

# 805

LIVING



Summer *fun*

# Taste

FOOD / WINE / DINING OUT

## The Bounty of the Bramble

MAKE THE MOST OF THE BLACKBERRY'S FLEETING SEASON WITH THESE RECIPES FROM 805-AREA CHEFS.

By Jaime Lewis Photograph by Gary Moss

**M**y favorite photo of my son dates to when he was 2 years old. In it, he stands before a mass of tangled blackberry vines, wearing a bucket hat and a gap-toothed toddler grin. His pudgy cheeks and hands are covered in blackberry juice, and he has a crazed look in his eye. As I recall, he nearly ate his weight in blackberries that day.

Of course, most blackberry plants are too prickly for a little guy to navigate, but these were Triple Crown Blackberries: a thornless variety that invites quick and painless picking. The day I took the photo, our friends had invited us to make a dent in their berry patch before the birds got to it. Their Triple Crown vines started as cuttings from someone else's vines, which started as cuttings from someone else's. That August afternoon, the plump berries warmed in the sun, so ripe they tasted almost boozy. Enamored, I asked if our friends would pass it forward with a few cuttings for me, too.

Today, those four modest cuttings pump out pounds upon pounds of blackberries each summer; I love making refrigerator jam, tarts, and smoothies with the bounty. My son is 12 now, and (only very slightly) better at transporting berries from vine to mouth, but his obsession remains. On any given summer day, I'll find him by our blackberry patch, picking and eating with gusto—and with that same maniacal focus.

Three Central Coast chefs share his passion for blackberries. Check out their recipes for the sultry seasonal fruit here, including Blackberry Tarragon Pie from pastry chef Emilie Sandven at **Helena Avenue Bakery** ([helenaavenuebakery.com](http://helenaavenuebakery.com)) in Santa Barbara; Blackberry Cardamom Jam from chef-owners Jaron and Bree Gugliuzza of **The Royal Egg Café** ([theroyaleggcafe.com](http://theroyaleggcafe.com)) in Westlake Village; and Duck Breast with Blackberry-Ginger Sauce from Chef Mark Huston at **Jane** ([janesb.com](http://janesb.com)) restaurant, which has locations in Santa Barbara and Goleta.

### BLACKBERRY CARDAMOM JAM

*At The Royal Egg Café, chef-owners Jaron and Bree Gugliuzza kept getting requests from customers for dishes with blackberries. So, they came up with this blackberry jam, scented with cardamom.*

*"It's a unique but versatile spice that pairs incredibly well with the blackberry flavor," says Jaron, "especially toasted," as it is in this recipe. At the café, the jam is used in a number of dishes, including the house-made ricotta toast. "I personally like the blackberry cardamom jam best spread on top of our cheddar jalapeño biscuit," Jaron says, "along with some soft, unsalted butter."*

Makes 1 quart

- ½ cup ground cardamom
- 4 quarts fresh ripe blackberries, rinsed
- 2½ cups white granulated sugar
- ¼ cup lemon juice

Warm a sauté pan over medium-low heat. Once it's hot, add cardamom to pan and toast for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat.

In a saucepot, combine toasted cardamom with remaining ingredients. Bring to a simmer and cook down for about 1 hour, stirring every 10 minutes with a wooden spoon to prevent sticking. Remove from heat and transfer to a blender. Blend well in batches, taking care to avoid overfilling blender with hot jam.

Strain mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a metal or other heatproof container, pressing firmly with a wooden spoon to extract all jam. Let jam cool completely overnight in the refrigerator, uncovered. Transfer to an airtight container. Store in the refrigerator and use within 30 days.

### BLACKBERRY TARRAGON PIE

*"I come from Denmark, where raspberry and black licorice is a common pairing in sweets," says Emilie Sandven, pastry chef at Helena Avenue Bakery. "I wanted to emulate the combination of sweet, tart berries with an earthy, herbal, anise-y flavor. I decided on blackberry and tarragon, because I felt that reflected the central California climate and produce best."*

*Sandven, who buys blackberries at the farmers market in Santa Barbara, cites Caitlin Ranch and 2 Peas in a Pod Farms as favorite sources. For home bakers in hot summer kitchens, she recommends refrigerating pie-making tools before using them. "Refrigerate your pie tin, rolling pin, and the bowl and blade of your food processor," she says, "to keep your dough as cool as possible." >*



Simmer up a batch of The Royal Egg Café's Blackberry Cardamom Jam, a staple at the restaurant that's served in a variety of dishes, including straight up on nine-grain toast.

Serves 6 to 8

## DOUBLE CRUST

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1½ teaspoons sugar
- 1 cup unsalted butter, cold and cut into small cubes
- 4–8 tablespoons water, ice cold
- 1 egg, beaten

## FILLING

- 5 pints blackberries
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 tablespoons cornstarch
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon chopped tarragon

**To make the double crust:** Combine flour, salt, sugar, and butter in a food processor and pulse until butter is pea-size pieces. Add water 1 tablespoon at a time and pulse after each addition until dough comes together. Form into 2 evenly sized discs and wrap tightly in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

**To make the filling and bake the pie:** Preheat oven to 350°F. Roll out one of the dough discs and transfer it to the bottom of a pie tin, leaving about an inch of overhang on the sides.

Combine all filling ingredients in a mixing bowl and toss to coat berries evenly. Allow just a few of the blackberries to get a little smashed to incorporate their juices. Pour filling into dough-lined pie tin.

Roll out top crust of the pie and lay it over berries, so there is about ½ inch of dough overhanging the edge of the pie tin. Press together the overhang from the top and bottom crust and fold it onto itself. Crimp the edge and cut vents in the center of the top crust. Brush with beaten egg. Bake for about 75 minutes, until crust is golden brown and filling is bubbling beneath vents. If top starts getting too dark during baking, drape pie with aluminum foil and continue baking until done.

## DUCK BREAST WITH BLACKBERRY-GINGER SAUCE

*Chef Mark Huston of Jane has made this duck dish for decades, but he can't remember the inspiration for it, exactly. "It may have been a riff on canard à l'orange (duck with orange sauce)," he says. "That's a classic duck-and-fruit pairing." For the blackberry-ginger sauce, he uses blackberries that his*

*partner Margaret gets at The Santa Barbara Farmers Market downtown.*

*"The hardest part of making this dish—and the most important part—is making the stock," he says. Finding duck bones to prepare a stock may be a challenge. Check with your local butcher for bones from birds they've already broken down. And while you're at it, order four duck breasts for this dish, too. The stock requires an overnight stint in the refrigerator, so be sure to prepare it the day before you intend to serve the dish.*

Serves 4

## DUCK STOCK

- 1 cup duck bones (about 1 duck, broken down), cut into 3- to 4-inch pieces
- ½ teaspoon vegetable oil
- ½ onion, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 carrot, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 celery rib, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1½ teaspoons tomato paste
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- 1 sprig fresh parsley
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ teaspoon whole peppercorns

## BLACKBERRY-GINGER SAUCE

- 1 shallot, chopped
- 1 cup port plus 1 tablespoon, divided
- 3 cups duck stock
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger, finely chopped
- 1 cup blackberries

## DUCK BREASTS

- 4 duck breasts
- Kosher salt
- Cracked black pepper
- Fresh blackberries, for garnish

**To make the duck stock:** Preheat oven to 400°F. In a large bowl, toss duck bones with oil to coat. Spread bones in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet (reserve bowl with oil in it) and roast, turning bones once, until they begin to brown, about 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, toss onion, carrot, and celery in the empty, oiled bowl, to coat. Once bones have browned, scatter vegetables over and around bones on baking sheet as evenly as possible. Roast until vegetables are also well-browned, about 20 more minutes. Remove baking sheet from heat and allow it to cool slightly.

Transfer bones and vegetables to a stockpot or large Dutch oven, discarding any fat that has accumulated on baking sheet. Toss vegetables and bones with tomato paste, and add thyme, parsley, bay leaf, and peppercorns. Add cold water to a level about 2 inches above bones and vegetables. Bring mixture to a boil, then simmer until stock is a deep red-brown color and reduces to about three cups—about 3 hours.

Let stock cool slightly, then strain it through a fine-mesh sieve into a large sealable container. Discard solids, seal the container, and refrigerate stock overnight.

The next day, when you're ready to prepare the dish, skim off and discard the fat from the top of the stock.

**To prepare the Blackberry-Ginger Sauce:** In a medium saucepan over medium heat, add shallot and ½ cup port. Reduce liquid until it's almost gone, about 5 minutes. Add duck stock and simmer until liquid is reduced to 1 cup, about 20 to 30 minutes. In a small cup or jar, whisk together cornstarch and 1 tablespoon port. Add cornstarch mixture to stock reduction and cook until just thick enough so that it pools in place on a plate. Set thickened stock reduction aside.

**To prepare the duck breasts:** Preheat a grill pan or barbecue. Season duck breasts with salt and pepper on both sides and place them in a sauté pan just large enough to hold them, skin-side down. (If pan is too large, the fat will spread and burn.) Over medium-low heat, render fat until three-quarters of it is gone, about 15 to 20 minutes.

Transfer duck breasts, skin-side down, to preheated grill pan or barbecue, discarding fat and reserving sauté pan. Cook breasts, for 10 minutes, turning occasionally, but keep skin sides down for the majority of the time, being careful not to burn them.

**Meanwhile, finish the Blackberry-Ginger Sauce:** Deglaze reserved pan with remaining ½ cup of port. Simmer over low heat for 1 to 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and whisk in butter. When mixture is reduced to ¼ cup, add to thickened stock reduction. Fold in ginger and blackberries, and remove from heat to avoid overcooking berries.

**To plate the duck:** When cooking time is up, transfer duck breasts from grill or barbecue to a plate or tray and allow them to rest for a few minutes. Slice duck breasts and serve them skin-side up over a pool of Blackberry-Ginger Sauce. Garnish with fresh blackberries. ♦