

# Easy to Eat Local: Start by Opening a Package, Jar, Bottle or Box

In the spring, summer and fall of the year, we all think in terms of eating local by first shopping at local farmers' markets. And remember that we can shop at local farmers' markets in the winter too – farmers work all year long to provide us with produce and proteins. If you've not taken in a winter market before do start now, but be sure to check time frames that may differ from the longer weekly spring-time schedules.

What you may not realize is that you can shop local in your favorite grocery store, specialty food store or online as well. Lots of local finds, made or produced in North Carolina, come on grocers' shelves and freezer cases as well as being just picked from a local garden.

For more recipes to help you eat local by opening a package, jar, bottle or box featuring all of these wonderful North Carolina products and more, visit Heidi Billotto's Blog at HeidiBillottoFood.com or visit each company's individual website for recipes, to order product and to see all the retail locations for each company in Charlotte and across the state.



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## RENWOOD MILLS

While you may not know the name Renwood Mills, right off the bat, I know you have seen Renwood's popular brands on your grocer's shelves for years. The company has been producing locally milled flours and cornmeals since 1935. These are the makers of Southern Biscuit Flour, Tenda Bake Pancake mixes and Tenda Bake cornmeal mixes; and the mill that grinds and packages this local product is in Newton, North Carolina.

One of the wonderful things about this local mill is that they source local North

Carolina wheat to mill for their products just as they have done since Renwood's humble beginnings!

Keep a supply in stock for all of your baking needs – Southern Biscuit Flour comes in all purpose and self-rising varieties, and my favorite new Renwood Mills/Southern Biscuit Flour variety is "Formula L" – a biscuit mix blend perfect for making easy high rising biscuits, sausage cheese biscuit balls and more – just add milk and let this local mix do the rest. For more info visit [RenwoodMills.com](http://RenwoodMills.com).

## PARLA PASTA

Simone and Rick Drake, owners of Drake's Pasta in High Point, North Carolina, and their team of pasta makers have been making fresh pasta for 30 years, and Parla is their new retail line. Boxed and frozen, you may select from an assortment of ravioli, manicotti and tortellini direct from your grocer's freezer case to your table. This delicious stuffed pasta is made from extremely high quality ingredients from the dough to the filling, just like you would make it from scratch at home, but now, thanks to the pasta makers at Parla, you don't have to.

The beauty is, with a box of Parla in the freezer, you are set for a quick family or company dinner anytime. Cook the tortellini

according to package directions and then cool to toss in pasta salads or in soup like pasta e fagiole. Prepare the ravioli as directed and toss in olive oil or butter topped with a coarse grate of Parmesan cheese or deep fry the frozen ravioli in hot oil until brown, drain and serve with marinara or pesto as a dipping sauce for a fabulous perfect-for-company or game day hors d'oeuvre! When you open a box of Parla, in the time the pasta boils to perfection, you can create a quick sauce or pesto to toss with the stuffed noodles and enjoy. Parla Pastas are available in the freezer case at area Harris Teeters, Lowes, Publix and Fresh Markets. For more info visit [ParlaPasta.com](http://ParlaPasta.com).

## CLOISTER HONEY

Cloister Honey started in Charlotte, North Carolina as a backyard bee keeping hobby. Joanne de la Rionda thought it would just be a little something for her husband, bee keeper Randall York, to do in his spare time. Now this hobby turned honey-based business has taken the Southeastern United States by storm!!!

This is the real deal, and in fact, in 2016 Cloister Honey was nationally recognized as the winner of Southern Living's national food awards - getting top honors in the jams and spreads category and also received a Sofi award by the Southern Specialty Food Association.

Cloister Honey comes in a variety of guises – traditional honeys, whipped honeys and my favorites, the infused honeys and the honey spreads. The infused honeys include Cloister's bourbon infused honey – great for cocktails and bbq sauces; the arbol pepper honey – a perfect start to an appetizer when drizzled over a toasted slice of French bread spread with a creamy blue cheese or a local goat cheese; while the honey spreads are wonderful flavor combinations created by Joanne, such as Cloister's Salted Honey and the newest member of the Cloister family, the Power Seeded Honey – wonderful on yogurt or a peanut butter sandwich or used as a finishing sauce simply spread on skewers of Chicken Sate. For more info visit [CloisterHoney.com](http://CloisterHoney.com).



## CAROLINA FARMHOUSE DAIRY

North Carolina is a big dairy state and Carolina Farmhouse Dairy is the first Yogurt Dairy of its kind. All organic, and I am in love with the yogurt and kefir owner Cindy Hamrick and her family produce! Carolina Farmhouse Dairy is a newbie as family farms go, just into its third year, located in Bahama, NC (pronounced Ba-Hey-Ma), located just north of Durham. Hamrick is originally from Charlotte, left the corporate world and moved her three sons to start a family farm and dairy. They are doing it right. Just like cream top milk, this is cream top yogurt as yogurt was meant to be. It's probiotic and incredibly good for you – not watered down with gelatin and a bunch of preservatives, like so many other yogurts on the market. They also make Kefir, a yogurt based drink filled with everything that is good for you including high levels of vitamin B12, calcium, magnesium, vitamin K2, biotin, folate, enzymes and all the probiotics a body needs.

Enjoy the yogurt and kefir as they are or use them to up your morning smoothie game by blending them with your favorite frozen organic fruit or veggies. These delicious yogurts and kefir are also a wonderful ingredient in many sweet and savory recipes used in place of sour cream, heavy cream or milk; and the kefir is particularly good in salad dressings and cream sauces. Carolina Farmhouse Dairy Yogurts and Kefir are available in Charlotte at the Queen City Pantry inside the Atherton Mill & Market. For more info visit [CarolinaFarmhouseDairy.com](http://CarolinaFarmhouseDairy.com).





**GOODNIGHT BROTHERS COUNTRY HAM**

While the Goodnight Brothers company, based in Boone, NC, does not raise pigs themselves, they have been in the business of curing, aging, de-boning, slicing and packaging country ham since the company's beginnings in 1948. They purchase the pork from local producers and then use the traditional proven methods to dry cure hams that have been handed down to each generation of Goodnights by their Appalachian forefathers.

In their line of country hams, Goodnight Brothers also offers a variety they called All Natural Country Ham sold to the public at Whole Foods and Earthfare stores. This food writer's favorite among the Goodnight retail line-up is the dry cured thin sliced variety chefs call this NC prosciutto. It is cured without any artificial nitrates, only those occurring naturally in sea salt and celery. I love this ham in something as simple as a charcuterie platter or a ham biscuit with spicy mustard – it's also great to wrap around shrimp asparagus or scallops for a flavorful first course or appetizer. For more information visit GoodnightBrothers.com for each company's individual website for recipes, to order product and to see all the retail locations in Charlotte and across the state.

**OUTERBANKS SEASALT**

In this world of automation and face paced technology it is hard to believe that much food production is done by hand any more, but it is. Enter the fine folks at OuterBanks SeaSalt, who since the company's inception in 2009, harvest and package 100% all natural sea salt in small batches using artisan and heritage practices. There are no preservatives, no anti-caking agents, just all natural sea salt from the Atlantic Ocean.

With lots of different salts on the market these days, know that each has its own unique flavor. OuterBanks SeaSalt makes its home in Poplar Branch, North Carolina. The taste and the aroma will take you back to the beach to enjoy the sand, the surf and the taste of the waves as they splash up and across your face. Use the OuterBanks sea salt as a culinary finishing salt, as I have in making a candied sea salt ginger or serve at the table in beautiful handcrafted salt cellars made by OuterBanks artist Antoinette Mattingly of Kinnakeet Clay. OuterBanks culinary SeaSalt as well as their so salty bath products are available in jars of several sizes and larger bags online at their website and at their new Etsy store: OuterBanksSeaSalt. For more information visit their Facebook page @OuterBanksSeaSalt.



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