



BACK OF THE HOUSE

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL ALBRECHT

RANDOM ACTS

Ingredients:

- 1 large beautiful Texas Hill Country backdrop
- 11 foodies excited about spending the day with other foodies from across the country for a culinary adventure
- 5 local spots offering fresh, locally produced fare
- 1 Sibby Barrett, Hill Country food guru and proprietor of Onion Creek Kitchens cooking classes (juniperhillsfarm.com)

Preparation:

Mix all ingredients in a 15 passenger van and shake for 6–7 hours, allow for lunch and frequent stops. Return to prep kitchen (Junipers Hills Farm, home of Sibby) and brainstorm an exciting variety of entrées to create using treasures procured on journey. Enjoy fare around a big table with your newfound friends, marinating often with your favorite beverage.



Hill Country Excursion and Random Acts of Cooking is just one of the classes offered by Sibby Barrett, owner of Onion Creek Kitchens at Juniper Hills Farm.

The excursion is to discover what local vendors have to offer and pick out what looks good. The random part is deciding what to do with all those fresh ingredients. Gathering in Sibby’s kitchen, everyone gets in on the act, throws out ideas and shares stories of similar things they’ve cooked or would like to try.

Sibby explains: “I’m at most a guide. I don’t tell anyone what to make. I will make suggestions if we’re coming up with really similar entrées, ways to make them different. I do talk a bit about having a well-stocked pantry, things on hand that can make working with what’s in season locally easy to make into a great meal.”

DESTINATIONS FOR THIS EXCURSION:

- Bella Vista Ranch, Olive Trees and Vineyard, Wimberley
- Mandola Estate Winery, Driftwood
- Texas Specialty Cut Flowers, Arnosky Farms, Blanco County
- Hill Country Lavender, Blanco on the Square
- CKC Farms, Blanco



“I’m at most a guide. I don’t tell anybody what to make.”
—Sibby Barrett (above), selecting produce at Arnosky Farms

MENU CREATED:

Cornish game hens with Juniper Hills Farm chimayo spice mix and Raspberry Chipotle Sauce from Bella Vista Ranch

Grilled pork loin chops with Juniper Hills Farm Juniper Provence spice mix rub, olive oil and crushed garlic served with sautéed balsamic roasted beets, turnips, pears, apples, lime zest and toasted walnuts (Arnosky beets and turnips)

Spinach salad with CKC Farms Sun-Dried Tomato Roasted Garlic Feta and toasted pecans dressed with blood orange–infused olive oil, date and fig balsamic, and peach jam vinaigrette from Bella Vista Ranch (Arnosky spinach)

Risotto with porcini mushrooms, spinach and pecorino nero (risotto, porcini, pecorino from Mandola’s Winery, Arnosky spinach)

Sauté of swiss chard, komatsuma, garlic and spring onions finished with a touch of cream and Parmigiano Reggiano (greens and onions from Arnosky, Parmigiano from Mandola)

Crostini with artichoke puree from Bella Vista

Granita of mandarin oranges, lemons and limes with Paula’s Texas Orange Liqueur