



The Cedar Post

Cedar Down Farm's Weekly Newsletter

Winter CSA, Week 5/10, January 7, 2012

This week's share:

Carrots, potatoes, onions, garlic, beets, parsnip, Napa cabbage, delicata & sweet dumpling squash, greens

Next week's guess:

Carrots, potatoes, onions, garlic, kohlrabi, squash, radishes, greens

On the farm...

Happy New Year everyone! Hopefully you all had a great holiday and got some rest and had some fun. Here at the farm, we've been enjoying the long-awaited winter weather. The cows that we take care of for the winter arrived in December and we've been happily doing chores - watering and giving feed - and maintaining our veggie storage rooms and greenhouses.

We had some nice sunny weather for a few days which meant we could open the doors to our greenhouses and let some air through. When the sun shines, the greenhouses where we grow the winter spinach and kale for your CSA shares are toasty warm even if the outside weather is quite cold. It's quite amazing, actually, to be able to go into these warm, outdoor spaces during the cold weather - they smell of soil and there are healthy, green plants growing in them, a nice reminder of spring and summer weather.

Winter greenhouse growing is a great thing - we grow about 3000 feet of spinach and kale in two greenhouses throughout the winter. The greenhouses are totally unheated except for the warmth of the sun and the double layer of plastic on them keeps the climate inside at least 4 or 5 degrees warmer than the outside for most of the day (or even hotter if it's sunny outside). We grow cold-hardy greens crops in the greenhouses for winter harvest (and then plow them under in the spring to be replaced by summer tomato crops).

Crops like spinach and kale can freeze and thaw many times and still be top quality for harvest. The trick is to time the plantings correctly so that they are mostly mature once the length of days becomes very short. We seed the spinach and transplant the kale at the end of September. At that time, days are short but not too short for the crops to keep growing. They grow fairly slowly (relative to the rest of the summer), which is good, and typically are big enough to pick by mid to late November (about the time when we stop picking outdoor greens from the field). Once the greens in the greenhouses have sized up, they can sit throughout the winter not growing at all or growing extremely slowly and we pick them bit by bit. Unlike during the summer when things like spinach and kale grow back quite quickly after being harvested, winter greens must be rationed because they don't really grow back. So we have to meter out the greens over the winter months to try to get the most out of the greenhouse space. But it's pretty amazing how much food you can get out of a 90' x 20' greenhouse! And, there's nothing like fresh spinach in the winter!



Parsnip Purée

From <http://thefooddept.blogspot.com.au>
Serves 4

This purée is absolutely delectable - even those of you you think you don't like parsnip are sure to love it. It is rich, creamy and makes a wonderful side dish with chicken.

3 large parsnips, peeled
30g butter
1 small onion finely diced
1 clove garlic crushed
2 cups good quality chicken stock
White pepper to taste

Cut the parsnips into quarters lengthways, roughly chop into chunks and set aside.

Heat butter in a large saucepan until bubbling, add the onion and garlic and sauté until onion is softened but not browned. Add the parsnip chunks and sauté for a further 5 minutes. Add the stock and bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer 15 minutes, remove the lid and simmer for a further 15 - 20 minutes or until most of the stock has evaporated.

Blend the parsnip with the remaining stock from the pot until smooth. If you would like the puree a little thinner adjust with a little extra stock or some cream. Season to taste and serve hot.



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Carrot, Parsnip and Lentil Casserole

From <http://noshingwiththenolands.com>

Serves: 4

1 Tbsp. olive oil
3 carrots, peeled and sliced
2 parsnips, peeled and sliced
1 onion, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
½ cup red lentils, rinsed
1 can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
2 tsp. cumin
1 tsp. ginger
1 tsp. ground coriander
1 bay leaf
Salt and pepper to taste
600 ml. vegetable stock
2 medium potatoes
2 Tbsp. milk
1 Tbsp. butter
Parmesan cheese, grated



Add olive oil to a large pot and saute onion and garlic until soft. Add the carrots and parsnips to the pan along with the stock and bring to a boil. Add the lentils, herbs and spices. Simmer covered for 20min. or until the vegetables are tender and the lentils are cooked.

Preheat oven to 300F. Grease casserole with a bit of oil if needed. Mix kidney beans into the large pot with the carrot mixture. Using a slotted spoon transfer vegetables into the casserole dish, then ladle in enough liquid to cover the vegetables. Bake for 30-40 min. until a slight skin forms and the casserole is bubbling.

Meanwhile, peel and chop potatoes and cook in boiling water until tender. Mash with the milk and butter and season with salt and pepper. Remove the casserole from the oven and carefully put spoonfuls of mashed potato onto the vegetables. Increase oven to 350F and return casserole to oven and bake for an additional 20-30 min. until potatoes begin to crisp.

Add grated parmesan and broil until slightly browned. Cool slightly and serve with warm crusty bread.

Chicken and Napa Cabbage Salad

Dressing:

3 tablespoons apple juice
¼ cup rice vinegar
¼ cup canola oil
4 teaspoons tamari (or soy sauce)
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon ground ginger

Chicken:

1 pound chicken breasts, sliced
2 quarts water
¼ cup salt
¼ cup sugar

Salad:

5 cups shredded Napa Cabbage
1.5 cups shredded carrots

Mix all of the dressing ingredients in a small lidded jar and shake to combine. Add more tamari, if desired.

Place the salt and sugar in a large bowl filled with approximately 2 quarts cool water. When the salt and sugar have dissolved, add the chicken. Allow the chicken to sit in the brine for 20 minutes. Drain chicken, rinse once, and pat dry with paper towels. Heat a grill pan or skillet over medium heat. Add the chicken and cook for about 4 minutes. Flip and cook on the other side until cooked through. Cover the plate with foil and allow the chicken to rest and cool for at least 10 minutes. When the chicken has cooled, chop it into bite sized pieces.

In a large bowl, toss all of the salad vegetables along with the chicken pieces. Add the dressing and toss again to distribute the dressing. Allow the salad to sit for at least 30 minutes. Toss again before serving.

Roasted Squash with Sweet Spices, Lime and Chili

From "Plenty" by Yotam Ottolenghi

2 small or 1 medium-large squash
4 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp cardamom pods
1 tsp ground allspice (or 1/2 ground cloves, 1/2 ground cinnamon)
1/2 cup plain yogurt
2 tbsp tahini
Juice of 1 lime
1 small chili, dried or fresh, ground or minced
fresh cilantro

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Cut the squash in half, discard seeds and slice into 1/2 inch thick slices. Lay out on a baking sheet greased with 1 tbsp oil.

Place cardamom pods in a mortar and work with the pestle to get seeds out of pods. Discard pods and work the seeds to a rough powder. Transfer to a small bowl and add remaining 3 tbsp olive oil and allspice. Stir and brush mixture onto squash slices. Sprinkle with salt. Roast until light browned and tender.

Meanwhile, whisk together yogurt, tahini, lime juice, 2 tbsp water and a pinch of salt and sugar. The sauce should be thick but runny enough to pour - add more water if necessary.

Serve the squash hot, drizzled with yogurt sauce.

Beet Hummus

Found at <http://tlt-thelittlethings.com/2013/01/01/beet-hummus/>

Serving Size: 4

1/3 cup + 2 tablespoons walnuts
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
half a slice stale bread, crusts removed
7 oz cooked beetroot, cut into cubes
1 tablespoon tahini
1 large garlic clove, crushed
Juice of 1 lemon
Sea salt and black pepper
A little olive or rapeseed oil



Put the walnuts on a baking tray and toast in a preheated oven at 350F for 5-7 mins. Leave to cool.

Warm a small frying pan over medium heat. Add the cumin seeds and dry-fry them, shaking the pan almost constantly, until they start to darken and release their aroma - this should take less than a minute so be careful not to burn them. Crush with a pestle and mortar or a spice grinder. Break the bread into small pieces, put in a food processor or blender with the walnuts and blend until fine. Add the beetroot, tahini, most of the garlic and cumin, half the lemon juice, half a tablespoon of oil and a little salt and pepper. Blend to a thick paste.

Taste and adjust by adding some cumin, garlic, lemon, salt or pepper. Blend again until you are happy with the result. Loosen with some oil.

Keep in fridge and serve at room temperature.