



Allison Beale holds marinated tomato and pickled okra used in 'mini Royale with cheese' by Ashley Christensen of Poole's Diner in Raleigh. Robert Willett, Staff Photos by Robert Willett



Andrea Reusing, center, from Lantern restaurant in Chapel Hill, relaxes after the Farm to Fork picnic in Hurdle Mills. Robert Willett, Staff Photo by Robert Willett



Grilled pizza, topped with duck egg, prepared by Phoebe Lawless of Scratch Baking with produce from Brinkley Farm. Robert Willett, Staff Photo by Robert Willett



The 'mini Royale with cheese' by Ashley Christensen was a favorite at the Farm to Fork picnic. Robert Willett, Staff Photo by Robert Willett

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Farm to Fork to full

Sold-out fundraising picnic offers chance to chow on pig hearts or popular burgers

In some circles, the Farm to Fork picnic is a saliva-inducing phrase.

The event earlier this month, sponsored by Triangle Slow Food, paired local chefs and artisan cooks with local farmers. More than two dozen chefs turned out such dishes as Tuscan-style porchetta; grilled pizza with kale, feta and a poached duck egg; and strawberry, honey and marshmallow snow balls.

For the adventurous eaters in the crowd, of which there were many, there were barbecued pig tails, tacos made with pig hearts and tongues, and hog head cheese on focaccia bread with pickled kohlrabi.

Four hundred people bought the \$50 tickets, which raised money for farm-apprentice programs via the Center for Environmental Farming Systems and the People Learning Agriculture Now for Tomorrow (PLANT) program at the W.C. Breeze farm in northern Orange County. Tickets sold out 10 days before the event. Some resorted to craigslist to buy tickets; one person offered to pay \$75 more than two tickets cost.

The chefs and farmers took swigs of beer while serving up food on biodegradable plates. Children climbed all over a stack of hay bales. Crowd members could be heard telling one another what to eat next; a common refrain was Ashley Christensen's mini Royale with cheese, a house-ground burger made from Rare Earth beef, cast iron-seared in rendered duck fat and finished with marinated sungold cherry tomatoes, pickled okra and Celebrity Dairy chevre. All served on a tiny challah roll.

For those who couldn't be there, we snagged a couple of recipes. Next time, buy your tickets early.

Andrea Weigl

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Food at its most basic

Triangle Slow Food is a local membership organization devoted to celebrating local foods, the farmers who raise it and the artisans who make it. The local chapter is part of an international group that believes that "the food we eat should taste good; that it should be produced in a clean way that does not harm the environment, animal welfare or our health; and that food producers should receive fair compensation for their work." The Triangle chapter is expanding to Raleigh, and it held a potluck last month. For more information, go to www.slowfoodtriangle.org.

The Center for Environmental Farming Systems is dedicated to sustainable agriculture research, extension and education. It was started in 1994 as a collaboration between N.C. State University, N.C. A&T State University and the N.C. Department of Agriculture. The picnic was a fundraiser for CEFS.

For more information, go to www.cefs.ncsu.edu.

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