

THE ROOT CELLAR

Inspired by the history of preservation and winter abundance.

The root cellar has significantly impacted society, changing how people manage food, survival, and seasonal cycles. Root cellars provide a way to store fresh produce for extended periods, helping ensure a steady food supply during times of scarcity. By allowing for the preservation of excess harvest, root cellars reduce reliance on external food sources and encourage seasonal eating, which minimizes waste and enables communities to make the most of their local environment.

Using root cellars empowers communities by enhancing their autonomy, sustainability, and food security. This practice has played a crucial role in fostering resilient, self-reliant societies.

As we navigate a constantly changing world, we can draw valuable lessons from traditions to inform our future. These skills have been handed down through generations, helping preserve our food and cultural histories.

Magdalena
A MARYLAND BISTRO



SWEET POTATO | \$20

Sweet Potato and Pecan Orgeat, Uncle Nearest 1856, Dr. Bird Rum, Amaro Sfumato, Cinnamon, Toasted Swiss Meringue

Sweet, starchy, satisfying, and versatile, the sweet potato has become an iconic part of every holiday meal. The term "sweet potato" was first used in the 1740's in America. Adrian Miller, a James Beard Award-winning author, traced the evolution of numerous soul food staples, including sweet potatoes, in his book *Soul Food: The Surprising Story of an American Cuisine, One Plate at a Time*. "West Africa is a yam-based culture," said Miller. "Even though we call dark-fleshed sweet potatoes yams, they're not the same as the tropical root plant. [P]eople were dismissing the sweet potato as the 'white man's yam,' but on this side of the Atlantic, sweet potatoes were embraced because [enslaved people] couldn't get the true tropical yams."

This dish not only reflects the region's agricultural heritage but also serves as a reminder of the historical journey of African Americans, especially during the Great Migration. As communities relocated to urban centers, they carried their recipes with them, ensuring that the rich flavors and traditions associated with sweet potatoes endured. Today, sweet potato pie is celebrated beyond its Southern roots, showcasing its evolution and culinary heritage.

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KALE | \$18

Montelobos Mezcal, Heirloom Creme De Flora,
Clarified Green Juice, Celery Bitters, Mint

In the early-mid 2000s, kale had reached an almost unbearable media saturation. Famous New York City chef Dan Barber submitted a recipe for kale chips to *Bon Appétit* in 2009. Dr. Oz first presented kale to his audience in 2010. In 2011, Gwyneth Paltrow made kale chips for *Ellen*. *Time* named kale one of the top 10 food fads of 2012 the following year, while *Bon Appétit* dubbed it the "year of kale." National Kale Day was established in 2013. How did kale become the most popular vegetable for health nuts, celebrity dietitians, and green juice enthusiasts?

Rumor has it that before 2012, the largest buyer of kale was Pizza Hut, which used its curly leaves as décor for their salad bars. Kale has a long history, with evidence of its cultivation dating back to at least 2000 BCE in the Eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor, which is now Turkey. But it wasn't until a guerilla marketing campaign starring a fake association created by a New York PR company made kale sexy. Oberon Sinclair created the 'American Kale Association,' a fictional company, to promote healthy eating and the bitter leafy green. The viral sensation brought kale out from under the salad bowl and into the limelight.

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CALÇOT | \$17

Charred Leek Infused Forager Gin, Red Pepper Infused
Dry Vermouth, Umami Bitters, Nut-Free Romesco,
Dehydrated Leek Powder

In Catalonia, one lesser-known vegetable is so well-liked by the locals that it necessitates a whole social gathering to eat. The humble calçot, a local variety of green onion, causes Catalans to gather on their patios before blazing fires, eager to slather the charred vegetables in a sauce before devouring them with their bare hands. Originally from Tarragona, located just south of Barcelona, calçots have become well-known throughout Catalonia.

Similar to Fenland celery in the UK, they are cultivated by progressively increasing the soil surrounding the onion stalk as it develops. This keeps the vegetable white and prevents it from becoming green, a process known as calçar, which gives the vegetable its name. They are in season from November to April but at their peak in January and February. They are so popular with Catalans that massive festivals are called calçotades, the largest of which is in Valls, Tarragona, towards the end of January to celebrate the calçot. Amid the conflict between Catalonia and Spain, it is essential to recognize the distinctiveness of Catalan culture and cuisine. We invite you to get romesco on your face while you sip this cocktail. Salud!

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MUSHROOM | \$20

Nikka Gin, Lo-Fi Gentian Amaro, Mushroom Duxelle and Butter Jam, White Chocolate, Crispy Onions, Thyme

Since the beginning of human history, people have probably eaten mushrooms. According to "The Oxford Companion To Food," evidence of mushrooms as a food source is found throughout early European colonies and highly valued in Ancient Greece and Rome.

Campbell's Cream of Mushroom Soup, now well-known, first appeared in the 1930s. Immortalized by Andy Warhol as a piece of art, cream of mushroom is a key ingredient in a range of holiday casseroles and bakes, including one-pot beef stroganoff, tuna casserole, and the classic green bean casserole. According to the Houston Press, Campbell's Condensed Cream of Mushroom is so commonly used in various meals nationwide that it has earned the nickname "America's béchamel."

In his book 'Almost From Scratch,' Andrew Schloss stated that seasoning mixes, salsas, and other products in cans, boxes, and bottles allow home chefs to try more complex recipes. Upon entering the kitchen, the chef finds the onions chopped, the stocks prepared, the béchamel sauce ready, and all other necessary preparations completed. The kitchen assistant handles the chef's mise en place, so why not have the grocery store handle yours as well? A backlash against foodies is emerging in the wake of the financial meltdown. You can sauté your onions, make béchamel sauce, swap haricot verts for traditional green beans in the green bean casserole, and peel and roast fresh pumpkins for the pumpkin pie. But when does it become a consumeristic absurdity? Is this the year we all accept defeat, raise the white flag, and grab the communal can opener?

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APPLE | \$16

Hanson Meyer Lemon Vodka, Acid Adjusted Green Apple Juice, Baking Spice Green Apple Brine, Pickled Apple

An apple initiated the Trojan War. Apples are the source of immortality for the Norse gods. The Arabian Nights includes a miraculous apple from Samarkand that can heal every human sickness, which came way before that whole apple/doctor saying, written in 1866. Robert Frost, Emily Dickinson, Christina Rossetti, and Dylan Thomas wrote poems about apples, while artists such as Caravaggio and Magritte painted them. We owe the sweet, crunchy, satisfying flavor of apples to domestication. While Henry David Thorough claimed that he preferred the "spirited flavor" of the wild apple, even he admitted that sometimes that spirited bite was "sour enough to set a squirrel's teeth on edge and make a jay scream." Wild apples suffer from their genetic diversity, a trait identified by botanists as extreme heterozygosity. An apple grown from seed will not resemble its parents and promotes evolution by creating numerous apple types suitable for North Dakota and New Zealand locations.

However, growers find the apple's elusive genome bothersome as they strive to maintain specific preferred varieties. Grafting is the sole method of ensuring reproducibility in apples and how our modern eating apples reproduce. Americans cultivated numerous types of apples a century ago, but today, only a few remain. Rarely does genetic uniformity in crops prove beneficial, and the American apple, constantly under assault from pests, now relies on various chemicals for survival. Inherited wild apple genes could provide our apples with new strength and adaptability - not to mention a whole new range of tastes, hues, and forms that we have forgotten that apples once possessed.

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