

Th: Jefferson

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Revolutionary Chef Alice Waters Visits Monticello



“The way you eat influences the way you think.”

REVOLUTIONARY CHEF ALICE WATERS and her team from her Berkeley restaurant Chez Panisse prepared a meal at Monticello in April, in celebration of Jefferson’s legacy as a farmer and as our most famously epicurean President.

A leader in the local and organic food movement for more than 40 years, Waters said she felt drawn to Monticello because of the connection between Jefferson, the garden, and food.

“I really feel like, buried in the ground here, are all the values of our democracy, and we have to dig them up and eat them,” said Waters.

And she did just that. Waters spent a beautiful spring day in Jefferson’s Vegetable Garden, harvesting lettuce and washing it at a makeshift washstand in the garden.

She selected an array of bright green “tennis ball” lettuce, reddish-brown Dutch brown lettuce, the unique-looking “Spotted Aleppo” lettuce, and arugula, or garden rocket, for a mixed-green salad served with a French vinaigrette. After noticing the ripe and robust kale, Waters added a last-minute appetizer to the menu: kale crostinis.

As she moved through the garden, inspiration was at every turn.

“It was through food that [Jefferson] built community, preserved biodiversity, expressed generosity; he talked about beauty and camaraderie, sustainability and all of those beautiful things that are so important for us to live in this 21st century,” said Waters.

“This is what we have to teach our kids. Jefferson was our first edible educator.”

Waters’ visit preceded Historic Garden Week in Virginia and the launch of Peter Hatch’s new book *“A Rich Spot of Earth” Thomas Jefferson’s Revolutionary Garden at Monticello*. Alice Waters wrote the foreword for *“A Rich Spot of Earth.”*

In the foreword Waters wrote, “We

desperately need to reconnect ourselves to the pastoral and self-sufficient tradition that Jefferson built; nothing is more vital than returning

Alice Waters stands in the doorway of the Kitchen at Monticello with a basket of fresh lettuce.



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this tradition to the very heart of American culture.”

The garden-inspired meal was prepared in “local food movement” fashion. Waters and her team sourced produce, meats, and bread from local farms and producers. Waters even milked a Jersey cow, which provided fresh cream for butter.

Hors d’oeuvres were served on rustic wooden tables spaced throughout Jefferson’s lush one-thousand-foot-long terraced Vegetable Garden.

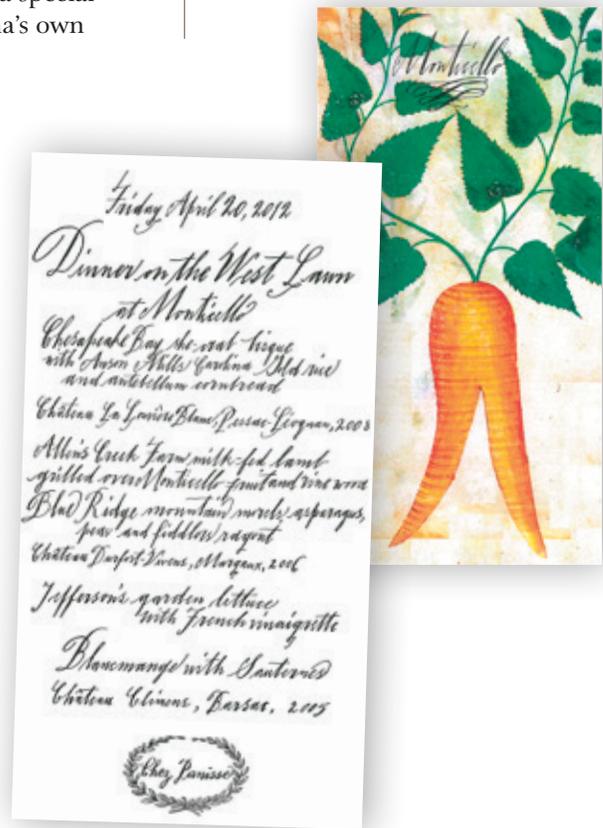
The beautiful setting was a constant reminder of Jefferson’s interest in gardening new and unusual plants in his “experimental laboratory.”

Thomas Jefferson was known as a gardener, farmer, and connoisseur of food and wine. He left a lasting impression on the culinary, gardening, and landscaping histories of the United States—his interests and tastes are still celebrated today. Plants from Jefferson’s garden have a special place in Michelle Obama’s own

White House kitchen garden.

Waters said she hopes vegetable gardens will become as relevant today as they were in Jefferson’s time.

“Jefferson had a way of communicating about his gardens and taking notes that are like a road map for us. We need to pick that up as our own priority; there is nothing more important than taking care of the land and nourishing ourselves.”



ABOVE: Handcrafted menu with a vegetable theme to mark the occasion.

ABOVE, LEFT: Waters milks a Jersey cow for fresh cream.

LEFT: Kale crostinis and rabbit rillettes on toast with black walnut relish.

Waters is Vice President of Slow Food International, a nonprofit organization that promotes and celebrates local artisanal food traditions and has 100,000 members in over 130 countries. She is the author of eight books, including *The Art of Simple Food: Notes and Recipes from a Delicious Revolution*.



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—Alice Waters



- 1 Alice Waters picks lettuce in Jefferson's Vegetable Garden at Monticello
- 2 Ham cooks over the fire in the Kitchen at Monticello
- 3 Scott Peacock prepares a biscuit with Virginia ham and fresh rhubarb compote
- 4 Gerry Newman, Albemarle Baking Company, delivers fresh bread
- 5 Pickled duck eggs prepared with eggs from Whistlin' Hollow Farm
- 6 Chesapeake Bay she-crab bisque
- 7 Alice Waters during a demonstration in Jefferson's kitchen

