



## **FOOD/CULINARY**

### **FOR RELEASE AT WILL**

CONTACT: Justin Yax, DVA Advertising & PR, 541-389-2411, [justin@dvaadv.com](mailto:justin@dvaadv.com)  
Ron Peck, Tourism Walla Walla, 509-525-8799, [rpeck@wallawalla.org](mailto:rpeck@wallawalla.org)

### **WASHINGTON'S BREADBASKET SERVES UP** **LOCAL PRODUCE AND GOURMET EATS**

(WALLA WALLA, Wash.)—While Walla Walla may be world renown for its wine production, the culinary side of the Walla Walla Valley is quickly gaining recognition for the quality and variety of its cuisine.

Walla Walla's long-standing love affair with cultivating food began more than a century ago on the island of Corsica off the west coast of Italy. It was there that a French soldier found a sweet onion seed and brought it to the Walla Walla Valley. Over decades, this sweet onion was developed through a process of hand selecting onions from each year's harvest for exceptional sweetness, size and shape.

Under a federal marketing order established in 1995, Walla Walla Sweets can be grown only within the Walla Walla Valley. Anyone outside that area can grow Walla Walla Sweet seed, but they may not market the name. The high water and sugar contents that make Walla Walla Sweets so sweet and mild also mean they do not store as well as traditional onions. So eat them when they're ready, which is mid-June through September. But Walla Walla has plenty more to offer than just its iconic onion.

-more-



## Food/Culinary—Page 2

Most agricultural areas in Walla Walla remain devoted to wheat. The region is one of the top wheat producers in the state, which is why Walla Walla is often referred to as “The Breadbasket of the Pacific Northwest.”

World-class vineyards and wineries also abound here. And typically where fine wine thrives, so do gourmet eats as evidenced by Walla Walla’s recent recognition by The Daily Meal as “America’s Best Small Town for Food.” Visitors can savor the “localvore” lifestyle by sampling goat cheese at Monteillet Fromagerie, artisan chocolate at Petits Noirs, and homegrown asparagus, spinach, potatoes, green peas, string and lima beans, corn, cherries, and strawberries from local farmers markets, roadside stands or u-pick farms located throughout the Valley.

Walla Walla’s burgeoning culinary scene not only includes an array of fine-dining establishments and world-class chefs but numerous festivals and events devoted to the culinary arts and savoring the tastes of the Valley. They include:

**Walla Walla Farmers Market** – Held on Saturdays and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in downtown Walla Walla from May through October.

**February is for Foodies** – Month-long celebration of the culinary side of Walla Walla includes culinary weekend experiences with workshops, cooking demonstrations and competitions as well as special prix fixe menus at area restaurants with beer and wine pairings.

-more-



Food/Culinary—Page 3

**Feast Walla Walla** – Held in April amid the charming historic streets of downtown, this event celebrates the emergence of Spring with fine food, wine and art – all from local purveyors; [www.feastwallawalla.com](http://www.feastwallawalla.com).

**Walla Walla Sweet Onion Festival** – Annual July event pays tribute to the Walla Walla Sweet with chef's competitions, cooking demonstrations and plenty of opportunity to taste Washington's State Vegetable at its peak of sweetness.

#### **About Tourism Walla Walla**

As the voice for all sectors of tourism and hospitality in the Walla Walla Valley, Tourism Walla Walla is committed to being a representative, industry-driven organization. Through cooperation, experience and industry insight, Tourism Walla Walla is dedicated to providing leadership and direction, making tourism and hospitality one of the leading and most viably sustainable industries in the Valley. For more information visit [www.wallawalla.org](http://www.wallawalla.org).

# # #

EDITOR'S NOTE: On the following pages are two recipes that rely heavily on foods grown within the Walla Walla Valley.



## **Walla Walla Sweet Onion and Beet Salad**

Courtesy of [sweetonions.org](http://sweetonions.org)

### **INGREDIENTS**

#### **Dressing:**

½ cup olive oil

4 TBL orange juice

1 TBL Dijon mustard

1 tsp white wine vinegar

2 TBL fresh dill

1 TBL honey

Salt and freshly ground pepper

Whisk together all ingredients until well blended. Season to taste, and set aside.

#### **Salad:**

6 medium beets (2 pounds), stems removed

2 TBL olive oil

2 medium Walla Walla Sweet Onions, peeled and cut into quarters

½ pound mixed lettuce greens

¼ pound blue cheese, block or crumbled

### **DIRECTIONS:**

Place beets in baking pan, drizzle with oil and season with salt. Cover with foil and bake 1 hour, or until tender when pierced with a knife. When cool enough to handle, peel the beets and cut into quarters. Add the onions and toss with prepared dressing. Serve on bed of wild green and grate block of blue cheese over the salad or sprinkle with crumbles.



### **Tomato, Fresh Cheese and Watercress Salad**

Courtesy *Sunset Magazine*, "Spring in Walla Walla," April 2005 issue

#### **INGREDIENTS:**

3 TBL red wine vinegar  
2 TBL minced shallot  
1 TBL honey  
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
Salt and pepper  
10 ounces watercress (2 bunches), rinsed and stemmed  
2 cups cherry tomatoes (about 10 oz) rinsed, stemmed and halved  
8 ounces fresh sheep or goat's milk cheese (such as the Fresh Herbed Chevre from Monteillet Fromagerie)

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

In a bowl, mix first three ingredients. Whisking constantly, slowly drizzle in olive oil and whisk until mixture is thick and emulsified. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add watercress and mix to coat.

Divide watercress mixture among six plates, then arrange tomatoes and a chunk of cheese on each plate. Sprinkle salads with salt and pepper, and drizzle tomatoes and cheese with additional olive oil.