



# A Hoosier 4<sup>th</sup> of July



(clockwise from top left)  
Heirloom tomatoes from the Orr garden; Uncle Sam meets Dr. Seuss; iced watermelon; the Harrison Lake neighborhood parade; corn on the grill; boy meets grill; Chef Daniel Orr; FARM-Bloomington staffers show their colors.

There is one event that has always brought Daniel Orr home to Indiana. Although his celebrated culinary career has taken him to France, New York, and the British West Indies, every midsummer he has boarded a plane back to the Hoosier state in time for his family's Fourth of July picnic.

★★★ By Elisabeth Andrews ★ Photography by Daniel Orr ★★★





That day, spent enjoying “home-grown, home-made food” with family and friends at his parent’s home, seemed to capture everything he missed about growing up along Harrison Lake outside Columbus. “It would bring me back to my childhood and remind me of what’s important,” he says. “That annual trek kept that sentimental part in my heart alive.”

From the fry-up on the beach at dawn, through the all-afternoon buffet lunch drawn straight from the garden, into the evening barbecue and glass of wine, Orr found a simple joy that ultimately convinced him to return to his roots and open his restaurant FARMbloomington. The Orrs’ Fourth of July tradition dates back almost 50 years, to when Daniel’s parents moved from Fort Wayne with their two small boys. All summer, recalls his mother Mary Lu, the neighborhood kids would inhabit the lake-front, running barefoot and catching turtles to keep in an old tractor tire in the yard. By the time July rolled around, they were experts at finding crayfish and duck eggs and fishing for minnows to use as live bait. Independence Day gave them a chance to use those skills to contribute to the bounty on the table, and when the lake community of some hundred

homes started up an annual parade, led by a real fire engine, the occasion became a true festival of childhood fantasy.

Today, of course, those kids now have their own children, who themselves are almost grown. Daniel, who as a boy looked on in wonder while his parents transformed their garden crop into a magnificent meal, is now the “ring-leader” of the event. And part of his duty is to honor those who are now missing from the picnic. “Even people that aren’t with us any longer, they still show up in one way or another through a recipe, an old quilt, or a ladle for serving lemonade,” he says.

#### FROM THE GARDEN TO THE TABLE

For Mary Lu, preparation for the party is an all-year affair, as she plans and tends what Daniel describes as “an old-time victory garden” full of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers. There are raspberries, apples, grapes, and pears; radishes, lettuce, asparagus, broccoli, eggplant, squash, and a great many heirloom tomatoes; some 30 different herbs including basil, thyme, tarragon, parsley, cilantro, borage, comfrey, and all kinds of mints. Stretching from the heights of the Chinese long beans along the fence to the depths of the potato baskets beneath the earth, she’ll grow nearly all the vegetables for the meal.

The flowers for the table, meanwhile, will bloom in the colors of the flag: red dahlias, gladiolas, and amaryllis; white daisies and Dusty Miller Artemisia; blue larkspur, bachelor’s button, hyssop, and lobelia.

The fruit, in addition to filling pies and salads and being eaten out of hand, will be converted into wines, in flavors like persimmon, rhubarb, and “tutti fruity,” a mixture of berries that looks like a rosé and tastes like a pinot noir. The Orrs will also head to a neighbor’s yard to pick cherries for their traditional cherry lemonade, and there may be a sangria or two prepared in advance.

Most of the cooking, however, happens that day. It starts with a trotline laid in the water the previous night. Early on the morning of the 4th, while the dew is still on the grass, whoever wakes up first will head down to see if the line is jiggling with bluegill or catfish. If it is—and it usually is—it’s time to get everybody up to watch the Orrs’ neighbor, a surgeon, fillet the fish before Daniel fries it up on the beach to accompany Mary Lu’s buttermilk biscuits. There are also sausages, eggs cooked in bacon fat, and some roasted tomatoes.

After breakfast, the children get ready for the morning’s parade by raiding Mary Lu’s basket of seasonal costumes. Donning Uncle Sam hats and red and blue beads, they’ll march around the two 50-acre lakes that together make up the Harrison Lake community, while older family members look on from their lawn chairs.

#### THE EATING GOES ON AND ON

Then, with Daniel at the helm, food preparations can begin in earnest. Everyone has a job, from picking tomatoes in the garden to prepping the barbecue. “Usually we start with snacky things,” he says, naming his Sweet Pea Guacamole as a perennial favorite. The family scoops it up with corn chips as they fix the rest of the meal.

Burgers and grilled chicken are de rigueur, but Daniel adds some whimsy with his homemade condiments. (He now bottles and sells several of the sauces that were perfected at the annual barbecue, such as his Chipotle Ketchup and Hard Working Mustard.) There’ll be corn on the cob, fresh iced watermelon, and a number of salads. “We always do a slaw of some kind,” he says, “But we stay away from the mayonnaise-based slaws and instead do something with blueberries or use a spicy Caribbean curry vinaigrette.”

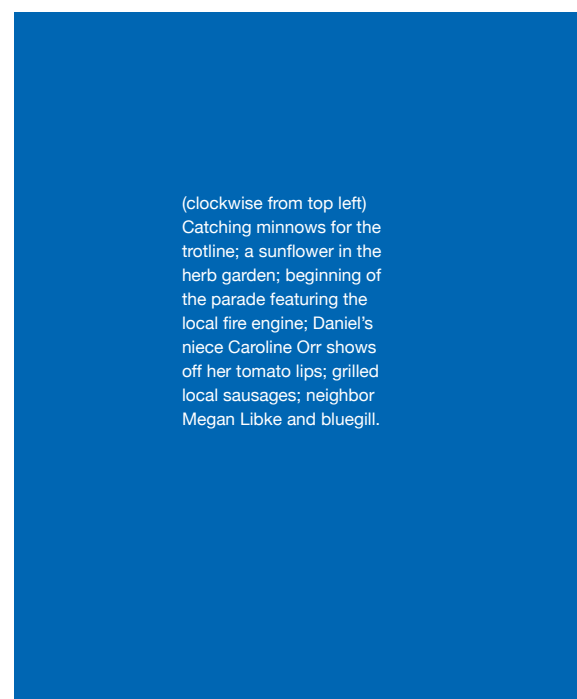
Lunch goes on for hours, with the children sprawled on blankets on the lawn and the adults occupying whatever has been pressed into service as a table, such as an upturned boat. When all have had their fill, around 4 or 5 pm, some will siesta in the shade while others make use of the badminton net or challenge one another to their traditional basketball shooting contest.

After the sun goes down, there are the local fireworks over the lake and, despite Mary Lu’s “clucking,” a few are launched from the Orr’s little stretch of beach. The kids enjoy s’mores by a fire before piling into the basement to crash on bunk beds or the floor.

Then, at last, “a bottle of wine is broken out and the adult fun can start,” says Daniel. Though they rarely last more than an hour or two after the kids have gone to bed, there’s always time for a dip in the lake—which, despite everyone being stuffed to capacity, is traditionally of the skinny variety.



Everyone has a job, from picking tomatoes in the garden to prepping the barbecue.



(clockwise from top left) Catching minnows for the trotline; a sunflower in the herb garden; beginning of the parade featuring the local fire engine; Daniel’s niece Caroline Orr shows off her tomato lips; grilled local sausages; neighbor Megan Libke and bluegill.





# R ECIPES

## Sour Cherry Lemonade

Makes 16 10-oz servings  
 2 lbs pitted fresh, or frozen-and-thawed sour cherries (2 qts)  
 2 cups fresh lemon juice  
 1 ½ cups superfine sugar  
 4 to 6 cups chilled sparkling water  
 3 cups white rum (optional)  
 Fresh sour cherries with stems, for garnish.

Blend cherries in a blender with sugar until very smooth. Strain if necessary. Pour into a 4-quart pitcher. Add lemon juice and dilute with water to taste. Chill well.

**To serve:**  
 Add ice OR add 3 Tbs white rum into each of 16 tall (10-oz) glasses. Top each with ½ cup cherry lemonade and finish with sparkling water. The cherry purée can be made a day or two ahead of time and refrigerated. It also freezes well.

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## Sweet Pea Guacamole

Makes 3 Cups  
 1 lb sweet peas, cooked until skins are tender then shocked in cold water.  
 1 jalapeno, roughly chopped  
 2 cloves garlic  
 1 Tbs ginger, minced  
 10 basil leaves  
 5 sprigs cilantro  
 ½ lb silken tofu  
 ¼ cup olive oil  
 Salt and pepper to taste  
 Tabasco as needed

Purée ingredients together in a blender or food processor until smooth. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and Tabasco.

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## Perfect Barbecued Chicken

**1.** Rinse bone-in, skin-on chicken parts under cold water and toss them with some lemon juice to coat. Allow to sit for 8-10 minutes. (The citrus will remove some of the greasiness of the chicken and encourage a crisper skin.)

**2.** Pat the chicken parts dry with towels. Rub the pieces lightly with a small amount of olive oil and season with salt and pepper or your favorite dry rub mixture.

**3.** Prepare a bed of medium-hot coals in a charcoal grill or turn your gas grill to medium-high heat.

**4.** Clean your grill well by brushing the hot grill grate clean with a stiff wire brush. Using tongs, hold a small, clean rag, dip in oil, and apply a thin coat of the oil on the grill.

**5.** Adjust your grill so there is a hot side and a warm side.

**6.** Put the chicken pieces on the hot grill, skin-side down, and cook for about 8-10 minutes uncovered, until the skin is golden brown. If you have flare-ups, sprinkle with water or beer.

**7.** Cover-cook 20-30 min, turning as needed. (Daniel uses his Big Belly or Wet Your Apricot FARMbrand BBQ sauces, both available at FARMbloomington.)

**8.** Check for doneness by cutting one of the thicker pieces in the middle to the bone. The juices should run clear when you cut into the thickest part of the piece and there shouldn't be any red at the bone.

**9.** If your chicken starts to get too dark on the outside but it isn't cooked thoroughly, you may pop it in the microwave for a couple of minutes to complete cooking.

**10.** Sprinkle with coarse sea salt and freshly ground pepper and garnish with some lemon or lime wedges. Serve extra sauces on the table.

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## Caribbean Island Slaw

Makes 6-8 servings  
 ¼ cup honey  
 ½ cup cider vinegar  
 1 lemon, juiced  
 1 tsp Kitchen d'Orr Mellow Yellow Spice Blend OR curry  
 1 tsp Kitchen d'Orr New Regime Blend OR ¼ Tbs Chinese five-spice  
 1 tsp Kitchen d'Orr Aux Poivres Spice Blend OR ½ Tbs cracked black pepper  
 ½ jalapeno pepper, minced (or your favorite chili to taste)  
 1 head savoy cabbage, chiffonade [cut in thin ribbons]  
 2 large carrots, julienned [cut in thin strips]  
 1 red onion, minced  
 ½ cup Italian parsley, roughly chopped  
 ½ cup cilantro, roughly chopped  
 salt and pepper to taste

Whisk all ingredients; marinate overnight. Chef Daniel's Kitchen d'Orr spices are available at FARMbloomington or online at flavorbank.com.

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## Chef Daniel's Grilling Tips

**1. Charcoal grillers:** Always use more charcoal than you think you need. There's nothing worse than not having enough heat to give your food that good sear. Coals are perfect when they have an even white ash around them: no black unburnt coal and not too much red-hot burn. Also, don't overcrowd the grill. A fire is like a living thing—it needs to be able to breathe or it will tire and go to sleep. Finally, keep an open bottle of beer or wine next to the grill so you can pour some on the fire if it flames up. It adds flavor as well as keeps the fire under control.

**Gas grillers:** Preheat the grill, covered, for at least 10-15 minutes before cooking. This will give you nice grill marks and flavor, and prevent sticking.

(opposite) Sour Cherry Lemonade (top left) Chef Orr's Perfect Barbecued Chicken (bottom) Caribbean Island Slaw (top right) Yum!

**2.** Whether using charcoal or gas, always arrange the heat to have a hot side and a warm side. With charcoal, you'll move the majority of the coals to one side. Gas grillers can simply set one side higher. That way you can "mark" foods on the hot side and slow-cook on the warm side with the cover on. This maximizes flavor, prevents burning, and allows the food to pick up more smoky flavor. Always start cooking the largest and longest-cooking items first and moving them to the warm side of the grill to finish so that everything is ready at the same time.

**3.** Don't move the food around too much. Let it sit and color then move it to the slow-heat side of the grill. I try not to turn anything more than once or twice.

**4.** Use an instant-read thermometer to check doneness. Always check in the center of the thickest part of the item. Guidelines for cooking meats are as follows:  
 Chicken and turkey: 160-165 degrees  
 Pork and veal: 135-145 degrees  
 Beef, lamb, and duck: 115-125 degrees rare, 125-130 medium rare, 135-145 medium. Any more doneness is a waste of time.  
 Fish: Good quality tuna just needs a sear on all sides, but in general the temperatures can be the same as for beef.



**5.** For flavor, get creative with herbs. Use lemongrass, rosemary, sugar-cane, wild fennel, and other types of flavorful branches to use as skewers for meat, fish, and vegetables. Or make a brush by tying rosemary and other herbs on a chopstick or skewer of some type and use this brush to "mop" or apply marinades and sauces to grilled items.

**6.** Place wet onion skins under meat or fish to add a wonderfully sweet, smoky flavor.

**7.** Large pieces of meat (like a pork roast) can be rubbed with garlic, spices, and herbs, rolled in aluminum, then pre-roasted in the oven until tender before finishing on the grill. When finishing, I like to place the roast on the slow side of the grill, place wood chips on the hot side, and cover with the dome so the meat gets a good smoky flavor.

**8.** Never place cooked items back on the trays that the raw food was on. You want your friends to have good memories of your party!

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