

GRANDPA BILL'S NO RECIPE FOODS

Cooking With the Garden's Colors

Sisterhood Gardens at Ten



The garden offered the palette. The table followed.



A garden-led anniversary menu, adapted for the home kitchen



SISTERHOOD GARDENS AT TEN

Cooking With the Garden's Colors

An anniversary recipe booklet from Grandpa Bill's No Recipe Foods

How to Use This Book

These recipes offer a direction, not a single destination. Quantities are useful starting points. Taste as you go, pay attention to texture and temperature, and adjust until the food makes sense in your kitchen.

Allergen Note

Recipes in this guide include peanuts, soy, sesame, wheat, eggs, and dairy. Verify packaged ingredients for your needs and prevent cross-contact with separate tools, bowls, and serving utensils. The peanut-ginger sauce should remain clearly labeled and separate - or be omitted entirely.

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A Kitchen-Language Ladder

The guide keeps useful culinary language, then gives you a rung to stand on. Learn the term, watch for the sensory cue, and let the food confirm what the word means.

Sweat

Cook gently in a little fat over low or medium-low heat until softened and translucent, without browning. It is not a dry-pan technique.

Dry-brine

Salt food in advance and refrigerate it uncovered. Time carries the seasoning inward and helps the surface dry for better browning.

Probe-tender

A skewer or thermometer slides into the food with very little resistance. Texture gets the final vote.

Fold

Use a spatula to lift and turn a mixture gently, combining it without beating out the air.

Zest

The fragrant colored outer skin of citrus, removed without the bitter white pith underneath.

Shimmering oil

Oil that looks loose and faintly rippled across the surface: hot enough to wake up aromatics, but not smoking.

Reverse-sear

Cook gently until the center is nearly done, then finish with high heat to build a browned crust.

Defat

Let cooking juices settle, then spoon or pour off the fat that rises to the top.

Emulsify

Whisk oil into a water-based liquid until they look temporarily unified instead of immediately separating.

Julienne

Cut into thin matchsticks. Precision is welcome; identical little vegetable soldiers are not required.

You do not need to memorize the ladder before cooking. Return when a word feels like a locked door; the definition is the key, and the pan still gets the final vote.



1. SISTERHOOD GARDENS AT TEN

The Garden Before the Menu

Welcome to the Anniversary Table

This booklet grew from the meal created for Sisterhood Gardens' tenth anniversary - a celebration of a place shaped by food, color, care, and community.

The menu began with the garden itself. Each dish drew inspiration from something growing there: the deep burgundy of a dahlia, the bright heat of red and orange flowers, the cool greens of herbs and leaves, the purple of potatoes and cabbage, or the fruit growing on the orchard hillside.

The goal was not to reproduce the garden literally. It was to let its colors, contrasts, and abundance guide the food - to create a table that felt like it belonged to the place being celebrated.

A Garden Rooted in Community

Sisterhood Gardens sits near Arch Street and Brotherhood Way in San Francisco's Oceanview-Merced Heights-Ingleside neighborhood. What is now a thriving community garden began as a neighborhood vision for transforming underused public land into a shared green space.

After years of planning and collaboration between residents, community groups, and the City of San Francisco, the garden broke ground in 2016. A project of the Chinese Progressive Association, it has grown into a place for food, flowers, pollinators, learning, cultural gatherings, volunteer days, and the ordinary relationship-building that makes a neighborhood feel held.

Ten years in, the garden's story is not simply about transforming a piece of land. It is about what becomes possible when a community is given room to plant something together - and the time and support to keep tending it.



SISTERHOOD GARDENS AT TEN

Sitting Long Enough to Notice

Sitting With the Garden

Before I planned the anniversary menu, I went to Sisterhood Gardens and sat there for several hours.

I was not looking for ingredients or trying to force an idea into place. I wanted to pay attention - to notice which colors repeated themselves, which plants pulled my eye, and how the garden felt once I stayed long enough to stop treating it like scenery.

Eventually, the menu began to reveal itself through color. Deep burgundy and plum suggested tri-tip and balsamic. Bright reds, oranges, and yellows became mango, habanero, hibiscus, and chile. Pale greens found their way into scallions, herbs, lettuce, cabbage, and garden vegetables. Purple appeared through potatoes, slaw, and fruit. The apple cake and rhubarb-plum compote carried the inspiration all the way to the orchard.

Flavor still had to lead the final decisions. But the garden opened the first door. That felt deeply connected to the way Grandpa Bill cooked: pay attention first; let the food come afterward.

From Event-Day Adaptation to Home-Kitchen Choice

The original plan was to mix each sauce directly into its intended protein before service. On event day, the proteins and sauces were served separately instead.

Guests enjoyed exploring the combinations, and some preferred the Grandpa Bill's-seasoned proteins on their own. The additional choices also made a busy serving line more complicated - a useful reminder that a home table and a large community event ask different things of a menu.

For this home-kitchen guide, the modular approach becomes intentional. Proteins and sauces are presented separately so you can choose one pairing, try several, or skip the sauce altogether. Around a home table, there is room to wander.



PROTEINS

Black Satin Tri-Tip



Inspired by
Black Satin
Dahlia

Sliced Tri-tip

Tender sliced tri-tip served with a sweet and tangy plum-balsamic relish. Perfectly seasoned and cooked to a warm pink center.



Garden Inspiration

The Black Satin dahlia moves through deep red, burgundy, and nearly black depending on the light. The tri-tip carries that palette in a dark crust, warm pink center, and glossy plum-balsamic scallion sauce.

Why It Works

Tri-tip is flavorful enough to need very little fuss. A dry brine seasons it through; Grandpa Bill's Spicy & Savory blend builds a bold exterior; and a reverse sear cooks the center gently before a final blast of heat develops the crust. The fruit-and-balsamic sauce brings optional sweetness and acid without softening that hard-earned bark.

Grandpa Bill's Lab Notes

On the Reverse Sear

Cook gently first and finish hot. The first stage gives you an even interior; the second is there to build crust, not rescue the center.

On Temperature

The shape of tri-tip varies wildly. Begin checking early and trust the thermometer more than the clock.

On the Grain

The grain changes direction across the roast. Look before cooking, take a photo if needed, then divide and slice each section against its own grain. A perfect roast sliced badly can still chew like a polite leather belt.

THE WORKING RECIPE

Black Satin Tri-Tip

SERVES
4-6PREP
15 min + brineCOOK
60-100 min + restEFFORT
Moderate

Ingredients

Meat

- 1 tri-tip roast, about 2 to 2 1/2 pounds

Pantry

- Kosher salt, to taste
- Grandpa Bill's Spicy & Savory seasoning, to taste
- Neutral high-heat oil, if needed for searing (I use avocado oil)

For Serving

- Plum-balsamic scallion sauce, on the side

Cook by Paying Attention

Salt it early. Pat the tri-tip dry, season generously with kosher salt, and refrigerate uncovered on a rack overnight when you can.

Study the grain. Before seasoning hides the evidence, notice where the muscle fibers change direction. A quick phone photo is cheap insurance.

Start low. Season with Grandpa Bill's Spicy & Savory blend. For a medium-rare finish, roast at 250°F until the thickest section reaches 120-125°F. For a 2 to 2 1/2 pound roast, begin checking around 45-60 minutes; shape and starting temperature matter more than the clock.

Finish hot. Sear over a very hot grill or in a heavy skillet, turning as needed, until a deep crust forms and the center reaches roughly 130-135°F for medium-rare. The temperature may rise a little more while the roast rests.

Rest and slice. Rest 10-15 minutes. Divide where the grain changes, then slice each section thinly against its grain.

Serve with options. Put the plum-balsamic scallion sauce alongside the platter. Drizzle responsibly - or with complete abandon.

Original Event Pairing

At the anniversary, the tri-tip met plum, balsamic, and scallion. The fruit echoed the Black Satin dahlia; the acidity and allium kept the beef lively.



PROTEINS

Low-and-Slow Pulled Pork



Garden Inspiration

One batch of pork became two garden stories: warm orange and gold for the Sylvia Craig Hunter dahlia, and soft yellow-green for Serenity. The pork is the steady soil underneath both - rich, deeply seasoned, and generous enough to take more than one path.

Why It Works

Pork shoulder rewards patient heat. Grandpa Bill's Sweet & Spicy blend builds a savory-sweet bark while collagen slowly relaxes into tenderness. Keeping the cooking juices with the meat gives you moist pork that tastes complete before a single sauce enters the room.

Grandpa Bill's Lab Notes

On the Finish Line

The temperature is a clue, not a verdict. Around 200-205°F, slide in a probe or skewer. It should meet very little resistance in several spots.

On the Rest

Rest the shoulder before pulling. The meat stays juicier, the bark settles, and your hands will send you a thank-you card.

On the Juices

Reserve, defat, and return enough cooking liquid to make the pork glossy. Sauce should be a choice; dryness should not be.

THE WORKING RECIPE

Low-and-Slow Pulled Pork

SERVES
4-6

PREP
15 min

COOK
6-9 hr + rest

EFFORT
Patient

Ingredients

Meat

- 1 boneless pork shoulder, about 3 pounds

Pantry

- Grandpa Bill's Sweet & Spicy seasoning, about 2 tablespoons or to taste
- Kosher salt and black pepper, as needed

For Serving

- Slider buns or lettuce cups, optional
- Ginger-scallion sauce and mango-habanero sauce, on the side

Cook by Paying Attention

Season with confidence. Trim only thick, hard surface fat. Coat the pork evenly with Grandpa Bill's Sweet & Spicy blend, adding salt only if your blend and palate ask for it.

Start low and stay there. Place the pork in a covered roasting pan or Dutch oven and roast at 250°F. Begin checking around 6 hours, but expect the exact timing to move with the size and shape of the shoulder.

Cook to feel. When the center is near 200-205°F, probe several areas. Keep cooking until the probe slips in with very little resistance and the shoulder yields when pressed.

Rest before pulling. Rest, loosely covered, for 45-60 minutes. Pull while still warm, discarding large pockets of fat.

Bring the good stuff back. Defat the pan juices and fold enough back into the pork to keep it moist and glossy. Taste before adding anything else.

Let people choose. Serve the pork plain with sauces alongside. It is excellent in a slider, but it does not require bread, sauce, or paperwork to prove itself.

Original Event Pairing

The planned pairings were ginger-scallion and mango-habanero. Serving both on the side turned one pork shoulder into a small choose-your-own-adventure.



PROTEINS

Savory Chicken Thighs



Inspired by
Veca Lucia
Dahlia

Peanut Chicken Butter Lettuce Wrap

Tender chicken tossed in a creamy peanut ginger sauce with crisp vegetables in cool butter lettuce. Fresh, crunchy, and satisfying.



Garden Inspiration

The Veca Lucia dahlia brought soft white and blush-pink tones to the table. Tender chicken, pale-green butter lettuce, radish, and scallion translated that gentle palette into something crisp, savory, and quietly rich.

Why It Works

Chicken thighs stay tender through roasting and reheating. Soy and sesame season the meat without making it dependent on the peanut sauce, so guests can build the original pairing or enjoy a simple Grandpa Bill's-seasoned bite on its own.

Grandpa Bill's Lab Notes

On Thighs

Dark meat gives you a wider margin than breast meat. Cook until done and juicy, not until it has filed for retirement.

On Sauce Timing

Sauce at the table preserves the chicken's browned edges and keeps the lettuce crisp. Keep the peanut-ginger sauce clearly labeled and physically separate so anyone avoiding peanuts can choose confidently.

On Lettuce Cups

Dry the leaves well and build just before eating. Water is not a condiment.

THE WORKING RECIPE

Savory Chicken Thighs

SERVES
4-6

PREP
15 min

COOK
25-35 min

EFFORT
Easy

Ingredients

Chicken

- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste
- Grandpa Bill's Savory & Mild seasoning, to taste

For Serving

- Butter lettuce leaves, optional
- Peanut-ginger sauce, clearly labeled and served separately
- Sliced scallions, radishes, or cilantro, as desired

Cook by Paying Attention

Season lightly. Toss the thighs with soy sauce, sesame oil, black pepper, and enough Grandpa Bill's seasoning to coat. Taste your seasoning blend before adding extra salt.

Roast until juicy. Arrange on a sheet pan and roast at 425°F until browned and cooked through, usually 25-35 minutes. Look for at least 165°F internally; thighs remain tender a little beyond that.

Rest and cut. Rest 5-10 minutes, then chop or slice into bite-sized pieces. Spoon any good pan juices back over the chicken.

Build or don't. Serve warm with lettuce, garnishes, and peanut-ginger sauce alongside. A bowl and fork are also valid kitchen equipment.

Original Event Pairing

Peanut-ginger sauce was the original partner, with crisp lettuce and fresh garnishes providing contrast.



PROTEINS

Crispy Crumbled Tofu



Inspired by
Red Dahlia

Hibiscus Chili Lime Tofu Lettuce Wrap

Crispy tofu glazed with hibiscus, chile, and lime over crunchy vegetables in butter lettuce. Bright, tangy, and lightly spicy.



Garden Inspiration

The red dahlia supplied the energy: hibiscus, chile, lime, and the browned edges of hand-crumbled tofu. Butter lettuce and fresh green garnishes keep the whole thing bright rather than heavy.

Why It Works

Hand-crumbling creates irregular edges that crisp well while leaving some tender centers. Grandpa Bill's seasoning gives the tofu enough flavor to stand on its own; hibiscus chili-lime sauce adds a bright, optional finish.

Grandpa Bill's Lab Notes

On Pressing

You do not need to erase every molecule of water. A short press removes enough moisture to help the edges brown while leaving the center tender.

On Crumbling

Break the tofu up by hand into uneven, bite-sized pieces. The mix of small crags and larger crumbles is useful: more edges brown, and the finished texture stays interesting.

On Crowding

Spread the tofu in a thin layer. If it is piled up, it steams. If it has room, it develops the crisp edges we came here for.

THE WORKING RECIPE

Crispy Crumbled Tofu

SERVES

4-6

PREP

15 min

COOK

25-35 min

EFFORT

Easy

Ingredients

Tofu

- 1 block extra-firm tofu, about 16 ounces
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- Grandpa Bill's Savory & Mild seasoning, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste

For Serving

- Butter lettuce leaves, optional
- Hibiscus chili-lime sauce, on the side
- Scallions, cilantro, or radish, as desired

Cook by Paying Attention

Press briefly. Wrap the tofu in a clean towel and press under a light weight for 15-20 minutes.

Crumble and season. Break the tofu into uneven, bite-sized crumbles by hand. Toss gently with Grandpa Bill's seasoning and just enough oil to coat without crushing the pieces.

Give it room. Spread in a thin, even layer on a lightly oiled or parchment-lined sheet pan.

Bake for edges. Roast at 425°F for 25-35 minutes, turning once or twice, until the edges are crisp and the center remains tender.

Serve modularly. Pile into lettuce cups or bowls and offer hibiscus chili-lime sauce alongside. Add enough to wake the tofu up, not erase it.

Original Event Pairing

The tart, ruby hibiscus sauce was designed for the tofu and red-dahlia palette, but guests were free to cross-pollinate.



3. THE SAUCE GARDEN

Five Sauces, No Assigned Seating

At the anniversary, the sauces were served separately from their intended proteins. Guests enjoyed choosing among them, while the added decisions also made a busy serving line more complicated. In this home-kitchen guide, the same modular idea becomes intentional: choose one pairing, sample several, or skip sauce entirely.

Tri-tip

Plum-balsamic scallion

Pulled pork

Ginger-scallion or mango-habanero

Chicken

Peanut-ginger

Tofu

Hibiscus chili-lime

Taste each sauce after it rests. Fruit, chile, alliums, and peanut butter all change their volume once they have had a minute to think.

THE SAUCE GARDEN

The Burgundy Corner

Plum-Balsamic Scallion Sauce

Jammy fruit, dark acidity, and fresh allium for tri-tip - or anything else that needs a little burgundy drama.

SERVES	PREP	COOK	EFFORT
About 1 1/2 cups	15 min	20-30 min	Easy

Ingredients

- 3 ripe plums, diced
- 1 small shallot, finely diced
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced, whites and greens separated
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, plus more to taste
- 1-2 tablespoons brown sugar, only if the fruit needs it
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
- Neutral oil (I use avocado oil), as needed
- Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste

Method

Sweat the aromatics. Sweat the shallot and scallion whites: cook them gently in a little oil over low or medium-low heat until softened and translucent, without browning.

Let the plums decide. Add plums and balsamic. Simmer until soft and spoonable but still recognizable. Add sugar only after tasting the fruit.

Finish fresh. Season with salt and pepper; remove from heat and stir in thyme and scallion greens. Add balsamic if the sauce needs more lift.

Taste It Here

Look for dark fruit first, then acidity, then a fresh scallion finish. If it tastes merely sweet, it is not done balancing.



THE SAUCE GARDEN

The Fresh Green Corner

Ginger-Scallion Sauce

Fresh, savory, and aromatic - the sauce that makes a plain spoonful of pork suddenly sit up straighter.

SERVES	PREP	COOK	EFFORT
About 1 cup	15 min	5 min	Easy

Ingredients

- 1 packed cup thinly sliced scallions
- 2 tablespoons finely grated fresh ginger
- 1/4 cup neutral oil (I use avocado oil)
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 1/2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 2 teaspoons sesame oil
- Kosher salt, only if needed

Method

Combine the aromatics. Put scallions and ginger in a heatproof bowl.

Wake them up. Warm the neutral oil until shimmering - loose and faintly rippled, but not smoking - then carefully pour it over the aromatics.

Balance. Stir in soy sauce, rice vinegar, and sesame oil. Taste after five minutes and adjust ginger, salt, or acid.

Taste It Here

The sauce should feel fresh before it feels oily, and savory before it feels salty. Resting softens the aromatics, so taste twice.



THE SAUCE GARDEN

The Golden Corner

Mango-Habanero Sauce

A quick mango chutney with enough heat to be interesting and enough fruit to remain sociable.

SERVES	PREP	COOK	EFFORT
About 1 1/4 cups	15 min	10-15 min	Easy

Ingredients

- 1 large ripe mango, diced
- 1/2 habanero, seeded and minced, plus more to taste
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 1/2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon agave, or to taste
- Neutral oil, as needed
- Kosher salt, to taste

Method

Sweat the aromatics. Sweat the habanero, garlic, and ginger: cook them gently in a little oil until softened and fragrant, without browning.

Make it cohesive. Add mango, lime, vinegar, agave, and salt. Simmer until the fruit softens but some pieces remain.

Choose the texture. Leave chunky, mash lightly, or blend briefly. Cool before judging the heat; habanero enjoys delayed entrances.

Taste It Here

Sweetness should introduce the sauce, acid should keep it moving, and heat should arrive without evicting everybody else.



THE SAUCE GARDEN

The Creamy Corner

Peanut-Ginger Sauce

Creamy, savory, bright, and deliberately spoonable rather than wallpaper paste.

SERVES	PREP	COOK	EFFORT
About 1 cup	10 min	None	Very easy

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup smooth peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 1/2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon agave
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 tablespoon finely grated ginger
- 1 small garlic clove, grated
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- Warm water, as needed
- Sriracha, optional

Method

Whisk the base. Combine everything except the water until smooth.

Find spoonable. Add warm water a tablespoon at a time until the sauce flows but still clings.

Tune it. Adjust lime, soy, ginger, sweetness, and optional heat to taste.

Allergen Note

Contains peanuts, soy, and sesame. If cooking for someone with an allergy, verify every packaged ingredient, use separate tools and serving utensils, and prevent cross-contact. Omit this sauce entirely when those precautions cannot be assured.

Taste It Here

Peanut butter wants to dominate. Keep adding acid, ginger, and water until the sauce tastes like a conversation rather than a monologue.



THE SAUCE GARDEN

The Ruby Corner

Hibiscus Chili-Lime Sauce

Tart hibiscus, chile heat, lime, and agave in a bright ruby sauce designed for crisp tofu.

SERVES	PREP	COOK	EFFORT
About 3/4 cup	10 min	None	Very easy

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons concentrated hibiscus tea or reduction
- 2 tablespoons agave
- 1 1/2 tablespoons sriracha
- 1 tablespoon gochugaru
- Juice and finely grated zest of 1 lime
- 1 1/2 tablespoons avocado oil
- Kosher salt, to taste

Method

Whisk until glossy. Combine hibiscus, agave, sriracha, gochugaru, lime, oil, and a pinch of salt.

Let it settle. Rest 10 minutes so the chile hydrates and the flavors meet each other.

Adjust by instinct. Add lime for brightness, agave for roundness, hibiscus for tart fruit, or chile for more heat.

Taste It Here

Aim for tart first, then heat, then a small sweet landing. If your hibiscus concentrate is intense, begin with less and creep up.



GARDEN SIDES

Pollinator Garden Roasted Vegetables

Garden Inspiration

Purple potatoes and orange squash mirror the pollinator garden's saturated blooms. Broccolini and herbs add the green stems and leaves that keep those colors from floating away.

Why It Works

Roasting the vegetables separately respects their different cooking times. A honey-Dijon vinaigrette brings sweetness, acid, and mustard without turning the vegetables into a sauce delivery system.

Grandpa Bill's Lab Notes

On Separate Pans

Potatoes need time to become creamy; squash can move quickly from caramelized to collapsed. Separate pans are not fussiness - they are diplomacy.

On Dressing

Warm vegetables absorb dressing eagerly. Add a little, toss, taste, and stop before the colors disappear under shine.

THE WORKING RECIPE

Pollinator Garden Roasted Vegetables

SERVES

4-6

PREP

20 min

COOK

30-45 min

EFFORT

Easy

Ingredients

Produce

- 1 pound purple potatoes, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 pound butternut squash, peeled and cubed
- 8 ounces broccolini, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley and/or thyme

Pantry

- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- Grandpa Bill's Savory & Mild seasoning, to taste
- Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 1/2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, for the honey-Dijon vinaigrette

Cook by Paying Attention

Heat the oven. Preheat to 425°F. Give the potatoes, squash, and broccolini their own spaces on one large pan or separate pans.

Season separately. Toss each vegetable with just enough oil to coat, Grandpa Bill's Savory & Mild seasoning, salt if needed, and black pepper.

Roast by feel. Roast potatoes until browned and creamy within, 30-45 minutes. Roast squash until caramelized but holding its shape, 25-35 minutes. Add broccolini for the final 12-18 minutes.

Make the honey-Dijon vinaigrette and dress lightly. Whisk Dijon, honey, and cider vinegar, then slowly whisk in the olive oil until the dressing looks unified - that is emulsifying. Toss the warm vegetables with a modest amount, finish with herbs, and add more only if the vegetables ask for it.

Original Event Pairing

This side was inspired by the pollinator garden and served as a colorful bridge between the proteins and the cool slaw.



GARDEN SIDES

Crunchy Garden Slaw



Garden Inspiration

Purple and white statice became cabbage, apple, radish, jicama, and pepitas - a cool cluster of color and crunch beside the warmer dishes.

Why It Works

Cabbage and jicama provide staying power; apple and carrot bring sweetness; radish contributes bite; and a sharp vinaigrette resets the palate after rich meat and creamy sauce.

Grandpa Bill's Lab Notes

On the Core

Remove the dense white cabbage core before shredding. It sounds obvious because it is - and it still makes the finished texture noticeably better.

On the Last Minute

Dress shortly before serving and add pepitas last. Crunch is an ingredient with a very short attention span.

THE WORKING RECIPE

Crunchy Garden Slaw

SERVES

4-6

PREP

25 min

COOK

5 min

EFFORT

Easy

Ingredients

Produce

- 3 cups thinly shredded green cabbage
- 2 cups thinly shredded red cabbage
- 1 cup julienned jicama
- 1 cup julienned carrots
- 1 crisp apple, cut into matchsticks
- 1 watermelon radish, thinly sliced, optional

Pantry

- 1/3 cup garden vinaigrette, plus more to taste
- 1/3 cup pepitas
- Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste

Cook by Paying Attention

Toast the pepitas. Toast in a dry skillet until fragrant and beginning to pop. Cool completely.

Build the crunch. Combine cabbage, jicama, carrots, apple, and optional radish.

Dress at the last responsible moment. Toss with enough vinaigrette to brighten the vegetables without weighing them down.

Finish and listen. Fold in pepitas, taste for salt and acid, and serve while the slaw still sounds alive.

Original Event Pairing

At the event, this was the cool, crisp reset beside rich proteins and warm roasted vegetables.



DESSERT

Apple Olive Oil Cake with Rhubarb-Plum Compote

Garden Inspiration

The final plate looked toward the orchard hillside and the garden harvest: apple in the cake, rhubarb and plum in the compote, and a red-fruit palette that carried the garden through dessert.

Why It Works

Olive oil keeps the cake moist and tender, yogurt adds gentle tang, and diced apples disappear into soft pockets. At the event, the cake was served simply with rhubarb-plum compote; the bright fruit gave the dessert everything it needed.

Grandpa Bill's Lab Notes

On Baking by Evidence

The timer tells you when to start looking. The cake is done when the center springs back lightly and a tester comes out without wet batter.

On Compote

Fruit varies. Add sugar and lemon in response to what is in the pot, not because a number is feeling bossy.

On Serving

Spoon the rhubarb-plum compote over the cake while it is warm or cool. The moist crumb and bright fruit make a complete dessert without an additional topping.



THE WORKING RECIPE

Apple Olive Oil Cake with Rhubarb-Plum Compote

SERVES
6 generous

PREP
30 min + cooling

COOK
40-55 min

EFFORT
Moderate

Ingredients

Cake

- 2 cups (250 g) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup (200 g) sugar
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 medium apples, peeled if desired and diced small

Compote

- 10 ounces (300 g) rhubarb, sliced
- 2 plums, diced
- 1 apple, diced
- 1/3 cup (75 g) sugar, plus more or less to taste
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice, plus more if needed
- Pinch of kosher salt

Cook by Paying Attention

Make the compote first. Combine rhubarb, plums, apple, sugar, vanilla, lemon, and salt. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until the rhubarb softens and the juices become spoonable, about 15-25 minutes. Taste and adjust sweetness and acid, then spread in a shallow dish and cool to room temperature.

Prepare the pan. While the compote cools, heat the oven to 350°F. Grease and line a 9-inch round pan or an 8-inch square pan.

Mix the dry ingredients. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt.

Mix the wet ingredients. Whisk eggs and sugar until smooth, then whisk in olive oil, yogurt, and vanilla.

Fold, don't punish. Add the dry mixture to the wet. Fold - gently lift and turn the batter with a spatula - just until combined, then fold in the apples.

Bake by evidence. Bake until golden, gently springy in the center, and a tester comes out without wet batter, about 40-55 minutes. Cool completely.

Serve simply. Spoon the cooled or room-temperature compote over the cake and let the fruit do the finishing work.

Original Event Pairing

The event version paired moist apple cake with tart rhubarb-plum compote, a simple combination that held the dessert table on its own.



6. FROM THE GARDEN TO THE TABLE

Keep Paying Attention

Gratitude to Sisterhood Gardens

This meal was created for a place that demonstrates what care can do over time. Thank you to the gardeners, volunteers, organizers, neighbors, and community members who have tended Sisterhood Gardens through its first decade.

Growing, Gathering, and Intuitive Cooking

A garden and a kitchen ask for many of the same habits: observation, patience, adjustment, and a willingness to work with what is actually in front of you. The recipes in this book are records of one meal, but they are also invitations to notice more closely and cook with more confidence.

Grandpa Bill's Mission

Grandpa Bill's No Recipe Foods exists to make cooking accessible, fun, and flavorful while honoring a legacy of community, creativity, and doing good work. Food is one of the easiest ways to bring people together. The seasoning helps. Paying attention does the rest.

A Final Lab Note

Cooking for a community gathering asks for more than good food. It asks for timing, clarity, coordination, and a service plan that makes the meal easy to receive. This guide preserves the anniversary flavors while adapting them for the more relaxed rhythm of a home kitchen.

Created by Grandpa Bill's No Recipe Foods in reflection on the meal prepared for Sisterhood Gardens' tenth-anniversary celebration.

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Cook by paying attention.

