



www.PickTnProducts.org

MEDIA RELEASE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

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Heat Up the Cold with Local Sausages, Soups

NASHVILLE - It's the most challenging time of the year for localvores: how does one stave off mealtime boredom when all that's left of local produce are root vegetables and the occasional cabbage?

The answer lies in a pot of soup. Our bodies crave the warmth of soups and stews in wintertime. Even better, many wintertime ingredients like beans and yes, root vegetables, can be chameleons of flavor depending on spices and whether the soup is vegetable broth, meat broth, or cream based. It doesn't take a professional chef to know that chicken noodle soup and beef stew are a tasty world apart.

Local ingredients that remain available year round include all dairy products, flour, meal and pastas, honey and sorghum, canned fruits and vegetables, plus all types of meats.

Fortunately, in this part of the country, local meats are at their peak of availability – including bacon, ham and sausage – in most retail stores, on farms, and even online. Cold weather was essential to traditional meat processing and curing, and still is on many Tennessee farms where meat processing and curing is an artisan craft.

Sausage in particular is plentiful and perhaps the most versatile of all, as a mere change in spices added to ground pork can make the difference between old country Italian and plain ole' country breakfast sausage. Epicurean adventurers can easily purchase fresh ground pork from a local farm or processor and create a variety of sausages. Like all fresh meats, sausage freezes very well, so a cavalcade of sausage flavors can be doled out from the freezer a package at a time all winter long.

The Pick Tennessee Products website, www.picktnproducts.org, has directories of farms and local USDA certified processors that sell their meats directly to the customer, plus a listing of retail stores that carry Tennessee products.

The Pick Tennessee Products website provides a gateway to locally grown and made products across the state, posting statewide directories of nearly 2,000 individual farmers and farm-direct businesses who list more than 8,000 food and farm products. Savvy cell phone users can point their phone cameras at a Pick Tennessee Products QR code that takes them straight to the website home page.

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Find Tennessee farm direct meats and locally processed meats at www.picktnproducts.org , or contact Wendy Sneed at Wendy.Sneed@tn.gov. Follow Pick Tennessee Products on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Picktnproducts and Twitter at @PickTnProducts.

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Smartphone users can use this QR code to go directly to the PTP meats directories.



Hearty Sausage & Bean Soup

Yield: 10 servings

- 1 pound ground Italian or other local sausage
- 1 sweet onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup diced carrots
- 1 cup diced celery
- 3 (14-ounce) cans beef stock
- 2 (14.5-ounce) cans diced tomatoes with basil, oregano and garlic
- 1 (16-ounce) can dark red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (16-ounce) can light red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (15.5-ounce) can Northern beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 cups ditalini or other short, tube-shaped pasta

1 teaspoon garlic salt

1 teaspoon black pepper

Fresh chopped parsley for garnish

In a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat, cook the sausage, onions, carrots and celery for 7 minutes or until the sausage is browned. Drain well and add the stock, tomatoes, dark red kidney bean, light red kidney beans and Northern beans.

Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer 20 minutes. Add the pasta and cook 9 minutes longer. Stir in the salt and pepper and serve warm with a garnish of fresh parsley.

**Recipe photo attached and hi-res version available for download at PickTnProducts.org*