

When Everyone's At The Table

STORYTELLING AS SOLIDARITY

Story Sharing

POTLUCK SUPPERS

COMMUNITY COOKBOOK

A Story Sharing Supper Series organized by
Maine Immigrants Rights Coalition
Maine Climate Action Now
Maine Council of Churches
Presenté! Maine
& Community Plate

Hosted at

The County Co-op & Farm Store
April 19, 2026
Houlton, Maine

Halcyon Grange #345
May 30, 2026
Blue Hill, Maine

Harrison Community Center
June 27, 2026
Harrison, Maine

Story Sharing Supper Selected Recipes

Introduction

The Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC), in partnership with Maine Climate Action Now (MCAN), Maine Council of Churches (MCC), Presente!Maine, and Community Plate, hosted this series of three community Story Sharing Potluck Suppers between April and June 2026. The series was titled "When Everyone's At the Table: Storytelling as Solidarity." These community events were designed to build community, educate Mainers about issues impacting immigrants today, combat negative stereotypes about immigrant communities, and connect attendees with local organizations supporting immigrants. By inviting our immigrant neighbors to share their stories of their Maine experiences in their own words, the suppers sought to challenge the stereotype that immigrants are "other," dangerous, and economically harmful to Maine. Additionally, we invited volunteers working with immigrant communities to share stories of their experiences doing mutual aid work to inspire and encourage others to join the volunteer ranks.

The coalition of organizations intentionally selected areas of Maine with lower pre-existing connection to MIRC and its project partners, in an effort to reach Maine communities outside our traditional networks. As a result of these suppers, we were able to engage more than 100 Mainers directly, and many more indirectly, providing an opportunity for community connection, local storytelling, and connection to local nonprofits.

Thank you to the local community partners and venues that hosted these events: The County Co-op & Farm Store, Rotary Club of Houlton, Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce, and Gateway Ambassadors in Houlton; Halcyon Grange #345, and Mano en Mano in Blue Hill; and Harrison Community Center, First Congregational Church, and Chris Christoforo in Harrison.

A special thank you to **Maine's Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Tribal Populations** for the grant to fund this initiative.

This community cookbook is a lasting artifact of the stories told, the connections made, and the hope that we can continue to support all Mainers, and be a welcoming community for anyone who would like to call Maine home.

The Suppers

Story Sharing Potluck Supper:

The County Co-op & Farm Store, April 19, Houlton

Halcyon Grange #345, May 30, Blue Hill

Harrison Community Center, June 27, Harrison

When Everyone's At the Table Storytelling as Solidarity

Story Sharing Prompts:

- ✦ Share a story about the first time you tasted something that really surprised you.
- ✦ Share a story about a time when you were a stranger.
- ✦ Share a story about a time when community lifted you up.

Thank you to our storytellers:

Houlton:

Ruba Haddad, "From Worry to Welcome"

Andre Anderson, "The Power of Sports"

Elly Dulinsky, "Kozonach"

Youngeun Joyce Kang, "Bibimbap"

Blue Hill:

Becky Wentworth, "Community Building: History of the Grange"

Diane Fitzgerald, "Immigrant Defense Hotline"

Tania & Alondra Medina interviewed by Panagioti Tsolkas

Amy Eshoo, "The Welcome is the Reward"

Harrison:

Lani Peterson, "Story Listening is an Act of Love"

Wendy Schlotterbeck, "An Extraordinary Road Trip"

Candice McElroy, "Muscle Rub for the Soul"

My Stow Called Band, "I Can Hear"

Cover Illustration by Johanna Johnson

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The Menu

Jordanian Tamarind Punch	Ruba Haddad	2
Watermelon, Mint & Lime with Maple	Chloe Meyers	3
Pickled Eggs	David McBeth	3
Betty's Hard Boiled Eggs	Diane Fitzgerald	4
Baba Ghanouj	Nancy Boros	5
Challah	Charlotte Schatz	6
Fruit Soup	Sirong Wang	7
Corn and Black Bean Salad	Susan Griffith Schneider	8
Potato/Spinach Casserole	Alison Bossie	9
Caribbean Bean & Nut Salad	Tamara Sewell	9
Warm Lentil and Potato Salad	Angie Wotton	10
Beet and Goat Cheese Arugula Salad	Kerry Read	11
Sour Cream Potato Salad	Samantha Hunt	12
Crockpot Creamed Corn	Donna McBeth	12
True Shepherd's Pie!	The Jackmans	13
Lynn's Leek and Spinach Pie	Lani Peterson	14
Vegan Paella	Candice McElroy	14
Black Bean and Salsa Soup	Linda Rowe	16
Tamale Casserole	Maria Sanchez	17
Bibimbap (Korean Mixed Rice with Meat and Vegetables)	Youngeun Joyce Kang	17
Adana Meatballs	Amy Eshoo	20
Jambalaya	Nancy Putnam	21
Dal and Rice	Erin Roy	22
Haasenkuche (PA Dutch Rabbit Casserole)	Brian B. Burger	24
Chocolate Crinkle Cookies	Audrey Zimmerman	25
Rhubarb Squares	<i>Maine Community Cookbook, Vol 2</i>	26
Traditional Scottish Shortbread	Mary Chapman	27
The "Better-Than-Before" Scotcharoo	Jill Hyman	28
Shoo-Fly Pie	Sally Chappell	29

Jordanian Tamarind Punch (تمر هندي)

Ruba Haddad • Houlton

Houlton Supper

Tamarind juice is one of the signature drinks served during the holy month of Ramadan throughout Jordan and much of the Middle East. After a day of fasting, families often break their fast with dates, water, and a refreshing glass of tamarind juice. Every household has its own recipe—some cook the tamarind, while others, like this family recipe, simply steep it in hot water to preserve its fresh, bright flavor. The sweetness can be adjusted to taste, making it a refreshing drink enjoyed by both children and adults. This recipe makes about 2 quarts, or 8 servings.

**1 package (approximately
14 oz / 400 g) tamarind pulp
(seeded or with seeds)
8 cups boiling water
1/2-3/4 cup granulated sugar,
or to taste**

**2–3 cups cold water, as needed
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
(optional, to brighten the flavor)
Ice, for serving
Fresh mint sprigs or thinly sliced
lemon, for serving**

Place the tamarind pulp in a large heatproof bowl. Pour the boiling water over the tamarind. Cover and let it steep for 1 to 2 hours, until the pulp has softened completely.

Using clean hands, gently massage and squeeze the tamarind in the water to separate as much of the pulp as possible. The water will become dark brown and fragrant.

Pour the mixture through a cheesecloth-lined strainer or a fine-mesh sieve into a large pitcher or bowl. Gather the cloth and squeeze firmly to extract every drop of juice. Discard the remaining fibers and seeds. Stir in the sugar until dissolved. Add the lemon juice, if desired. Taste and add 2–3 cups of cold water, or enough to reach your preferred balance of sweetness and tartness. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving.

Serve very cold over ice. Garnish with a sprig of fresh mint or a thin slice of lemon, if desired.



Watermelon, Mint & Lime with Maple

Chloe Meyers • Auburn

Harrison Supper

I learned how to mix these ingredients at a retreat center in Upstate New York. The organic mint is from my garden!

Watermelon, cubed
Mint, torn from stem
Lime juice

Local maple syrup
Pinch of pink salt

Combine all ingredients in your preferred proportions. Serve chilled.



Pickled Eggs

David McBeth • Brooksville

Blue Hill Supper

My mother grew up in northwest Ohio, the youngest of four girls. She used to tell tales of, as the youngest, being tasked with catching the chicken after her father lopped off its head. I imagine each of her older siblings had that same task in their turn, but she never revealed that part of the story. By the time I was the youngest grandchild, my grandfather must have found a better way to prepare the chickens for cooking. I was never relied upon to catch the headless chicken. Thankfully!

Pickled eggs were on the table for every holiday gathering. I imagine they were on the table more frequently than that, but growing up in Illinois, it was most often a holiday when I was visiting my grandparents. And pickled eggs were a regular on our own family table all through my childhood. And then the next generation. When my wife and our children would visit my parents, the grandchildren, in turn, learned about these delicious pickled eggs.

Twelve years ago, my mother passed away. Driving back to my brother's house after the visitation, exclaimed that we needed to take pickled eggs to the church for the lunch after the funeral service. It just seemed like the right thing to do. I had never really thought that pickled eggs were so important, but that evening, it felt like a grand gesture to Mom. We stopped at the grocery store on the way to my brother Ken's house and bought a couple dozen eggs and several jars of pickled beets. He thought we were crazy.

After the service the next day, as we all gathered in the church fellowship hall to eat together and reminisce about Mom and Dad (who had passed many years earlier), several women from the church came by our table to thank us for bringing the eggs. “It’s just like Bonnie is here with us. She always brought pickled eggs to our church potlucks. Thank you! So much!”

And so now, pickled eggs for every holiday and church potluck at St. Francis by the Sea.

12 eggs

**2 jars (16 ounces each) Aunt Nellie’s
sliced pickled beets**

Hard boil a dozen eggs. Cool them and then peel off the shells. Put eggs into a sealable container. Pour the sliced beets and beet juice over the eggs. All of this should be done a couple days prior to serving so the eggs have plenty of time to absorb the purple dye of the beets. I use Aunt Nellie’s because they are so much tastier than any pickled beet I have made (so far!). And don’t use Harvard beets—the taste is just not the same. We usually serve them whole, with the sliced beets, however, I’ve seen them served sliced in half, revealing the purple outer layer, inner white, and the yellow of the cooked yolk.



Betty’s Hard Boiled Eggs

Diane Fitzgerald • Bridgton

Blue Hill Supper

My mother-in-law, Betty, passed away this year at the ripe old age of 98. Although she was the best mother-in-law one could hope for, she was not much of a cook, despite cooking for a family of 8 for decades. Her hard boiled eggs, however, were always a hit.

Hard boiled eggs
Mayonnaise
Mustard
Ketchup

Relish
Salt and pepper
Paprika

Slice hard boiled eggs in half and remove yolk. In a bowl, mash together yolks and mayonnaise, mustard, ketchup, relish, and salt and pepper, in your preferred proportions. Taste and adjust seasoning.

Mound the yolk mixture into the hollows of the egg whites and sprinkle with paprika before serving.



Baba Ghanouj

Nancy Boros • Stow

Harrison Supper

We eat a lot of vegetarian dishes and like to try new things. During COVID, I subscribed to NYT Cooking. The recipes were fun to try and people can add comments/hints/tips about the recipes. I felt like I had a community of cooks to share ideas with.

2 pounds eggplant
1/4 cup lemon juice
1/4 cup sesame tahini, stirred
1-2 tablespoons plain yogurt, as needed

2 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
Sprinkle of smoked paprika
Salt, to taste
Extra virgin olive oil
Chopped flat-leaf parsley

Pierce the eggplants a few times to prevent explosion, then microwave for 7 minutes. (Unlike roasting in the oven, this keeps your kitchen cool in summer!) Once the eggplant is soft, place it in a colander in the sink and allow it to cool and drain. When cool enough to handle, cut off the stems and pull the eggplant into halves. Allow the halves to drain in the colander for an additional 15-30 minutes.

Puree the drained eggplant in a food processor. Add the lemon juice, tahini, yogurt, garlic, and a little smoked paprika, to taste, and pulse until smooth. Taste and add salt, as desired. To serve, mound the baba ghanouj into a serving dish or platter, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with parsley. Serve with pita bread.



Challah

Charlotte Schatz • Gray

Harrison Supper

My mom taught me how to make this challah and now I make it every shabbat at college for the Jewish community. From generation to generation!

1 tablespoon active dry yeast	1 tablespoon kosher salt
2 cups of warm water	2 cups whole wheat flour
1/2 cup sugar	4-5 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
1/4 cup honey	3/4 cup raisins (optional)
1/2 cup canola oil, plus 2 tablespoons more for greasing the bowl	1 egg yolk mixed with 1 tablespoon cold water for glaze
A few threads of saffron threads, crushed (omit if you don't have any in pantry)	Poppy or sesame seeds for sprinkling (optional)
3 large eggs	

In a large bowl, combine yeast, honey, sugar, and lukewarm water and let proof. When it has turned creamy and begun to foam, after about 5 minutes, add the oil, saffron (if using), salt, and eggs. Stir in the whole wheat flour, using a wooden spoon or spatula, and mix well until all the ingredients are incorporated.

Gradually add the all-purpose flour, mixing in a 1/2 cup at a time. When the dough becomes too stiff to stir, begin kneading with your hands. As the dough comes together, turn it out onto a heavily floured surface and knead until it is smooth and supple. If using raisins, knead them in.

Clean out bowl and grease it, then return dough to bowl. Cover with plastic wrap or a clean dish towel, and let rise in a warm place for 1 1/2 hour, until almost doubled in size. Dough may also rise in an oven that has been warmed to 150 degrees then turned off (this is a good trick in winter). Punch down dough, cover and let rise again in a warm place for another hour.

Divide dough in half and cut each piece into thirds or sixths. Roll out the dough into long logs and braid.

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Cover the loaves loosely with plastic wrap and let rise for another 45 minutes.

Uncover and brush with egg wash. For a shinier loaf, wait 5 minutes and brush with egg again before baking. Sprinkle poppy seeds or sesame seeds if using.

Bake for about 50 minutes to 1 hour, until the loaf is lightly browned and sounds hollow when its underside is rapped with a knuckle.



Fruit Soup (水果汤)

Sirong Wang • Houlton

Houlton Supper

This traditional recipe was shared by a home cook from China who has made it for many years without measuring ingredients. Like many family recipes, the amounts are estimated. Feel free to adjust the fruit based on the season and your family's taste. The soup should be colorful, full of tender fruit, and thick enough to lightly coat a spoon.

6 cups water	1 cup strawberries, hulled and halved
2 pears, peeled, cored, and diced	1/4-1/2 cup sugar (optional,
1/2 cup raisins	depending on the sweetness
2 peaches, peeled and diced (or	of the fruit)
2 cups canned peaches, drained)	1/4 cup cornstarch dissolved in
2 mandarins or tangerines, peeled	1/2 cup cold water (to make
and separated into segments	a slurry)

In a large pot, bring the water to a boil. Add the pears and raisins. Reduce to a simmer and cook for 8–10 minutes. Add the peaches and simmer for another 3–4 minutes. Add the tangerines and strawberries. Cook for 2–3 minutes, just until the strawberries begin to soften. Stir in the sugar, if using.

In a separate bowl, whisk the cornstarch with the cold water until completely smooth. While stirring the soup continuously, slowly pour in the cornstarch slurry. Continue cooking over medium heat for 2–3 minutes, stirring gently. The soup will become noticeably thicker and glossy. Remove from the heat as soon as it reaches the consistency of a light fruit sauce. It will thicken a little more as it cools.

Serve warm or chilled in small dessert bowls. The soup is especially refreshing when chilled, and the thickened fruit syrup coats each piece of fruit beautifully.

Corn and Black Bean Salad

Susan Griffith Schneider • Blue Hill

Blue Hill Supper

I love all the flavors in this vegetarian salad. Growing up in Rhode Island, it also blends with my son-in-law's New Mexico and Mexican backgrounds, and our love for fresh corn and beans. My mother and I would sometimes just eat several ears of that sweet summer corn for our dinner! We also have a tradition of making a pot of baked beans on Christmas Eve, ready to eat by Christmas morning, making for an easy and tasty breakfast with the addition of toasted bread and eggs.

**15-ounce can black beans, drained
(or 2 cups dried beans, soaked
and cooked)**

**1 1/2-2 cups thawed frozen corn
(or fresh kernels)**

1/2 cup diced red onion

1 cup diced red bell pepper

1-2 cloves garlic, minced

2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

**1 jalapeño, diced, or 1/4 teaspoon
cayenne (or more, to taste)**

Dressing:

1 tablespoon olive or avocado oil

1/4 cup fresh lime juice

1 teaspoon cumin

1/3 cup chipotle salsa

In a medium bowl, combine beans, corn, red onion, bell pepper, garlic, cilantro, and jalapeño or cayenne. In a separate small bowl, mix together oil, lime juice, cumin, and salsa.

Add dressing to the bean and corn mixture and mix well. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes, mixing occasionally. Season to taste and serve at room temperature.



Potato/Spinach Casserole

Alison Bossie • Houlton

Houlton Supper

Potatoes from The County!

**6-8 large potatoes, peeled, cooked,
mashed**

1 cup sour cream

2 teaspoons salt

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

2 tablespoons chopped chives

1/4 cup butter or margarine

10 ounce package frozen chopped

spinach, thawed and well drained

1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

In a large bowl, combine all ingredients except the cheese. Spoon into a greased 2 quart casserole. Bake uncovered at 400 degrees for 15 minutes. Top with cheese and bake 5 minutes longer.



Caribbean Bean & Nut Salad

Tamara Sewell • Surry

Blue Hill Supper

I think this is originally from the Moosewood Cookbook. A friend introduced it to me in Farmington and I've taken it to potlucks ever since, here in Maine, in New York, and in Tennessee, with friends from all over the world. It is stable and flexible with ingredients. I added charred corn tonight!

Dressing:

1 tablespoon ketchup

3 tablespoons olive oil

3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1/4 teaspoon cumin

1 clove garlic, minced

**3 cans beans of your choice,
drained and rinsed**

**2 stalks celery, chopped
(I add the leaves, too)**

1 sweet red pepper, chopped

2 green onions, chopped

Chopped cashew nuts

In a medium bowl, mix together dressing ingredients. In a large bowl, combine beans, celery, red pepper, and green onions. Add dressing to the vegetable mixture and refrigerate for at least 4 hours to marinate. Just before serving, add chopped cashews (or serve on the side).

Warm Lentil and Potato Salad

Angie Wotton • Hammond

Houlton Supper

I committed the cooking sin of making something to share I had never even made before. Sometimes, that works out perfectly!

**2 large shallots, 1 halved, 1 finely
diced**

4 sprigs thyme

1 small bay leaf

Salt and pepper

1 cup dry green lentils

1 pound potatoes

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1-2 cloves garlic, minced

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1/4 cup olive oil

2 teaspoons capers, chopped

2 tablespoons chopped cornichons

1-2 scallions, thinly sliced

1/4 cup chopped parsley

Cook lentils: Place halved shallot, thyme, bay leaf, salt and pepper, and 4 cups of water into a saucepan with green lentils. Simmer until firm-tender (20 minutes or so). Drain and discard shallot, thyme, and bay leaf. Keep lentils warm.

Cook potatoes: In a separate pan, cover potatoes with 1-2 inches cold water and simmer until fork-tender. Drain and keep warm.

Dressing: Place the chopped shallot and red wine vinegar in a small bowl and let sit for 5 minutes. Whisk in minced garlic, Dijon mustard, pinch of salt, a few grinds of black pepper, and olive oil. Stir in chopped capers, cornichons, and scallions.

Assemble salad: Slice potatoes into 1/2-inch segments and place in a serving bowl. Add cooked lentils, dressing, and all but 1 tablespoon of the parsley, and combine. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper, if needed. Scatter with remaining parsley. Serve warm.



Beet and Goat Cheese Arugula Salad

Kerry Read • South Paris

Harrison Supper

The beets in this salad are from my son's farm in Vermont, and the arugula is from Liberation Farms in Wales.

Dressing:

1/3 cup olive oil

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

2 tablespoons honey

1 teaspoon salt, or to taste

**1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper,
or to taste**

8 ounces arugula

1 large apple, thinly sliced

**1 medium beet, cooked, peeled,
and cubed**

3 ounces crumbled goat cheese

1/2 cup roasted pecans

1/3 cup dried cranberries

To make the dressing: Combine all ingredients in a sealable jar. Close the lid and shake vigorously. Open jar and taste, then adjust seasonings to your preference. (This will make more dressing than you need for one salad—refrigerate leftovers.)

Place the arugula leaves at the bottom of a salad bowl. Top with sliced apple and cubed beets. Top that with crumbled goat cheese, roasted nuts, and dried cranberries. Before serving, dress the salad and toss to combine.



Sour Cream Potato Salad

Samantha Hunt • Bethel

Harrison Supper

We had this potato salad at every summer gathering—birthdays, holiday celebrations, BBQs. My grandmother loved cooking and sharing her care for others through homemade food, including this dish.

6 cups diced, cooked potatoes

**1/4 cup chopped green onions,
white and green tops**

1 teaspoon celery seed

1 1/2 teaspoons salt

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

4 hard-boiled eggs

1 cup sour cream

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1/4 cup vinegar

1 teaspoon mustard

3/4 cup diced, peeled cucumber

Minced parsley, for serving

Combine potatoes, onions, celery seed, salt, and pepper. Toss lightly. Separate the whites of the hard-boiled eggs from the yolks. Chop the white and add to the potato mixture. Chill.

Mash hard-cooked yolks. Add sour cream, mayonnaise, vinegar, and mustard. Mix well. Pour dressing over potatoes. Toss lightly. Let stand 20 minutes. Just before serving, add cucumber. Trim with minced parsley.



Crockpot Creamed Corn

Donna McBeth • Brooksville

Blue Hill Supper

I don't remember just when creamed corn came into our family's life. It is likely this dish first appeared on our Thanksgiving table in 1992. My husband was a new professor at the University of Tennessee at Martin, in northwest Tennessee. He had met another new professor, at almost the same time as I was meeting that man's wife at the bank. Both families with two children almost exactly the same ages. We quickly became a family of eight. There was even semi-serious talk of a family compound or commune. There was so much food that first Thanksgiving, two families sharing and combining our own traditions, that we barely had room on the table or in our bellies for the turkey.

My family foursome got associated with Trinity Presbyterian Church there in Martin. The congregation was mostly retired faculty and newer, younger faculty with kids roughly the same age as ours. Creamed corn was a huge hit with our primary school son and, to a lesser degrees, our pre-school daughter. The creamed corn had been such a hit at Thanksgiving that it seemed a logical choice the next time a church potluck rolled around. Maybe Christmas. From then on, Crock-pot creamed corn and church potluck have been synonymous. Now this comfort food has found a friendly table at St. Francis by the Sea Episcopal Church, too. And our family love for this dish has grown to include our daughter-in-law, son-in-law, and several grandchildren.

Two 10-ounce packages frozen corn	8 ounces cream cheese
2 tablespoons sugar (I used 1 1/2	1/2 stick margarine
tablespoons Maine maple syrup)	6 tablespoons water

Cook 4 hours in crockpot on low. Enjoy!



True Shepherd's Pie!

The Jackmans • Amity
Houlton Supper

Our grandparents all came from Ireland. One grandfather was pivotal in building railroad systems. Another was John, who was killed in the Salem Trials.

4 onions	1/4 cup maple syrup
1 tablespoon salt	4 pounds hamburger
1 tablespoon pepper	4 pounds potatoes
1 tablespoon oregano	1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
1 tablespoon minced garlic	4 cans corn, drained

Sauté onions with spices and syrup. Stir in meat and cook until brown. In a separate pot, cook potatoes until soft enough to mash. Mash with butter. Spread cooked meat in a baking pan, top with corn, then spread with mashed potatoes. Bake at 450 degrees for 30 minutes.



Lynn's Leek and Spinach Pie

Lani Peterson • Yarmouth

Harrison Supper

A group of dear friends gathered every Thursday night to create art while supporting each other through those challenging early years of parenting. Sometimes there was chocolate. Sometimes there was wine. Sometimes there was something as scrumptious as this spinach and leek pie.

8 eggs

1 pound cottage cheese

1 pound feta cheese

3 leeks, washed, sliced, and sautéed

**1 package frozen spinach, thawed
and squeezed dry**

1 package filo dough, thawed

**1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, melted (for
between the layers of filo)**

In a large bowl, combine eggs, cottage cheese, feta cheese, cooked leeks, and thawed, drained spinach. Line a baking dish with one layer of filo dough, and brush butter over the top before adding another layer. Repeat this with half of the sheets of dough. Spread filling over the filo-lined baking pan. Top with more filo dough, brushing between each layer until all sheets are used. Bake in a 350 degree oven for 45 minutes, until filo dough is crispy and filling is bubbling.



Vegan Paella

Candice McElroy • Stow

Harrison Supper

When I started cooking this afternoon, my husband walked through the kitchen and said, “Don’t forget to write down your recipe!” He knows me. We’ve been married for 20 years and have 3 boys and many animals, and we love playing music together!

I don’t follow recipes, except occasionally with baking because that involves chemistry and measurements should be somewhat exact so that cakes don’t explode or just not rise and form a brick. Other than when baking, I look at a bunch of recipes and then substituted things that I like and alter ingredients based on what I have and end up with a conglomerate of something I hope tastes pleasing and is nourishing to the body and soul.

I had a container of frozen tomato sauce I made last fall with ingredients I mostly grew from my garden, which was too water to work well as pasta sauce (member that part about not following directions? Simmering it down was too tedious and I just used any of the abundant heirloom and other tomatoes I grew, rather than sauce tomatoes.) So in the sauce was:

- Various types of tomatoes
- Peppers (bell and some other non-spicy ones)
- Shredded excess summer squash
- Oregano, basil, and rosemary
- Farmstand garlic and onions

I thought that this watery sauce could make a good base for a vegan paella-type dish, so I defrosted it and looked up a bunch of recipes that I did not actually follow.

I went to the farmstand this morning and picked up garlic scapes and kale. I sautéed chopped garlic scapes and red onion in olive oil along with carrots and green beans I needed to put to use, added salt and paprika and fresh rosemary from my porch herb pots, then added my garden-vegetable tomato sauce, a can of drained chickpeas, and short-grained brown rice.

I simmered this for a loooooong time as the rice took forever to cook, stirring periodically to keep the bottom of my non-paella-designed wok I was using from burning the rice, and added a half cup of water every now and then to keep the rice cooking, while trying to prevent it from becoming too watery. I also added some more paprika, ground pepper, a little turmeric, and a splash of liquid aminos.

When the rice finally seemed like it was getting close to being done, I threw in the chopped kale and some more fresh herbs from my porch (rosemary, oregano, thyme), and let this steam for a few minutes.

Finally, I garnished it with quartered artichoke hearts, drizzled with flavored olive oil, added a few more chopped garlic scapes (because you can never have too many garlic scapes), and sprinkled some Penzey's Fox Point seasoning over the top.

Everything is vegan because I am a hard-core 30+ year vegan. I hope you enjoy the dish I created. I wish it had a better story than "I was trying to use up things in my kitchen," but that's the truth! I did, however, grow many of the vegetables and herbs in this dish with love!



Black Bean and Salsa Soup

Linda Rowe • Houlton

Houlton Supper

About 10 years ago, I was looking for quick meals to make when David and I lived in the woods and off the grid. I also wanted these recipes to taste good, of course. I happened upon this recipe with no real fanfare. It had just 4 ingredients! (At the time, I just used canned beans.) We absolutely loved it. It had great flavor and we added beans into our diet, which I had avoided for a long time. It is a staple in our meal plan all year long. Whether you use canned beans or fresh cooked, this soup comes together almost as fast as opening the 2 cans of prepared soup!

2 cans black beans, rinsed and drained

1 cup chunky salsa (mild, medium, or hot—your choice)

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 1/2 cups vegetable broth

Optional: lime juice, sour cream, cheese, scallions, avocado

Use a blender or immersion blender or food processor to combine beans, salsa, cumin, and broth. Blend mixture until fairly smooth. Heat until thoroughly heated. Ladle into bowls and serve with your favorite optional toppings!



Tamale Casserole

Maria Sanchez • Gray

Harrison Supper

Tamales are eaten throughout Latin America, where preparing them is a community-making event. It's very labor-intensive. Since moving to the USA, I do not have the big community to cook with, so I make them in a big pot, though not in corn husks, as originally served.

Chicken

Spices: cumin, paprika, chili powder

Chicken broth

Onions

Garlic

Corn masa

Cook the meat for several hours in a crock pot, seasoning with spices, to taste. Cook until the meat is so soft it can be shredded with your fingers.

In a separate pot, cook onions and garlic in broth. Bring to a boil and add the masa (use packaging as a guide for proportions of liquid to masa). Stir well. Add cooked masa to the chicken and simmer and low heat for at least 10 minutes, or until flavors blend.



Bibimbap

(Korean Mixed Rice with Meat and Vegetables)

Youngeun Joyce Kang • Houlton

Houlton Supper

In 2023, “Bibimbap” was the most searched Korean food on Google. It’s a staple on every Korean airline—a dish loved by people all over the world. In Korean, Bibim means “mixed,” and Bap means “rice.”

Bibimbap is a traditional dish of rice mixed with meat and assorted vegetables. Each ingredient—the mushrooms, the spinach, the carrots—is seasoned, sautéed, or blanched individually. When each piece is ready, they are gathered in a bowl over a bed of rice and topped with a spicy or savory sauce. In Korean culture, these seasoned vegetables are called Namul. On their own, they are just side dishes. But when you gather them all together and mix them with the sauce, they become something new: a “Main Menu” dish. Simple, humble ingredients retain their own color and flavor, yet blend together to create a masterpiece.

To me, Bibimbap is more than food. It is the story of my life over 18 years as an immigrant and 12 years here in Houlton. Just last week, I officially became a U.S. citizen. I truly believe the American spirit is the spirit of Bibimbap—not a “melting pot” where we lose who we are, but a “unity of diversity” where our differences make us better. I believe the American spirit is about unity, not uniformity—it’s about bringing our different flavors together. What made my citizenship feel real wasn’t the paperwork; it was the people of Houlton welcoming me as a “sister” in this country.

Receiving your flowers and cards made me realize that I haven’t just joined a nation; I have joined a family here in the County. You called us by our names when we felt like “humble side dishes.” You gathered the spicy, the salty, and the sweet residents of this town and made a “Houlton Bibimbap.” I will carry the lessons I learned here—how to love and how to be loved—wherever I go. This Bibimbap spirit makes Houlton beautiful, and it makes America beautiful. Let’s Go, Houlton Bibimbap! Let’s Go, American Bibimbap!

Meat and meat sauce:

**12 ounces ribeye steak, ground beef,
or pork**

2 tablespoons soy sauce

2 teaspoons brown sugar

**1/2 teaspoon minced garlic (or garlic
powder)**

**1 onion and 1 apple blended together,
for marinating meat (optional)**

2 tablespoons sesame oil (optional)

Vegetables:

8 ounces spinach

12 ounces bean sprouts

Minced garlic, to taste

Sesame oil, to taste

Salt, to taste

8 ounces carrots

**10 ounces Shiitake or other
mushrooms**

8 ounces onions

8 ounces zucchini

Seasoned Vegetable Sauce:

1/2 teaspoon sea salt

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

1 teaspoon cooking oil

1 teaspoon sesame oil

1 teaspoon sesame seeds

Bibimbap Sauce:

**4 tablespoons Gochujang (if you don’t
like spicy food, use less or omit)**

2 tablespoons soy sauce

2 tablespoons sesame oil

**2 tablespoons cooking wine or 2
teaspoons vinegar**

2 teaspoons minced garlic

2 teaspoons sugar or honey

4-5 eggs

4-5 cups steamed rice

**Optional: sliced cucumber, avocado,
daikon radish**

To make the meat: mix the beef (or pork) with the soy sauce, brown sugar, garlic, optional onion/apple mixture, and optional sesame oil. Marinate the meat for about 30 minutes while prepping the vegetables and sauces. When ready to cook the meat, add some cooking oil to a wok and cook the meat on medium-high to high heat for 3-5 minutes, until it's cooked thoroughly.

To make the spinach and bean sprouts: Boil a saucepan of water and blanch the spinach for 30 seconds, and the sprouts for 1-2 minutes. For each vegetable, after taking it out of the boiling water, rinse in cold water, then squeeze out the water and season with garlic, sesame oil, and salt, to taste.

To make the carrots, mushrooms, onions, and zucchini: Rinse, peel and julienne all the vegetables. Add some cooking oil and 1/2 teaspoon of sea salt to a wok and cook each vegetable on medium-high to high heat for 2-3 minutes, until cooked. Alternatively, you can steam each vegetable.

For each type of vegetable, make a batch of seasoned vegetable sauce combining sea salt, black pepper, oil, sesame oil, and sesame seeds. You can dress sautéed or steamed vegetables with this sauce.

To make the Bibimbap sauce: In a small bowl, combine all the ingredients and blend until thoroughly mixed. Set aside until you assemble the Bibimbap.

In a little oil in the wok, either fry eggs sunny-side-up, or beat eggs and fry into an omelette. If you make an omelette, slice it into ribbons before serving to make a shredded egg.

To assemble: Place the cooked rice into a bowl, then add the meat, assorted vegetables of your choice, and Bibimbap sauce. Top with the cooked egg.

To eat: Mix together all the components in the bowl and enjoy!



Adana Meatballs

Amy Eshoo • North Yarmouth

Harrison Supper

This recipe is adapted from one found in NYT Cooking. These meatballs use the seasoning of Turkish kebabs in ground meat, which are baked for a quick weeknight meal or festive party snack. The ground meat is flexible—you can use all beef or lamb, or a mixture of the two.

1 small red bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1-inch chunks

1 medium white onion, thinly sliced, divided

5 garlic cloves, divided

1/2 pound ground lamb

1/2 pound ground beef

2 teaspoons ground cumin

1 teaspoon crushed red pepper

4 tablespoons olive oil, divided

1 cup Greek yogurt

2 tablespoons lemon juice, divided

2 cups parsley leaves and tender stems

1 cup mint leaves

2 teaspoons sumac

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In the bowl of a food processor, combine bell pepper with half the onion and 4 garlic cloves. Pulse to finely chop the vegetables.

Transfer the vegetables to a large bowl and add the meat, cumin, crushed red pepper, 2 teaspoons of salt and 1 teaspoon of black pepper. Mix with your hands until thoroughly combined.

Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper and grease the paper with 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Using lightly oiled hands, form about 2 dozen meatballs and place them on the baking sheet, about an inch apart. Place tray in the oven and bake until meatballs are cooked through and lightly browned, 25-30 minutes.

While the meatballs bake, whisk together yogurt and 1 tablespoon of lemon juice. Grate in the remaining garlic clove, season with salt and set aside until ready to serve.

Soak the remaining sliced onion in cold water for 10 minutes. Drain, dry thoroughly, and transfer to a large bowl. Add the parsley, mint, sumac, remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil, and remaining tablespoon of lemon juice. Toss to combine, then season with salt, to taste. Serve meatballs with salad and yogurt sauce.

Jambalaya

Nancy Putnam • New Limerick
Houlton Supper

This recipe came from my son, Albert Putnam. A hearty supper after a full day of skiing!

2 pounds shrimp	1 pint tomato sauce
12 ounces uncured sausage, sliced into coins	1 1/2 cups dry brown rice
1 cup chopped onions	1 3/4 cups water
2 cloves garlic, minced	3 tablespoons chopped parsley
1 cup chopped green pepper	1 bay leaf
3/4 cup chopped celery	1/2 teaspoon thyme
1 quart canned tomatoes	1/4 teaspoon cayenne
	1 teaspoon salt

Cook and peel the shrimp, then set aside. In a Dutch oven, sauté the sausage coins. Remove from pan and set aside cooked sausage, but reserve the drippings.

In the same Dutch oven, sauté onions, garlic, green pepper and celery in 4 tablespoons of drippings. If there isn't enough fat from the sausage, add enough oil to make 4 tablespoons. Add the remaining ingredients and simmer 30-40 minutes, until rice is cooked. Stir in reserved cooked shrimp and sausage and continue cooking until they're heated through.



Dal and Rice

Erin Roy • Hancock

Blue Hill Supper

This is the Roy family comfort food! My half-Indian children ask for this recipe above all others...when sick, when home from college, for celebrations, when friends come over....

Dal:

**1 1/2 cups pink lentils (Masar dal) or
yellow lentils (Toovar dal)**

3/4 teaspoons turmeric

2 teaspoons kosher salt

Tadka:

**2-3 tablespoons ghee or light
vegetable oil**

5-6 large garlic cloves

**Cooked basmati rice, for serving
(see Note)**

Note: Here is a little trick to the best rice every time: Indian basmati rice! We are lucky because there is an Indian grocery in South Portland - Masala Mahal. Get your rice there! Also green chiles. Life changing if you like spicy! To cook: rinse very well - until the water runs clear. Two parts water to one part rice. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook for 10 min, until all the water has absorbed.

To make the dal: Pick over, clean and wash lentils (rinse them several times, until the rinse water runs clear. This is important because otherwise the water gets foamy when you boil it (in this case, however, just skim it off).

Put the lentils in a deep pot along with turmeric and 5 cups of water, and bring to a boil, stirring often as the lentils have a tendency to lump together at this stage. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, partially covered, for 25-30 minutes (40-45 minutes for yellow lentils) or until the lentils are thoroughly cooked and tender when pressed between your fingers. Stir now and then to protect sticking. Turn off the heat, and beat the lentils with a wire whisk or wooden spoon for a minute to smooth the puree. There should be 5-5 1/2 cups of lentil puree. If you have less, add sufficient water to make 5 cups. Stir in the salt. (The lentil puree may be prepared ahead and refrigerated for up to 3 days. It also freezes well. Defrost thoroughly before proceeding with the recipe).

When ready to serve, simmer the puree over low heat until piping hot. The puree thickens with keeping, therefore check the consistency and add water if necessary. It should be like moderately thick cream soup. Keep the puree warm while you make the garlic butter (tadka).

To make the tadka: Heat the ghee or veg oil over medium heat in a small frying pan. When it is hot, add the garlic slices and fry just until they turn light brown and are still soft (about 1-2 minutes). Turn off heat and immediately pour this perfumed garlic butter with the cooked garlic slices over the lentil puree. Stir to mix and serve in small bowls, with naan, roti or paratha bread, or over basmati rice.



Haasenkuche

(PA Dutch Rabbit Casserole)

Brian B. Burger • Moro Plantation
Houlton Supper

“Ich bin Pennsilfaaisch Deutsch.” Born in southeast PA where “palatine” Southern German farmers were sought by William Penn to feed his Quaker colony, gifted by the English king. PA Dutch is not Amish, but shares the language. Pennsylvania Dutch is a language derived from High German. Their faith practices were dominantly Lutheran and “Reformed” (today’s United Church of Christ), often sharing a single community “Union Church.” Such churches still exist in Pennsylvania.

I made this recipe with chicken, rather than rabbit, so it’s technically “Hinkelkuche!”

1-2 rabbits (cottontail), sectioned and parboiled (about 3 pounds fresh weight) or 6-8 chicken thighs	4-8 cups prepared poultry-type bread stuffing
4 cups prepared mashed potatoes	2 cups prepared gravy (made from the cooking broth)
	1 cup buttered bread crumbs

Carefully remove the meat from the bones of the parboiled rabbit, reserving liquid. Cut or tear meat pieces into teaspoon-sized bits. Set aside.

In a large bowl, incorporate fully the mashed potatoes and stuffing.

Into a large, deep, buttered casserole dish, place one third of the potato/stuffing filling, spreading evenly. Atop that, place one half of the meat, then one half of the gravy. Repeat. Top with the last third of the potato/stuffing mixture. You should total three layers of potato mixture and two layers of meat and gravy. Top with buttered bread crumbs.

Bake at 350 degrees for 45-60 minutes, until bubbling hot and golden on top. Consider serving with a bowl of extra gravy. Note: This dish will taste reminiscently of “Thanksgiving in one dish.” As a meal, it is well complemented with cranberry-orange relish and coleslaw.



Chocolate Crinkle Cookies

Audrey Zimmerman • Glenburn
Houlton Supper

Recipe first found in a magazine and I made them for the opening of The Cup Cafe, and internet cafe in the basement of the Houlton Unitarian Church, 2009.

3/4 cup unsalted butter
9 ounces unsweetened chocolate
3 cups sugar
6 large eggs, room temperature
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups walnuts, finely chopped

3 cups all-purpose flour
2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
3/4 teaspoon salt
About 1 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar,
for coating

Melt the butter and chocolate together in the top of a double boiler. Stir till smooth. Cool partially.

Beat together sugar and eggs in a large bowl, until light and airy, 4 minutes. Add vanilla and chocolate mixture. Blend. Stir in walnuts.

Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Stir into the chocolate mixture, half at a time, till evenly mixed. The dough will be quite soft. Cover and refrigerate 4 hours, or overnight.

When you're ready to bake, preheat oven to 325 degrees. Line cookie sheets with parchment. Sift confectioners' sugar into a shallow bowl. Shape dough into 1 1/2-inch balls. Roll in confectioners' sugar, coating heavily. Put on cooking sheets 2 1/2 inches apart. Bake for 13 minutes, one sheet at a time. When done, cookies will have puffed, but will still be moist in the center. Transfer cookie sheets to a rack and cool for 5 minutes. Transfer cookies using a spatula to a rack. Refrigerate on the rack for 30 minutes, to firm. Makes about 40 large cookies. Freezes well.



Rhubarb Squares

Maine Community Cookbook, Vol. 2

Harrison Supper

This recipe was submitted to the Maine Community Cookbook, Volume 2, by Susan Hall of Hampden. She wrote: "Since I love rhubarb and like to grow it even more, I cook with it every spring. My neighbor and I watch for the first sign of it sprouting up with a sigh of relief that winter is just about behind us. I have probably made these rhubarb squares over one hundred times over the years. The recipe originally came from the Eddington School Cook Book 1987-88. Surprisingly, it was submitted by my father-in-law's wife. They are always requested at family gatherings, loved at the snowmobile club bean suppers, and at church gatherings, not to mention the first dessert when the rhubarb is ready! I sometimes cut the squares larger as a 'fork' dessert with ice cream or whipped cream, or cut smaller sized squares for a 'finger food' dessert. Note: I make the rhubarb mixture well ahead so it can cool."

3 cups diced rhubarb

1 1/2 cups sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla

2 tablespoons cornstarch

1/4 cup cold water

1 1/2 cups flour

1 cup firmly packed brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1 cup butter or margarine, chilled

1/2 cup chopped walnuts

In a large pan, mix together rhubarb, sugar, and vanilla. In a smaller bowl, combine cornstarch and cold water, stir, and add to the rhubarb mixture. Cook over medium-low heat until rhubarb is tender, stirring constantly while mixture thickens. Set aside to cool.

In a medium-size bowl, mix together flour, brown sugar, and baking soda. Cut in cold butter or margarine, and add nuts. Pat 3/4 of the mixture into a greased 9x13-inch pan. Spread rhubarb mixture over the base, and sprinkle remaining 1/4 of the crumbs over the top. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes. Serve warm or cold.



Traditional Scottish Shortbread

Mary Chapman • Blue Hill

Blue Hill Supper

This is a family favorite.

2 cups all purpose flour

**1/2 cup caster (superfine) sugar—
if you only have regular sugar,
pulse it in a food processor**

1/4 teaspoon table salt

8 ounces unsalted butter, softened

Line an 8x8-inch baking pan with parchment paper. Set aside.

In the bowl of a food processor, pulse the flour, sugar and salt until well incorporated. Add the butter and pulse until the mixture resembles coarse bread crumbs. Press into the baking pan, using the palms of your hands to firmly press the mixture down.

Prick the dough at 1-inch intervals with the tines of a fork, then score the dough into 2x1-inch bars. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for at least 2 hours.

When ready to bake, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Bake in the middle of the oven for 30-35 minutes, until set and lightly golden brown. Do not overbake, or the cookies will be dry. When cookies are done, place the pan on a wire rack to cool for 5 minutes. Cut the shortbread into bars along the lines you scored. Store the cookies in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 1 week.



The “Better-Than-Before” Scotcharoo

Jill Hyman • Houlton

Houlton Supper

For as long as I can remember, Scotcharoos were the undisputed stars of our family reunions. They were the “special occasion” treat—the one thing I’d scan the dessert table for as a kid.

As reunions became a thing of the past, I wanted to bring that same joy to my kids. I started experimenting with the recipe, swapping out heavy syrups for organic agave and using less-processed sugars to deepen the flavor. What started as a personal kitchen experiment turned into a workplace favorite! I began bringing these to the break room as a healthier alternative to pre-packaged snacks, and they disappeared faster than I could set them down.

These bars represent the best of both worlds: a cherished family legacy and a modern, mindful update. I hope they bring a little bit of that “special occasion” magic to our community!

**Small pat of butter for greasing
the pan**

1 cup organic agave nectar

**3/4 cup less-processed sugar (such
as coconut sugar or evaporated
cane juice)**

1 cup creamy peanut butter

1 teaspoon organic vanilla extract

5 1/2 cups crisped rice cereal

1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

1 cup butterscotch bits

Lightly butter a 9x13-inch baking pan and set aside.

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine the agave nectar and the sugar. Heat the mixture, stirring occasionally, until air bubbles begin to appear (just before the boil). Remove from heat and immediately stir in the peanut butter and vanilla, mixing until smooth. Add the rice cereal to the saucepan (or transfer to a large bowl), and fold gently until every grain is evenly coated. Press the mixture firmly into the prepared pan, using a buttered spatula or waxed paper.

Using a double boiler (or a heat-safe bowl over a pot of simmering water), melt the chocolate chips and butterscotch bits together, stirring until silky. Pour the melted mixture over the cereal base and spread evenly to the edges. Before cutting into squares, allow the bars to cool completely at room temperature, or chill in the fridge for a faster set.

Shoo-Fly Pie

Sally Chappell • Bridgton

Harrison Supper

I grew up in close proximity to the Pennsylvania Dutch area and thus was familiar with shoo-fly pie as a child. Supposedly, these sweet pies were meant to distract flies from other food at outdoor eating occasions. But I'm suspicious of that mythology. I can't imagine the frugal Pennsylvania Dutch would bake pies specifically for flies. My guess is that shoo-fly pie (otherwise known as molasses crumb pie) was a pie baker's choice for its simple ingredients when fruit was unavailable.

Pastry for one 9-inch pie crust

1 cup flour

Scant 2/3 cup brown sugar

1 tablespoon vegetable shortening

1 cup light molasses

1 large egg

1 teaspoon baking soda

3/4 cup boiling water

Press pastry crust into a 9-inch pie plate. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

In a large bowl, mix together flour, brown sugar, and shortening until shortening is integrated and a crumb is formed. Reserve 1/2 cup of the mixture. To the bowl, add molasses, egg, baking soda, and mix to blend. Then add boiling water and mix, scraping down the sides and bottom of the bowl to make sure everything gets incorporated. Pour into the pastry-line pie plate and sprinkle the reserved crumb mixture on top.

Bake at 375 degrees for 18 minutes, then lower oven temperature to 350 degrees and bake for another 18-20 minutes, until the crust is golden and the center of the pie is only a bit wobbly. Cool pie on a rack. Serve with vanilla ice cream or a dollop of whipped cream.



Notes





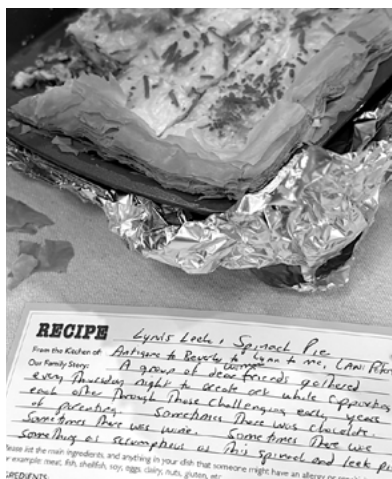
The County Co-op & Farm Store, Houlton





Halcyon Grange #345, Blue Hill





Harrison Community Center, Harrison



Connections

I am generally optimistic and believe there is always more good in the world than not, but it's certainly nice to have an event such as this to take time to listen to someone else's story and perspective.
- Houlton

We talked a lot about being "from away" and how that impacts whether we feel like we belong or not ... how do we build belonging between people with different views of what being from Houlton (or even being American) means. - Houlton

Joyce's story was one of the most impactful testimonies I have heard in a very long time. - Houlton

I was very happy to meet people from the Immigrant Rights Coalition. I was really glad they were there to help us learn more about their work. - Houlton

I was able to overcome my innate shyness and speak with total strangers about very interesting things! - Harrison

I met a woman who lives in the same neighborhood as a relative of mine. I also signed up with Maine Climate Action Now to receive their monthly newsletter. - Harrison

Hearing the story of a person helping an ICE detainee really connected with me. - Harrison

Talking with a stranger one to one was good, like when you travel and strike up a conversation with someone you don't know. The whole room felt engaged and open to each other. - Harrison

Hearing the stories relayed by the three invited speakers made the challenging daily lives of our immigrant friends so much more real for me. - Blue Hill

Watching the power of food and sharing to draw folks together is a reminder of how very needed community building is. Seeing these communities welcome and receive stories showed us just how wonderful Mainers can be - Blue Hill

Resources

Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition

<https://maineimmigrantrights.org/>

207-956-7030

info@maineimmigrantrights.org

Presenté ! Maine

<https://www.presentemaine.org/>

207-800-7453

info@presentemaine.org

Maine Climate Action Now

<https://www.maineclimateaction.org>

info@maineclimateaction.org

Maine Council of Churches

<https://mainecouncilofchurches.org>

207-772-1918

info@mainecouncilofchurches.org



Mano en Mano

<https://www.manomaine.org>

207-546-3006

info@manomaine.org

Rotary Club of Houlton

<https://houltonrotary.org>

<https://houltonrotary.org/singleemail/>

contactus

Gateway Ambassadors

<https://upgradetohoulton.com/ambassadors>

ambassadors

Greater Houlton Chamber of Commerce

<https://www.greaterhoulton.com>

(207) 694-3414

Director@greaterhoulton.com

Halcyon Grange #345

<https://www.halcyongrange.org>

207-460-9933

halcyongrange345@gmail.com

Harrison Foodbank & Community Center

<https://www.harrisonfoodbank.com>

207-647-3384

harrisonfoodbank@gmail.com



Community Plate

Serving community one food story at a time.

Community Plate is a nonprofit organization facilitating connection and building community through a common language of food, shared food stories and recipes, and the preservation of family food histories.

<https://communityplate.me>