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Chef's Apron

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More information the web at
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This week marks the fortieth anniversary of Woodstock. Wow! I'm not sure if that makes me feel old or young or what! The event's official name was "The Woodstock Music and Art Fair" but for the masses who were there (or wished they were there), it will always be just Woodstock, a wet and wild weekend.

Woodstock has been lauded as a historic moment, although it was hardly monumental, not like walking on the moon. However, it was more than a quick blip on the radar. It might not have changed the world, but the "Aquarian Exposition" was certainly a sign of the times. The concert was talked about not for days or weeks but decades and remembered fondly by hundreds of thousands.

More than 450,000 people gathered in Max Yasgur's alfalfa field near Woodstock, New York. For four days, the site was one heck of a party. And no, I wasn't there; I'm MUCH too young. Okay, maybe just too young.

Even if you weren't there, there is a pretty good chance that you know someone who was. I seem to remember that our beach, and hundreds like it, went without lifeguards that weekend. College students quit their summer jobs early and gas stations, ice cream shops and pizza parlors lost their crews. Every kid who could find a ride or hitchhike headed to Yasgur's farm. It was the hottest ticket of the summer, maybe of all time. The event caused one heck of a traffic jam.

All for a little music on a summer weekend. Well, not just any ordinary music. Thirty-two musicians played at Woodstock and the list reads like a "who's who" of the day. Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, The Grateful Dead, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, The Who and Joe Cocker all the appeared during the sometimes rainy, generally muddy weekend.

Like many, the story behind Woodstock is an odd one. Woodstock happened because John Roberts and Joel Rosenman decided to write a television comedy. Their show had two friends with more money than sense starting a series of business ventures. The two heroes were more Lucy and Ethel than Trump and Welch. The show called for the duo to regularly run amuck and then somehow escape peril or bankruptcy in time for the closing credits.

In search of plot ideas, Roberts and Rosenman put an ad in the Wall Street Journal and The New York Times stating, "Young Men With Unlimited Capital looking for interesting, legitimate investment opportunities and business propositions." They got thousands of replies. One thing led to another and the would-be writers became wannabe venture capitalists. Instead of writing the show, they became the show.

Enter Artie Kornfield and Michael Lang, two musicians/producers searching for financing for a music festival. Together, the four, all under thirty, hatched Woodstock – Three Days of Peace and Music. They figured they could draw a crowd of 50,000, making it the world's largest concert. Later they tacked on an extra day and optimistically hoped to get 100,000 to the concert. Instead almost half a million hippies, flower children and college students got to Woodstock to dance, prance and celebrate.

Where were you in the summer of '69? Whether you were at Woodstock or not, check the back of your closet, find that tie-dye T-shirt and rally friends around for a little peace, love and a summer celebration!

Enjoy summer's bounty and bon appétit!

Susan

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Corn, Tomato & Arugula Salad

Local corn and tomatoes are available in the market right now. This salad is a colorful addition to any summer party. Add a few nasturtiums for a little flower power! Serve with grilled chicken or shrimp and enjoy!

Serves 6 - 8

- 3-4 ears of corn or 2 cups corn kernels
- 1/2 pint red grape tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 pint yellow pear tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 1/2 small red onion, chopped
- Sun-Dried Tomato Vinaigrette (recipe follows)
- 12 ounces arugula

Fill a large pot about three-quarters full with water. Bring the water to a boil; add the corn and cook for 2-3 minutes. Remove the corn from the boiling water and plunge in an ice water bath. When the corn is cool enough to handle, cut the kernels off the cob and put them in a large bowl.

Add the tomatoes, cucumber and onion to the corn. Add a little Sun-Dried Tomato Vinaigrette and toss to combine. Let rest for 15-20 minutes to combine the flavors. Add the arugula, a little more vinaigrette, toss and serve.

Sun-Dried Tomato Vinaigrette

- 2 halves oil packed sun dried tomatoes
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1-2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- 1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil



The market was out of arugula - romaine is a good substitute ...

In a blender or mini food processor, combine all the ingredients except the olive oil; pulse a few times to mince and combine. With the machine running, slowly add the oil; process until well incorporated and emulsified.

Makes about 1 cup, store extra vinaigrette in the refrigerator.