

Holiday meals are most memorable when prepared and shared with family and friends, says Chef Daniel Orr. From left: Eric Bolstridge (WTIU producer and videographer), Brooke Baker (Daniel Orr's assistant), Chef Daniel Orr, Gretchen Marks, Mary Lu Orr, and Annie Corrigan (producer of WFIU's Earth Eats).
Photo by Leigh Bush

(inset) Located between Nashville and Columbus, Indiana, Gretchen Marks' home studio was created from the wood of several old barns. Photo by Daniel Orr



A HOOSIER



Holiday Feast

by Lee Ann Sandweiss photography by Daniel Orr and Leigh Bush

During the *holidays*, many dream of going *over the river* and *through the woods* to a house where a fire blazes in a *big stone hearth* and commingling aromas of fresh cooked *meats and treats* fill the air.





Growing up in

Columbus, Indiana, Daniel Orr, chef/owner of FARMbloomington, had that idyllic experience every year at the home of artist Gretchen Marks, a family friend who lives in a rustic wonderland between Columbus and Nashville, Indiana. Orr recently returned to Marks' home with his mother, Mary Lu Orr, and a crew from WFIU Public Radio to recreate—and document—the kind of traditional Hoosier holiday feast he enjoyed as a boy.

"Ever since I was a kid, we would go over to Gretchen's and cook a meal in the fireplace using the coals and traditional cooking methods. It would take all day, and the house would be permeated with amazing aromas," Orr says. "With fireplace cooking, you are not in a hurry; it's about process more than final product. It's about being together and cooking together, not about one person slaving away in the kitchen alone. Sharing these creative tasks is the way the holidays should be spent."

The impetus for making the meal was a request from Annie Corrigan, producer of WFIU's *Earth Eats*, a popular weekly show, blog, and podcast that provides information about Hoosier food and sustainable agriculture. Currently, *Earth Eats* is carried by several NPR stations besides WFIU and has close to 200,000 Twitter followers.

"Food is always an integral part of any holiday celebration," says Corrigan. "For this holiday special, we wanted to acknowledge traditional dishes but then put a fun, local, seasonal twist on them." Orr, who has multiple irons in the fire—chef, restaurateur, blogger, cookbook author, photographer, and Corrigan's *Earth Eats* cohost—was game.

"With the Slow Food movement, we're coming back to the ways we did things in the past," Orr says. "Since *Earth Eats* has thousands of listeners all across the country, it's also a great way to get the word out about southern Indiana's commitment to sustainability, great food, and great living."

In the days leading up to the meal, the menu was set and the food gathered. Orr says holiday meals are the time to bring out special food items that you've been saving or have "put up" during the year. On the actual day of the meal, his advice to his cohorts was: Take it slow.

Orr has provided recipes for many of the dishes served that day so you can prepare them yourselves on an open hearth or in a modern kitchen. Printed here are the recipes for roasted duck with kumquat rum sauce, parsnip soup with sweet potato leaves, and embellished baked Brie. On the *Bloom* website, magbloom.com/holidayrecipes, are the recipes for eggnog; goat-cheese ball with pecans, cherries, and bacon; chicken of the woods mushrooms; Christmas tree bread with oats and seeds; old-fashioned baked apples with sweet seasons spices; roasted pumpkin with cumin, cardamom, and citrus; and wild rice with almonds, dried cherries, and mushrooms.

"This meal is an all-day affair," Orr cautions. "Plan on starting about 11 am and having a meal

(above): All of the Hoosier holiday dinner courses were cooked in Marks' massive stone fireplace. Shown here (clockwise from lower left): roasted black figs with balsamic vinegar and local honey; fire-roasted duck livers with cracked pepper and home-grown thyme; wild rice with almonds, dried cherries, and mushrooms; old-fashioned baked apples; roasted ducks; (in front) grilled duck necks; aluminum-wrapped roasted garlic; (in red dish) braised chicken of the woods mushrooms; embellished baked Brie; (underneath the rack) roasted pumpkins and more figs. Photo by Leigh Bush

1: Dessert is apples baked in the fireplace and covered with a not-so-secret sauce: melted vanilla ice cream, which Orr calls "the easiest sauce you'll ever make." Photo by Daniel Orr

2: "Christmas tree bread is meant to be pulled apart and shared," says Orr. "For the holidays, I like break-apart-style food that's gutsy, tactile, and real." Photo by Daniel Orr

3: Rustic parsnip soup with sweet potato leaves is a glorious comfort food on a cold day. Photo by Daniel Orr

4: The inviting holiday table is a charming hodgepodge of mismatched furniture and dinnerware. "Things in Gretchen's house were collected over the years," says Orr. "There's a feeling of the past in everything." Photo by Daniel Orr

5: Daniel Orr slices the main course—a local duck from Maple Leaf Farms that was slow-roasted over the hot coals until the skin was crispy and the meat inside tender. Photo by Leigh Bush

6: The Brie is a cornucopia of goodies: dried cherries, Oregon hazelnuts, apricots, walnuts, and pine nuts, glazed with Indiana honey. Photo by Daniel Orr

7: Got Nog? Gretchen Marks (left) and Mary Lu Orr show telltale signs of sampling some of the extra-thick homemade eggnog. Photo by Daniel Orr



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Recipes by Chef Orr

around 5 or 6 o'clock. You can graze and enjoy food and wine while you are preparing the next course. What's great is that it's a time when everyone can unplug from their iPods, notebooks, and various devices and play a board game or cards while the food is on the fire. You might even take a nap at some point."

Preparation, however, is a different matter, warns Orr. "This type of cooking is a full contact sport! Everyone gets physically involved."

With its massive stone fireplace, charmingly mismatched chairs, and palpable sense of the past, Marks' home was an ideal location for preparing the day-long feast. "Gretchen's kitchen looked like a farmers' market had exploded all over it," Orr says. "Even after we left the house we noticed that our clothes smelled pleasantly of food and fire."

Orr's advice to home cooks is the same as he gave his friends at their feast. "Take it slow. There is no rush; everything doesn't have to hit the table at once."

Another suggestion he offers: "Create a moveable feast! Have different courses at various homes of nearby family and friends. That way you can spread out the chores and the cost; plus, it adds to the conviviality and encourages you to get an invigorating and calorie-burning stroll in between courses." *



Chef Orr tends to the dessert of baked apples in front of the fireplace in which all of the holiday meal courses were cooked. Photo by Leigh Bush

Duck with Kumquat Rum Sauce

This is a play on the old French canard à l'orange using my house-flavored kumquat rum. I like using some of the drunken kumquats from the bottle to add to the sauce and serve over the sliced duck. If you don't want to go through the whole process of flavoring the rum, use some Grande Marnier and some sliced fresh kumquats.

4 SERVINGS

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| 1 large | duck (4 to 5 pounds) |
| 1 T | Kitchen d'Orr Sweet Seasoning Spice Blend or Chinese five-spice |
| | Salt and pepper, to taste |
| 2 small | onions, quartered |
| 1 head | garlic, cut in half (east to west) |
| 4 branches | each rosemary and thyme |
| 2 medium | oranges |
| 2 medium | lemons |
| | Boiling water, as needed |
| 1/4 c | sugar |
| 1/3 c | white wine vinegar |
| 3 c | brown chicken stock |
| 2 tsp | cornstarch |
| 1 T | bitter orange marmalade |
| 1/2 c | dry white wine |
| 1/2 c | homemade kumquat rum—or your favorite orange liqueur |
| | Freshly ground white pepper, to taste |

► Preheat oven to 350°F. Liberally season duck inside cavity with salt, black pepper, and spices. Stuff it with the onions, garlic, and fresh herbs.

► Place breast-side up on a rack in a pan and prick thighs and breast with a fork to allow fat to escape. Place the duck in the oven and pour 1 1/2 cups of water into the pan with it. Roast until juice runs clear when the thigh is pricked, about 1 1/2 hours or until thermometer registers 145-150°F at the thickest part of the thigh. If the roasting duck begins to darken, cover lightly with foil and return to the oven. When cooked, remove and allow to rest lightly covered in a warm place for at least 8-10 minutes.

► While the duck is cooking, remove zest from the oranges and lemons and cut into fine julienne. Squeeze juice from the oranges and lemons and set aside. Blanch the zest in boiling water and cover for 3 minutes; drain and set aside.

► In a heavy-bottomed saucepan over moderate heat, melt sugar and cook until it begins to brown lightly. Add vinegar, orange and lemon juices, and stock and reduce over medium heat to a light sauce consistency.

► In a small bowl, mix the cornstarch with a little water and stir into stock mixture. Simmer briefly until slightly thickened. Stir in marmalade and keep sauce warm.

► While the duck is resting, spoon off fat from pan juices that have collected in the roasting pan. Place the pan on the stove over high heat. Once it is hot quickly remove it from the flame and deglaze the roasting pan with wine and kumquat rum. Return to the fire and flambé, all the while scraping up the brown bits. Add the sauce to the pan and return to a boil. Strain. Add reserved zest and kumquats from the rum bottle (or freshly sliced kumquats) and simmer until slightly thickened.

► Carve duck, place on a warm serving platter, and pour sauce over pieces.

Parsnip Soup with Sweet Potato Leaves

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| 3 cloves | garlic, roughly chopped |
| 1/4 c | olive oil |
| 2 | white onions, diced into 1/4 inch bites |
| 2 | shallots, diced |
| 6 | parsnips, peeled and diced |
| 3 c | water or stock |
| | Salt and pepper, to taste |
| 2 c | heavy cream |
| | Large bunch sweet potato (or spinach) leaves, torn into pieces |
| | Lemon juice |

- Brown the garlic in a pan with the olive oil.
- Add onions and shallots to the pan and increase the heat. Cook the onions and shallots until they are translucent. Add parsnips and cook.
- Add water or stock and pinches of salt and pepper. Cover and bring the soup to a boil, then let it simmer for 15-20 minutes.
- Add heavy cream and sweet potato leaves. Cook until the leaves wilt.



Embellished Baked Brie

INGREDIENTS, ALL TO TASTE

- Dried cherries
Hazelnuts
Apricots
Walnuts
Pine nuts
Salt and pepper
Honey

- Cut the Brie in half to expose the creamy interior. Place back in the wooden box.
- Salt and pepper the cheese.
- Place dried cherries in the middle. Push hazelnuts down into cheese and arrange walnuts and pine nuts around the outside.
- Finish by glazing the cheese, fruit, and nuts with a drizzle of honey.
- Position it over an open fire. Serve when the Brie starts to warm and melt.

More recipes online!



All recipes for the Hoosier holiday dinner can be found on the Bloom website:

[magbloom.com/
holidayrecipes](http://magbloom.com/holidayrecipes)

