

HARRIS FARM MARKETS

fresh news

— FEBRUARY 2011 —

Plum crazy

Back to school...
Starting the day with a good breakfast

This month's best

Staples hit hard

The baker and the bread...true artisan baking

The goodness of blueberries

MY PICK FOR FEBRUARY:
FIGS AND TASSIE BLUEBERRIES

David Harris

What's in season: Apricots, avocados, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, figs, grapes, limes, lychees, mangosteens, melons, nectarines, peaches, pears, pineapple, plums, prickly pears, rambutans and Valencia oranges. Beans - flat, butter and snake beans, capsicum, celery, chillies, chokos, cucumbers, eggplant, green onions, lettuce, onions (salad), okra, sugar snap peas, radish, sweetcorn, tomatoes and zucchini.

PLUM CRAZY

From now & into March plums are at their best

NSW and Victorian growers have produced some fantastic plums this year, even with the appalling weather conditions.

You'll find Teagan Blues are good eating. These firm plums have a deep bluish-purple skin, but don't be fooled by their firmness. Their amber flesh is juicy. If you're after plums to eat fresh and to cook with, choose sugar plums, also known as D'Agen plums - the type used for making prunes. They're great in cakes and crumbles. To make sure they keep their shape during cooking, especially tarts, use plums that are almost but not quite ripe.

A Perfect Pairing - figs and blue cheese

Halve each fig horizontally, gently push a small piece of blue cheese into the centre, close fig over again. Wrap each fig with a slice of prosciutto (secure with a toothpick).

Place on baking tray lined with baking paper and cook in a moderate oven for 10-15 mins. Spoon the cooking juices over the figs to serve.

Make a fig, blue cheese and prosciutto pizza using a thin, crispy pizza base. Slice figs and place them over the pizza base, crumble the blue cheese over the figs, add a few slices of prosciutto. Cook until golden. Top with rocket leaves to serve.



BACK TO SCHOOL

Starting the day with a good breakfast, even if it is on the run, helps kids stay alert and do better at school. Ready in minutes, these breakfast ideas using HFM yoghurt hit the spot.

- **Breakfast sundae** - layer a tall glass with HFM plain or fruit yoghurt, muesli, and fresh berries.
- **Brekkie smoothie** - whiz together a banana, HFM yoghurt, honey and milk.
- **Frozen fruit smoothie** - freeze a punnet of blueberries. In the morning process them with a punnet of hulled strawberries and two peeled oranges.
- Mix muesli with the juice of one orange, fresh passion fruit pulp, a dollop of HFM yoghurt and freshly grated apple.

"Our new season Gala apples are sweet and small in size, just perfect for the kid's lunch boxes".



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this month's best

Tasmania has been spared the worst of the weather so we'll be far more reliant on crops from the Apple Isle this year. At the moment you can't go past Tassie blueberries. The Brigitta blueberries we have in store are top quality. They have outstanding flavour and keep well. They have a frosty looking bloom, a sure sign of a great tasting blueberry. Store them in their punnets, in the fridge. Rinse just before using.

Gala apples (sometimes called Royal Gala) are at their best from now through to May. They have a crisp, aromatic flesh with a sweet flavour and are wonderfully juicy. Coming from South Australia and NSW they're good quality, though not as large as they'd normally be. Hail damage in the early part of their growing season has left them smaller and slightly marked, but they still taste great.

Fresh figs have two seasons, a short season in the early summer and a second season from February through to early autumn. Fruit from the second season is smaller but richer and tastier. Figs are highly perishable so handle them gently. They're green when immature and turn purple from the base up when ripe. Keep them on the kitchen bench to remind you to enjoy their lusciousness. Store them in the fridge for up to 2 days once they're fully ripe.

Aussie apricots have nearly finished, so most of the apricots this month are from the south island of New Zealand. They are firm and sweet in flavour. Don't worry about blemishes - NZ has had its share of hail too so some fruit will be marked. Unless it looks like the blemish has penetrated the skin they'll still taste great.

Hass avocados are at the end of their season. From now on its Shephard avos through to April. They have a smooth, thin, bright green skin which doesn't darken as it ripens and a sweet buttery flesh. They're the only avocado that doesn't turn brown when you cut them so they're perfect for salads, sandwiches and dips.

STAPLES

HIT HARD

The extreme weather conditions around Australia these last six months have certainly affected supply and quality of fruit and vegies. We're expecting some lines to be poor and limited, and as you'd expect prices will be a little higher. Two lines hit particularly hard are Valencia oranges and onions. Valencia oranges are very scarce, and much of the fruit is used for the commercial juice market so there won't be much available as fresh fruit.

Hail and storms have reduced the harvest of all varieties of onions, because of this the quantity and the quality are quite compromised. Expect their shelf-life to be short.

THE BAKER AND THE BREAD...

TRUE ARTISAN BAKING

Expert training, skill and a love of good ingredients have come together to create Australia's leading sourdough bakery Brasserie Bread. Originating from the iconic Bayswater Brasserie restaurant in 1989, Brasserie Bread is passionate about the quest to bake true artisan bread and honour the age-old traditions of artisan baking.

Michael Klausen, CEO of Brasserie Bread explains an artisan baker "is a craftsperson who is trained to the highest skill level to mix, ferment, shape by hand and bake a hand-crafted loaf of bread." Artisan bread is simply bread that is hand-crafted rather than mass produced. A loaf of bread from the supermarket might contain ten or more ingredients, including emulsifiers and preservatives.

Brasserie Bread's loaves contain no preservatives and are based on three basic ingredients - flour, water and salt. The majority of their artisan breads begin with their own starter, a naturally-occurring yeast which gets its flavour from friendly bacterium. Brasserie Bread sourdoughs take 3 days to make, using only natural ingredients, fermentation and their unique 15 year old starter.



At the 2010 Royal Fine Food Show, the Baker's Round Organic Sourdough was awarded Champion Loaf and a 'Gold Medal'. "A great dining experience is not complete without a fantastic bread accompaniment", said Klausen. We agree!

The goodness of blueberries

Research indicates blueberries long list of benefits includes that they can potentially help lower the risk factors of cancer, enhance memory and strengthen blood vessels.

Another perk of blueberries is that they contain the same phytochemicals that have made cranberry juice a folk remedy for preventing urinary tract infections. Blueberries are great on breakfast cereal, with yoghurt, in smoothies, in muffins, or just straight from the punnet, so it's easy to enjoy their goodness every day.



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