

SAY CHEESE! ARTISANAL TASTING AND PAIRING AT THE COOP

February 10, 2026



The Park Slope Food Coop Cooking Squad Presents

SAY CHEESE!

Tastings and pairings from the Coop's own cheese buyer, Yuri Weber

Learn about cheese sourcing, seasonality, and selection.



Yuri Weber has been the coop cheese, olive, bulk, and fine foods buyer for 16 years. He enjoys cooking and singing (not always at the same time).



TO REGISTER:

foodcoopcooks.org/rsvp

IG: [foodcoopcooks](https://www.instagram.com/foodcoopcooks)



Note: In-person attendance is limited to 30 seats.

Feb 18th

7:30 pm EDT

upstairs at the Park Slope Food Coop
\$10 cash fee for
the in person class
(online is free!)

Courtesy of venue

Ever wonder how the Coop selects cheeses? Or, wish you knew how to shop the case like a pro? Join the PSFC Cooking Squad for **a practical, approachable cheese class** with our very own cheese buyer, **Yuri Weber**, on **Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 7:30 p.m. EST** as part of the Coop's monthly cooking series. This Cheese 101-style session offers a behind-the-scenes look at sourcing, seasonality and selection, along with practical advice for choosing cheeses for different occasions and budgets.

The class will focus on artisanal regional cheeses with an emphasis on standout producers from Wisconsin and Vermont. From understanding flavor profiles to creating thoughtful pairings with what's currently available, Yuri will share tips for building a seasonal cheese board and delve into the many practical facets of cheese—like which ones melt best and how to avoid quesadillas that drip!

DID YOU KNOW THE COOP SELLS OVER 5,000 POUNDS OF CHEESE EVERY WEEK?

Join us for an hour filled with practical advice from someone who knows the cheese case inside and out. Class will be **in-person at the Coop** and streamed **online via Zoom**. For in-person attendees, there is a \$10 cash-only fee taken at the door to help cover the cost of ingredients. Attendees will get to ask questions, meet Yuri and eat cheese! This class is perfect for anyone looking to elevate everyday snacking or hosting without overcomplicating things.

ABOUT THE CHEF

Yuri Weber has been the Coop's cheese, olive, bulk and fine foods buyer for 16 years. He enjoys cooking and singing (but not always at the same time). Yuri is also full of useful and interesting tips and facts about cheese! ***Did you know the Coop sells over 5,000 pounds of cheese every week?***

RSVP, PARTICIPATE, AND FOLLOW

Sign up for classes, download recipes and find shopping lists to cook along from home at foodcoopcooks.org. As classes are added, they will show up on the Squad's home page. Check back regularly for updates! Follow the Cooking Squad on Instagram for more content, including shopping sessions with guest chefs!

TEACH A CLASS

Though cooperation is at the heart of the Coop's mission, so is food! The Cooking Committee is looking for guest chefs to share their food expertise, traditions, and special treats. Members receive FTOP credit for preparing and delivering classes. Tell us what you want to teach!

CALLING ALL HOME COOKS!

February 10, 2026



A CALL FOR HOME COOKS

The Food Coop Cooking Class Squad is looking for members to teach cooking classes!

Share some of your favorite dishes or family culinary traditions as part of the coop's monthly cooking class series.

Interested? Get in touch!

foodcoopcooks.org/contact



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Share some of your favorite dishes or family culinary traditions as part of the Coop's monthly cooking class series.

Get in touch!

FOOD CLASS: EGGPLANT 101

February 10, 2026

The Park Slope Food Coop Cooking Squad presents

eggplant 101

with guest chef Leila Darabi

September 24 @ 7:30 pm EDT

LEARN TO MAKE TWO
PERSIAN EGGPLANT DIPS



KALEH KABOB

with walnuts, pomegranate,
and herbs
(vegan)



KASHK-E BADEMJAN

with whey
(vegetarian)



Leila is an Iranian-American home cook and storyteller. You may recognize her voice from the Linewalters' Gazette or PBS Frontline's Tehran Bureau, where she occasionally wrote about food.

Check out her IG: [@persian_lsh](https://www.instagram.com/persian_lsh).



**Coop cooking
classes are NOW
both in person
and online!**



Come meet Leila!

In-person classes are held at the Park Slope Food Coop. \$10 cash-only fee is taken at the door to help cover the cost of ingredients (for tastings—yum!) Online is still free.

TO REGISTER:
foodcoopcooks.org/rsvp
IG: [foodcoopcooks](https://www.instagram.com/foodcoopcooks)



September 16, 2025

Join us with Guest Chef Leila Darabi to make two Persian eggplant dips on Wednesday, September 24, at 7:30 p.m. as part of the Coop's monthly cooking series. The class will be in person at the Coop *and* streamed online via Zoom. For in-person attendees, there is a \$10 cash-only fee taken at the door to help cover the cost of ingredients. Attendees will get to interact with the chef and sample the recipes!

About the Chef

Leila Darabi is an Iranian-American home cook and storyteller. You may recognize her voice from the *Linewaiters' Gazette* or PBS Frontline's Tehran Bureau, where she occasionally wrote about food. She will be sharing two Persian eggplant dips: kaleh kabob with walnuts, pomegranate and herbs (vegan), and kashk-e bademjan with whey (vegetarian). Find her on Instagram here: @persian_ish.

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FOOD CLASS: BREAKFAST TACOS, TEXAS STYLE!

February 10, 2026

The Park Slope Food Coop Cooking Squad Presents

TACOS

Breakfast tacos, Texas style!

Make breakfast
tacos with Food
Studies scholar
and community
organizer,

Rebecca Gorena

@hardfeelingstacos



Rebecca shares
her passion for
food and
community-
building through
classes, dinner
parties, and
breakfast taco
pop ups!

foodcoopcooks.org/rsvp

IG: foodcoopcooks



July 30th

7:30 pm EDT

NOW in person
and online!



July 15, 2025

Join us with Chef **Rebecca Gorena** to make **Texas-style breakfast tacos** on **Wednesday, July 30, at 7:30 p.m. EDT** as part of the Coop's monthly cooking series. The class will be in person at the Coop and feature Austin-style Papa con Huevo breakfast tacos!

About the Chef

Rebecca Gorena grew up on the Texas-Mexico border, where breakfast tacos are a beloved part of everyday life. After 14 years in Austin, she moved to Brooklyn to pursue a master's degree in food studies at NYU and to share her passion for food knowledge and community-building through cooking classes, dinner parties and breakfast taco pop-ups around the city. With a background in culinary research and community organizing, Rebecca likes to explore the powerful connections between food, culture and identity. She loves helping others reconnect with their culinary roots while discovering new flavors and stories along the way. You can find her on Instagram: **@hardfeelingstacos**.

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FOOD CLASS: COOK THE GREEN MARKET!

February 10, 2026



PHOTO BY JOHN MIDGLEY



THE PARK SLOPE FOOD COOP
COOKING SQUAD PRESENTS



Cooking the Greenmarket

JUNE 25 @ 7:30 PM EDT

A FREE, ONLINE COOKING CLASS,
OPEN TO ALL!

WWW.FOODCOOPCOOKS.ORG
IG: FOODCOOPCOOKS

Ricotta Dumplings
with Spring Stock and
Seasonal Vegetables
from *The Nimble Cook*

Ronna is the owner of Purple Kale Kitchenworks, a mighty little cooking studio in Brooklyn, NY. She has also worked as a chef in restaurants and pastry shops in NYC and abroad and all told, has been cooking professionally for over 30 years. She is also author of *The Nimble Cook*, and her recipes and writings have been featured in the NYTimes, Food52, Bon Appetit, Martha Stewart, and more.
www.purplekale.com



SIGN UP NOW!

June 24, 2025

Join us live from Chef and Coop Member Ronna Welsh's kitchen studio in Sunset Park for *Cook the Green Market* on Wednesday, June 25, at 7:30 p.m. EDT as part of the Coop's monthly cooking series. The class will be broadcast live on Zoom and will feature Ricotta Dumplings with Spring Stock and Seasonal Vegetables. Ronna is the owner of Purple Kale Kitchenworks, a mighty little cooking studio right here in Brooklyn!

About the Chef

Ronna Welsh has worked as a chef in restaurants and pastry shops in NYC and abroad and has been cooking professionally for over 30 years. Author of *The Nimble Cook*, her recipes and writings have been featured by the *New York Times*, *Food52*, *Bon Appétit*, *Martha Stewart*, and more. She has been a Coop Member since 2001 and currently resides in Park Slope. Connect and see her work at purplekale.com.

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FOOD IN COMMUNITY: MEMBERS CONNECT THROUGH MEALS

February 10, 2026



June 3, 2025

By William Doran

Food is at the heart of the Coop's mission. Even in today's divisive world, the need to eat is a commonality we cannot escape as animal beings.

Eating in community is even better. Yet New York City is full of people who eat alone. Even those living—and eating—with partners or children still often mindlessly chomp through meals. Fewer and fewer people seem to truly know their immediate communities, which makes it hard to connect, share burdens, or feel less alone. So I embarked

on a mission to find people in our Coop community who are actively connecting through food.

MEMBER RACHEL LUO JOINED THE COOP IN 2018 AND STARTED HOSTING COOK-BOOK DINNERS, WHERE FRIENDS AND STRANGERS COULD SHARE A MEAL.

Rachel Luo joined the Coop in 2018 and has built a thriving network in New York by bringing people together through food. She started hosting cookbook dinners, where friends and strangers could share a meal and forge new connections. She explained, “I pick out a cookbook... something culturally interesting or maybe something I don’t know about.” She then invites a handful of people to cook items from some of the book’s recipes and enjoy them together.



Coop member Rachel Luo hosts cookbook dinners. Photograph by Michael Berman. Picks have included *My America* by Kwame Onwuachi, *Bethlehem* by Fadi Kattan, and *Chinese Enough* by Kristina Cho. In Cho's book, a chapter titled "It Takes A Village" highlights communal recipes prepared with others as a way of bonding. Luo added, "I made dumplings with my parents when I was little, but I grew up in Houston in predominantly White spaces." She recalled, "I wasn't getting a lot of exposure to other people who were Chinese American. Food was the way that I started to understand pieces of that identity." After a recent dinner, Luo gave guests two little bags of frozen dumplings to take home: one containing her own family's recipe and the other filled with Cho's.

"MY FAMILY IS PUNJABI, AND PLANNING AROUND FOOD AND COMMENSALITY IS IN-

GRAINED IN INDIAN CULTURE,” SAYS MEMBER MANDIRA GHAI.

Luo’s passion for connection extends beyond cookbook dinners, though. After moving into her current building, she lamented that the culture there didn’t embrace socializing. So, she created a text chat group, adding people as she met them in the hallways. She then made some food, sat out in the garden, and invited the neighbors. But she wondered, “What if nobody shows and I’m just sitting out here?” Happily, she managed to wrangle half of the building’s 30 residents. She added, “I met one of my best friends through this garden picnic. She lives in my building.”



Reporter William Doran hosted some members of the Cooking Club for dinner at his apartment. His main course was orzo with fresh peas. Photograph by Michael Berman. Other PSFC members are building community at the Coop. Mandira Ghai, who joined

in 2016, co-chairs the Cooking Squad, which hosts free monthly cooking classes. Growing up, Ghai expressed how her parents really set the stage for a life of community-building through food. “My family is Punjabi, and planning around food and commensality is ingrained in Indian culture.” *Commensality* is defined as sharing a meal at a common table.

IN CHALLENGING TIMES—PERSONAL OR COLLECTIVE—FOOD SERVES A PIVOTAL ROLE IN CONNECTING PEOPLE.

Her parents, newly emigrated from India, ingeniously taught cooking classes from their home in Pittsburgh to expand their social circle. Ghai continued her parents’ legacy when she joined the Cooking Squad in 2018. She fondly remembered: “It was a dynamic shift with people regularly collaborating to put together an instructive hour in a small space. Our squad had a very respectful and welcoming rapport. We became friends.”



The author slicing cucumbers. Photograph by Michael Berman.

When the pandemic hit, everything changed. In-person classes and member labor ceased. The Coop hired additional staff to keep operating, including chefs to feed everyone. Instead of stewing in individual panic, Ghai wanted to contribute. Cooking was still the answer. In 2020, she volunteered twice to prepare lunch for approximately 60 staff members. Ghai reflected that “cooking provided a different level of gratitude and empathy. I saw the staff’s hustle amidst uncertainty and fear. The way they reshuffled to keep members safe and informed was truly remarkable.”

In challenging times—personal or collective—food serves a pivotal role in connecting people. Before the pandemic, the Coop member and professional chef Ronna Welsh found inspiration and community as she navigated caring for her newborn daughter, who was born with special needs.

Welsh described how life's challenges still brought her back to food: "I had a team of therapists come to my house daily for months, and when we weren't talking about my daughter, we were talking about food." The small community that developed around her daughter's care pushed her to develop a larger community around teaching people how to cook. Welsh continued, "I started to teach when I realized that my work as a chef could extend beyond feeding those who paid for a meal. The therapists made up my very first class."



Other members of the Cooking Club join over Zoom. Photograph by Michael Berman. Welsh eventually opened a cooking school in Sunset Park—Purple Kale Kitchenworks—and wrote a cookbook. She also began hosting community-oriented events out of her professional studio kitchen. Welsh recently connected with a close friend who had been organizing storytelling nights in the Hudson Valley, and hosted a storytelling

night of her own in her kitchen. “The storytelling is wonderful, and the space we provide afterwards for people to talk and laugh (and eat!) is magical. I love how food is integral to the evening, but not the star of the show.”

Last year, Welsh deployed her skills to help the Coop’s Cooking Squad. “Ronna brought a lot of expertise and attention to pulling together the details of the classes,” remarked Jeff Bonar, who co-chairs the squad with Mandira Ghai. The squad now films and broadcasts classes from Welsh’s studio, since they are still hosted virtually.

PATRONIZING NEIGHBORHOOD ESTABLISHMENTS IS QUINTESSENTIAL NEW YORK COMMUNITY BUILDING.

Bonar shared some of his own experiences growing up around food in Los Angeles. “My father owned a Jewish deli. So I grew up around barrels of pickles, learned how to slice lox, and made butter in this big wooden churn.” Today, when he isn’t at the Coop, Bonar finds community close to home in Ridgewood, Queens, where he takes his four-year-old grandson to the local coffee shop. “We’ll show up and they know him. They know what he orders. This is a very New York thing—he knows which coffee shop has which pastry that he likes.”



Left to right: Cooking Club members Ronna Welsh, Michael Venzor, Willam Doran, Elana Sigall. Photograph by Michael Berman.

Patronizing neighborhood establishments is quintessential New York community building. Bonar noted that other parents come up and introduce themselves because they recognize his grandson from daycare. “That blows me away about New York. I know it’s a bunch of neighborhoods and people live locally, but this is such a potent demonstration of that.”

At the Coop, Bonar has been working with Ghai to reignite the cooking classes. They recruited local chef Jeffrey Mason to teach the first virtual class in 2023. Mason recently shared his experience: “I had done lots of shifts at the Coop and wanted to do something a little different, something that I connected with. A previous job as a sous chef included training and teaching new cooks. I really connected with sharing my

knowledge with people who wanted to learn.”



Close-up of peas cooking. Photograph by Michael Berman.

Mason became a community builder himself when he recruited his neighbor and friend, Siavash Haghtalab, to join the Coop the following year. Haghtalab grew up in Tehran surrounded by food traditions. He passionately described cooking as a way to show love. “I think community, food and culture go hand in hand. As humans, this is ingrained in our traditions and cultures. I show love to people by cooking them Persian food.” Food connected these two neighbors and it brought Haghtalab to lead two of the Coop’s most well-attended cooking classes.

As I closed my conversation with Rachel Luo, she really hit the core of what it means to build community in an uncertain world. “I invite a lot of random people to my dinners. It’s kind of intimidating!” she exclaimed. “At the same time, building those con-

nections requires you to be a little bit vulnerable. New York City can be a lonely place. It's important to be able to make it smaller. Connecting really changes that dynamic. We're not just random people living next to each other."

Top image, Left to right: Elana Sigall, Rachel Luo, Ronna Welsh, and William Doran.

COOK WITH THE COOP!

February 10, 2026

THE COOP
COOKING SQUAD
PRESENTS

4-23-2025
7:30 - 8:30 PM EDT

SIMPLE SIPS AND BITES

A FREE, ONLINE COOKING CLASS



THE BEST SHRIMP
COCKTAIL



BUTTER BEANS
WITH RICOTTA
AND PESTO



HERB LEMONADE

TAUGHT BY PARK
SLOPE FOOD
COOP MEMBER
RACHEL LUO



REGISTRATION IS
NOW OPEN

FOODCOOPCOOKS.ORG
IG: @FOODCOOPCOOKS

April 22, 2025

By William Doran for the Cooking Committee

Join the Cooking Squad and Coop Member **Rachel Luo** for *Simple Sips and Bites* on **Wednesday, April 23, at 7:30 p.m. EDT on Zoom** as part of the Coop's monthly cooking series. Rachel will share some entertaining basics and three elegant recipes for entertaining: the best shrimp cocktail, butter beans with ricotta and pesto and an herb lemonade! Born into Houston's diverse food scene, she grew up constantly exploring new foods and fell in love with the ways food could translate stories and bring people together. Formerly the head of a bartending agency and a bartender for private events across the city, Rachel has hosted countless events.

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