

Full Moon Suppers at Salt Water Farm: Recipes from Land and Sea

Annemarie Ahearn

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When Annemarie Ahearn was a teenager, she was dismayed by her parents' decision to relocate from Wisconsin to build a house on a boggy former sheep farm on the Maine coast. Ahearn's post-college mindset morphed over time, and eventually she planned a cooking school and demonstration farm on her parents' land. Salt Water Farm, named after an E. B. White essay, is the happy result, where Ahearn teaches, forages, cultivates, and hosts sold-out monthly suppers for twenty.

Each of these feasts features locally sourced foods and New England flavors, and honors aspects of Native American symbolism. January's Full Wolf Moon supper reinforces gratitude for warm hearths and bellies full of comforting, slow-cooked foods redolent of cream, cinnamon, and citrus, whereas August's Full Corn Moon celebrates a riotous vegetable bounty that calls for a simpler touch in the kitchen. Clearly explained recipes for every supper course, from cocktails to desserts, are enhanced with photos of the finished result, and occasional sidebars add information on cooking methods and recipe variations.

What makes this cookbook so distinctive, however, is Ahearn's thoughtful writing. Her introduction to each monthly supper chapter is an ode to the rhythm of the seasons on the New England coast, to the area wildlife, livestock, and plants, and to seasonal chores. It is clear that her menu mojo is keenly attuned to these interconnections. Her beginning chapter, "How to be a Graceful Host," is also a sensitively written playbook for replacing the frazzle with orderly progression of kitchen prep and the simple joy of having an uninterrupted day of cooking capped with the reward of feeding others well at your table.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (May/June 2017)

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