



Photo courtesy of Bodhi Farms

A WHOLE MONTANA

TO EVERY SEASON THERE IS A MENU

BY SARAH TILT

Chef Alex Hrabovsky of the Bodhi Farms eco-resort and restaurant in Bozeman believes in eating local ingredients as much as possible and shifts his menu with the seasons. Eating seasonally is the practice of enjoying food—produce in particular—harvested at its peak according to the season. Eating seasonally and locally helps to connect our urban and rural communities, supports our local economies, and helps to conserve land and maintain open spaces. Perhaps more importantly, when you choose foods grown on area farms, you typically get more flavorful products, which are more enjoyable to eat.

Hrabovsky left his hometown of Bozeman in 2007 to attend culinary school. His goal was to better understand what sourcing, cooking, and eating seasonally really meant. After graduating in 2009 from Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in San Francisco, he worked in Napa and Sonoma learning the skills and techniques of food and wine pairing. He made his way back to Montana in 2021 and, now at Bodhi Farms, he embodies the ideology of using local products first and foremost.

To rely on local foods, a chef needs to have good relationships with multiple producers across the landscape to ensure that they can have adequate product on hand when they need it. Weather, drought, and pests, among other factors, can wreak havoc on production and create challenges for supply.

“You have to have relationships and be intelligent about

what you can source and when you can source certain foods,” Hrabovsky says.

Eating seasonally doesn’t have to be hard, he says. You just need to be cognizant of the time of year and the types of food grown each season. Change your cooking methods and adapt to nature. He calls it “wise culinary arts.” In winter, we look for hearty dishes like stews and roasts and at restaurants, that might include braised skirt steak or oxtail bourguignon.

Hrabovsky believes we have an opportunity to change how chefs and restaurants operate. Many restaurants are pressured to consistently provide cuts of meat that are familiar to patrons. But what if restaurants could change tactics and utilize the whole animal? Perhaps chefs could tap into our community’s appetite for local food and new things by offering less-familiar cuts of meat on a rotating schedule, relying on locally sourced beef and using the whole animal rather than utilizing parts of many animals.

Eating seasonally puts consumers in contact with producers and encourages all of us to think about what grows in Montana and when. 🌿

Sarah Tilt is the executive director of One Montana, a nonprofit working to support private land stewardship and working lands, sustain our cultural heritage, and connect our urban and rural communities. One Montana’s campaign, The Montana Way, is an effort to educate and provide resources for all Montanans to steward our private and public resources and continue traditions for the next generation.