



## Marine Cuisine

Sylvester “Sly” Murray loves a homesick student. A homesick student longs for familiar food, whether it’s eel or eggplant, goat or plantains. For 39 years, Murray has been the head cook at Duke University’s Marine Service Lab in Beaufort, home to a revolving door of international students, graduate students, and professors. “I’ve never had to think about traveling,” Murray says, “because they come to me, with their tales of home, the social issues of their country, their family histories.” And their food requests. (Italian is the most requested ethnic food in his cafeteria.) Murray cooks three daily meals for a vast diversity of diners, including vegans and vegetarians, the lactose- and gluten-intolerant, and the parent who wants her daughter to have a curry on her birthday. Murray has prepared well over 40,000 meals in his career, an accomplishment that caused Duke University to honor him with a Presidential Award.



Sly Murray incorporated many of his recipes into a cookbook, *Down Home Coastal, Exotic, and Traditional Cooking*. The 677-page paperback features everything from Italian, Mexican, Asian, and Southern dishes to separate sections for traditional cooking and vegetarian/vegan recipes. It’s sold at The Gothic Bookshop at Duke University and on Amazon.com.



## Cheesemakers

“We began by making a little cheese on the kitchen stove,” Portia McKnight, 61, says of her beginnings at Wellspring Grocery (now Whole Foods). Ten years later, that urge has become much more. “We do it all,” McKnight says of her business with partner Flo Hawley. “It all happens at the farm.” Thirty-four Jersey cows — because they’re smaller, more fertile, produce better milk, and “have soulful eyes” — produce 100 to 150 gallons of milk daily for the six to eight varieties of cheeses at Chapel Hill Creamery. Take their Calvander, a 10-pound wheel (sold in smaller portions at farmers markets and Whole Foods) inspired by Asiago. Raw milk from their cows in their fields is put in a vat and warmed. Cultures — to make acids — are added, as well as rennet, to coagulate the milk. The curd is cut into small cubes with a tool called a harp. “Because it looks like one,” McKnight says, adding, “The cheese makes the music seven months later.” After “driving out” the whey — which, in the circle of sustainability, goes to feed the farm’s pigs — the cheese is formed, stacked, pressed, bandaged, brined, and placed in the ripening room, where it gets brushed and turned several times a week for seven to nine months. And then it’s Calvander, named for an intersection near Chapel Hill Creamery. From grass blade to knife blade, this full-flavored, labor-intensive, highest-quality cheese, 98 percent of which is sold in-state, has been created under one roof.



Find Chapel Hill Creamery cheese at four Triangle farmers markets: Carrboro, Durham, Raleigh City Farmers Market, and the State Farmers Market. It’s also at specialty food shops, like Southern Season and Whole Foods.