Cheryl started preparing meals for workers during the long days of harvest.

"It started years ago. I would take out a pot of chili to the guys on the field. We started off with small pots then expanded from there," Cheryl remembers. "I'm so used to it now I don't even think about it. We do a different meal every day for 14 days. It's all in the planning. I enjoy it, and the people enjoy it. Everything is homemade—the bread, meals and baking. Everything we grow is incorporated into a meal."

After all these years, the Berrys continue to prove that the best part of being successful, is being able to share it with others.

Dark Brown Baked Beans

Ingredients

1 lb dry white navy beans
2 medium onions,
finely chopped
½ lb bacon, chopped

Ingredients for sauce

2½ tsp salt
1½ tsp dry mustard
¼ tsp pepper
¾ cup brown sugar
5 tbsp molasses
¾ cup ketchup
1 cup boiling water

Directions

Wash beans and place in pot. Cover with 1" of water over beans, soak overnight.

Next day, add a bit more water, if necessary, to cover beans again. Simmer for an hour until beans are tender. May take longer, taste as beans should be soft.

Place beans into a small roasting pan.

To make sauce, combine all ingredients and stir. Pour sauce over beans, add chopped onions and bacon, stir together. Bake in oven with lid on at 275°F for 6 hours. Stir occasionally, checking for moisture. Might have to add a bit more water if too dry.

Tip: Add less molasses if you want a lighter colour or less sweet.

Notes

Doug & Cheryl Berry
Glenboro, Manitoba

Bacon & Caramelized Onion Asparagus

Ingredients

3 slices bacon
1 bunch asparagus
1 tbsp water
½ cup chopped onion
⅓ cup ranch dressing

Directions

Cook bacon in skillet until crisp and absorb grease with paper towel. Add onions to skillet, cook until crisp yet tender. Stir in dressing. Keep warm. Place asparagus in microwavable dish and add water. Microwave on high for 4–5 minutes. Drain asparagus and top with sauce and crumbled bacon.

Notes

Sharon Sauter
Fairlight, Saskatchewan

Broccoli & Cauliflower Salad

Ingredients

6 green onions chopped
1 large head broccoli
1 medium cauliflower
1 cup celery
½ lb bacon
1 cup raisins or cranberries
2 cups grated cheddar
cheese

Ingredients for dressing

1 cup mayonnaise
2 tbsp vinegar
⅓ - ½ cup sugar

Directions

Cut vegetables in small pieces. Fry bacon until crisp, crumble and cool. Add to vegetables. Mix dressing, pour over salad and blend. Add raisins and cheese. Let stand for a few minutes and enjoy.

Notes

Andrew & Corinne Grift
Swan Lake, Manitoba

Deep Fried Cauliflower

Ingredients

1 head cauliflower
2 eggs
¼ cup milk
Salt to taste
½ cup flour
2 cups bread crumbs

Directions

Separate cauliflower into florets. Beat eggs and milk together. Season cauliflower with salt and roll in flour. Dip in egg mixture and coat with bread crumbs.

Heat oil to 400°F. Fry cauliflower until golden brown. Remove from fryer, place in 2-quart casserole dish, bake at 350°F for about 10 minutes.

Do not overcook.

Tip: When you wash the cauliflower, leave it a little damp so the flour will stick to it.

Notes

Ralph Balog

Kipling, Saskatchewan



Gallo Pinto

Ingredients

1 can red kidney beans
Basmati rice
½ onion
½ tsp salt
2 tbsp oil

Directions

Rinse kidney beans and mix together with cooked rice.
Fry onion with oil until soft and add to the rice mixture.
Add in salt. Mix well and serve when cool.

Notes

Virginia Vargas
Regina, Saskatchewan

High Protein Quiche

Ingredients for crust

⅓ cup melted butter
¾ cup flour
½ cup grated cheese
½ tbsp dry mustard

Ingredients for filling

2 eggs
1 cup milk
½ cup grated cheese or more
½ cup chopped ham
2 tbsp diced onion
Pinch dry mustard
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Mix crust ingredients into pie plate or 8×8" square glass pan. Stir filling ingredients with fork, pour into crust. Bake at 350°F for 1 hour.

Notes

Jean Flottorp

Regina, Saskatchewan



Lasagna Soup

Ingredients

1 lb ground beef
½ cup chopped onion
1 pkg lasagna dinner mix
1 can (28 oz) diced tomatoes
2 cups kernel corn
2 tbsp parmesan cheese
8 cups water

Directions

Brown beef and onion in a pot. Add the sauce mix from the lasagna package. Add water, tomatoes, corn and cheese. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Add noodles, cover and simmer for 10 minutes until noodles are tender. Can serve with garlic toast for a complete meal.

Notes

Annis Simoens
Holland, Manitoba

Simple Pizza

Ingredients for crust

- 2/3 cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup flour
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp pepper

Directions

Mix all ingredients and pour into two 12" pizza pans. Bake at 400°F for 15 minutes. Take the pizzas out of the oven, spread pizza sauce on crust and add desired toppings and cheese. Bake for another 15 minutes and enjoy.

Notes

Norma Bueckert
Winkler, Manitoba



Turnip Casserole

Ingredients

3 cups cooked and
mashed turnip
1 cup apple sauce
2 tbsp butter
1 tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt
¼ tsp pepper
2 eggs
3 tbsp flour
Bread crumbs
Butter for dabbing

Directions

Beat eggs into turnip, applesauce, butter, flour, baking powder, salt and pepper. Put mixture into casserole dish, sprinkle with bread crumbs and dab with butter.

Bake at 375°F for 20 minutes.

Tip: If making ahead of time, just mix the ingredients together and bake when needed.

Notes

Jean Nelson
Port Hope, Ontario

