# "You bought what?" By Chef Dan Leff

ext time you're at one of the local farmer's markets, look carefully. Past the heirloom tomatoes, Brentwood Diamond corn, and baby arugula, you'll find them ... a variety of Asian vegetables that most casual shoppers lack the inclination to deal with.

Simply put, too many questions arise when seeing these veggies: "How does it taste? Do I need special equipment to cook this? Do I need a really specific recipe? Not to worry, help is on the way for preparing 4 of the most commonly found Asian vegetables.

#### About Chef Dan Leff... After graduating from the CA Culinary Academy in 1995, I've worked in venues around the

Bay Area. Having worked with Bradley Ogden at the Lark Creek Inn, I specialize in Classic American cuisine, using seasonal ingredients, with a fine dining emphasis.

Chef Dan Leff Catering focuses on intimate, elegant sit-down dinners and small corporate events. http://www.chefdanleff.com



This variety of spinach is identifiable by its hollow stems. These stems are a part of Water Spinach's appeal, as they lend a slight crunch to the vegetable when cooked.

When handling this type of spinach, remember:

- Don't cut away too much of the stem this is the part that makes it distinctive. Wash thoroughly, then trim the stalks into fairly large pieces
- · This type of spinach requires a slightly longer cooking time than conventional spinach (which tends to wilt instantly). Chinese Water Spinach does well when sautéed in garlic and/or ginger, then allowed to braise in its own liquids for 2-3 minutes. Cooked in this manner, it's a good accompaniment wherever a vegetable side dish is called for.



#### Bitter Melon

This item looks like a wrinkled cucumber with a light green skin. It's called "bitter" for a very good reason and requires specific handling: • Before using, wash lightly and trim off the ends. Slice lengthwise, and

- remove the seeds and accompanying pith with a tablespoon. • Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Add the melon halves and poach for 3-4 minutes. Drain, rinse with cold water, and allow cooling down. The pieces should still be firm; they will be cooked again later so
- don't overcook! • At this point, the melon pieces can be cut into strips or cubes. They are best when prepared in dishes with enough richness to balance out their undeniable bitterness. When added to a hearty, spicy lamb stew, they add a touch of bitter flavor. They do well in wonton soup; the richness of the broth and the wontons offset their bitterness.



#### Chinese Broccoli ("Gai Lan")

Like Water Spinach, this variety is tougher than its Western counterpart. Only a few pointers are required:

- Wash lightly, then trim off just a half inch of the stalky ends. Cut into large pieces.
- Bring salted water to a boil, add the pieces, and poach for
- 4-5 minutes. Drain and allow to cool. • The Chinese Broccoli can now be used in a number of different ways:
- It can be poached again, briefly, to warm it through at this point it can be served with richer foods, it's crunchy texture providing some distinction
- It can be sautéed briefly in ginger, garlic, and oyster sauce this makes for a good, interesting vegetable side dish
- If cut into thinner pieces, it can be added to a chicken broth-style soup for added texture and nutrients



#### Chinese Long Beans

In their long rope-like bundles, with leathery green or purple skin, there's something otherworldly about these beans. Preparing them is actually quite easy, however:

- · Wash them lightly and trim off just the ends. Cut them into more easily edible pieces, perhaps 2"-3" in length
- These beans are versatile they can be deep-fried (until the skin just starts to wrinkle) and drained, poached in boiling salted water (for 3-4 minutes) and cooled, or steamed.
- They can be used for stir-fries, in soups, or even in salads (surprisingly, they do well in potato salads, especially if enough mustard and vinegar are used in the dressing).



This recipe is available on our web site. Go to: http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/html/read.html

#### Orinda's Saturday Market By Lee Borrowman



he Orinda Farmers' Market has settled nicely into its new location on Orinda Way. Although it is somewhat smaller than its Moraga counterpart, the Orinda Market has a loyal following that is growing as the summer weeks go by. This past weekend, it appeared to be all about the tomatoes!

"We absolutely love our new location," said Orinda Farmers' Market Manager Janice Foust, who believes the proximity to the Park, Library and Community Center is bringing many new customers to the Market each week. "Business is good; we've added several new vendors and are working on bringing in others." New additions this year include small local winery Periscope Cellars, Holding Ranch beef, and Empi empanadas.

Jeanne and Loyd W. McCormick, who have lived in Orinda for forty years, come to the Market every week and "love it." Mrs. McCormick comes particularly for the tomatoes because, "They taste like tomatoes! I can't get them like this in the store." Orinda resident Etheredge shops the market for the best produce when-

ever she is in town. "It is fresher, and the tomatoes taste better," Etheredge explained, although she preferred the Market's former location because it did not require the closure of a main street.

Nessa Feller likes the new location of the market because she can walk there directly from the soccer field with her son Noah after his game. She comes to the Market, "For the fresh food,





Jeanne and Loyd W. McCormick

nice community feeling and to see everyone." She enjoys the opportunity to teach Noah about different vegetables and flowers and to catch up with friends. "It feels healthy," she added.

The Orinda Farmers'

Market will be open from 9:00-1:00 every Saturday through Nov. 20.

Roving reporters Wendy and Andy Scheck, who can frequently be found at Farmers' Markets, contributed to this article.

283-2345

283-6639

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376-1411

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254-2800

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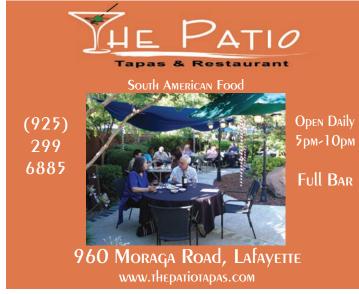
32 Lafayette Circle. Petar's is open for lunch

Monday through Saturday from 11:30 to 4:00 and open for dinner nightly.



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## LAMORINDA's Restaurants

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American		
Bistro	3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-7108
Chow Restaurant	53 Lafayette Cir, Laf	962-2469
Hungry Hunter	3201 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	938-3938
Quiznos	3651 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	962-0200
Ranch House	1012 School St, Mor	376-5127
Terzetto Cuisine	1419 Moraga Way, Mor	376-3832
The Cheese Steak Shop	3455 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-1234
BBQ		
Bo's Barbecue	3422 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-7133
Burger Joint		
Flippers	960 Moraga Rd, Laf	284-1567
Nation's Giant Hamburgers	400 Park, Mor	376-8888
Nation's Giant Hamburgers	76 Moraga Way, Ori	254-8888
Café		
Express Cafe	3732 Mt. Diablo Blvd # 170, Laf	283-7170
Ferrari- Lucca Delicatessens	23 Lafayette Cir, Laf	299-8040
Geppetto's caffe	87 Orinda Way, Ori	253-9894
California Cuisine		
Metro Lafayette	3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-4422
Shelby's	2 Theatre Sq, Ori	254-9687
Caribbean		
Calypso Bar & Grill Chinese	2 Theatre Sq. Suite 153, Ori	258-9686
Asia Palace Restaurant	1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor	376-0809
Chef Chao Restaurant	343 Rheem Blvd, Mor	376-1740
China Moon Restaurant	380 Park St, Mor	376-1828
The Great Wall Restaurant	3500 Golden Gate Way, Laf	284-3500
Hsiangs Mandarin Cuisine	1 Orinda Way # 1, Ori	253-9852
Lily's House	3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #A, Laf	284-7569
Mandarin Flower	581 Moraga Rd, Mor	376-7839
Panda Express	3608 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	962-0288
Szechwan Chinese Restaurant	79 Orinda Way, Ori	254-2020
Uncle Yu's Szechuan	999 Oak Hill Řá, Laf	283-1688
Yan's Restaurant	3444 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-2228

**Coffee Shop** 1018 Oak Hill Rd #A, Laf Millie's Kitchen 283-2397 Squirrel's Coffee Shop 998 Moraga Rd, Laf 284-7830 Village Inn Café 290 Village Square, Ori 254-6080 Continental Petar's Restaurant 32 Lafayette Cir, Laf 284-7117 3531 Plaza Way, Laf Vino Restaurant 284-1330 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Laf 283-7108 **Duck Club Restaurant Hawaiian Grill** 2 Theatre Square, St. 142, Ori 253-1338 Indian 3740 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf 284-5700 India Palace **Swad Indian Cuisine** 3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf 962-9575 Italian 3406 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf 283-3869 Giardino 100 Lafayette Cir, St. 101, Laf 284-5282 La Finestra Ristorante La Piazza 15 Moraga Way, Ori 253-9191 975 Moraga Rd, Laf 284-3081 Mangia Ristorante Pizzeria 1375 Moraga Way, Mor Michael's 376-4300 Mondello's 337 Rheem Blvd, Mor 376-2533 Pizza Antica 3600 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf 299-0500 Postino 3565 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf 299-8700 360 Park St, Mor 377-7662 Ristorante Amoroma Japanese Asia Palace Sushi Bar 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor 376-0809 Blue Ginko 3518-A Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf 962-9020 3474 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf Kane Sushi 284-9709 Niwa Restaurant 1 Camino Sobrante # 6, Ori 254-1606 2 Theatre Sq # 118, Ori 254-7088 Serika Restaurant Tamami's Japanese Restaurant 356 Park St, Mor 376-2872 19 Moraga Way, Ori 253-8399 Yu Sushi **Jazz Dinner Club** Joe's of Lafayette 3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Laf 299-8807 The Orinda House 258-4445 65 Moraga Way, Ori Mediterranean 2 Theatre Sq # 105, Ori 254-5290 Oasis Café 3594 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf 299-8822

3339 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf El Charro Mexican Dining 3563 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf El Jaro Mexican Cafe La Cocina Mexicana 23 Orinda Way, Ori 1375-B Moraga Way, Mor 3596 Mt. Diable Blvd, Laf Mucho wraps Baja Fresh Mexican Grill Celia's Restaurant 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf El Balazo 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf 74 Moraga Way, Ori Maya Taqueria El Balazo 3518D Mt. Diablo Blvd. Laf Numero Uno Taqueria 3616 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf Pizza 3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf Aladino's Pizza Mountain Mike's Pizza 504 Center St, Mor Pennini's 1375 Moraga Rd, Mor Round Table Pizza "361 Rheem Blvd, ", Mor 3637 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf Round Table Pizza Village Pizza 19 Orinda Way # Ab, Ori 1 Camino Sobrante # 4, Ori Zamboni's Pizza Sandwiches/Deli 1480 Moraga Rd # A, Mor Bianca's Deli Europa Hofbrau Deli & Pub 64 Moraga Way , Ori 484 Center St, Mor Gourmet Bistro Café Kasper's Hot Dogs 103 Moraga Way, Ori Noah's Bagels 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf Orinda Deli 19 F Orinda Way, Ori Singaporean/Malaysian 3647 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf **South American** 960 Moraga Road, Laf The Patio Tapas and restaurant Steak Casa Orinda 20 Bryant Way, Ori Tea 71 Lafayette Cir, Laf Patesserie Lafayette Thai 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd # B, Laf Amarin Thai Cuisine 99 Orinda Way, Ori Baan Thai Royal Siam 512 Center St, Mor 23 Orinda Way # F, Ori Siam Orchid

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3655 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf

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Per Tutti Ristorante

Mexican 360 Gourmet Burrito