



PlumFresh Harvest Subscription

Season 7, Week 12
Wednesday, August 10, 2022

Finally, some rain! All the rain that had been falling elsewhere during the past couple of weeks had missed us. The Sauratown Mountains do a good job of holding back rain (and storms) here – sometimes that is welcome and sometimes not! The 2+ inches that arrived over the weekend were a definite blessing. Things were starting to get pretty dry, and our irrigation system was working overtime.

We want to give you a heads up that **we will NOT have a bag next Wednesday, August 17.** We just learned that our annual Organic inspection will be on Thursday, so we really need as much time as we can squeeze out of our schedules to be prepared for this event. It is a big deal. This will be our 12th inspection, but we still always get nervous and want to make sure that everything is in order. Our farm, although it is very small, is very complicated. We grow lots of different crops along with plants and do some processing of products (i.e. garlic powder). Our inspectors tell us that it takes as long to audit us as it does a farm with hundreds of acres of one or two crops such as soybeans or corn. Our audit takes about 4-5 hours and reviews all our documentation as well as physically inspects every field and building.

People frequently ask us why we choose to be Organic and go through the extra effort and cost to be certified. To us it is an important part of our commitment to organic agriculture. We wish more farmers shared this dedication. If farmers say they support organic principles and growing practices, then why don't they step up to the plate to truly commit to those principles? It is very sad that we are the only Organic farm in either Stokes or Forsyth Counties. We frequently hear people talk about "all of those organic farms at Cobblestone" but in fact, we are the only one. We appreciate your support of our farm and our commitment to Organic agriculture. And although we do source items from other farms that are not organic, we are completely transparent about that, and we vet those farms' growing practices – and we always encourage our fellow farmers to take the next step.

Let's talk about what's in your bag this week. The onions that you had earlier in the season have now cured and are considered storage onions. We have been delighted at how well these onions grew – and dried down. Typically, we have had problems with the tops of the onions not drying completely but this year they have cured nicely. We hope you enjoy!

We are also excited about the watermelon in this week's bag! It comes to us from Randy Massey at M & M Plant Farms in Elon. Randy's farm is Organic and happens to be certified by the same agency as ours. Ray drove out to Elon last Thursday and got quite a haul! This Blacktail Mountain variety was developed in the 1970 by a seed-saver in northern Idaho. It is a medium-sized melon with pink flesh and black seeds – it is delicious and refreshing!

Turning to tomatoes, we have more of the cooking tomatoes from Felsbeck Farm. As we mentioned last week, unfortunately his crop seems to have some sort of nutritional issue that causes a larger core and some white edges inside the tomato. However, this week's tomatoes are riper and do not seem to have as much of an issue with this. Regular bag members are also getting a mix of our fruits and saladettes – the first of the season!

This week's menu includes:

- Yellow Onions – *Expression*
- Watermelon – *Blacktail Mountain from M & M Plant Farms (Organic)*
- Tomatoes from Felsbeck Farm – *Big Beef*

Regular Bags Only:

- Tomato Fruit Box Mix – *Valentine, Red Pearl, Chocolate Drop, Cherry Blossom, Citrine, Jasper, Lollipop; Saladettes: Clementine, Sunrise Bumble Bee, Purple Bumble Bee, Pink Bumble Bee*
- Member Choice: *Sweet Corn, Shishito Peppers, Fennel, Peaches, Heirloom Apples, Fingerling Potatoes*

Storage Tips

- **Please make sure that you always wash all of your produce – while we wash many of our products (but not all) and we don't use chemical pesticides, there may be field dirt or other residue. And yes, you may even find a bug (or slug!) in your veggies! Please wash them!**
- **Tomatoes** belong on the counter – not in the refrigerator!
- Refrigerate **watermelon** right away. Cut melon should be covered in plastic wrap, and chunks or slices should be kept in an air-tight container. The melons were washed but please wash them again. If your watermelon has a white powder on it, don't worry --- it is kaolin clay that is used as a pest barrier for a lot of hard skinned fruits and vegetables.
- **Store onions** in any cool, dark, dry place with adequate air circulation for several months if they are cured. Be sure to store onions and potatoes in separate places. Moisture given off by potatoes can cause onions to spoil.

Things to Know + How do I use this stuff?

- **Did you know that you can freeze watermelon? Yep!** Melon must be frozen in a sugar syrup. Choose a ripe melon (but not too mushy). Remove the rind and seeds and cut into cubes. Prepare sugar syrup. In a pot on stove, combine 1 3/4 cup sugar with 4 cups water. Heat until dissolved, then let cool. Put in fridge to cool. Syrup must be cold before packing. Place melon in freezer containers and cover with cold syrup. The syrup should cover all the fruit. Remove air and seal.

We hope you enjoy this week's adventure in fresh, local food! Until August 24th,



Recipes

TOMATO IDEAS!

Although we are f-a-r from "Peak Tomato," we wanted to share some ideas of other ways to use a bounty of tomatoes.

Source: "Bounty from the Box: The CSA Farm Cookbook," by Mi Ae Lipe

- *Try serving a traditional English breakfast: Fry up bacon in a pan and reserve the fat to fry thick slices of sourdough or French bread until crisp. Serve with poached eggs and grilled tomato slices on the side.*
- *Add whole cherry tomatoes to kebabs.*
- *Top sliced tomatoes with thin slices of Cheddar, American, or mozzarella cheese, and broil until the tomatoes become soft and the cheese is melted and bubbly.*
- *Who says BLTs are just for sandwiches? Try a bacon, lettuce, and tomato salad, along with hard-boiled eggs and a little of the bacon drippings added to the dressing.*
- *For that quintessential Italian appetizer, bruschetta, top grilled or toasted slices of garlic-and-oil-rubbed baguette with diced fresh, ripe, peeled tomatoes that have been combined with olive oil, salt, pepper, and fresh herbs.*
- *Combine fresh tomato puree, mint, sugar, champagne, and fresh lemon juice for a refreshing sorbet.*

Have you heard of this? It's a thing! In case you'd like to see a TikTok of this recipe being made by Chef Alex (Alex's Kitchen Story), check this out: [Kate Middleton's Daily Lunch #watermelonsugar #katemiddleton #royals #watermelonsalad #foryou \(tiktok.com\)](#)

Serves 4

KATE MIDDLETON'S WATERMELON SALAD

Source: [Try Kate Middleton's Refreshing Watermelon and Feta Salad Recipe \(katiecouric.com\)](#)

Ingredients:

- 1 small watermelon
- 1 block of feta
- Half a cucumber
- 1 avocado
- 2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- Lime, mint, salt, pepper

Directions:

- Peel the watermelon, cut into cubes, and place in a large bowl. Remove seeds if seeded.
- Peel the avocado, cut into cubes, and place into the bowl.
- Cut your cucumber into small pieces and add them to the bowl.
- Cut your feta into cubes and add them to the bowl.
- Add vinegar, olive oil, and lime.
- Season with salt and pepper.
- Chop mint leaves and add to taste.
- Mix everything together and serve.

From Love and Lemons, a cooling refreshing soup!

Watermelon Gazpacho

Prep time

20 mins

Total time

20 mins

This super refreshing watermelon gazpacho hits the spot on hot summer days. This recipe makes a big batch, so store the leftovers in the fridge for easy lunches all week long.

Author: Jeanine Donofrio

Recipe type: Soup

Serves: 6

Ingredients

- 4 heaping cups cubed seedless watermelon
- 1 English cucumber, diced, reserve half
- 3 medium tomatoes, diced, reserve half
- 1 small red bell pepper, diced, reserve half
- ½ cup chopped green onions, diced, reserve half
- 1 garlic clove
- small handful basil
- 3 to 4 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 1 to 2 teaspoons sea salt, or to taste
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ½ jalapeño pepper, optional
- diced avocado, optional
- micro greens, optional for garnish

Instructions

1. Set aside the reserved half of the chopped cucumber, tomatoes, red pepper and green onions and place the remaining half in a blender. Add the watermelon, garlic, basil, vinegar, olive oil, salt, pepper and jalapeño pepper, if using. Blend until smooth. Taste and adjust seasonings.
2. Pour into a large bowl (or small individual jars, as pictured) and stir in the reserved chopped vegetables.
3. Chill for 3 to 4 hours or overnight.
4. Drizzle with olive oil and garnish with diced avocado and/or micro greens, if desired, before serving.

Recipe by Love and Lemons at <https://www.loveandlemons.com/watermelon-gazpacho/>



MORE WATERMELON IDEAS

Source: “Bounty from the Box: The CSA Farm Cookbook,” by Mi Ae Lipe

- Watermelon is a wonderfully thirst-quenching snack anytime and is surprisingly filling, either by itself or in conjunction with other fruit.
- Kids and adults alike love foods in fun shapes: Cut watermelon, cheese, and sausage into cubes or flat squares, and arrange to create checkerboards or a Rubik’s Cube. Serve with toothpicks and a variety of tasty dips and sauces.
- Hollow out a big watermelon shell and fill it with assorted fruits and melon balls tossed in a spicy-sweet, ginger-lemon-honey-mint dressing.
- Mince watermelon and toss with maple syrup to use as a topping on pancakes, waffles, ice cream, and sherbet.
- Use watermelon puree to add a subtle, sweet, fruity flavor to sauces, glazes, and marinades.
- Grill whole shrimp and watermelon cubes on skewers.

RECIPE SWAP: TOMATO PIE

Source: Michael Hastings, Winston-Salem Journal

https://journalnow.com/entertainment/dining/recipe-swap-tomato-pie-a-southern-summer-tradition/article_99b834bc-0e97-11ed-a935-afaef8bee60b.html

PGF Note: I know there was another recipe from Southern Living in last week’s newsletter but I saw a post from Mary Haglund citing this one from Michael Hastings. It is far less complicated and sounds delicious!

Notes from Michael Hastings: If you’re looking for something different to make with tomatoes this summer after your hundredth tomato sandwich, consider a tomato pie. A classic of the Southern summer repertoire, tomato pie is like a hot tomato sandwich with lots of cheesy goodness. Low-calorie it isn’t, but it does make a nice lunch or light supper during August’s dog days. Now is the time to make one, too — peak-season fresh tomatoes are a must here. I think the best tomato pies contain two or three different varieties of tomatoes — for complexity of flavor as well as visual appeal. The same goes for the cheeses. I rely mostly on Parmesan, a tomato’s friend if there ever was one, but I usually supplement the Parmesan with a bit of sharp white cheddar, Gruyere or fontina. In the recipe below, I even suggest a bit of tangy feta for fun.

I always add onion, but you could replace it or supplement it with a clove or two of minced garlic. I also like to add fresh basil in my tomato pie, but that, too, is up for negotiation. Maybe you’d prefer oregano, chives or tarragon — or no herbs at all.

Two things are not negotiable in a good tomato pie: removing the excess moisture from the tomatoes, and then cooling the pie after it bakes.

To remove moisture, salt the tomato slices and leave them to rest on paper towels for at least 30 minutes, followed by a final patting down with clean, dry paper towels. A half-hour usually does the trick. But I’ve heard of other cooks who let the tomatoes drain for six hours. In short, I can’t overemphasize the importance of draining. You do not want a soggy pie with puddles of tomato water.

It’s also important to let the tomato pie sit and cool. Not only does it taste best when lukewarm to room temperature, but the cooling-off period helps the pie set up, evaporating the last bits of moisture and allowing for cleaner slices.

Tomato Pie

Makes 6 to 8 servings

For the crust:

1 pie crust, enough for a 9-inch pie

For the filling:

2½ to 3 pounds assorted heirloom tomatoes, divided use

Salt

1 sweet onion, chopped

1 cup grated Parmesan cheese

½ cup grated fontina, gruyere or white cheddar

¼ to ½ cup crumbled feta, optional

½ cup mayonnaise

1 egg, beaten

1 to 2 tablespoons freshly chopped basil or other herbs

Freshly ground black pepper

Cornmeal

1. Gently press dough into bottom and sides of pie pan. Crimp edges along the top, then trim excess dough. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

2. Slice all but one large or two medium tomatoes about ¼ inch thick. Reserve the remaining tomato for later. Place on double layer of paper towels. Sprinkle with about 1 teaspoon salt and let sit at least 30 minutes.

3. Combine cheeses, mayonnaise, egg and herbs. Season with salt and plenty of pepper.

4. Heat oven to 425 degrees. Gently but thoroughly pat tops of tomato slices with clean paper towels to remove excess moisture. Sprinkle a thin layer of cornmeal, about 2 tablespoons, over the crust. Spread onion evenly over cornmeal. Top with ⅓ of the cheese mixture. Layer half of tomatoes over cheese mixture in overlapping pattern. Top tomatoes with ⅓ of cheese mixture. Repeat with another layer of tomatoes and cheese mixture. Cut remaining tomato into ¼-inch slices and arrange on top of pie in an overlapping pattern.

5. Place pie on baking sheet and place in oven. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes.

6. Let rest at least 20 minutes before serving. Serve at room temperature. Garnish with fresh herbs if desired.