

# NATIONAL CULINARY REVIEW

## *The* **VEGETABLE** RENAISSANCE

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The Roland E.  
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Classic



American Culinary Federation

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# The VEGETABLE RENAISSANCE

By **Jeffrey Spear**

You're constantly seeking ways to deliver new culinary experiences. You go out of your way to source the right ingredients and pay close attention to how finished dishes are organized on the plate, making every meal a delightful occasion that stimulates the senses. With growing interest in plant-based and healthier meal choices, you're also developing ways to cater to specific dietary needs and provide a broader selection of health and wellness options with the same outcomes in mind.

The good news is that exciting new fruit and vegetable varieties with distinctive visual attributes, bold flavors, appealing textures, and exceptional nutritional benefits allow

you to prepare innovative vegetarian and plant-enhanced dishes suitable for every section of your menu. This includes adventurous veggie boards (as opposed to charcuterie), elevated salad combinations, fruit and vegetable pairings that colorfully frame proteins in the center of the plate, and noteworthy sides that defy expectations. In some cases, these uncommon ingredients can heighten the appeal of desserts, infusing them with unusually vibrant color and exceptional nutritional value.

According to the **What's Hot 2024 Culinary Forecast** published by the **National Restaurant Association**, root vegetables such as beets and potatoes are listed as top ingredients for commercial kitchens. If you're looking to upgrade your offerings with more colorful and nutritionally dense vegetarian ingredients, you'll find the highly versatile Baby Beets, produced by Babé Farms in Santa Maria,

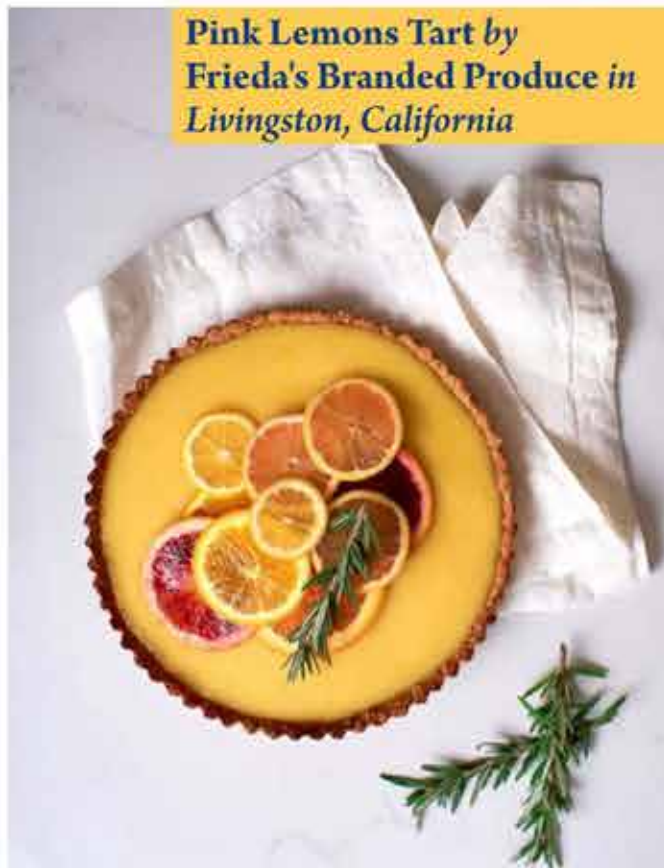
**Baby Stripe Beets and Ninja Radish Carpaccio**  
by Babé Farms in Santa Maria, California



California, a worthwhile addition to your pantry. Recognized for their visual impact—gold, red, and striped varieties—these visually striking, earthy, and aromatic Baby Beets can be roasted, grilled, pickled, or served raw. They perform well as colorful additions to salads and charcuterie boards, often paired with creamy sharp cheeses and balsamic reductions. Available year-round, they're considered a superfood: low in calories, high in vitamins and minerals, and known to help lower blood pressure, increase cardiovascular health, and improve athletic performance. What's not to like?



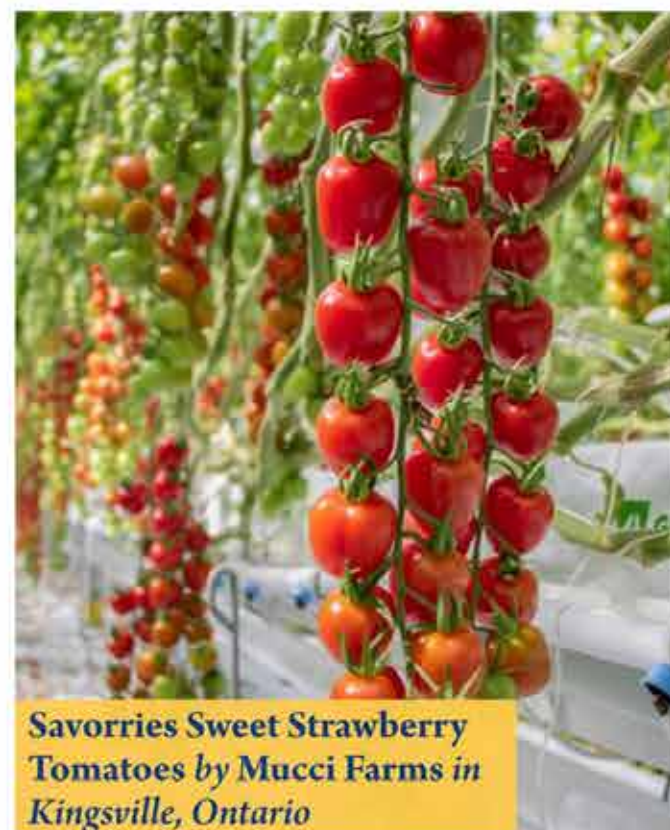
### Pink Lemons Tart by Frieda's Branded Produce in Livingston, California



lemon flavor. Whether you use them fresh, juiced, as a colorful garnish, or even oven-dried to float on cocktails, the pink-hued flesh, juice, and striped skin of the Pink Lemon is sure to turn heads.

Tomatoes are undeniable crowd-pleasers, valued for their versatility, flavor, sweetness, and nutritional benefits. If you're eager to embrace these attributes while infusing visual distinction into menu items, Savorries Sweet Strawberry Tomatoes may be exactly what you need. Shaped like a strawberry, this exceptionally sweet tomato offers a distinctive combination of visual appeal and bold tomato flavor. Greenhouse-grown by Mucci Farms in Kingsville, Ontario, these proprietary tomatoes enjoy perfect temperature, sunlight, and nutrients for maximum flavor, with Brix measuring higher than 7.0. Along with careful water and pest management and supplemental lighting in winter months, Mucci Farms generates significantly higher yields than traditional farming practices, allowing them to maintain availability year-round.

No matter which of these colorful fruits or vegetables you find most appealing, their versatility, coupled with the value of their visual and nutritional attributes, cannot be minimized. Each represents an opportunity to add newfound vitality to your menu across all dayparts, creating dining experiences that are sure to be remembered.



Savorries Sweet Strawberry Tomatoes by Mucci Farms in Kingsville, Ontario

Similarly, the brilliantly hued Organic Stokes Purple™ Sweet Potatoes (not to be confused with less flavorful ube/purple yams) are as nutritious as they are beautiful. Their vibrant purple skin and flesh deliver an eating experience unlike any other potato, providing a mildly sweet taste with slight earthy notes and a moist, moderately starchy texture. They're especially rich in minerals and antioxidants (just like blueberries) and contain more potassium than bananas. Grown from proprietary seeds by Frieda's Branded Produce in the rich, fertile soils of Livingston, California, and available year-round, Organic Stokes Purple™ Sweet Potatoes are perfect for eye-popping mashes as well as vividly hued cakes, tarts, soups, frittatas, salads, hummus, and more.

Frieda's also produces a delightful Pink Lemon. A seasonal California specialty available from October to April, these zesty lemons are packed with vitamin C and antioxidants—compounds that can have beneficial effects on cancer, cardiovascular disease, and inflammation. From a culinary perspective, while just as versatile as yellow varieties, their vibrant pink hue, tangy flavor with a hint of berry-like sweetness, and visually arresting presence elevate everyday recipes with a colorful twist. When freshly squeezed, Pink Lemon juice offers a subtle yet distinctive twist on the classic



### SAVORRIES SWEET STRAWBERRY TOMATO TART

Serves 8-10

The mix of tomatoes, strawberries, nuts and cheese makes this a visually impressive, flavorful and highly enjoyable dish. Well suited to all dayparts, especially as an appetizer, for lunch or brunch, or a lighter style bar snack.

#### INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 cups Parmesan cheese, grated  
1 cup mini pretzels, more for garnish  
1 cup raw pecans  
1 1/2 cups feta  
3/4 cup ricotta cheese  
1/4 cup feta brine  
20 leaves fresh basil, more for garnish  
salt and pepper, to taste

8 green olives, pitted and sliced  
2 cups Savorries sweet strawberry tomatoes, halved  
1 cup strawberries, halved or quartered  
white balsamic vinegar, to taste  
black pepper, to taste

#### DIRECTIONS

Place the Parmesan, pretzels and pecans in a food processor and process until a fine crumb has formed.

Using a 9-inch tart pan with a removable bottom, gently press the mixture into the bottom, spreading evenly to form a crust. Bake at 375°F for 10-12 minutes. Remove from the oven, cool completely, then transfer to a serving plate.

Place the feta, ricotta, feta brine and basil in a food processor and process until smooth. Add salt and pepper as needed, to taste.

Spread the feta mixture over the crust to form an even layer. Distribute the tomatoes, strawberries and olives over top.

To serve, garnish with a drizzle of white balsamic vinegar, a sprinkle of broken mini pretzels, small basil leaves and a little black pepper.