

Grains and Seeds—Blackberry Farm

Ami and I were lucky enough to be featured guests at our third Vintners Weekend at Blackberry Farm in Tennessee this past June. It is the nation's finest culinary resort and with their recent expansion to the facing Blackberry Mountain, also one of the most exciting luxury outdoor destinations. Ami and I were the first "clients" to ride to the top of the mountain on their new mountain biking trail system and, wow, just wow. Anyway, the most exciting, unexpected dish we ate over 5 days of lights out cooking from the Blackberry Farm chefs and our James Beard Best Chef Co-host, chef Steven Satterfield from Miller Union in Atlanta, was a broth we ate one night paired with Pinot noir. You read that right, broth. It was so complex, deep, and pleasing, that I ordered it again 2 nights later. It is an umami bomb and all the crunchy grains and seeds give it such a satisfying texture. Now, there are some steps in this recipe that may be a little bit outside your and my abilities, but I made suggestions for easier shortcuts. Let me know how it goes. And eat it with an older vintage of Peay Pinot noir as the earthy, tea driven notes are a perfect match.

- Andy Peay

Serves 4

Ingredients:

Cooked buckwheat—1 cup
Cooked large grain grits (related to polenta, not the same) - 1 cup
Benne seeds (source: Anson Mills, or less ideal, use sesame seeds) - 1/4 cup
Flax seeds—1 Tbs
Beef jerky—20 small, thumbnail-sized, pieces

Ingredients:

Smoked butter (see below for shortcut) - 1/4 stick
Beef Broth—12 oz.
Two thinly sliced radishes
1/2 bunch chopped chives
Juice of one lemon
Extra Virgin Olive Oil—to drizzle

To Prepare:

1. Cook the grits and buckwheat as indicated on the packages. 30-60 minutes depending on type of grits. Spread them both out on a sheet pan to cool and dry out for 10 minutes (or longer).
2. Sauté the cooked buckwheat in a hot pan until crispy but not too crunchy, stirring and breaking up clumps. Add the corn grits and toast until they take on a little texture. Turn down heat to medium to low, add the flax seeds and benne (or sesame seeds), and continue to lightly toast. Watch for burning.
3. Mix and scoop two heaping spoonfuls in the center of 4 bowls. Add chopped chives and 5 pieces of soft jerky to each bowl. If hard, put jerky in broth below as it warms up.
4. Beef Broth: The quality of this broth is *very* important so if you don't have access to intensely flavored, good quality homemade broth follow these steps. Portions for

making stock are loose and really up to you to refine. This is cooking by feel and I don't want to box you in. One suggestion, the more water you use, the more dilute the flavor, so use more "stuff" and less water or simmer for longer.

- A. Get beef trim and bones (equal portions) from your butcher and hard roast it in the oven at 500 degrees for 60 minutes. Every 20 or so minutes stir them so browned on all sides.
 - B. In a large stock pot, add 1/4 cup oil and caramelize on low to medium heat 1 diced onion, 2 carrots, and 5 garlic cloves until they are deep brown. Add a few sprigs of rosemary and thyme.
 - C. Deglaze the pan with red wine and a touch of ruby port (cheap stuff is fine). Add roasted beef trim, bones and all the juice from the roasting pan.
 - D. Add water to 5" above the ingredients and simmer for 4-6 hours with lid off to concentrate the flavor of the broth. Towards the end of this period, taste the broth seeking intensity of flavor.
 - E. Pour contents of the pot through a sieve or chinois and let fat rise to the top. Separate the fat.
 - F. Add lemon juice a little at a time as you stir and taste the broth looking for a little acid bump in the dish to perk it up.
5. Smoked butter: you could cold smoke butter for 2 to 3 minutes in blue smoke but if you know how to do that, you aren't reading this recipe as you cook professionally. For the rest of us mortals, let butter warm up to room temperature so it is creamy. Add a dot, I mean the smallest drop of liquid smoke (I know, cringe), to the butter and whip. Pray it is not too smoky and acrid. Just a hint of smoke is the goal. If too much, skip the smoke part.
 6. Paint the butter in a thin layer around the inside of the bowl near but not touching the grains and seeds in the middle. Pour the broth in the bowl so it is about halfway up the side of the butter.
 7. Float salted radishes on top of the broth and drizzle a little pungent EVOO, if desired. Season with salt and pepper, if needed.