



## *Stags' Leap*

### EATING FLOWERS: THE COLORFUL NOURISHMENT OF EARLY SUMMER

*Recipe:* Rose Petal Breast of Chicken, Andrew Wild Catering

*Recipe:* Sopa de Flor de Calabaza / Squash Blossom Soup, Shannon Hughes

Shannon Hughes, introduction

“Delirious with joy, Florentino Ariza  
spent the rest of the afternoon  
eating roses and reading the note  
letter by letter...”  
—Gabriel Garcia Marquez,  
*Love in the Time of Cholera*

At the Leap in early summer, the property becomes a lush palette of colors and fragrances. From the Winemaker's Apothecary Garden comes the aromas of scented geraniums, rose, and ginger peach. Along a stone wall are old English roses bursting in a profusion of delight. The yellow mustard growing between the vines is now nearly gone, but what comes in its wake are the true gifts of summer. The borage in the garden, the marigold and calendula planted among the vegetables distract the bugs. They also find themselves in our kitchens, welcoming the bounty and the beginning of summer.

In the vegetable garden, many plants offer their first gift as blossom. For a chef, these many blossoms are a rainbow of flavors and textures waiting to attend a summer evenings' meal. The borage blossom, periwinkle blue, blue as a summer sky in Provence, blue as the wing of a jaybird, is imbued with the flavor of cucumber, quietly scenting a salad of young greens, or floating on the surface of a cold yellow beet borscht. The marigold, thick-petaled, meaty, piquant, has a base note reminiscent of young cabbage leaves, and the more elongated French marigold offers a bit more spice, a spark of nutmeg in its top note.



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Carnation, *Dianthus*, carries a secret legacy of cinnamon. Nasturtium, so necessary in any summer salad, brings forth a soft generous sweetness. The variegated blossom of the wild radish, resplendent in meadow and pasture, is delicate as the wing of a dragonfly, arriving hot and spicy, yet quick to leave the palate. Calendula, each long graceful petal filled with the sun, is sweet and smooth, and a balm to the skin. Her petals, ground to a paste, can heal a burn or soothe a sting. She can also be used to dye cloth, or confetti a bowl of roasted peppers and black olives.



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The rose is redolent of fragrances ancient and habitual, emanating a deep sensual perfume that enters the belly, where it is swiftly divined directly to the soul, transfused into the blood, at rest within the heart.

### *Recipe: Rose Petal Breast of Chicken*

Andy Wild, Chef/Owner, Andrew Wild Catering, 707 287-0199

This Spanish style dish is wonderful served over rice pilaf. Makes two servings.

Pair with Stags' Leap Winery Napa Valley Petite Syrah

or Stags' Leap Winery Napa Valley Chardonnay

#### Ingredients:

2 whole boneless breasts of chicken, with skin on

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons ginger, peeled and minced

1 small clove garlic, sliced thin

1/4 cup dry sherry

2 tablespoons rose flower water

1 teaspoon honey

2 tablespoons chives, minced

1/4 cup almonds, slivered and toasted

1 cup rose petals, julliened (cut into long, thin strips)

salt/pepper to taste

#### Instructions:

Lay chicken between two sheets of wax paper, skin-side down, and pound to a uniform thickness.

Season with salt and pepper.



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Heat sauté pan with oil over medium heat, add ginger and garlic, sauté until garlic turns golden.

Raise heat and add chicken, cook until golden then flip over, add sherry, rose water and honey to pan. Simmer for 2 minutes, then add rose petals and cook 1 minute, making sure to coat chicken well. To serve, slice chicken and serve over rice.

Spoon sauce over chicken and season with salt and pepper.

Garnish with chives, almonds, rose petals, and a rose.

Enjoy!



## *Stags' Leap*

The squash blossom, prized by many cultures for stuffing, steaming, or adding to soup, can be tempura'd in feather light batter, or torn apart fresh to garnish a salad or beautifully blanched young beans. Here we offer it to you in an exquisite traditional rustic sopa from Mexico. The name alone speaks of the poetry of this dish.

### *Recipe: Sopa de Flor de Calabaza / Squash Blossom Soup*

Shannon Hughes, chef and writer, shanita@mcn.org, 707 882-3286

Pair with Stags' Leap Winery Napa Valley Viognier

Or, on a cool day, Stags' Leap Napa Valley Merlot

Makes six cups, six to eight servings

#### Ingredients:

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 finely chopped onion

1 leek, finely chopped

3 garlic cloves, finely chopped

a pinch of dried chipotle\*\* chili powder

2 pounds flor de calabaza (squash blossoms: zucchini, crookneck, pattypan...even pumpkin blossoms can be used), finely chopped

5 cups chicken broth

1 cup of zucchini, yellow or green (choose the smallish, tender new squash), diced into small cubes

1 cup corn kernels

1 cup finely diced butternut squash

2 fresh chilis poblano, peeled† and cut into thin strips

2 small leafy stems of fresh epazote‡

sea salt to taste

a handful of marigold, calendula and squash blossom petals



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1 cup heavy cream (optional)

### Instructions:

Heat the olive oil in a sauté pan, add the onion, leek, garlic, and chipotle powder. Sauté gently without browning, for about two minutes until tender. Stir in the flowers (it will seem like a huge quantity, but will reduce quickly to half its volume). Cover the pan and simmer over medium heat for about 5 minutes. If the flowers are very fresh, the mixture will be very juicy; remove the cover and continue to cook until the calyxes of the flowers (the outer covering of the flower, at the base of the petals) are tender and the juice has been reduced, about 10 minutes. If the flowers tend to be on the dry side, add a bit of water to moisten and simmer covered until tender. Put one cup of the flowers into a blender jar with 2/3 cup of the broth and blend until smooth.

Transfer to soup pot, add the remainder of the flowers, broth, zucchini, corn kernels, butternut squash, and poblano chili strips. Cook over low heat until the vegetables are tender. Add the epazote, taste for salt, and cook for 15 minutes more. Garnish with the handful of blossoms. It is also a nice touch to add a cup of heavy cream, to thicken and enrich the broth. Serve with fresh or homemade hot corn tortillas.

\*\* Chipotle chili powder: A powder made from fully ripened and smoked jalapeño pepper

† To peel fresh chili peppers, place into a cast iron skillet or oven-proof pan and put into a 450 degree F. oven until they soften. Remove from the oven, cover until cool. The steam from the heated chilis penetrates the chilis to soften them further. The skins then come off easily.

‡ Epazote: An herb used in many Mexican dishes, available fresh, or air-dried



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### **Sources:**

Mexican condiments, along with fresh chilis poblano, are available from any Mexican grocery or any well-stocked fine foods grocery, such as Trader Joe's or Whole Foods. Squash blossoms are available at the same fine foods groceries, along with many farmers' markets.

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