



# Silver City Food Co-op Garbanzo Gazette

it's  
MAD!

Volume 24

❖ Your Monthly Newsletter ❖ March 2024

## Co-op Hours:

Mon. - Sat.  
9 am - 7 pm

Sunday  
11 am - 5 pm

575•388•2343  
520 N. Bullard St.

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YOU  
ARE  
WHAT  
YOU  
EAT

## Silver City Food Co-op's 50th Anniversary 1974 - 2024

by Mike Madigan  
Operations Manager



The Co-op (unofficially, and without pomp or circumstance) turned 50 years old on January 17, 2024. For those who are so inclined, there was even an astrological birth chart drawn up at the time. The Silver City Food Co-op is a Capricorn with Taurus rising, and that initial chart-reading back in 1974 spoke of "being practical, the stamina to keep on the job and finish what has been started." Now, some 50 years later, our vintage is a savored one. Did you ever stop to think that the Co-op is Gen X? We're born smack in the middle of the generation that is now celebrating five decades of being. It's with the maturity and experience of a 50-year-old that we are stepping confidently into what promises to be a transition of some magnitude.

It's been a fun experience, reading through the archives and seeing how the vibe has changed over the years. In infancy,

we were guided with intimacy and idealism; with the warmth of the kitchen in which we were born. There were no employees, just two volunteers, and the first general meeting minutes reported that there were 34 attendees for the gathering that took place in the front yard of one of our founders. There were 50 or so items available for purchase, in bulk, and by the end of that first year, the Co-op recorded \$18,717 in gross sales.

By the time the Co-op turned four, we had progressed to needing someone to officially coordinate activities and the first and second paid positions were introduced. Later in 1977, it became clear that the Co-op was outgrowing its space, and the move to a new spot some four blocks away was arranged. As a five-year-old, the Co-op looked less like a baby and started to come in to its own. We started to receive a couple of deliveries a week, saw vitamins introduced for the first time, and got our first proper sign out front (which we still have in storage!) By then, annual sales had climbed to nearly \$40,000. On the plus-side, the Co-op sought incorporation that year. On the not-so-plus-side: "The telephone is open to all members and there is a constant problem of unpaid long-distance charges."

This Co-op, raised by the community had become precocious, delightful, and a little mischievous. Next month we'll stretch a little further in its childhood....growing pains and all.



General Membership Meeting 1975

1889 member/owners strong and counting . . .

# Silver City Food Co-op

established 1974



[www.silvercityfoodcoop.coop](http://www.silvercityfoodcoop.coop)

575.388.2343

## Store Hours

Mon-Sat 9am-7pm

Sunday 11am-5pm

## Vision Statement

Promoting the inherently healthy relationship between food, community, and nature.

## Seven Cooperative Principles

- Voluntary and open membership
- Democratic member control
- Member economic participation
- Autonomy and independence
- Education, training and information
  - Cooperation among co-ops
  - Concern for community

## Kevin Waters

General Manager

## The Garbanzo Gazette

Editor: Mike Madigan

Guest Writers:

Susan Van Auken • Monica Rude  
Vynce Bourné • Carolyn Smith  
Oly Sturdevant • Doug Walton

Staff Writer: Judith Kenney

Layout & Design: Carol Ann Young

Proofreader: Mike Madigan

Submissions are welcomed!

Submit letters, articles, or items of interest to:

[judith@silvercityfoodcoop.coop](mailto:judith@silvercityfoodcoop.coop)

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# Not Watered Down



by Kevin Waters  
General Manager

Lot's of activity at the new store site in the recent month. At times, we have had plumbing, electrical, HVAC, framers, drywall and earthworks contractors all working on the same day. The main building is beginning to be slightly recognizable as a very empty future grocery store. The back offices are coming along as well. The footings are in place for the new metal building, and we have received our first piece of refrigeration equipment. The Proto Aire 9000. Ok, it is just the Proto Aire. But this thing looks like it should be called the Proto Aire 9000. This beast will run on refrigerant that is way more environmentally friendly than our current old stuff. And, it will provide a significant reduction in refrigerant charge needed, a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, better energy efficiency, less copper refrigerant piping, and fewer braze joints for fewer leaks. A big upgrade all around.



Underground electrical conduit



Looking out the window while waiting in line at the future check stand



Ron, the GC, likely ranting about the architects and the engineers



Plumbing stub outs on the new building site



The ProtoAire 9000 (Steaz Tea added for scale)



Silver City Food Co-op's  
**50th Anniversary**  
 1974 - 2024

**March  
 Anniversary Sale**



**week 1 • 3rd - 9th**

Santa Cruz

Organic Peanut Butter 16 oz

**\$5.50** sale price

**week 2 • 10th - 16th**

Applegate Farms  
 Sausage 7 oz



**\$4.50** sale price



**week 3 • 17th - 23rd**

Amy & Brian

Coconut Water 1 L

**\$4.50** sale price

**week 4 • 24th - 31st**

Perfect Bars 2.3 oz

**2/\$4.50** sale price



*Judith Kenney*

outreach/GG

*Kate Stansberger*

supplement buyer

*Jake Sipko*

produce manager

*Carol Ann Young*

GG/office

*Becky Carr*

dairy buyer

*Marguerite Bellringer*

finance manager

*Doug Smith*

grocery buyer

*Tinisha Rodriguez*

HABA buyer/POS

*Mike Madigan*

operations manager

*Joy Kilpatrick*

receiver

*Judy Kenneally*

deli

*Vynce Bourné*

bulk buyer

*Kevin Waters*

general manager

*Andrea Sandoval*

cashier/stocker

*Eva Ortega*

produce

*Gini Loch*

pm supervisor

*Jalyn McClain*

human resources

*Kelsi Cunniff*

cashier/stocker

*Jaylene Chacon*

cashier/stocker

*Isaiah Muñoz*

utility

*Doug Walton*

deli manager

*Steve Buckley*

utility

*Bailey Young*

utility

*Sarah Lynn*

utility

*Arisa Chavez*

deli

*Donna O'Donovan*

utility

*Maeve Hyland*

deli

*Rechelle Gutierrez*

utility

*Eric Guerrero*

utility



# Kitchen Meditations

## Spring Salmon w/ Strawberry Scallion Tapenade

*This recipe brims with bright, briny flavor, making use of spring produce.*

### Equipment:

Large skillet, or indoor grill pan, or outdoor grill

### Ingredients:

- ¾ cup diced strawberries
- ⅓ cup pitted and chopped green olives (Castelvetro olives are delicious)
- ¼ cup thinly sliced scallions
- ¼ cup fresh chopped cilantro or parsley (or a mix of both)
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons low sodium soy sauce or tamari
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 4 (6 oz.) skin-on salmon fillets
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, divided

### Instructions:

- In a medium bowl, combine strawberries, olives, scallions, herbs, vinegar, soy sauce, 2 tablespoons of the oil, and ¼ teaspoon each salt and black pepper. Toss to combine. Set aside.
- Blot salmon dry with a paper towel and season flesh evenly with remaining ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon black pepper.
- Heat remaining 2 tablespoons of oil in an indoor grill pan or skillet over medium-high heat. Place salmon fillets, skin-side down, in pan and cook 3 minutes or until skin starts to crisp. Gently flip salmon to its flesh side and cook 3 more minutes, or until salmon reaches desired level of doneness.
- Transfer salmon to a serving platter and spoon tapenade over top.

## Mushroom & Scallion Frittatas



Although it makes a delightful breakfast, frittata can also be served with a green salad for lunch or a light dinner. White button mushrooms can be substituted for the shiitakes; trim, but do not remove the stems. Cook the vegetables, then add the seasoned eggs, and bake the frittata, all in one pan.

### Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 12 scallions
- ½ lb. shitake mushrooms
- Salt to taste
- Pepper
- 8 eggs
- ½ cup grated parmesan cheese

## Savory Garden Vegetable Bread w/ Cheese

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup milk
- 2 eggs beaten
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2.5 cups flour (all-purpose or other flour of your choice)
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 cup grated zucchini (no need to squeeze out water)
- ½ cup diced fresh tomatoes (remove seeds before dicing)
- ½ cup thinly sliced scallions
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic (from 2-3 cloves)
- ¼ cup shredded parmesan cheese

### Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9" loaf pan with butter and set aside.
- In a large mixing bowl, whisk together eggs, milk and olive oil.
- In a separate bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the bowl with the wet ones. Stir with a rubber spatula until combined.
- Fold in the cheddar cheese, followed by the grated zucchini, diced tomatoes, sliced green onions, chopped basil, and minced garlic. Stir with spatula until everything is incorporated throughout the batter. The batter will be sticky.
- Pour or spoon the batter into the greased loaf pan. Sprinkle with the parmesan cheese.
- Bake in preheated oven for 50-60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. If the toothpick hits a piece of cheese and comes out with melted cheese on it, try again in another spot to ensure that the bread is cooked through.
- Allow the bread cool for at least 20 minutes before taking it out of the loaf pan. Let it finish cooling on a cutting board or wire cooling rack. Slice and enjoy!

### Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Heat olive oil in a medium-sized ovenproof skillet over medium heat. Add scallions and mushrooms. Cover and cook on low until the vegetables are very soft, about 15 minutes. (The veggies start out piled high, but they cook down quickly).
- In a large bowl, whisk the eggs. Pour egg mixture over the vegetables, stir for 2 minutes, then cook for 3-4 minutes more. Sprinkle cheese over the frittata, and bake in the oven for 15 minutes.

# Jake's March Produce Picks



## Strawberries

Strawberries, with their fruity-floral scent and sweet taste, have appealed to people around the world for thousands of years. Originally from the forests of Europe and North America where strawberries grew wild (and still do), they found their way to the tables of the Romans who considered them a true culinary treat. They also consumed them as a treatment for a wide variety of physical and mental ailments, including melancholy, fevers, attacks of gout, and diseases of the liver and spleen, to name a few.

By the 16th and 17th centuries, ample documentation has been found about strawberries, as botanical and decorative illustrations, herbal medicine references, and even carvings in cathedral stonework. By the mid-1500s, demand for strawberries was growing, as evidenced by early written instructions of how they can be cultivated. At the same time, across the Atlantic Ocean explorers landing in North America found that the native peoples were enjoying their own varieties of local strawberries.

Strawberries are part of the rose family. The typically red fruit has an early summer harvest, with a growing season dependent upon variety and location. Growers in some regions, like California and Florida, harvest them almost the entire year, while in other parts of the world the fruit is only ripe for picking for a few short months.

Like other berries, this vibrant fruit is rich in vitamins, minerals, fiber, and compounds with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Many folks think that strawberries are best eaten fresh, either out of hand or as part of a mixed fruit salad, topping a tart or cake, or in a savory salad. They can also be cooked into jams and compotes or baked into cakes and bread. Other possibilities include strawberries dipped in chocolate fondue, added to smoothies and milkshakes, or simple served with whipped cream. Truly, the options seem endless!



## Scallions

Scallions, also known as spring or green onions are, in fact, very young onions harvested before the bulb has had a chance to swell. Both the long slender green tops and the small white bulbs are edible and are good, both raw and cooked. Scallions are a member of the Allium family, which includes garlic, onions, leeks and shallots.

One of the wonderful things about scallions is that they are mild enough to be eaten raw or slightly cooked, but are best when retaining a bit of crispness. They really are tastiest when enjoyed in salads, as crudites, or as a garnish on a variety of dishes. They are great in stir-frys, added at the very end so that they retain a bit of crunch. Sliced thinly, they impart more of their flavor to the dish, whereas bigger pieces will release more flavor when eaten. The white bottoms taste more like a mature onion, though sweeter and less pungent. The green part is distinctively oniony, but with an additional fresh, grassy flavor.

To keep your scallions fresh for a short period of time, remove the rubber band from the bunch, rinse them, shake off excess water and pat dry with paper towels or a clean cotton dish towel. Then wrap them in the damp towel (squeeze out first if very wet) and store them in the crisper drawer for up to three days. To keep fresh longer, fill a large, clean jar half-full with water and stand the scallions up inside with white ends at the bottom. Cover securely. They will keep up to a week with this method.



## Becky's March Dairy Pick

### Old Croc Grand Reserve Cheddar Cheese

Old Croc's Grand Reserve Cheddar is aged for two years for an extra sharp, rich flavor. Its texture is creamy, yet crumbly, with mouthwatering crystals. Yum! Through the aging process, the flavor evolves from mild and delicate to tangier and complex with deeper, richer flavors. The texture of the final cheese also changes dramatically, going from smooth and creamy to firmer and denser. Where exactly do the tiny crunchy bits come from? It's just basic chemistry. As cheddar ages, good bacteria breaks lactose down into lactic acid which combines with the natural calcium in milk to create calcium lactate. This, then, becomes the flavorful crystals that many cheese lovers relish.

Imported from Australia and made from the milk of grass-fed cows, Old Croc Grand Reserve is a melt-in-your-mouth cheese with a zesty bite. Old Croc Grand Reserve is excellent served with a crusty bread and dried fruit. Enjoy this well-rounded cheese in sandwiches, Mexican dishes, crisp salads topped with fresh fruit, and cheddar-y pasta carbonara. Did we say versatile? To pair it with a beverage, you'll want a drink that stands up to its flavor and texture, but doesn't overpower it. Try Belgian ales and, for wine, how about riesling, chardonnay, champagne, pinot noir or chianti?

*March 1 - March 31 • Members Receive 20 % OFF • In the front cooler*

# CO-OP Community



## Thank You Co-op Volunteers!

Many thanks to these member volunteers for their January Service.

Tammy Pittman • Sue Ann Childers  
Tasha Marshe • Tim Garner • Monica Rude  
Mary Ann Finn • Susan Van Auken  
Carolyn Smith • Jane Papin • Randy Harkins



## RAIN CHECK

Sorry we are out.  
Lettuce make it up to you!



Was the item your're looking for out of stock?  
Let us fill out a rain check for you!

We will happily carry your purchases to your vehicle, wherever you're parked!



## Round Up Donation Program

The Silver City Food Co-op invites you to "Round Up." This means as a customer you can round up the balance of your total purchase to the nearest dollar, thereby donating that amount to a local non-profit. Donation recipients change every month. Information can be obtained at the cash registers when you check out. Many thanks to our cashiers who make this program work so that we can all give to our community.

### Round Up for March

January Round Up  
\$1613.00

### Round Up for April

## SW New Mexico Seed Library



The mission of the Seed Library is to nurture a community of growers and seed stewards who harvest and exchange seeds, protect the sovereignty and diversity of our local food system, and increase our community's ability to feed itself.  
(See article on page 14)

## Border Partners



The funds raised will be used to support our "Meals on Wheels" program for needy seniors. Since 2017, our health promoters have prepared and delivered a hot meal each weekday to 25 isolated seniors. Fresh vegetable grown in our year-round community greenhouses are also included in the meal. This program has several advantages for the participants: People who otherwise might not eat a healthy diet receive five healthy meals each week, People who might not have transportation receive a daily visit from someone trained to recognize health problems, The participants have a social contact each day which they might not otherwise have. Thank you to all that have Rounded Up!!

## The Gila Chapter of the Back Country Horesmen



The primary mission of the Gila Chapter of the Back Country Horesmen (Gila BCH) is to perpetuate the recreational use of horses on public lands for all, including horesback riders, hikers, hunters, fishermen, and mountain bikers, and other recreational users of the Gila National Forest.

**Customer Change for Community Change!**

# Silver City Recycles

305 S. Bullard St. at the corner of Sonora Street

Recycling drop-off times for March  
Two Saturdays, the 9th and the 30th



For more information:

<https://silvercityrecycles.org/>

[silvercitynmrecycles@gmail.com](mailto:silvercitynmrecycles@gmail.com) or: [www.t2t.green](http://www.t2t.green)

## Do you love your Co-op?

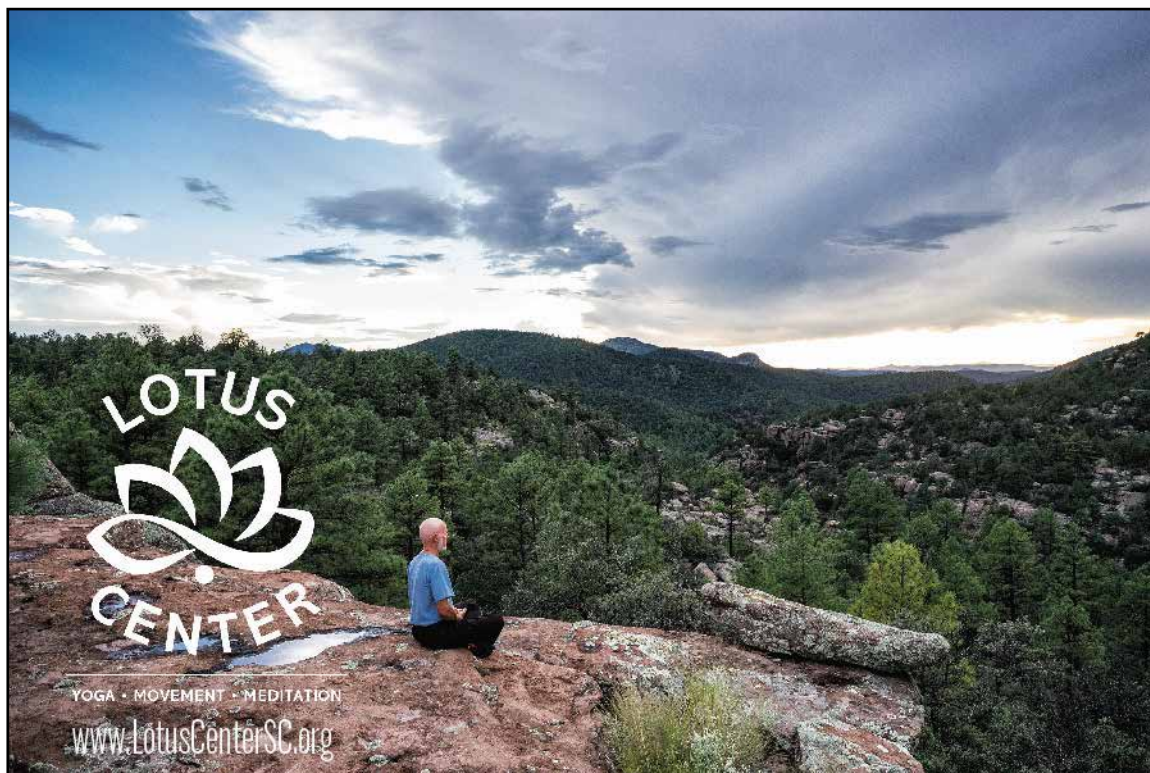


Would you like to let others know what the Co-op means to you? We'd like to invite you to submit an article for our Garbanzo Gazette that supports our mission and values and is educational for our readers. If you have an idea for an article that you think is of specific interest to Co-op members, **please send it to Judith at: [judith@silvercityfoodcoop.coop](mailto:judith@silvercityfoodcoop.coop)**

*Questions are welcomed.*

*The Co-op reserves the right to, respectfully, accept or edit any article submitted.*

**Three hours earns a 15% Volunteer Discount**



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the rewards!**

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Discounts on Special Orders!  
You'll be supporting our local  
& regional food shed &  
you'll help to build a resilient local economy.  
*You Own It!***

## Produce Compost Guidelines

This is a free service provided for our customers. We are not able to honor "special" requests for specific produce in bags and keep this service free. Please note:

- First come, first served
- One bag per person, please
- Scraps are bagged randomly as produce is processed
- Best days for compost are Tuesday & Thursday

## Calling for Guest Writers!

Do you love your Co-op?  
Do you want to help get  
the word out  
about the issues  
facing the Co-op?



**We would love your help writing articles  
for the Garbanzo Gazette!**

Members, if interested please email  
[judith@silvercityfoodcoop.coop](mailto:judith@silvercityfoodcoop.coop)

**Three hours earns a 15% Volunteer Discount**

# 50 Years and Growing! Our Co-op's Success Story!

*by Susan Van Auken  
reprint from July 2020  
expanded to include  
the most recent history*

## Early Times - The 1970s

In 1974 a number of folks in Silver City joined many people across the country wanting access to healthier food. These Silver City folks ordered food together, and then some of them drove to Tucson to pick up the bags of whole grains and beans and cases of canned goods. Back home, the orders were split up, and then everyone picked up their share. Within a year, others wanted to join, so a “storefront” was opened in the back of David and Susan Berry’s house, at 511 North Bullard, right across the street from our current building. A committee ran this buying club, and shopping was restricted to members.

In 1977 the buying club moved to a more visible location, at 108 East Broadway, and opened the store to non-members. Jim Goodkind was the manager, food deliveries came once a month, and sales were close to \$26,000 that year. A few years later the buying club took a big step and incorporated as a non-profit corporation under New Mexico state law and became the Silver City Food Co-op.



## Growing Pains - The 1980s

The early '80s brought cash-flow problems, growing pains, and difficult times. The manager, Ed Anthes, along with co-op member Pamela Patrick, brought the co-op out of this low time. By 1984 Pamela was manager and sales had reached \$76,000. Still staffed mainly by volunteers, the co-op was now able to put a few workers on payroll.

In 1985 the store moved to its current location, 520 North Bullard, a prominent place in the center of downtown. Sales soared during this exciting period, to \$240,000, and the forward-thinking board, manager, and members of this young co-op took a leap of faith in 1989 and bought the building. Old and in need of upgrading, the building was refurbished over the next couple of years, when electrical problems were corrected and many other improvements were made.

## Big Changes - The 1990s

To comply with new regulations for repacking bulk food, the co-op added a kitchen. Also during the early '90s an IRS ruling changed how co-ops across the country could operate. Compensating volunteer workers through a discount on products was no longer allowed, so after eighteen years of depending on volunteers, the co-op's staff was now composed of only paid employees.

By 1995 a second checkout counter and a new walk-in cooler had been installed, and a major roof replacement completed. The biggest concern of the co-op at this time, though, did not involve the building or equipment, but problems caused by a new neighbor across the street where the Hub is now. This small plastics factory released chemical emissions, which caused a variety of difficulties for workers and shoppers at the co-op. Litigation took two years, and eventually the factory moved. Sales at the co-op had continued to grow, however, reaching \$650,000 by 1996.

In 1997 Kathleen Wigley, who had worked with Pamela for three years as assistant manager, took over as manager. She directed a big remodeling push for two years, increasing the retail space, installing another walk-in cooler, an administration office, and the current kitchen. By the end of 1999, the construction was completed, and the retail sales space available was 2,060 square feet.

By the close of the 1990s, the co-op was nearly a million-dollar business and the need for a more effective working relationship between the board of directors and the manager had become apparent. Many co-ops in the country, experiencing similar challenges, decided to adopt, as our co-op did, a new method, called Policy Governance, which clearly defines the roles of both the board and the manager.



## Steady Growth - The 2000s

In 2000 the members of the co-op made a big change by reincorporating as a cooperative association under the New Mexico state laws. The Silver City Food Co-op was now truly a co-op.

The decade began with sales just under \$900,000, and during the next five years sales kept increasing. Double-digit profits during these years allowed profit-sharing with the employees, and in 2005 the co-op passed \$2 million in sales.

This growth necessitated changes. The addition of computerization of pricing and scanners at the checkout counters was a big step toward greater efficiency, but also a quite controversial one. A third row of shelves and another aisle added in the front section of the store allowed space for more product, but the additions, unfortunately, created much narrower aisles.

In 2006 the co-op purchased the old, rundown garage across the back alley from the store, to gain much needed space for the “behind the scenes” activities. The newly renovated building, ready for occupancy in February 2007, contained warehouse space, a walk-in cooler and freezer, office space, and a community room plumbed to become a kitchen for future food-preparation possibilities.

In 2007, after many profitable years, the co-op decided to give back to the community by creating an outreach staff position. Over the next few years, the outreach coordinator provided valuable support to the Grant County Community Food Pantry, The Commons: Center for Food Security and Sustainability, the Silver City Farmers’ Market, the Grant County Food Policy Council, and many annual events providing awareness about food and nutrition.

When Kathleen Wigley and her co-manager, Catrina Helbock, left in 2008, the co-op had reached \$2.5 million in sales and found that it needed to search outside of Silver City for a new leader. In 2009 Doug Zilm became the first general manager hired from out of state. With the board of directors, he worked to improve the governance systems and move from a fee-for-membership status to an equity-membership status, one more step on the path of a maturing cooperative.

## More Space Needed - The 2010s

The co-op directors started spending much time considering expansion, since the co-op had truly outgrown its space. Numerous ideas were discussed, and clearly everyone wanted the co-op to remain downtown. No suitable building with parking was available in the area, so creative solutions, such as satellite stores, home delivery, online shopping, and extended hours were debated.

When Joe Zwiebach began his term as general manager in early 2013, solutions to space limitations were a primary responsibility. With sales increasing from \$900,000 to \$3 million in thirteen years within the same 2,060 square feet of retail space, both staff and customers were acutely aware of the limits.

Every nook and cranny was used more efficiently, and customers adapted to shopping in crowded aisles. Subtle additions of more shelves and stand-alone coolers helped. In October 2013 the store opened on Sundays for six hours, with a very enthusiastic reception.

In 2014, in response to membership surveys, a small kitchen was created in the back warehouse for the preparation of the “Grab ’n’ Go” sandwiches, salads, soups, and desserts made available in a deli case near the checkout stands.

When a building one block north of the co-op became available for a reasonable rent, the board and general manager decided this was a good opportunity.

Immediately the building provided space for product storage and meetings, and in July 2016, The Market Cafe opened in the front portion, serving healthy prepared foods. Although initially successful, the cafe succumbed to challenges on many levels, and the decision was made to close it in October 2017.

To keep up with sales growth, management improved inventory systems, computerized staff scheduling, and upgraded the physical structure. Staff were cross-trained for various positions, and the popular Member Appreciation Days, which had become truly maddening, were switched from three member-discount days a year to a plan where members picked their own MAD days.

In March 2018, a marvelous opportunity appeared in the form of a large downtown building for sale, with parking! Southwest Services for the Handicapped was going out of business, and offered to sell their building to the co-op at a very low price. Since it met the needs for a full expansion and relocation, the board of directors decided to purchase the building at 907 Pope Street in July 2018. The real work of planning an expansion began as the board, managers, and several volunteers worked diligently for over a year to gather, study, and plan for renovating the new building and moving the store.

## Many Surprises - The 2020s

The decade began with a bright outlook. Sales in 2019 were just shy of \$3.8 million and the newly hired general manager, Kevin Waters, was eager to help the co-op move forward with the relocation. Then life changed.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, immediate adaptations were instituted; and with no crystal ball to reveal the future, plans unfolded day by day. The co-op required masks and limited the number of shoppers in the store. Employees sanitized surfaces and provided curbside delivery. Supply-chain issues caused out-of-stocks to soar, and prices increased. With due diligence the co-op avoided a

major COVID outbreak in the store and the sales showed a steady growth.

During the pandemic, progress on the relocation efforts definitely slowed. Because of the delay we lost the building contract, supply-chain problems surfaced, and the cost of everything soared. It took a few years to start over with a new contractor and slightly modified building plans. Finally in the summer of 2023 the reconstruction began. A salvage team worked on deconstruction to remove usable materials, then some demolition took place before the rebuilding began. A grand opening is slated for later in 2024.

## What a Story!

This little co-op that could, did! In its retail sales space at 520 North Bullard Street for the past thirty-nine years, the co-op has gone from sales of under \$100,000 to \$4.7 million and from a handful of employees to about thirty; continues serving its current 1,900 member-owners; and now plans the opening of its new larger downtown store. This success story happened thanks to loyal member-owners and shoppers, inspired general managers, devoted employees, dedicated board members, and generous volunteers. What a wonderful story!

# Eye Drops for Your Dry Eyes



by *Monica Rude*

Oops! Your favorite drops for dry eyes are gone from the Coop shelf and other stores and online too. Too bad – maybe it was the only one that worked for you. However, it didn't work for the FDA and that's what counts... for them.

The eye drops, marketed as a homeopathic treatment for various eye conditions, are considered “new drugs” not approved by the FDA since their claims are based on traditional homeopathic practice and not accepted medical evidence. Translated, this means the products have not undergone extensive double-blind clinical trials to prove their safety and effectiveness. That the products have been available across the US for nearly 40 years and more than 100 million bottles have been sold with no known cases of adverse events linked to the use of silver sulfate as a preservative is not enough evidence of safety and effectiveness for the FDA.

Recent eye infections associated with contaminated eye drops have caused the FDA to turn their attention to the manufacture of these products. Dozens of over-the-counter lubricating eyedrops and artificial tears were recalled in 2023, due to “unsafe manufacturing practices” after infections caused by contaminated eye drops from India resulted in the death of three people and at least eight people have lost their vision permanently. ABC news reports, as of March 14, 68 people across 16 US states were infected with the bacteria.

#### **For a complete list of recalled eye drops:**

<https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-warns-consumers-not-purchase-or-use-certain-eye-drops-several-major-brands-due-risk-eye>

Dry eye disease (DED) is characterized as “a disease that occurs due to increased tear evaporation or decreased tear secretion that results in symptoms of ocular irritation”, it is considered chronic and progressive.

Meibomian gland dysfunction (MGD) is the most common cause of DED. Meibomian glands are sebaceous glands along the rims of the eyelid which produce meibum, an oily substance that along with water and mucus form the three layers of tear film, the fluid that keeps eyes moist. Meibum keeps tears in the eyes and makes the closed lids airtight. The process of blinking releases meibum into the lid margin. When these glands become clogged due to aging or medications, less oil reaches the eye surface, resulting in burning, itching, irritated, dry eyes and blurred vision that improves with blinking. Symptoms can get worse with long hours on the computer or if the air in the home is very dry, either from air conditioning, heating or wind or... living in the desert.

Shopping for eye drops: Eye drops containing lubricants keep the eye moist, help to protect the eye from injury and infection, and decrease the discomfort of dry eyes. There are dozens of products for dry eyes and a multitude of ingredients, most with unfamiliar names, added for a multitude of reasons. Many mimic the properties of natural tears. These include polyethylene or propylene glycol, povidone, glycerin, carboxymethyl cellulose. Hyaluronic acid (HA) is a water-attracting molecule that retains moisture to help lubricate and protect the corneal epithelium. Trehalose is a bioprotectant that fortifies the cells on the

ocular surface, so they do not suffer as much damage from dryness. Studies show that HA and trehalose work better together, compared to drops with HA alone.

Some eye drop ingredients are used to control the pH of the solution, others to prevent oxidation of the other ingredients. The biggest concern, when shopping for these products, is awareness of those containing preservatives, especially benzalkonium chloride (BAK).

#### ***Pro's and cons of preservatives in eye drops***

Any drop delivered in a multidose format must have some mechanism for maintaining the sterility of the contents throughout its intended length of use. In topical preparations, antimicrobial activity is most often achieved through the addition of preservatives. BAK is the most widely used preservative in eye drops, known to be an effective antimicrobial agent against a wide variety of common pathogens, especially when combined with the chelating agent ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid (EDTA). But it is also known to cause toxic effects on the ocular surface, particularly when used over an extended period of time. The undesirable effects of BAK have contributed to the development of preservative-free topical preparations which eliminate the irritation, burning, foreign body sensation, tearing and itching caused by some preservatives.

Most commonly, preservative-free preparations are supplied in single-dose units, intended to be used once and discarded, along with any remaining solution. While this format of eye drop enables preservatives to be completely eliminated, the cost can be 5–10 times higher than preserved multidose formats. Considering the chronic nature of DED and multiple doses required per day over the long term, this cost can be significant.

Polyquaternium (POLYQUAD) has long been used as a disinfectant in contact lens solutions and as a preservative in dry eye preparations. It is believed to have less toxic effect on ocular surface cells compared to BAK.

Oxidizing preservatives, such as Purite (sodium chlorite), OcuPure, sodium perborate, also known by the brand name GenAqua and Dequest (Thera Tears), are a stabilized oxychloro complex that has broad antimicrobial activity through oxidative damage to bacteria and fungus. When the drop is instilled into the eye, light exposure causes the complex to dissociate into hydrogen peroxide, which decomposes to oxygen and water. The idea of a “disappearing” or decomposing preservative is to deliver both antimicrobial activity in the solution and then cause minimal impact to the ocular surface on application. The little evidence available on the performance of these preservatives generally demonstrates they induce significantly less damage to the ocular surface than BAK.

#### ***What else can help dry eyes?***

Put a warm, wet washcloth or heat pack over your eyelids for 5 minutes, twice a day, to help loosen the oil from clogged meibomian glands. Follow this with a light fingertip massage to the edge of the eyelid. For more details: <https://www.webmd.com/eye-health/meibomian-gland-dysfunction>

In addition to using eye drops, stay hydrated, use a humidifier in your home and especially where you sleep, keep a fine-mist spritzer bottle of distilled water or hydrosol of rose or calendula nearby and spritz your eyes and face when you notice the dryness.

### ***Why not make your own eye drops at home?***

This is not generally recommended as it's extremely difficult to make your own and keep them sterile, plus it is difficult to maintain their sterility and need to be discarded after only a few hours. Sterility is hugely important in eye drops. Tears provide a delicate protective layer to the eye surface but this layer is often compromised in dry eyes and it's easy for microbes from your DIY eye drops to make your condition worse, impair your vision, and cause eye infections.

### ***Supplements***

Omega-3 fatty acid and vitamin E supplements have anti-inflammatory properties and may boost the quality of meibum. Carotenoids are used by the body to produce natural vitamin A which improves tear quality, increases eye blood flow and protects these nutrients on the way to your eyes.

A good eye health supplement will provide a mix of carotenoids, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and other herbal compounds to strengthen, nourish and protect your eyes.

**For more info on choosing an eye health supplement, visit:**  
<https://consumereview.org/reviews/eye-health/>

### ***Eat your colors***

Carotenoids are pigments that produce the bright yellow, red, and orange colors in plants, vegetables, and fruits. They are classified into two main groups: xanthophylls and carotenes. These include carotene, lutein, zeaxanthin, and lycopene. They must be consumed through the diet, not manufactured by your body; are fat-soluble compounds, meaning they are best absorbed with fat. Foods rich in carotenoids include: yams, kale, spinach, watermelon, carrots, cantaloupe, bell peppers, tomatoes, mangoes, oranges, etc. Any that are yellow, orange or red.

Eating carotenoid-rich foods can protect the healthy cells in the eye and help prevent the growth of cancerous cells, decrease the risk of developing macular degeneration, and prevent eye conditions from progressing.

Additionally, eating two servings of fish high in omega-3s per week and a portion of flaxseed oil every day, split over three doses supports eye health.

**For more info, visit:**  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6682755/>  
*The use of preervatives in dry eye drops, published in Clinical Ophthalmology in 2019.*

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## *Dyeing Eggs 'Robin Eggs Blue' Naturally*

Did you know that you can create vibrantly hued Easter eggs from a wide variety of natural plant materials? Possibilities range from onion skins to beets to turmeric and more! Here we offer you instructions for dyeing vivid blue eggs with purple cabbage that will remind you of pretty robin's eggs. When your creations are finished and dry, you can dapple them with a bit of gold paint (or any color for that matter). Just flick the speckles on the eggs with a toothbrush dipped in the paint, using a very light touch while you perfect your technique.

It really couldn't be easier. Coarsely chop a head of red cabbage, place it in a large pot and cover with water. Gently boil for 45 minutes. As it cools, hard boil one dozen white eggs (brown eggs will also work, with a different effect). Once the dye bath is cool, strain it into another pan or dish and add a few tablespoons of white vinegar. Now add the eggs and let them sit. *FoodSafety.gov* advises not to eat hard boiled eggs that have been left at room temp for more than two hours. It's a good idea to move them to the refrigerator and let them soak in the dye there.

Stir the eggs, very gently, every once in a while to keep the color even. If you'd like varying shades of blue, begin removing them after an hour and leave the rest in the dye bath. Check on them at intervals. The longer they soak, the deeper the color. You can even leave them overnight. Once they've arrived at their lovely colors, lift out carefully and place on a drying rack or upright in a muffin tin. When all moisture has evaporated from the surface, it's time to apply a smattering of paint. A bit of cooking oil rubbed, sparingly, into the surface of your eggs at the very end will make them glow.

This is just one method of dyeing eggs naturally. The internet is overflowing with similar recipes and lots of ideas that will allow you to create Easter eggs in a rainbow of gorgeous colors.



# Regenerative Agriculture: No-Till Farming

by Carolyn Smith

Most of the conversations surrounding solutions to reverse global warming focus on the immediate imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; we absolutely need to do this now and fast, but equally critical is the necessity to draw down the carbon that's already in the atmosphere.

Reducing greenhouse emissions involves many players across the planet, certainly all of us in the developed world, requiring big changes to existing infrastructure, national policies and cultures. As one individual in a population of billions, the need to change versus the resistance to change plays havoc with my mind and spirit.

A positive ray of hope and watershed moment for my personal psyche came from the 2015 keynote speaker at the NM Organic Farming Conference, “Coach” Mark Smallwood, Executive Director of the Rodale Institute. I learned that healthy soil plays an essential role in drawing down and sequestering carbon. According to the Rodale Institute’s research, “adopting regenerative agricultural practices across the globe could sequester the global annual greenhouse gas emissions by roughly 52 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide”!

Carbon is sequestered in soil by plants through photosynthesis and can be stored as soil organic carbon (SOC). As one of the strategies of regenerative agriculture, no-till farming plays a part in this story of carbon sequestration.

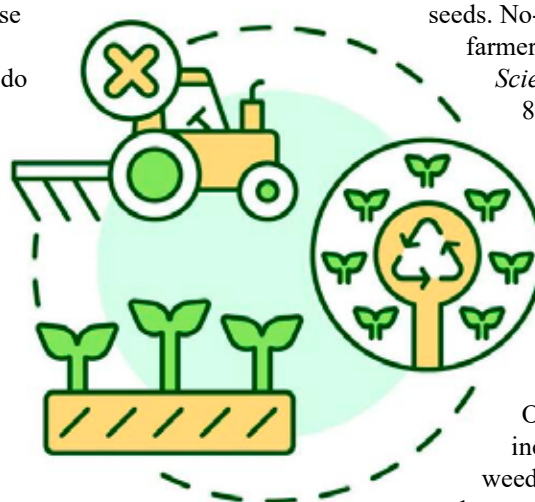
No-till farming is nothing new. It was used as far back as 10,000 years ago. But as plow designs and production methods improved during Europe’s Agricultural Revolution in the 18th and early 19th centuries, tilling became increasingly popular. Farmers adopted this method because it allowed them to plant more seeds while expending less effort.

Tilling involves turning over the first 6 – 10 inches of soil. This practice breaks up soil compaction, helps eliminate weeds, and incorporates cover crops or surface crop residues, animal manure and weeds into the soil before planting new crops. When the soil is plowed under, carbon, in the form of organic material such as plant roots and microorganisms, rises to the soil’s surface, temporarily providing nutrients for crops. But as the soil carbon is exposed to oxygen in the atmosphere, it transforms into carbon dioxide, contributing to the greenhouse gas emissions that warm the planet.

Tilling also displaces and/or kills off the millions of microbes and insects that embody a healthy soil biome. The long-term use of deep tillage can convert healthy soil into a lifeless growing medium dependent on chemical inputs for productivity.

No-till farming minimizes soil disturbance which keeps more carbon in the soil. It also enriches soil biodiversity, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers that emit greenhouse gases. Studies have shown that organic no-till practices, when combined with cover cropping and organic management, help increase soil organic carbon by up to 9 percent after two years and 21 percent after six years.

Modern no-till tractor implements allow farmers to sow seeds faster and cheaper than tilling. Conventional tillage practices require the farmer to make several passes over the field, first tilling the soil and then returning to plant



seeds. No-till removes the step of tilling the soil, saving the farmer time and money. According to a report published in *Scientific American*, fuel expenses are decreased by 50 to 80 percent and labor by 30 to 50 percent.

There are two types of no-till farming: conventional and organic. In conventional no-till farming, farmers use herbicides to manage the weeds before and after sowing the seeds, using even more than in tillage-based farming, increasing the ill effects on the environment and human health.

Organic no-till farming uses a variety of methods, including cover crops and crop rotation to manage weeds and reduce or eliminate tillage without resorting to the use of chemical herbicides. Small-scale organic growers use small powered tools and hand tools like no-till rolling punch planters, no-till slicer-planters, flail mowers, broadforks, hoes and rakes to manage no-till farming, while larger no-till farmers employ tractor attachments such as the roller crimper, invented by the Rodale Institute.

The roller crimper is a water-filled drum with chevron-patterned blades that attaches to the front of a tractor. As the farmer drives the tractor over the cover crop, the blades crimp the stems of the plants, killing them in place and the drum flattens the cut plants, leaving a weed-suppressing mulch that conserves moisture and adds organic matter to the soil as it and the cover crop’s roots degrade. Implements on the rear of the tractor part the cover crop mat, drop in seeds and cover them up to ensure soil contact, allowing the cash crop to grow straight up through the cover crop mulch. It all happens in a single pass, saving vital time and energy for farmers.

From a soil perspective, the benefits of no-till farming far outnumber those of tillage-based systems. Bare soil, deficient in rich organic matter and disturbed by tilling, loses its structure and its ability to hold nutrients and absorb water, so is more likely to be eroded by wind and water. The Earth loses roughly 23 billion tons of fertile soil every year. At this rate, all fertile soil will be gone within 150 years.

No-till farming reduces soil erosion by maintaining the soil structure and covering and protecting the soil with mulch from crop residues; both increasing the soil’s ability to hold nutrients and absorb and hold water. This reduces soil erosion and runoff and prevents pollution of nearby water sources and also slows evaporation, which increases irrigation efficiency and crop yields, especially during hot and dry weather.

Soil microorganisms, fungi and bacteria, critical to soil health, also benefit from no-till practices. When soil is left undisturbed, beneficial soil organisms can establish their communities and thrive, feeding off organic matter in the soil. A healthy soil biome is important for nutrient cycling and suppressing plant diseases. As soil organic matter improves, so does the soil’s internal structure—increasing the soil’s capacity to grow more nutrient-dense crops.

The benefits of no-till practices are huge: carbon sequestration, reduced erosion, improved soil health, safe and clean weed management, reduced labor and cost and increased biodiversity. No till-farming is good for the life in the soil and all life on the planet, now and into the future. Hope grows!



# Seed Saving in Southwestern New Mexico- SWNM Seed Library

♦ *it starts with a seed, but it continues with our community* ♦

by Oly Sturdevant

It starts with a seed, a vessel full of generational DNA potential. Seeds are a link to our past, present and future. The process of seed-saving involves harvesting, cleaning, drying, and storing seeds and has, in one way or another, been a way our food systems have stayed alive for millennia. By no means is seed-saving a new trend but it is one that has seen a resurgence in recent years. In 2020 and 2021 the increasing pressure of the instability of our global and regional food systems drove record sales for seed companies across the country. Seeds remain crucial to our success as a species. To have seeds is to have a promise for your future.

While the actual start date of the Southwestern New Mexico Seed Library is a little hazy, the main goal has always been clear to have free seeds exchanged in our community. Over ten years ago, Azima Forest modeled the SWNM Seed Library after a seed exchange that occurred at a store specializing in locally grown products in Tucson, AZ. The mission of the SWNM Seed Library is to nurture a community of growers and seed stewards who harvest and exchange seeds, to protect the sovereignty and diversity of our local food system and to increase our community's ability to feed itself.

Much like a real seedling, the SWNM Seed Library has grown significantly from that initial start. Operating in 11 locations across 3 counties (Grant, Hidalgo and Catron), SWNM Seed Libraries are now tucked away in locations like a thrift store, a heritage center, libraries, farmer's markets, even a restaurant. In 2023, the SWNM Seed Library distributed an astonishing 11,389 seed packs with 89% being donated locally. Every seed packet that goes out and is planted strengthens our local food systems.

The sense of community at SWNM Seed Library gatherings, whether online or in person, is truly special. Every week, dedicated volunteers come together to sort, clean, and package seeds. Conversations are easy and the seeds are plentiful. The Facebook group "Southwest New Mexico Seed Stewards" serves as an additional online platform for community members to share their experiences, knowledge, and enthusiasm for gardening and seed-saving. Another important component of the SWNM Seed Library is education. Classes on gardening and seed-saving related topics are taught by talented master gardeners and are always open to the public.

It starts with a seed, but it continues with our community.

For volunteer opportunities with SWNM Seed Library or to be added to the newsletter list, please contact Chris Jepson at [swnmseeds@gmail.com](mailto:swnmseeds@gmail.com)

For more information about Southwestern New Mexico Seed Library or their parent non-profit, National Center for Frontier Communities, please visit them on Facebook at "Southwestern New Mexico Seed Library", "National Center for Frontier Communities", on Instagram @swnmSeedLibrary and @FrontierCommunities, or at [www.frontierus.org](http://www.frontierus.org).



*An appealing display of seeds*



**Judy, one of our deli cooks, and Paul, board member, having fun on Mardi Gras**

**Our receiver Joy, all dressed up for Mardi Gras**



**Andrea, produce team member, loves Valentine's Day!**



**Mardi Gras & Valentine's Day are popular holidays here at SCFC.**

# GRAB'N'GO

## A Tale of Hummus

by Doug Walton



*Judy makes the best hummus in town!*

There are many dishes produced by the Grab 'n' Go Deli at the Silver City Food Co-op that have such a loyal following that we dare not let the supply run short. At the top of this list is our Hummus; a savory Middle Eastern delight which can be served as a dip, spread, salad topping, or even the base for a main course. Hummus is created from a simple, centuries old list of ingredients: chickpeas, tahini, lemon juice, olive oil, and garlic.

As garlic does not suit all palates,

we also produce a garlic-free version. Hummus is proof that some of the most delicious and satisfying dishes originate with the humblest of ingredients.

The chickpea, a member of the plant family Fabaceae, is one of the earliest cultivated legumes. This plant family also includes some other agricultural species, such as kidney beans, peanuts, black beans, and lima beans. The historical record of chickpea cultivation dates to a site in modern day Syria as far back as the early Pre-Pottery Neolithic period (c.8400BC). The name chickpea comes from the French chiche, which was derived from the species name *Cicer arietinum*; which translates from Latin to mean “small ram.” This name is descriptive of the unique shape of the legume, which bears resemblance to a ram’s head. In Spain and many Latin American countries, chickpeas are known as Garbanzo beans. This originates with the Basque term “garbantzu,” from the words “garau,” meaning seed, and “antzu,” meaning dry. The two names are utilized interchangeably throughout the world today.

Tahini is a food product of Arab origin prepared from hulled sesame seeds that have been toasted and then ground. The resulting paste, or seed butter is used as a condiment; as well as a component of sauces and dishes such as hummus. Sesame (*Sesamum indicum*) is a plant widely cultivated for its pods of edible seeds. The sesame seed is one of the world’s oldest oil seed crops, having been domesticated over 3000 years ago. The historian Herodotus writes about the cultivation of sesame in the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys 3500 years ago. The species cultivated today originated in India; though some wild varieties found in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of modern day Turkey are thought to have been gathered by early civilizations prior to the domestication of the plant.

The true birthplace of hummus is a hotly debated subject. Various cultures across the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East lay claim to this beloved dish. The name itself is derived from the Arabic term for chickpeas. As chickpeas and sesame seeds were widely cultivated throughout these areas; the lineage of the dish can be traced to several cultures.

The earliest written history of the dish can be found in a 13th-century Egyptian cookbook titled “Kitab Wasf al-Atima al-Mutada.” While this early recipe calls for mashed chickpeas and lemons; it uses vinegar instead of olive oil, and makes no mention of tahini. At about the same time in history, the Levant (modern-day Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, and Syria) had developed a sophisticated industry of farming chickpeas. There is also documented evidence of the use of tahini in this region dating to ancient times. Though there is no documented account of the

original event; the likelihood of these ingredients being combined to form such a dish is quite plausible. There are also historical arguments on the parts of Lebanon, Greece, and Israel as to the provenance and cultural ownership of this storied food.

By the 14th century, hummus was found in the food histories of various parts of the Ottoman Empire. From the 14th to the early 20th century, the expansion of the empire contributed to the addition of hummus to the diets of people in Greece, Turkey, and the Balkans. Middle Eastern migrations in the 20th century carried the dish to many Western countries. Different regions added their interpretations, adding pieces of their own history and a distinct blend of flavors that contributed further to the legacy of the timeless dish. To be sure, the question of hummus’ origins is a convoluted one, and is for many cultures today a matter of patriotism and identity. Today, hummus is praised for its appealing taste, versatility, and nutritive benefits. It aligns neatly with contemporary dietary trends.

Despite its worldwide popularity, hummus retains its status as a cherished culinary treasure deeply rooted with Middle Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean food traditions; symbolizing the rich history of migratory trade and cultural exchange. The fierce debate around the provenance of the dish affirms its cultural value. Each claim and variation in the recipe contributes to the diverse tapestry that is its history. It illustrates the influential role of food in shaping cultures, histories, and identities.

In addition to the cultural and historical enticements of this tasty creation, there are significant nutritional benefits. Chickpeas, the main ingredient, are full of dietary fiber, protein, manganese, and vitamin B6. Tahini and olive oil also provide additional benefits. Olive oil has powerful antioxidants that have anti-inflammatory benefits. Tahini is high in healthy fats and amino acids. It has benefits to heart, hormonal, and skin health. Chickpeas have a low glycemic index, which means they are more slowly digested and absorbed into the bloodstream; contributing to a more balanced rise and fall in glucose levels.

If you have not tried hummus, I suggest you consider adding it to your diet. It is a tasty and comforting piece of culinary history. In the coming weeks, we will be introducing some house-made toppings to enhance the ways you can enjoy this tasty product. These will include: Olive Tapenade, Roasted Chili & Pine Nuts, Lemongrass & Ginger, Sweet Onion Relish, and Sun-dried Tomatoes & Basil. ENJOY !



*Only the best goes into our hummus!*



# March

## Members Only Specials

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HopTea  
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