

Spring Ahead to Summer

FARM DINNERS, A HOT TICKET

by Ann Flood

photographs by Karl Knize

What could be more enjoyable than spending an afternoon at a working farm, enjoying a shared meal family style, created with ingredients fresh from the fields and prepared by a local chef recruited for the day? For beverages, a pairing with a local brewer, winemaker or spirits maker may also be included. These dinners are the truest way to experience a Farm-to-Table meal in an idyllic setting — whether it's an urban, suburban or rural location.

Here are just a few organizations and farmers that offer their time and space on a seasonal basis, so that you can see what is grown, taste what is fresh and, weather permitting, dine out under the big country sky. All are family friendly and some offer live music, farm tours and transportation. Listings are for June, July and August dinners. Most tickets are on sale now on their respective websites and many do sell out.

URBAN AND SUBURBAN

BIG DELICIOUS PLANET

You don't need to leave the Chicago city border limits for these urban farm dinners. Now in its fifth summer, the certified green restaurant offers dinners in their hidden West Town farm.

June 22, July 13, July 27, August 10 and August 24.

bigdeliciousplanet.com; 312-455-1019

CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

Join farmers, food artisans and makers of wine, beer and spirits served family style in the Regenstein Fruit & Vegetable Garden. Proceeds for the dinner support the Garden's Windy City Harvest Youth Farm program. August 17.

chicagobotanic.org; 847-835-5440

HERITAGE PRAIRIE FARM

Located in Elburn, IL, this summer Heritage Prairie is offering theme-based farm dinners with Penrose Brewing on June 16, Cocktail Party on July 14, and Honey & Beer with Revolution Brewing on August 11.

heritageprairiefarm.com; 630-443-5989

