

The Farm Crawl Report A look into local produce Spicy recipes to heat up your kitchen

MORSEL

www.neighborhood.coop

Winter 2024 • JAN-MAR



FREE



MORSEL

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION FROM NEIGHBORHOOD CO-OP GROCERY

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EDITORIAL POLICY

Morsel is a quarterly magazine produced by Neighborhood Co-op as a means to share news from the Co-op, promote local food, celebrate the seasons, and inspire our owners and patrons to enjoy a healthy lifestyle full of delicious and nutritious food. The views expressed in Morsel are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Co-op's directors, staff, or ownership. Health and nutrition articles are for informational purposes only and do not constitute medical advice.

SUBMISSION POLICY

Morsel accepts submissions on an ongoing basis. Letters, articles, artwork and ideas are all welcome! We reserve the right to edit content for brevity and clarity. Please send inquiries and submissions to info@neighborhood.coop.

OUR STORE

1815 W Main Street, Carbondale, IL 62901

Neighborhood Co-op is a cooperative grocery store owned by members of our very own community. Most of our staff are even owners! We are a founding member of the National Co-op Grocers, a network of more than 200 cooperative grocery stores all across America. We combine our buying power to bring you the best food at the best value while staying locally governed. We work hard to support our community and improve our local food system.

OUR MISSION

Neighborhood Co-op Grocery aims to serve the needs of its owners and patrons by providing wholesome foods, economically, in the cooperative tradition and in ways that best promote the health of the individual, the community and the earth.

QUESTIONS/ADVERTISING

Contact us at 618.529.3533 or info@neighborhood.coop.

ECO PRINTING

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Farm Crawl Beginnings

This photo shows an early version of what became the Co-op's annual Farm Crawl. Taken circa 2001, Patrick Sweeney of Green Ridge Farm is shown talking to a group of Co-op owners about his ecological growing practices.



Co-op Throwback



Sales & Events

WINTER 2024

For our most up-to-date news, events, and sales, visit us at neighborhood.coop/events or find us on social: facebook.com/carbondalecoop or Instagram [@neighborhood_coop](https://instagram.com/neighborhood_coop)

JANUARY

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

National Soup Month: Warm up with tasty natural and organic soups

3 Wellness Wednesday
10% off all wellness items

7, 14, 21, 28 Saluki Sundays
All students with college ID get 10% off their purchase

FEBRUARY

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

Black History Month: Shop local & national minority-owned products

7 Wellness Wednesday
10% off all wellness items

4, 11, 18, 25 Saluki Sundays
All students with college ID get 10% off their purchase

MARCH

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Owner Appreciation Month: 10% off coupon for a single transaction

6 Wellness Wednesday
10% off all wellness items

3, 10, 17, 24, 31 Saluki Sundays
All students with college ID get 10% off their purchase

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The Farm Crawl Report

The Co-op has been sponsoring annual Farm Crawls since 2012 and last fall's edition was especially fruitful. The purpose of the Farm Crawl is to connect customers to local food sources and to provide an educational opportunity to learn about various aspects of growing crops and managing livestock. This past fall, attendees had access to 17 local southern Illinois farms/producers to hear about each farm's history and to see how they grow food, raise livestock, and bring locally-grown, locally-sourced products to market. Activities included on-site tours, demos, kid activities, food and product sampling, wagon rides, and more.

Though this event raises money for Food Works, our main purpose is to educate consumers on resources in our region; connect how purchasing local supports creates a sustainable environment for local businesses; and the importance of healthy food and products based on healthy soil and practices.

This year, we took a different approach and divided the Farm Crawl into two regions of southern Illinois. This division allowed us to increase reach and also draw more people to the farms. Each region was only available to tour for one day of the weekend. Individual farms hosted a large number of visitors, concentrated into a single day instead of spread over an entire weekend. The event kept the same hours each day from 1 pm-6 pm.

We had seven farms in the Northwest Region, which were available for tours on Saturday, located 60-70 miles northwest of Carbondale. Participating farms in this region offered a new look at what is local and available South of I-64 that our customers may have not heard of prior to this year's event. It also provided some excitement in offering new farms that have never participated in our Farm Crawl.

The 10 farms in the Central Region were located within 25 miles of Carbondale. Participating farms in this region have all participated on the Farm Crawl before, but were only offered a single day to participate. We deemed them "Farm Crawl Favorites" for this year.

Overall, we heard great things from visitors and farmers, and we had beautiful weather all weekend! We had a great turn out and visitors loved the new leg of the crawl. We also got praise on the quality of the promotional materials and the professional booklet design. It gave a new feel to the whole event, setting the stage for years to come.

The 2023 Farm Crawl raised a record donation amount for Food Works of \$5,700!





A Fresh Perspective

by *Jak Tichenor*

Take a closer look into local produce at the Co-op

Chris Neville has worked at Neighborhood Co-op for 16-years and has been manager of the Produce Department since 2012. Co-op board member Jak Tichenor talked with Chris about his part of the store.

Chris, give our readers an overview of your part of the operation.

We focus all our efforts on local produce, vegetables, and fruits. So, I'd say at any given time, as much as half of the department could be local produce, fruits and vegetables, herbs, mushrooms, and nuts. Some of our biggest sellers in the whole store are local pecans.

What does the Co-op consider to be local?

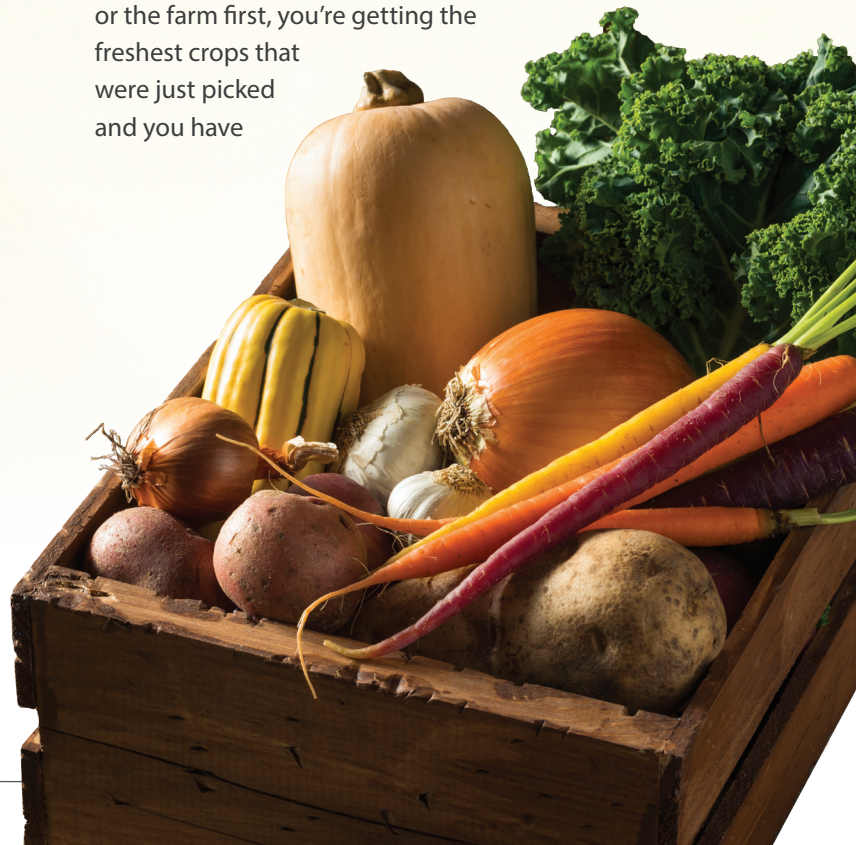
We consider anything within 200-miles or within the state of Illinois to be local. Some of the places in Illinois are beyond 200-miles, but based upon the economic impact, we think it's good to include those because they create jobs beyond the growing of fruit, there's packaging, distribution, and it contributes to the local economy. The majority of the farms we work with, the majority of the sales dollars we have here are from farms as close as one mile away to 16-miles away.

One of the things that I found fascinating is the fact that some of the items may have been picked only a couple of hours before they reach the store. Could you describe that?

Sure, it actually happens more often than you'd think like peaches for example. When we come into the peach season, they're up early in the morning picking the peaches. I get up early, leave my house

and go straight to the orchard. I give them my order on the way, they pack it up onto a pallet and the farmer and I load it into my van. I'll also hit multiple farms on the way back like Country Sprout Organics is only five miles from the Co-op, so I'll get multiple orders on that one trip to maximize everything I can get and reduce driving around.

Often it has to do with the early bird getting the worm. That's why when you get to the orchard or the farm first, you're getting the freshest crops that were just picked and you have



a wider variety to pick from, whereas if you come around later in the day or pay a truck to bring it, you're going to pay for fuel, you'll have less variety. This way you can ensure that the produce is at its freshest.

When it comes to the berry season, my favorite product is the local strawberries, and we sell more local strawberries than anything dollar wise. That's a daily thing, I'll go to the farm every morning and load up my van, cram-packed with local strawberries and bring them back to the store and they sell out within a couple of hours. They're literally picked that morning and I'll go back the next day and we'll do that every day during the season.

What about other fruits like apples and peaches which are grown just down the road from the store?

Right, I like to call it the Southern Illinois food corridor because all of it is concentrated in about a fifteen-mile bubble between here and Alto Pass. We get all our peaches from Echo Valley which is just about five miles away and we have access to some varieties that other orchards don't have. Those peaches when we have them, don't even hit the cooler after they're picked. We're literally driving the van out into the field where they're picked and packaged straight into the van from the tree. So those never hit the warehouse.

Same thing with apples. We're going out there multiple times a week. I was just out yesterday at Rendlemans and picked up 600-pounds of Jonathans and some Golden Delicious. Since we've worked with these people for so long, they give us great deals, it's just great working with the local farmers. We pick and choose who we buy from since we're not owned by a corporation. I know from personal experience since I've visited all these farms many times. I know who has the freshest and cleanest produce so that's one thing we can do that the big chains can't.



When I drove up this morning to do the interview, I saw you unloading a load of fresh pumpkins from SIU Carbondale.

It's the same kind of thing. When I got here this morning, I called Dr. Alan Walters from SIU and told him how many pumpkins we needed for the weekend, and he was actually in Belleville at their research facility there and he had a whole truck full of pumpkins that we purchased. We also get tons of watermelons from them.

There's always something going on. As soon as the farmers harvest their crops, we're already planning for next year. Like Country Sprout Organics, he's already ordering seed for next season so we're going over the numbers, how many hundreds of bags of spinach did we sell? How many thousands of pounds of tomatoes did we sell, that way he knows exactly what to buy and what they will be planting for the Co-op.

They base their crops on the data we pull from our point-of-sale system here in the store.



The biggest challenge is that you have to be on call 24-7, you're basically glued to your phone

because a farmer doesn't wait to pick their crop on

when a store orders it. When they're ready to pick, they call you and they want to know numbers. How much do you need because they need an outlet for right away because they have a limited time to do it before their crop is dead. You have to be ready to answer the phone on a Saturday night and say you can count on us Monday morning to get the 50-cases of strawberries and save them for us.

Tell us about the Link Match program that's been so successful at the Co-op for the last few years. How does it work and who benefits?

The whole community benefits from it in a major way, the farmers benefit from it, and the Co-op benefits. Money is pooled from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a grant program which helps low-income people buy our produce. When they use their Link card in our store for any amount up to \$25, the Co-op matches that in Link dollars, so they can purchase local fruits and vegetables and basically doubling their money. It helps them get more fresh produce in their grocery carts. It helps us purchase more from the local farmers, so they're selling more of their crops, and the Co-op benefits from the sales. That in turn, goes right back to the owners through owner dividends.

What gives you the greatest satisfaction about seeing how owners and customers view your department?

I like watching the community thrive and be happy and healthy and have access to these fresh fruit and vegetables because this is the exact reason my wife and I moved to Carbondale. We're rock climbers. We wanted to live where there's climbing close to town and a place that has good, natural, organic food. The Co-op has all that and we've been huge supporters of the Co-op since day one. We enjoy shopping here and buying the fruits and vegetables.

To know that I'm a key factor in having that door open to the community makes me know that my job is worthwhile because people are hopefully going to be healthier eating from here.



LOCAL PRODUCER SPOTLIGHT

Local is always in season at the Co-op. We are proud to support these Illinois producers and farmers by providing a variety of their goods in our store year-round.

Marcoot Jersey Creamery, Greenville, IL www.marcootjerseycreamery.com

Sustainability has been a cornerstone of this Illinois farm for seven generations. While the Marcoot family has been raising cattle since the mid-1800s, they only started making cheese in 2010. For the past decade, they have been providing artisan and farmstead cheeses across the region.

Excel Bottling Company, Breese, IL www.excelbottling.com

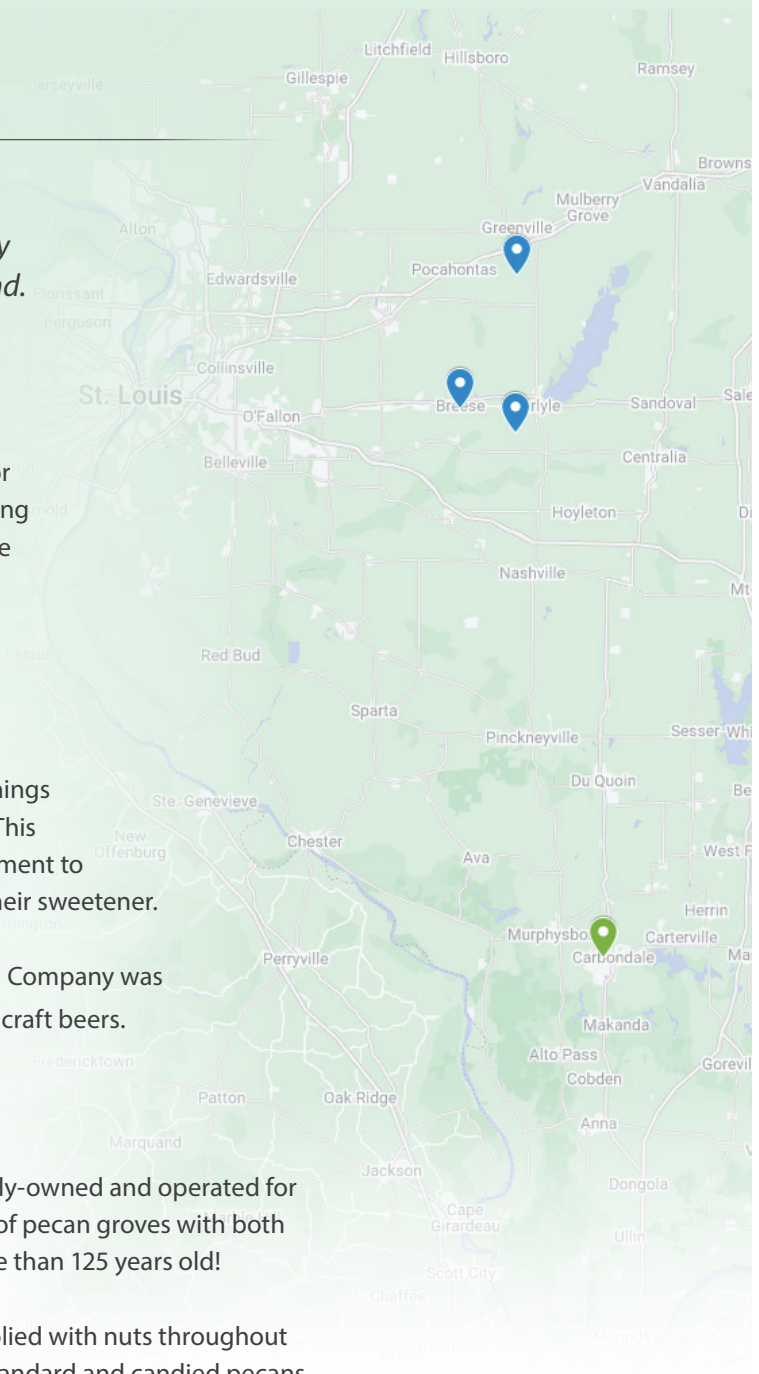
The idea of this local company started with humble beginnings in 1936, and has been a southern Illinois staple ever since. This third generation company still uses vintage bottling equipment to produce a variety of non-diet sodas using cane sugar for their sweetener.

After producing sodas exclusively until 2012, Excel Brewing Company was formed to bottle and distribute a variety of locally-brewed craft beers.

Voss Pecans, Carlyle, IL www.vosspecans.com

Voss Farms is Illinois' largest pecan farm and has been family-owned and operated for more than 30 years. Their 130+ acre farm is home to a mix of pecan groves with both improved and native tree varieties, some of which are more than 125 years old!

Fresh local pecans from this farm keep our customers supplied with nuts throughout the year. Co-op staff travels to Carlyle when our stock of standard and candied pecans has dwindled to guarantee the freshest supply of their product as possible.



STORE FEATURE

FROM THE CO-OP BAKERY

The Co-op Bakery features all natural made-from-scratch breads, pastries, and baked goods crafted with organic and Fair Trade certified ingredients whenever possible. We exclusively utilize organic unbleached and non-bromated flours, free-range brown vegetarian-fed eggs, non-GMO certified sunflower oil, and organic Fair Trade certified cane sugar. Locally sourced ingredients include Voss pecans and Prairie Farms milk and butter. All items are trans-fat free. Vegan and vegetarian options are always available.

Some of our best-selling baked goods include our delicious cookies! There are a few varieties that rotate periodically, but we have a few popular flavors that are typically available throughout the year.

cookies THE CLASSICS

Fiddle Rick

CHOCOLATE CHIP

Our traditional chocolate chip cookie is vegan, made with Earth Balance vegan butter, organic cane sugar, and flax meal.

Woodbox Gang

OATMEAL CHOCOLATE CHIP PECAN

A crisp oatmeal cookie made with organic oats and flax seeds, Voss pecans, and Guittard semisweet chocolate chips.

Phil Brown

PEANUT BUTTER CHOCOLATE CHIP

Our best selling cookie featuring pure Eastwind peanut butter and Guittard chocolate chips.

*natural and
from scratch*



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community service projects, at-need
community efforts, economic
development, education, and safety.



YOUR CONTRIBUTION HELPS STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY

Egyptian Electric will accept applications
from organizations and award much
needed funding!

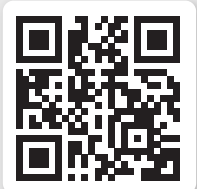


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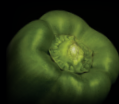
SOME LIKE IT

HOT

Spicy recipes to heat up your kitchen

SCOVILLE SCALE

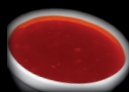
The level of heat in a pepper is expressed in Scoville Heat Units (SHUs). Spicier peppers, which contain more of the chemical compound capsaicin, earn a higher SHU number. Where do your favorite peppers land on the Scoville scale?



Bell Pepper

0 SHUs

Bell peppers are thick-walled, crisp and sweet with no heat.



Sriracha

1,000-6,700 SHUs

The popular hot sauce is not *that* hot in terms of SHUs, adding a delicious depth to many dishes.



Jalapeño

6,000-11,000 SHUs

Still on the lower end of the Scoville scale, much-loved jalapeños bring the heat without overpowering other flavors.



Serrano

10,000-25,000 SHUs

Fierce serrano is small but mighty, with a bright flavor. Add fresh-diced or grill-charred serranos to salsa and sauces.



Habanero

100,000-325,000 SHUs

Beware! Habaneros pack ten times the spice of serranos. Beneath the extra-hot heat is actually a sweet, fruity flavor.

Jamaican Beef Patties

12 hand pies. Prep time: 50 minutes.

Dough

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup vegetable shortening or cold, unsalted butter, thinly sliced
- ½ cup ice water, plus 2 to 3 tablespoons

Filling

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 3 scallions, finely chopped
- 2 large habanero peppers, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- ½ cup dry breadcrumbs
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ cup water

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F and line two baking sheets with parchment. Reserve.
2. Make the dough by mixing the flour, baking powder, turmeric and salt in a large bowl, then cut in the shortening or butter with a pastry cutter or a fork. Drizzle in ice water as you toss the flour mixture with a fork, until all the flour is moistened. Gently press the mixture together until it forms a dough.
3. Place dough on a floured counter and form into an 8-inch-long log, then divide into 12 even, round pieces. Form into disks and cover with a damp towel to keep from drying out.
4. Drizzle the oil in a large skillet set over medium-high heat and add the beef, onion, scallion, habanero peppers, thyme, garlic and ginger. Mix until well combined. Stir, turning and crumbling until the beef is browned and no pink remains, about 5 minutes. Stir in the breadcrumbs, curry



- powder and salt and mix well, then add ½ cup water and cover the pan. Simmer the mixture for 3 minutes, then uncover and stir until the pan is nearly dry. Let cool.
5. Get a rolling pin, a cup with water and a pastry brush. Roll out each dough disk to a 6-inch oval shape. Spoon ¼ cup filling on half, leaving a ¾-inch border. Moisten the edge of the dough with water using the brush or your finger, fold the upper half of the dough over to enclose the filling and seal. Place on a baking sheet.
6. Bake at 400°F for 20 minutes, until the pastry is browned along the edges. Serve while hot.

As beloved in Jamaica as hamburgers are in the U.S., these flaky hand pies filled with savory beef and veggies are flavorful and spicy enough that no condiments are needed.



Chorizo Cornbread Stuffing

Serves 4. Prep time: 40 minutes; 20 minutes active.

- ½ cup ground Mexican-style chorizo (casings removed), or plant-based version
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 rib celery, chopped
- 1 small green pepper, chopped
- 1 large carrot
- 3 cups cubed cornbread
- 1 cup chicken stock
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F, and lightly oil a small casserole or baking pan.
2. Place a large skillet over medium heat, then crumble the chorizo into the pan, stirring and breaking into pieces as you cook until browned. Pour off any excess fat. Add onion, celery, green pepper and carrot and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in the chicken stock.
3. Turn off the heat, add cornbread, salt and pepper, and fold to mix. Spread in prepared pan and bake for 20 minutes. When the top is lightly browned, cool on a rack briefly before serving hot.

Spicy chorizo sausage gives the whole pan a bit of heat. This recipe works well as a main dish or as a hearty side with simple roast chicken.

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Sriracha Glazed Turkey Meatballs

Serves 6 (24 meatballs). Prep time: 40 minutes; 15 minutes active.

Meatballs

- 1 pound ground turkey, or plant-based version
- 3 green onions, minced
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon minced ginger
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- ½ cup panko breadcrumbs
- 2 tablespoons Sriracha
- 1 teaspoon tamari
- ½ teaspoon ground white pepper
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil

Glaze

- ⅓ cup apricot preserves
- 1 to 2 tablespoons Sriracha
- 1 ½ tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon tamari
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In large bowl, gently combine all meatball ingredients until everything is evenly distributed. Form mixture into small balls, using 1 to 1½ tablespoons of meat per ball. Place the meatballs onto a rimmed baking tray and into the oven. Bake for 10 minutes and turn the meatballs. Bake for another 10 minutes until cooked through.
3. While the meatballs bake, combine all glaze ingredients in a small pot. Whisk and cook over medium heat for 5 minutes or until mixture is slightly thickened. To serve, toss or brush meatballs with warm glaze.

Inspired by Vietnamese banh mi sandwiches, this variation melds traditional fresh vegetables and herbal flavors with savory turkey and tangy cranberries.



Turkey Banh Mi with Quick-Pickled Cranberries

Serves 4. Prep time: 40 minutes.

Quick-Pickled Cranberries

- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup rice vinegar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup chopped cranberries
- 1 cup shredded carrot

Sandwich

- 1 or 2 baguettes, cut into 4 6-inch lengths
- 4 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh ginger
- 2 cups shredded turkey
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce, more if needed
- 1 teaspoon five-spice powder
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 12 slices cucumber
- 1 small jalapeño, sliced
- ½ cup fresh cilantro, torn
- Sriracha sauce (optional)

1. In a medium bowl, combine the sugar, rice vinegar and salt, then stir to combine. Add the cranberries and carrots and toss to coat. Let stand at room temperature while you make the rest of the sandwich.
2. Preheat the broiler. Slice the baguette pieces almost all the way through lengthwise and open each like a book. Spread a tablespoon of mayo on the cut sides of each piece. Place on a sheet pan and reserve.
3. In a large saute pan over medium heat, drizzle the oil and add the onion. Stir for 5 minutes, until softened. Add the garlic and ginger and stir for a minute, then add the turkey and sprinkle with fish sauce, five-spice powder and sugar. Stir until the turkey is heated through. Remove from heat and keep warm.
4. Place the prepared baguette slices under the broiler and broil until the mayonnaise is bubbly. Fill each baguette with the turkey mixture, then top it with cucumber slices, cranberry mixture, jalapeño and cilantro. If desired, drizzle with Sriracha sauce. Serve immediately.



Neighborhood Co-op Grocery

1815 West Main Street
Carbondale, IL 62901



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