



The Cedar Post

Cedar Down Farm's Weekly Newsletter

Summer CSA, Week 10, August 13, 2012

On the farm...

Two things this week have got me thinking about food. Okay, I always think about food. In fact I hardly ever think about anything else (!) but this week I was thinking about the value of food, meaning, the value that we place on it emotionally, philosophically and intellectually as well as the value that place on it monetarily. The first thing that got me thinking about food with some fresh eyes was a documentary that we watched called "How to Cook Your Life." The second thing was an email sent to me from a friend - also a farmer - who was having, well, a bit of a rant about people not valuing food enough, about people wanting food to be cheap.

These two things tied into each other well. The film is about Edward Espe Brown - a Zen Buddhist priest and chef who some of you may be familiar with because he wrote the famous Tassajara Bread Book. In the film, Brown talks at length about what his Zen Buddhist teacher taught about how to treat food and food preparation. Shunryu Suzuki, his teacher, said that we consider our food and how we prepare our food with the same regard with which we regard our eyesight. Wow! A pretty interesting notion. But, why not? What is it about the evolution of our food system that has made people de-value food to the point that we are at now? Money is probably the answer to that question but perhaps a little Zen philosophy is just what we need to be able to start to see food in a different way.

As a farmer, it isn't hard to see the intrinsic value of food - not just as a way of providing the energy our bodies need to get around- but as important social, cultural, emotional as well as nutritional sustenance. On the farm, we get to see the food from tiny seed to meal on our table and along the way see the hard work, dedication and love that goes into that process. We see how our friends gather together to eat and prepare meals with us. We hear stories about family recipes, dishes that have special significance and we see how much our CSA members revel in their CSA shares when they contain beautiful, healthful vegetables grown with care. So for us, treating our food as well as we treat our eyes makes sense. Because we see all of the ways that good food nurtures our soul.

The flip side of this, to me, is the industrial food system. In this system, food is regarded as commodity - how much can you make for how cheap. And that is how it is presented to us in grocery stores. Full of nameless, faceless "food," often laden with chemicals and preservatives, never telling the story of how it got from the field to your plate. The cheap price at the grocery store doesn't honour the hard labour of farm workers, the givingness of soil nor the plants and animals that form the basis of the system.

In my opinion, we are lucky to be in a place where abundant food is possible and our hearts and minds benefit from honouring the true value of good food. I don't mean to preach but I just thought it was a little, oh dear - food for thought!

This week's share:

Carrots, beets, chard, cucumbers, tomatoes, watermelon, eggplant, beans, green onions, garlic, herbs

Next week's guess:

Beans, tomatoes, cucumber, potatoes, onions, honeydew, turnips, peppers, lettuce, garlic, herbs

Cucumber Raita

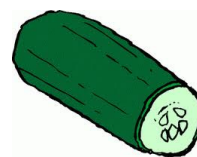
This is a lovely, light and refreshing side dish. Perfect for hot summer weather - it pairs perfectly with a spicy curry or other hot dishes!

- 2 cups plain yogurt
- 2 cucumbers
- 1 teaspoon fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon red chili powder
- 1 tablespoon cilantro (stems included), finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons salt, to taste

Seed the cucumbers and cut them into thin slices. Spread onto a flat surface. Sprinkle with salt. Allow to rest for about 20 minutes. Pat dry with paper towels. Cut the slices into matchsticks, then into small dice.

Whisk the yogurt using a fork until smooth.

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl until the texture is smooth and creamy. Chill in the refrigerator until you're ready to serve.



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Madras Pickled Eggplant

We found this amazing recipe in our friend Caitlin's CSA newsletter (ReRoot CSA in Harriston). It's a great way to use abundant eggplant and spells deliciousness for the winter!

2 lb eggplant (2 large)
 3 tbsp white vinegar
 2 large garlic cloves minced
 2 tbsp chili powder
 2 tsp ground ginger
 2 tsp turmeric
 1/4 cup canola oil
 1 tbsp cumin seed
 1 tbsp fenugreek seed
 1 1/4 white vinegar

1 cup granulated sugar
 2-4 finely chopped and seeded small hot red chile or jalapeno peppers
 1/4 cup finely chopped ginger
 2 tbsp pickling salt.

Cube unpeeled eggplant into bite-sized pieces and reserve. Combine 3 tbsp vinegar, garlic, chili powder, ginger, and turmeric in a small bowl to form a paste and reserve. Heat oil over medium heat in a large skillet. Add cumin and fenugreek seeds and saute for 1 minute. Add eggplant and saute for about 10 minutes or until eggplant is just tender. Add reserved paste and 1 1/4 cups vinegar, sugar, chile peppers, ginger and salt. Stir over medium heat for about 5 minutes or until boiling. Remove hot jars from canner and ladle pickles into jars with 1/2 inch of headspace. Process jars 15 minutes for halfpints and 20 minutes for pints. Makes 3 pints, but feel free to double it or more!

Korean Green Onion Pancakes (Pajeon)

1 large egg
 1 cup all-purpose flour
 1 cup cold water
 1/2 tsp baking powder (optional)
 4 stalks of green onions, cut lengthwise (only use the green parts for the pancake)
 1/2 tsp of light soy sauce
 Dash of sesame oil

Dipping sauce:

1/4 cup of light soy sauce
 1 tbsp sesame oil
 2 tsps sugar
 1 clove garlic, minced
 1 stalk green onion, minced
 3 red chilli peppers, cut
 1/2 tbsp vinegar

Mix better ingredients well in a bowl or large cup. Heat about 1 tbsp of cooking oil in a non-stick pan. Saute the white parts of the green onions in the pan. Remove the white parts of the green onions and discard. Turn heat to medium, pour about half of the batter into the pan depending on the size of the pan you're using. Lightly tilt the pan for the batter to cover the pan. The top of the pancake should start to bubble after 1 or 2 minutes. Wait for another 1-2 minutes then flip the pancake and continue frying the other side until almost golden brown. This should be easy to do with a good non-stick pan. Repeat the frying process with the rest of the batter. Cut the pancakes into wedges for easier serving.

Finally, mix all the ingredients for the dipping sauce in a separate bowl and do a taste test. Add more sugar if desired. Serve with pancake



Soft Tacos with Chard and Caramelized Onions

1 (12-ounce) bunch chard, thick lower stems cut off
 1 1/2 tbsp olive oil
 1 large red onion, sliced 1/4" thick
 4 garlic cloves, minced
 1 tsp red pepper flakes
 1/2 cup water
 Salt
 warm corn tortillas
 crumbled Mexican queso fresco or cheese of your choice
 salsa
 cilantro

Cut chard crosswise into 1/2" slices. In a very large (12-inch) skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat until hot. Add onion and cook, stirring frequently, until golden brown but still crunchy, about 4 to 5 minutes. Add garlic and red pepper flakes and stir for a few seconds, until aromatic, then add water, 1/2 tsp salt and the chard. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover pan, and cook until chard is almost tender, about 5 minutes.

Uncover pan, increase heat to medium-high and cook, stirring continually, until mixture is nearly dry. Taste and season with additional salt if necessary. Serve in warm tortillas, topped with cheese, cilantro, and salsa.

Makes about 8 tacos, depending on how full you like 'em.

Funky Tomatoes

Last week I talked about how wonderful it is to have abundant tomatoes to eat - a shortlived treat here in Ontario. We're all familiar with delicious, sweet red tomato.

But tomatoes are quite amazing - sure there are red ones, but tomatoes come in many colours, many shapes, many sizes and all are worth a taste. Like most vegetables, tomatoes in the grocery store generally come in one colour (red), with little diversity in taste and texture (actually grocery store tomatoes generally all have the same taste and texture - bad and hard!). But this is a sorry representation of the amazing diversity that tomatoes represent. You've probably noticed the black-skinned tomatoes we've been bringing to the pickups. These are called Indigo Rose and are a low-acid, gently flavoured tomato, quite delicious. We also grow yellow and orange tomatoes, pink ones and tomatoes of different sizes and shapes. We really encourage you to try these various tomatoes - the funkier, more colourful they are, the more delicious they tend to be!



Winter CSA!

It's time to sign up for a winter share! Check out the prices below and let us know if you have any questions. You can bring cheques or cash to your CSA pickup.

Pickup Location	Regular Share	Large Share
Hanover/Paisley	\$300	\$425
Guelph	\$310	\$435