



FOOD LOVER'S

GUIDE

To
Denver

"Local first, sustainable second, organic third." Celebrity chef Hugh Acheson's simple food philosophy can, and should, be a guiding light for all of us: Here in Denver, we're lucky to have a devoted group of people dedicated to local, sustainable, organic—and just plain good—food. Dig into the stories on the following pages, then get out there and taste the difference community makes.

EDITED BY AMANDA M. FAISON

PORTRAITS BY LAURIE SMITH

EARLY RISER
Michael Bortz of
City Bakery



ON THE WEB

Hungry for more?
Check out 5280.com/foodlovers for
additional savory
content.

THE SHAREHOLDER

The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model reaches beyond farm produce. There are like-minded programs for most everything a foodie could ask for: beef, chocolate, and even wine. We've highlighted several, but for a complete directory of local offerings, check out coloradocsas.info.

—ANDRA ZEPPELIN

CSA

BEEF

Four Sisters Farm in Hotchkiss sells shares of its pasture-raised, organic cows. Starting at \$115. foursistersfarm.com



OLD SCHOOL Erik (left) and Shannon Duffy of Denver's Tender Belly

Not the Other White Meat

Tender Belly restores pork's glory.

BACON IS GOOD FOR YOU. If you don't think that's true, you're probably eating the wrong kind. At least that's what Erik and Shannon Duffy, brothers and partners of two-year-old, Denver-based Tender Belly, will tell you. The Duffys, who grew up eating pigs raised on their grandfather's Iowa farm, say that most people have forgotten the succulent flavors and tenderloin-red hues of non-factory-farmed pork. "The pig industry progressed from a quality, heritage-breed pig to a more mass-produced pig," Shannon says. "We decided to give people the pork we were raised on."

To do that, former chef and all-around food guy, Erik, started making thick-cut, smoky bacon made from hogs raised in an uncaged, hormone-free, and humane environment back on an Iowa farm. Then,

in 2011, he went about introducing Tender Belly's nose-to-tail offerings to the Denver restaurant circuit. Since then, Tender Belly's bacon, sausage, Berkshire cuts, and whole hogs have been moving from the specials list to a menu must-have.

So, what's the difference? "Tender Belly pork is like a well-marbled steak. It should be red. It's juicier. It's not lean. It's not dry," Erik says. "People are afraid of the word fat, but this is good fat. It's a buttery, rich flavor."

Clearly, Coloradans aren't worried about fat: Tender Belly appears on 85 restaurant menus along the Front Range and in the mountains. (The Duffys have clients in Arizona, Nevada, and California as well.) That popularity may require the brothers to expand some of their farming operations into Colorado, possibly in the Denver or Boulder area. And that means only one thing: even more high-quality pork.

—LINDSEY R. MCKISSICK



MEAT

TASTE IT

Find Tender Belly cuts at the following restaurants and markets.

Fruition Restaurant

1313 E. SIXTH AVE., 303-831-1962,
FRUITIONRESTAURANT.COM

Frasca Food and Wine

1738 PEARL ST., BOULDER, 303-442-6966,
FRASCAFOODANDWINE.COM

Panzano

909 17TH ST., 303-296-3525,
PANZANO-DENVER.COM

The Squeaky Bean

1500 WYNKOOP ST., STE. 101, 303-623-2665,
THESQUEAKYBEAN.NET

CafeBar

295 S. PENNSYLVANIA ST., 303-362-0227,
CAFEBARCOLORADO.COM

Tony's Market

950 BROADWAY, 720-880-4501,
TONYSMARKET.COM

Truffle Cheese Shop

2906 E. SIXTH AVE., 303-322-7363,
DENVERTRUFFLE.COM

Lucky's Market

3960 BROADWAY ST., STE. 104, BOULDER,
303-444-0215, LUCKYSMARKET.COM

Cured

1825 PEARL ST., BOULDER, 720-389-8096,
CUREDBOULDER.COM

A Butcher's Life
Breaking down 400 pounds of meat is all in a day's work for Marczyk Fine Foods' meat and seafood manager Brian Glasgow. —AMF

5 a.m. I'm the only one here. I set up my work area and sharpen my knives. Then I start on one side of the cases—I do the pork, beef, and lamb cases first—and cut steaks, chops, and roasts. Each case takes about one to one-and-a-half hours. Then I do the grinds. We have two: extra-lean and butcher's choice. For butcher's choice, we use the chuck roll—a non-motor muscle that's basically a classic pot roast—and we trim out every one by hand. This is what we use for our Friday Burger Nights, and we make sure the grind is perfect.

8 a.m. I move on to the chicken case. I

start with whole birds and break them down into parts. I begin marinating some for easy dinners. I also brine birds for 24 hours, and then we slow-smoke them at 150 degrees for eight hours. Between the two stores, we bring in about 240 chickens a week from Boulder Natural Meats.

9:15 a.m. The sausage case is left. I bone out the shoulders and give the bones to the kitchen to roast off for stock. I grind 100 to 200 pounds of pork at a time. Then I make 20-pound batches of different sausages: Bratwurst, hot Italian, sweet Italian, chorizo, breakfast sausage, and French sausage. We make about 900 sausages a week.

10 a.m. I call in our daily beef, lamb, and pork orders to Niman Ranch. By this time other staffers are coming into work. A crew of guys sets up the seafood case, and starts making meat skewers and entrées.

11 a.m. I start going back through the cases—I'm constantly making sure they look perfect. Then I begin working on backups for the evening staff because they'll be busy with the after-work rush. We always have to have extra amounts of ground beef, the big-selling steaks, lamb chops, and pork chops.

1 p.m. I've made a fairly large mess during the day so I clean up to get everything ready for tomorrow. Then my day is done.



THE TAKE HOME

>The meat counter's best-selling item: rib-eye steak and butcher's choice ground beef.

> Glasgow's favorite cut: bone-in rib-eye. "I rub it with coarsely chopped garlic and black pepper, and give it a superhot sear on both sides. I keep it rare in the middle, and I add a little salt before eating it. When you're dealing with beef this good, you don't want to ruin it with complicated rubs or sauces."

> Perk of the job: "Usually the meat department is shoved in the back of a store. Here, I'm right up front and meat is the star of the show."

IT'S WHAT'S FOR DINNER

Jorge de la Torre, dean of culinary education at Johnson & Wales University (and a talented chef in his own right), shares his shopping secrets for more obscure cuts and ingredients. —AMF

INTERNATIONAL MARKET

2020 S. PARKER ROAD, 303-695-1090

What de la Torre says: For whole goat and for ground lamb meat, I go to International Market on Parker Road across the street from the mosque. Go to the back where the beverage cooler is and look behind the drinks—you will see all the whole goats and lambs hanging. **Of note:** The butchers take great care to thrice grind the lamb and take out all sinew.

DIYAR INTERNATIONAL MARKET

2159 S. PARKER ROAD, 303-337-6527

What de la Torre says: On the weekends, Diyar International Market grills its ground lamb-beef mix on skewers in the back of the store. The skewers are so fantastic that my kids eat them all in the car before we get home. **While you're there:** Don't pass up the freshly baked bread—sometimes it's so hot it burns your fingers.

ARASH INTERNATIONAL MARKET

2720 S. PARKER ROAD, AURORA, 303-752-9272

What de la Torre says: I think the lamb shanks at Arash are the best. **Bonus:** The meat is halal certified, which means it was raised and butchered in accordance with Islamic law. The service and the prices are also excellent.

H MART

2751 S. PARKER ROAD, AURORA, 303-745-4592, HMART.COM

What de la Torre says: H Mart is my go-to for rabbit, beef tongue, kidneys and heart, pork belly, and beef Kalbi ribs (Korean short ribs) for the grill. I'm a gizzard fanatic, and they have great duck and chicken gizzards. **Plus:** Buy the skin-on Boston butt (pork shoulder) when making porchetta.

Tender Belly bacon



Shannon Duffy: "An unfrenched pork chop on the grill with salt and pepper."

Farmers' Markets

TO MARKET, TO MARKET

A step-by-step insider's guide to the Boulder County Farmers' Market.

→ BE PREPARED

Arrive early for the best selection and easy parking. Bring your dull knives for sharpening, plenty of cash, reusable bags, and coolers (leave these in the car). If you forget cash, use a credit card to buy market bucks (\$5 vouchers that can be used at any vendor) at the **Boulder Market** booth.

→ SHOP LIKE A PRO

Drop off your knives at **Johnson Sharpening** (johnsonsharpening.com), get your caffeine fix from **Conscious Coffees** (consciouscoffees.com), and veer left for the best variety of Colorado lamb from **Leistikow Farms** (leistikowfarms.com). Select a shank or rack along with a goat shoulder (which makes great tacos—see

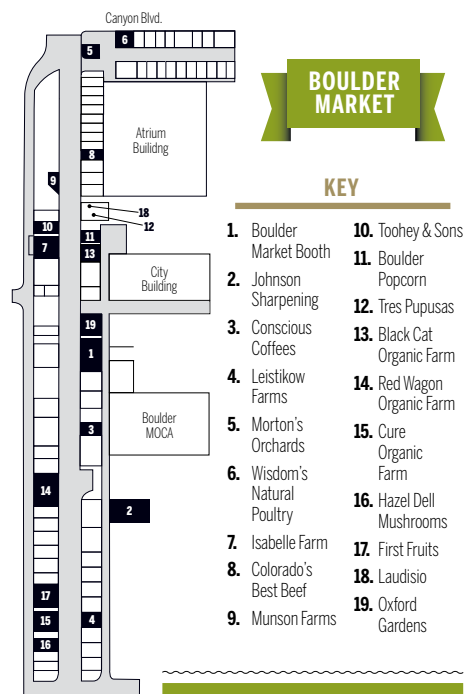
recipe on page 62). Walk quickly to the north end of the market for a bag or box of organic Palisade peaches from the giant **Morton's Orchards** truck (mortonorchards.com).

The lamb and peaches are always hot items, so now you can coast. To the right of the peach truck, pick up farm-raised chicken from **Wisdom's Natural Poultry** (wisdomsnaturalpoultry.com). Make your way to the **Isabelle Farm** stand (isabellefarm.com) for the sweetest watermelons and fresh chiles. Cross over to **Colorado's Best Beef** (naturalbeef.com) for an excellent selection of organic beef. Zigzag back to the other side for **Munson Farms** (munsonfarms.com) fragrant cantaloupes and the irresistible peaches-and-cream corn. Then, stop over at **Toohy & Sons** for a small but flawless selection of tomatoes.



QUICK TIPS

ARRIVE EARLY for the best selection—the good stuff goes fast. Or, if you're not picky, **ARRIVE LATE** for the best deals. **ASK QUESTIONS:** "Where GET A DEAL by buying by the case or by choosing the ugly stuff (it tastes just as good). **LEARN YOUR FARMER'S NAME:** Develop a relationship with



→ INTERMISSION

Even a seasoned shopper needs a break. Snack on a bag of popcorn from **Boulder Popcorn** (boulderpopcorn.com), entertain little ones with balloons and face painting, and do not miss **Tres Pupasas** (trespupasas.com) cooler of popsicles. These outrageous treats range from classic strawberry or watermelon to chamomile-infused apricot or basil lemonade.

→ AFTER THE BREAK

Continue your journey with a stop at **Black Cat Organic Farm** (blackcatfarm.org), where you'll find fresh mâche, lively mizuna greens, and tender arugula. (Also check out chef-owner-farmer Eric Skokan's whole ducks and his line of organic frozen soups.) Cross over to the market's most stunning display of Colorado produce, the **Red Wagon Organic Farm** stand (redwagonorganicfarm.com). A paradise for the eyes, Red Wagon is the best source for rainbow carrots, Hakurei turnips, and lovage—a stunning, difficult-to-find herb that tastes similar to celery. Just a couple of booths over, **Cure Organic Farm** (cureorganicfarm.com) always has lovely beets and parsnips, as well as a selection of heritage Berkshire pork—some fresh and some cured in collaboration with **Il Mondo Vecchio** (ilmondovecchio.net). Finally, if mushrooms are on your grocery list, stop off at the **Hazel Dell Mushrooms** stand (hazeldellmushrooms.com) for exotic offerings.



Clip and take to the market.



FROM LEFT: LAURIE SMITH; SARAH LAVIGNE; STYLING BY ERICA MCKEISH

IN THE KNOW Shop like the chefs do.



VERONICA VOLNY of Meadow Lark Farm Dinners (farm-dinners.com) gets excited about **First Fruits'** elephant heart plums. Their flesh is bright red and turns scarlet when cooked. Volny buys enough to make jam to hold her over for the winter.



PATRICK DUPAYS, owner and chef of Z Cuisine (zcuisineonline.com), likes to shop on a full stomach, so his first stop is always the **Laudisio** (laudisio.com) mobile oven and cart for the pizza bianca and a farm-egg omelet.



DAKOTA SOIFER of Cafe Aion (cafeaiion.com) looks for items to pickle and preserve. He likes a colorful winter pantry that's stocked with pickled green beans, cucumbers, and carrots from **Oxford Gardens** (oxfordgardensboulder.com). —AZ

ESSAY A Matter of Taste How a baby reminded me to find delight in each bite.

DETERMINED NOT TO BE LEFT behind by her siblings, my youngest daughter, Caroline, learned letters at three, ditched training wheels at four, and joined the swim team at five. But she wasn't always so eager to keep up. As an infant, Caroline would sit in her high chair, yanking at her bib and throwing her food off the tray like the baby in the Capital One commercial. Fifty percent more cash? I couldn't have cared less. All I wanted was for her to eat her frozen peas. ● She refused. Kids in her playgroup lapped up rice cereal and Gerber oatmeal like they were sundaes. Not Caroline. She'd consent to a spoonful or two, then pinch her lips so tightly that no amount of foolish antics ("Here comes the airplane!") could con her into opening them. I wasn't worried. Caroline was still happily nursing, and my freelance writing schedule gave me the flexibility to accommodate her quirks. ● But as six months turned into nine and her interest in solids remained almost nonexistent, her weight dropped off the chart. So I did what any mother would do: I panicked. Trips to the pediatrician and feeding therapist ensued, but they found no underlying physical or sensory issues. She'll do it in her own time, they said. In the meantime, make eating fun. ● I complied, experimenting with baby food flavors, smiling exaggeratedly as I modeled how to eat, and clapping when a stray Cheerio made it to her lips. I even tried Graduates Puffs, those easily dissolvable cereal snacks dubbed by a friend of mine as "baby crack." No dice. ● The turning point came one Sunday after a trip to the farmers' market. Slicing organic pears for my other kids, I gave a few baby-size chunks to Caroline. She picked one up, turned its slippery white flesh over in her fingers, and put it in her mouth. Then she picked up the rest and devoured them, before giving the baby sign for "more." As adults, we often take the pleasure of consuming fruits and vegetables in their purest form for granted. Somehow I'd forgotten that. All those months, all that stress—and all my little girl really wanted was the taste of real food. —GRETCHEN KURTZ

POP UP } DIY microgreens—with a little help.



Microgreens—those miniature vegetable sprouts that boost flavor and visual appeal—are a mainstay on high-end menus. Many chefs grow their own greens, but Michele Hanley of Mile High Urban Farmscaping will do it for you. Each Sunday at the farmers' market on South Pearl Street, Hanley sells small planters (perfect for a sunny windowsill) filled with sprouting microgreens such as alfalfa, wheatgrass, mild mix, and spicy mix for \$12. Bring the box back each week and she'll replenish the plants for \$3. You can pick your favorites and rotate the varieties. **Bonus:** If you can't make the farmers' market, Hanley will happily arrange a time to meet you to ensure you have a week's worth of greens. milehighurbanfarmscaping.com —RACHEL NOBREGA

On the Fringe Farmers' markets get all the glory, but recently there's been a quiet surge of nontraditional specialty markets.

MO' BETTA GREEN MARKETPLACE

Located in Five Points, Mo' Betta aims to educate shoppers about food and products that are organic, local, and traceable in origin. On top of homemade jams, you'll find vendors promoting urban farming and holistic healing. 2505 Welton St., 303-293-0235, facebook.com/mobetta.green

DENVER URBAN HOMESTEADING

The city's only year-round farmers' market offers a range of vendors peddling organic goat cheese and milk, biodynamic wine, heirloom seeds, and seasonal classes on raising backyard chickens or keeping a better garden. 200 Santa Fe Drive, 303-572-3122, denverurbanhomesteading.com

DENVER HANDMADE HOMEMADE MARKET

Local craftsmen, cooks, and agricultural connoisseurs are encouraged to test out their latest creations at "Ha-Ho." Operating out of Green Spaces near 26th and Walnut streets, sales are completed based on a suggested donation or by bartering. Trade for artwork, jewelry, or treats.

1368 26th St., 720-427-3305, denverhaho.org

NOOCH VEGAN MARKET

Moving from the pop-up format to a storefront, Nooch is Denver's first all-vegan local grocer. Find meat analogues, to-go dishes, and



"cheese" from Punk Rawk Labs. 3360 Larimer St., 720-328-5324, noochveganmarket.com —ALLISON KNAUS

does your produce come from?" **LOOK FOR RED FLAGS:** prelabeled produce, out-of-season vegetables and fruits, and non-native items such as lemons or avocados. the people you buy your food from. **TAP INTO** the artisanal producers and find handcrafted granolas, jams, pastas, cheeses, yogurts, and chocolates. —AZ

CONDIMENTS

It's a Scorcher The makings of a hot sauce empire.



Danny Cash



time, making hot sauce was a welcome respite from Cash's day job, selling knives and pepper spray out of Southwest Plaza. "One day I woke up, and I decided I needed something new in my life," Cash says.

Bottled Up Anger, as Cash's signature serrano-garlic mixture is now called, has led this 32-year-old on a sauce-making odyssey he never really expected. After Davie's Chuck Wagon called in its first order, he launched Danny Cash Hot Sauce with \$1,000 in start-up money. Today, the company has a small commercial kitchen, a store, employs 15 people, and boasts a lineup of 27 sauces and condiments, which are sold as far away as Berlin.

Although Cash says he expects to do \$1 million in sales this year, Danny Cash Hot Sauce is still a small Colorado company with a modest kitchen and a tough-guy persona gleaned directly from Cash's image as a Mohawk-wearing, motorcycle-loving biker dude. Smokin' Tailpipe, Mean Streak, and Radical Heat hot sauces sport labels with fire-engulfed motorcycles and the words "Danny Cash" set in a typeface only a Hells Angel could love.

But the bad-boy aura belies Cash's gentle, generous nature. Although Cash is proud of his company's success, he delights in helping other entrepreneurs. More than 50 companies retail out of Cash's location in Englewood. He'll even admit that one of the lines on his shelves—Rob Holdaway's Sticky Brand BBQ Sauce—makes his favorite barbecue sauce. "My own hot sauces taste like work," he says with a laugh. "I eat other people's way more than my own."

As Cash's line expands (he just released Chidawgo, a condiment inspired by the Chicago dog), it's fair to say that while hot sauce changed the course of Cash's life, he's repaying the favor by leaving a smoking-hot imprint on the industry itself. —PETE PROKESCH

A DECADE AFTER Danny Cash whipped up a fiery hot sauce, funneled it into an empty Tabasco bottle, and delivered it to one of his favorite restaurants, Davie's Chuck Wagon Diner on Colfax Avenue, he's still making the blistering concoction. "People love it," says Cash, who has always had a knack for tinkering in the kitchen. "It has a quick serrano bite, followed by a wave of garlic, ending with a strong, red habanero backburn. In other words, it's freaking awesome." At the

THE HOT LIST Colorado's hot sauce market is vast. Be on the lookout for these favorites.



SASO

Sizzling heat is tempered by the smoky sweetness of pequin peppers. This is a must-have for scrambled eggs and hash browns. sasosaucos.com



WHITE GIRL SALSA

Tart, roasted tomatillos bring punch to this kicky salsa. Buy the medium and spread over enchiladas, or eat it with tortilla chips. whitegirlsalsa.com



MOTHERLODE PROVISIONS

Each dollop tastes smoky, tangy, and a touch earthy. Add it to chicken-corn chowder. motherlodeprovisions.com



TEASPOON WILLIE'S

Less a hot sauce than a seasoning staple, drizzle the company's Everything Sauce on pizza, add it to sandwiches, or dip your fries into it. teaspoonwillies.com

From the Mouth of a Chef

At Root Down and Linger, chef Daniel Asher is the king of using Colorado products. Here, he creates a recipe using Five Points Fermentation Co.'s sauerkraut—and 10 other locally sourced ingredients. —AMF



Goat tacos

SLOW-BRAISED COLORADO GOAT TACOS

If goat isn't in your repertoire, substitute pork shoulder, beef short ribs, beef brisket, or chicken. For vegetarians, Five Points Fermentation Tempeh or Denver Tofu (extra-firm) are excellent stand-ins.

BRAISING LIQUID

- 1 local goat leg or shoulder
- 2 bottles Glider Cider from Colorado Cider Company
- 2 cans Avery White Rascal
- 1 cup local red wine such as Bookcliff Vineyards Petite Sirah
- 1 cup wheat-free organic tamari
- 2 medium organic carrots, diced
- 2 stalks organic celery, diced
- 4 medium shallots, chopped
- 8 Hazel Dell cremini mushrooms, sliced
- ½ cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons ras el hanout spice (find this Moroccan blend at Savory Spice Shop)

Bouquet garni with local organic herbs (thyme, rosemary, tarragon, and bay leaf wrapped in cheese cloth)

Filtered water or vegetarian stock, enough to fully submerge the goat

Mix all ingredients together (except olive oil, ras el hanout, and water or stock) in a 4-quart saucepan to create an aromatic and fragrant braising liquid. Make a wet spice paste by mixing olive oil with ras el hanout, and massage into goat meat until well coated.

Let sit 30 minutes, then grill at high heat until well marked on all sides (this will create a crust and seal the meat).

Place meat in a roasting pan, and cover with braising liquid and the bouquet garni. Add enough filtered water (or vegetarian stock) to submerge the meat. Cover pan with foil and slow-braise overnight at 225° for 9 hours.

Let goat meat cool, remove from pan and reserve braising liquid. Discard the bouquet garni. Pull the meat so it's shredded and removed from bone.

Place braising liquid in a saucepan. Reduce on the stovetop over low heat until thick. Add sea salt to taste. Toss with shredded goat.

BUILD THE TACOS

24 4-inch Raquelitas corn tortillas

Five Points Fermentation Co.'s Curry Kraut

local goat cheese or feta such as Ugly Goat, Jumpin Good, or Haystack Mountain

cilantro, chopped

local hot sauce such as Motherlode Provisions

lime wedges

Heat tortillas on a griddle until warm and soft, top with shredded goat, kraut, cheese, cilantro, and hot sauce. Squeeze fresh lime on top and enjoy.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT
Kathy Lee of Modern
Gingham Preserves



SWEET SURPLUS

MAKING A BUSINESS OF LEFTOVERS.

IF YOU TAKE a moment to look around on your next walk through the city, you may be surprised by the number of fruit trees and berry bushes growing. Come harvest time, Kathy Lee of Modern Gingham Preserves turns this abundance of local food into marmalades and jams. Not only does she forage for public surplus, but Lee's Congress Park home is also a pickup location for Grant Family Farms' CSA program—which often means her kitchen houses vast amounts of leftover produce. Adhering to the “waste not, want not” mentality, Lee repurposes the bounty into savory jams such as sweet red onion and a dynamic carrot-ginger-vanilla. Spread them on a sandwich, dab on a pizza (recipe below), or add to a cheese plate, and delight in Colorado's excess.
moderningham.com —RACHEL NOBREGA

GOAT CHEESE AND RED ONION PIZZA

1 package premade organic pizza dough (such as Whole Foods' brand)
2 tablespoons olive oil
6 ounces shredded mozzarella
2 ounces goat cheese
4 tablespoons Modern Gingham Red Onion Jam

Spread the pizza dough on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and evenly spread the cheeses. Top with the jam and bake for 20 minutes at 400°.

Preserves

SHELF LIFE

Locally fermented and fabulous.

Trü Pickles: These pickles have a vinegary jolt that fades into the herbal tones of dill and grape leaves. Tip: Use a tablespoon of the brine in tuna salad. *trupickles.com*

Zuké: Dip into a jar of the dill, caraway, and cabbage or the cabbage with citrus and ginger and you'll come away with a different perception of a pickle. *esotericfoods.com*

The Real Dill: Tyler DuBois left his job at Marczyk Fine Foods to devote more time to his hobby-turned-business: crafting small-batch pickles that are snappy, crisp, and tangy. *therealpickles.com* —AMF

The Jam Maker

Raj Dagstani takes an artistic approach to preserving.

As a classically trained artist in Italy and New York City, Raj Dagstani spent years carving marble and setting bronzes. Now a stay-at-home dad in Denver, his toolbox includes a simple paring knife and a French copper pot. His medium is fresh fruit. His art: fine, handmade preserves. He finishes each jar with a letterpress label stamped with “Dagstani & Sons.”

Dagstani takes an artist's approach to divine pairings of fruit with spices and herbs. One of his most prized blends, a pear-vanilla preserve, won a prestigious Good Food Award, a national honor devoted to the country's best small-batch foods. “Poire Martine,” as it's now called, is the only preserve available through most of the year. The rest of Dagstani's inventory—apricots and almonds, wild blueberry and bitter lemon—adhere to the seasons and his creative whim. *dagstaniandsons.com* —RACHEL NOBREGA



CSA

PRESERVES

Sign up for Dagstani & Sons “Jam Sessions” and receive a delivery of two 10-ounce jars each month. \$24 (per month). *dagstaniandsons.com*

YOU PICK IT

CURIOUS TO FIND YOUR OWN SUPPLY OF PUBLIC PRODUCE? Bookmark *neighborhoodfruit.com*, and plug in your ZIP code and the distance you're willing to travel. A Google map will pop up with the location of trees ripe for picking.

CHEESE

Milk Made

There was a time not so long ago when Haystack Mountain was the only Colorado-made cheese that was readily available. While Haystack's offerings (the Buttercup in particular) are still refrigerator staples, our state is seeing a new class of diverse and seriously exciting cheese. Don't miss the following. —AMF

1. Hand Bandaged Goat Cheddar

As a rule, cheddar is best made in a humid climate. And yet, Avalanche Cheese Company's Hand Bandaged Goat Cheddar defies Basalt's high-desert location to create a dry, snappy, and upscale cheese that's worthy of any picnic. avalanchecheese.com

2. Buttercup

Haystack Mountain Goat Dairy's first mixed-milk cheese (it's made of pasteurized cow and goat milks), Buttercup is creamy, mild, and easy to love. haystack-goatcheese.com

3. Ashley

Slice through MouCo's Ashley—a soft cow's milk cheese encased in a smoky vegetable ash rind—and you'll find a tangy cheese that's best when aged seven to eight weeks. That time in the cheese cave allows the flavors to mellow and the interior to soften. mouco.com

4. Shepherd's Halo

Fruition Farms' award-winning ricotta is on menus all over the state, but you see far less of Shepherd's Halo. With this exquisitely ripened and salty-sweet cheese, Fruition chef and co-owner Alex Seidel proves that a sheep dairy (the state's first) can not only exist in Colorado but also thrive. fruitionfarmsdairy.com

5. Leyden

Unwrap a wedge of Leyden from James Ranch in Durango and discover a raw cow's milk cheese that's embedded with whole cumin seeds. The spice adds an appealing lemony flavor. jamesranch.net



CSA

CHEESE

Grant Family Farms and Windsor Dairy partner to offer a 25-week cheese share. \$219. grantfarms.com

EAT CHEESE WITH...

>**34° CRISPS** Along with a line of savory flavors (stock up on the whole-grain), don't miss the newly released sweet crisps. The chocolate pairs especially well with blue cheese. 34-degrees.com. >**NITACRISP** Rustic and crunchy, these hand-cut crackers go well with cheese and dips. Also look for the spelt version, which is gluten-free.

Rising Stars

Many eateries rely on local bakeries to bake their crusty loaves. This is good news for diners wanting to bring restaurant-quality bread to their own kitchen tables. Below, cross-reference your ideal bread with the bakery behind it. —CHRISTIE SOUNART



1. Udi's Artisan Bakery

(UDISFOOD.COM)

Bakes for: Fuel Cafe, the Kitchen, Duo Restaurant

Where to find it: Udi's cafes, King Soopers, Vitamin Cottage, Sunflower Market, Costco, and farmers' markets.

2. Grateful Bread Company

(GRATEFULBREADDENVER.COM)

Bakes for: Fruition Restaurant, Masterpiece Delicatessen, Euclid Hall, Rioja, Bistro Vendôme, Table 6, Il Posto, Vesta Dipping Grill, Luca D'Italia

Where to find it: 425 Violet St., Golden. Open to the public on the first Saturday of every month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

3. The Denver Bread Company

(THEDENVERBREADCOMPANY.COM)

Bakes for: Potager, the Cherry Tomato, Bang!, Venue, Hops & Pie, Boulder Cork

Where to find it: 3200 Irving St., Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

4. City Bakery

(303-292-3989)

Bakes for: Snooze, Elway's, Shanhahan's Steakhouse, H BurgerCo., Ocean Prime, Steuben's, the Über Sausage

Where to find it: Marczyk Fine Foods, Carmine Lonardo's Meat Deli, and the Cheese Company



THE BREAD BOX

A guide to storing your loaves at altitude.

IT'LL LAST:

French bâtard: two days

Multigrain: two to three days

French baguette: three hours

Rye: three days

Sourdough: four to five days

Sandwich loaves: three days

Levain: four days

French boule: two days

BREADCRUMBS RECIPE

City Bakery's Michael Bortz recommends drying your bread as much as possible on a cake rack or oven rack. Once completely dried, grind it in a food processor until fine. Freeze for long-term use. **BONUS:** Season with salt, pepper, garlic powder, and dried parsley for Italian-flavored breadcrumbs that pair well with chicken.



Buzzworthy

The perfect cup of coffee.

Your cup of Joe is a highly personal choice, but think about this: Starbucks has perfected the art of standardization. That venti latte or grande drip will taste the same here as it will in Detroit or Beijing. That's exactly what you *won't* find at independent java huts.

• Barista extraordinaire Ami Cusack (currently running the coffee program at Jake's Brew Bar in Littleton) and I ventured across the Mile High City and surrounding areas sipping cappuccinos and espresso, talking to the baristas behind the bar, and examining microfoam, latte art, and the beans in the hopper. Our findings are below. —AMF

1. Go to: Crema Coffee House, 2862 Larimer St., 720-284-9648, cremacoffeehouse.net

Drink this: macchiato (two shots of espresso with a dollop of microfoam)

Cusack says: Crema is constantly changing up its espresso. I always go with whichever espresso the barista says is pulling best that day.

2. Go to: Pablo's Coffee, 630 E. Sixth Ave., 303-744-3323, pabloscoffee.com

Drink this: small latte for here

Cusack says: Go for the latte art.

3. Go to: Aviano Coffee, 3031 E. Second Ave., 303-399-8347, avianocoffee.blogspot.com

Drink this: espresso

Cusack says: This is the intellectual side of coffee. The baristas are

dedicated to their craft; they are always precise, on point, and methodical.

4. Go to: Corvus Coffee Co., 1947 S. Broadway, 303-913-8906, corvuscoffee.com

Drink this: chicory iced toddy

Cusack says: Owner Phil Goodlaxson is very adventurous and innovative. The roaster is right in the shop so the whole bean-to-cup process is transparent.

5. Go to: Hooked on Colfax, 3213 E. Colfax Ave., 303-398-2665, hookedoncolfax.com

Drink this: dirty chai (chai with two shots of espresso)

Cusack says: I love how the shop supports local products like Sweet Action Ice Cream, Corvus espresso, Pablo's beans, and Bhakti Chai.

6. Go to: The Denver Bicycle Cafe, 1308 E. 17th Ave., 720-446-8029, denverbicyclecafe.com

Drink this: cappuccino

Cusack says: The shop uses a bottomless filter (most places use a machine with a double spout), which is impressive because it indicates how well the espresso has been tamped down.

7. Go to: Happy Coffee, 1 S. Broadway, happycoffee.co, 720-328-8214

Drink this: toddy, which is brewed

via the Japanese drip system.

Cusack says: This is a coffeeshop for hipsters and coffee geeks. I love that the largest size drink you can order is 12 ounces.

8. Go to: Jake's Brew Bar, 2540 W. Main St., Littleton, 303-996-1006

Drink this: eight-ounce goat's milk latte with a honey drizzle

Cusack says: I make all my own syrups. Don't miss the vanilla-clove-cinnamon.

9. Go to: Metropolis, 300 W. 11th Ave., 303-534-1744, metropolisdenver.com

Drink this: cortado (two shots of espresso with an equal amount of milk)

Cusack says: Ask for either Brock Wortman or Miguel Vicuna to make your drink. Look for a second location in LoHi to open.

10. Go to: 2914 Coffee, 2914 W. 25th

Ave., 303-953-8997

Drink this: latte for here

Cusack says: Owner Anthony Davis worked for Amante (in Boulder), and he knows how to pour. His latte art is impressive—note the meringuelike microfoam.

11. Go to: Boxcar Coffee Roasters, 1825 Pearl St., Boulder, 303-527-1300, boxcarcoffee.com

Drink this: cappuccino

Cusack says: Watch the baristas make your coffee. The brewing technique is more science lab than coffeeshop. Look for Boxcar to open an outpost in Denver.

12. Go to: Two Rivers Craft Coffee Company, 7745 Wadsworth Blvd., Arvada, 303-424-1313, tworiverscoffee.com

Drink this: pour over (an individually brewed cup of coffee)

Cusack says: Owner Eric Yochim sources excellent beans. Right now he's using Novo and Corvus.

BOULDER

ARVADA

DENVER

LITTLETON



Happy Coffee

{ TRENDSPOTTING } Coffee Fans See the Light

Most Americans drink coffee made with beans that are dark and overroasted. But in cities such as New York, Portland, San Francisco, and now Denver, there's a move toward lighter roasts. "When you roast dark, you're mostly tasting the carbon," Cusack says. "You're not getting any of the organic, natural flavors that might be citrusy or fruity." Interested? Before ordering, ask the barista about lighter roasts.



COFFEE KNOWHOW

Improve your coffee IQ with **a cupping**—a tasting where you get a crash course in roasting, aromas, and origins. Novo Coffee (which just celebrated 10 years) hosts \$15 cuppings Fridays at noon; call for reservations. **BONUS:** The \$15 pricetag includes a bag of beans. 3008 Larimer St., 303-295-7678, novocoffee.com

Sweets

Time Machine

Chocolate, the old-fashioned way.

Nibble a piece of Ritual Chocolate, and it might surprise you. That's because what you're tasting is the cocoa bean, rather than sugar and cocoa butter. The flavor is dense and earthy, even floral—and surprisingly complex. "That's what got us into chocolate," says Robbie Stout, who owns the year-old Denver company with his wife, Anna Davies. "We wanted to see how far we could take the bean."



Stout and Davies travel to Costa Rica to source their beans directly from the farmers. Back in Colorado, they make 80-pound batches of chocolate once a week on machines from the early 1900s that winnow, mix, and temper. The resulting chocolate is aged for six months, then molded into either silver dollar-size disks or solid bars. Only then are the pieces wrapped in gold foil and brown paper, and hand-stamped with the Ritual logo. It's a lengthy process for a simple pleasure—and that's why Ritual is worth seeking out. *Find Ritual Chocolate at Cured, the Truffle Cheese Shop, and Artemisia & Rue.* ritualchocolate.com —CHELSEA LONG

GOODNESS With Ritual Chocolate, a single piece satisfies. *Inset:* Robbie Stout and Anna Davies



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF MR. LENTZ PHOTOGRAPHY; COURTESY OF RUSSELL ANDERSON; LAURIE SMITH

TASTING TIPS

"BRING CHOCOLATE UP TO ROOM TEMPERATURE. This will vastly change the flavor and the texture, like the crack of the shell and the creaminess of the center." —Andrew Starr, *Black Star Chocolates* "MAKE IT LAST. Chocolate is a special treat. It's not meant to be shoved into your mouth." —Damaris Graves, *the POMM* "EACH TRUFFLE IS MEANT TO BE TASTED IN AT LEAST TWO BITES." —Phil Simonson, *Chocolate Lab*

MORE TO LOVE

Look for these locally made chocolates.

BLACK STAR CHOCOLATES

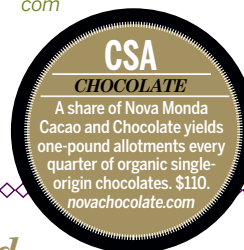
This Boulder-based shop is the combined dream of Andrew Starr and Jennifer Spielman. The pair met as employees of the National Center for Voice and Speech, and after discovering their mutual love for chocolate they went into business. Don't miss: The Saffron Rose cream truffle, which was crowned the 2012 grand champion truffle at the Colorado Chocolate Festival. blackstarchocolates.com

THE POMM

Damaris Graves and Katelyn Fox launched the POMM in Denver less than a year ago, but their small batch, fair trade, and organic bean-to-bar chocolates have already found a following. Don't miss: The 65 percent Mexican bar where dark chocolate mixes with almonds, guajillo chile, and cinnamon. thepomm.com

CHOCOLATE LAB

Phil Simonson and Austin Butterfield of Denver-based Chocolate Lab wanted to combine the discipline of candy science with the art of culinary confections. They ended up with combinations that push the boundaries. Don't miss: The 2Sparx, a jalapeño truffle with Pop Rocks on top. chocolatelabdenver.com —CL



Liquid Gold

Magic comes from cooking butter and sugar into caramel. These local candy makers have a sticky treat for every taste. —AZ

THE CLASSIC: Foster's Famous Caramels

Morrison-based Foster's makes caramels mostly in the classic style by melding rich cream into caramelized sugar to create a dense, smooth, and buttery treat. Nancy Foster's recipe has been in her family for three generations, but her daughter Val adds her own flair with walnuts, pecans, or chocolate. fostersfamouscaramels.com

salt, and locally sourced agave nectar, which is a flavorful substitute for corn syrup. The result is an intensely buttery, balanced dessert. Seek out the fleur de sel variety (pictured) for sweet-and-salty perfection. serendipityconfections.com

THE PLAYFUL: The Candy Scientist

These lighthearted treats bring together a simple caramel base with chocolate, nuts, and sometimes even millet. Robbie Bagni combines high-quality natural and organic ingredients to create a caramel with an appealing melty texture: creamy with just the right nutty crunch. The cashew variety shouldn't be missed. 720-339-7480



THE ADULT: Helli-mae's Hand-crafted Caramels

Hellimae's classic salt caramel is dark and slightly bitter, and pairs well with a glass of tawny port. This decadent sweet imparts intensity while maintaining a smooth and silky texture. Ellen Dae-hnick, the woman behind these grown-up treats, likes flavor variety—so she infuses her caramels with chile, coffee, and the alluring cardamom. saltcaramels.com

THE IRRESISTIBLE: Serendipity Confections

Rebecca Cassity crafts her treats with organic cream, butter, vanilla, brown sugar,

THE VEGAN: JJ's Sweets Cocomels

If you close your eyes when tasting this unique caramel, the hint of coconut might transport you to the beach. Made with coconut milk, these vegan candies are made by hand in Boulder. The "cocomels" come in four varieties: original, fleur de sel, vanilla, and the ever-reliable java. cocomel.com ▲