

## WHAT'S IN YOUR CART?

November 15, 2021



PHOTO BY ROD MORRISON

## MANY MUSHROOMS AND TEA FOR GODDESSES

*By Zoe Singer*

*If you've ever enjoyed working a check-out shift at PSFC you know the fascination of*

seeing what other shoppers choose, from produce you've never tasted to chocolate bars and yogurts you might not have known were worth the splurge. As your intrepid reporter, I wandered the aisles of the Coop asking members **"What's in your cart?"**

On an autumnal weekday afternoon Coop members' carts seemed especially abundant and idiosyncratic. I talked to folks buying everything from long knobby green bitter melons to spiky round pink rambutans, multiple mesh bags filled with exotic fresh mushrooms, and a garden's worth of dried flower blossoms. Here's some of what I learned by asking members about their shops.



*Bitter melon, umeboshi paste, and oyster mushrooms.*



*Jonathan Bines, bitter melon and rambutan buyer.*

Member Jon Bines had some eye-catching bitter melons and rambutan in his cart. Why? His high school-aged son asked him to get something unusual! (You can learn more about these unusual fresh gourds [here](#).) I caught up with Jon's son Luca via email and learned that he likes to cut the bitter melons lengthwise, scoop out the seeds and pulp with a spoon, and cut them into half-moon slices, then stir-fry them with crumbled tofu, eggs, soy sauce, salt, and *katsuobushi* (bonito flakes). "It's just really good," he assured me, "and it's fun to eat something that's both so bitter and so mild." Also in Jon's cart, *umeboshi* plum paste, which is a puree of pickled, very salty Japanese plums. The pink paste, which was on the endcap near the fresh chicken case, is delicious on rice and has many health benefits. Jon and his family roll it into simple vegetarian sushi.



*Satya Tisman.*

I stopped member Satya Tisman near the bulk tea because her shopping list was so long, and her cart resembled a big sachet of potpourri.

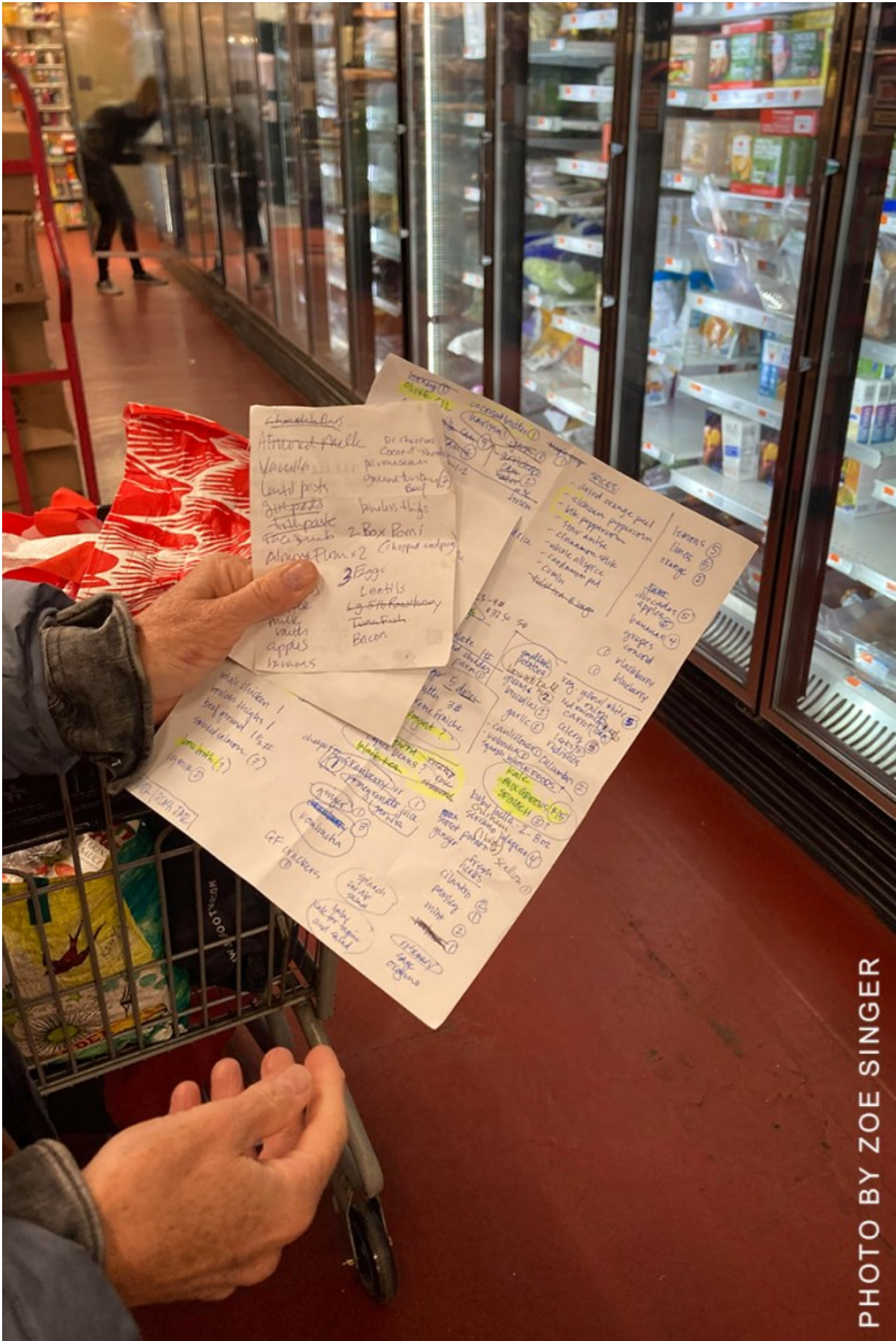


PHOTO BY ZOE SINGER

*Satya Tisman's shopping list.*

What for? A goddess energy women's retreat tapping into pagan traditions and sisterhood, to be held outside on Halloween weekend. Satya was preparing for the event with her friend Stephanie, a private chef who had planned a Middle Eastern-inspired menu of vegetarian kabocha squash and chickpea tagine, basmati rice, *chermoula* (green sauce), harissa (hot pepper sauce) with preserved lemon, and minted yogurt. The many dried flowers, teas, and spices were destined for three libations: a warm mocktail based on tulsi (holy basil) tea with honey, lemon, and cardamom; a cooler of pomegranate juice and ginger kombucha muddled with rosemary and pink peppercorns (a riff on this cranberry version); and a beautiful concoction that Stephanie described as a "feminine herbal tea emphasizing the lushness of flowers," with rose petals, rose buds, rosehips, and chamomile.



*Dried flowers, teas, and spices.*

Meanwhile, members Chris Esposito and Leah Schwartz were all in on mushrooms. They grow mushrooms at home and were buying big oyster mushrooms destined for a delicious-sounding frittata as well as shiitake mushrooms to make into vegan bacon—and they kindly shared both recipes below.

These days, when we don't break bread with others as much as we used to due to the

pandemic, the sharing of ingredient tips and recipes feels especially meaningful. During a season when we traditionally celebrate the harvest and give thanks, asking fellow shoppers about what's in their carts reminds me how lucky we are to access beautiful food in a cooperative community.



PHOTO BY ZOE SINGER

*Chris Esposito with his oyster mushrooms at checkout.*

## VEGAN SHIITAKE BACON

Serve these crispy, chewy, savory mushroom slices as you might serve bacon—as a side or topping.

Makes about 1 ½ cups

- 1 ½ tablespoons high heat vegetable oil, such as coconut
- 2 cups sliced shiitake mushroom caps
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup or to taste
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika or to taste
- ½ teaspoon salt or to taste
- ½ teaspoon liquid smoke (optional)

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. In a 10–12 inch, oven-safe pan over medium-high heat, warm the oil. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, toss the shiitake with the remaining ingredients. Scrape the seasoned mushrooms into the pan and sauté until tender, about 5 minutes. Transfer the pan to the oven and roast, stirring every 5 minutes, until the mushrooms are crispy, 15–20 minutes.

## MUSHROOM-LOVER'S FRITTATA



PHOTO BY CHRIS ESPOSITO

*Mushroom frittata.*

Resembling a baked omelette or crustless quiche, frittata is a savory egg dish you can enjoy at any temperature and any time of day. Chris and Leah like to use a variety of mushrooms.

Serves 2

- 1 ½ tablespoons unsalted butter

- 1 small shallot, diced
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 6 ounces fresh mushroom, such as shiitake or oyster, cleaned and sliced
- 2-4 farm eggs, beaten with salt and pepper to taste
- 1 ½ ounces grated cheese (Chris suggests sharp cheddar; Leah suggests goat gouda)

Preheat the broiler. In an 8-10 inch oven-safe pan over medium-high heat, melt the butter then add the shallot and a pinch of salt and sauté until softened, 2-3 minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until they have begun to brown, 5-7 more minutes. Pour in the eggs, tilting the pan to distribute evenly. Turn off the stove and sprinkle on the grated cheese. Transfer the pan to the broiler and broil until the cheese has melted and the egg mixture has begun to puff and brown, approximately 4 minutes. Watch closely to avoid burning.