



## *PlumFresh* Harvest Subscription

Season 7, Week 19

Saturday, September 24, 2022

Happy Fall, Everyone! It seemed the seasonal shift was a bit more pronounced than usual this time around. Thursday evening the temperature dropped about 10 degrees and this morning it was 46 degrees! That will get your attention! But I am not complaining – fall is definitely my favorite season (shssh! Don't tell the others!)

We had a grand time at our *PlumFresh* Tomato Tasting on Sunday! What's better than good conversation, a gorgeous day at the farm and TOMATOES! We sampled 26 varieties and folks got to vote on their favorites. We'll reveal the winners next week!

If you missed this event, don't worry – we are planning another *PlumFresh* event on the farm in early November. Stay tuned – we'll be announcing the details soon.

A treat in this week's bag are beautiful Blue Oyster Mushrooms from Haw River Mushrooms. They are a family-owned mushroom farm based in Saxapahaw, NC, a renovated mill town in central NC. They grow a wide variety of mushroom as well as produce value-added products such as mushroom jerky.

Coming soon from our fields: Sweet Potatoes (yay!), arugula, pac choi and other Asian Greens, and more kale and lettuce.

As I mentioned in the Thursday email, there's sort of a theme in this week's bag – Ratatouille! This Mediterranean stew is a perfect end-of-Summer dish filled with lots of veggies. And we have included many in your bag. Be sure to check out the recipes as well for more ideas!

This week's menu includes:

- Eggplant – *Annina, Little Finger, Ping Tung Long, Rosa Bianca*
- Blue Oyster Mushrooms from Haw River Mushrooms
- Sweet Peppers – *Lipstick*
- Italian Flat Leaf Parsley
- Tomatoes – *Slicers, San Marzano and Mini-Romas*
- Members Choice
  - Garlic – *Music and Chesnok*
  - Lettuce -- *Muir*
  - Okra – *Burgundy, Cajun Jewel*
  - Onions – *Scout*
  - Aji Dulce Sweet Habanero Peppers
  - Shishito Peppers
  - Summer Squash: *Smooth Operator, Jaune et Verte (pattypan), Zephyr (yellow/green), Dark Star Zucchini*
  - Sunflower Shoots
  - Fruit Tomatoes Mix
  - Saladette Tomatoes Mix: *Clementine, Sunrise Bumble Bee, Purple Bumble Bee, Pink Bumble Bee*

### 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!
- **Mushrooms** should be kept in their paper bag and will last up to a week in the fridge with proper humidity.
- **Tomatoes** belong on the counter – not in the refrigerator!
- Wrap unwashed **Eggplant** in a towel (not plastic) to absorb any moisture and keep it in the veggie drawer of your refrigerator. Or store unrefrigerated at a cool room temperature. Use within a week and it should still be fresh and mild.
- Refrigerate **Peppers** unwashed in a sealed plastic bag in hydrator drawer for 1-2 weeks.
- **All summer squashes** are surprisingly perishable; avoid washing them until just before using – **based on this advice, your squash have not been washed!** They also can dehydrate quickly. Put them in a perforated plastic bag and store in the crisper drawer of your fridge.
- **Okra** is also perishable and should be used within a few days. Store the dry, unwashed pods in a paper bag in the warmer part of the refrigerator (usually the upper area). Okra, in keeping with its tropical origins, does not like temperatures below 45°F.

### Things to know + How do I use this stuff?

- Here's an eggplant tip from our friends at Bounty from the Box: Thoroughly wash the outside of eggplants before slicing, then trim off the stem end. The skins are edible, but they may be tough on older or white eggplants. You may peel the skins before cutting, or, if you are baking the eggplant, scoop the flesh out of the shell after cooking. Some people think that salting and rinsing eggplant slices before cooking removes bitterness and makes them more tender. The effectiveness of this method is debatable, and it generally applies only to larger, older fruits.

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



## **Recipes**

### **MUSHROOM TIPS FROM HAW RIVER MUSHROOMS**

Are you intimidated by the thought of cooking mushrooms? You aren't the only one! Kick the anxiety to the corner with some simple tips on releasing the flavor and beneficial components of mushrooms.

Between lots of cooking experiences, garnering tips from our farm-to-table chefs, and digging through a few of our favorite mushroom cookbooks, here's the top three tips we'd suggest to customers hoping to ace their mushroom sauté game:

- **Lower Heat, Longer Cooking Time:** Most mushrooms are about 75% water (don't worry - they're packing plenty of nutrition and flavor in that other 25%). This makes them pretty stinking difficult to burn. That said, to bring out a decadent caramelization that will make its taste and texture shine, you want to stick to a mid-level heat (stoves are so different, on our gas top we aim for level 4). Plan to let 'em sit for at least 10 minutes, but the beauty of the lower heat, longer cooking is that you don't have

to worry about burning them, so go ahead and throw your mushrooms on while you do your other dinner prep. Get in touch with your inner Beatle and Let. It. Be. Give 'em a flip about halfway through their cooking time.

- Don't Salt Until the End: The key to caramelizing (mmmmm,delicious) rather than steaming (hmmmm, "sus") mushrooms is to keep the water content down. One key to this is to not add salt until the end, just for flavor. Salt will release the mushroom's liquids. (Occasional exception - if you're starting with a dry pan (no oil/butter), some chefs will add a little salt rather than adding broth or fat to get the cooking process started).
- Don't Crowd the Pan: In these COVID times we've all gotten used to wanting our space, but mushrooms have been that way since before it was cool. Use a big enough pan so that the mushrooms aren't right on top of each other or cook them in batches. This comes back down to the amount of water in mushrooms and wanting them to have space to let some of that steam off and the caramelization to set in.
- Bonus Tip: Look at you, ya overachiever reading all the way to the end! Here's a bonus tip (don't tell the folks who stopped at bullet (1). When you're done cooking, you can deglaze that carmelized goodness by adding a quarter cup of stock or wine. Sooo good. Season to taste with herbs, salt, pepper, soy sauce or butter. Serve them as a standalone side or mix in with sauteed seasonal greens or veggies for healthy crowd-pleasing side

## Crispy Pan Fried Oyster Mushrooms

4 large oyster mushrooms or eight small, broad oyster mushrooms  
Olive oil  
Salt and pepper

Makes: 4 servings



1. Mushroom selection is key: select mushrooms with broad, flattened caps so they do not split as much. Ask at your local farmer's market for older, flatter oysters.
2. Prepare the mushrooms by removing as much of the stem as possible. Save the stems to add into a gravy, sauce, or stirfry!
3. Add about two tablespoons of olive oil to your pan. Heat the olive oil on medium high.
4. Take the oyster mushrooms and place them cap side down in the hot oil. With a large spatula, very gently press the mushroom flat. It will split a little at the edges and base. Continue pressing it occasionally as it cooks so that the mushroom is as flat as possible.
5. Cook for about three minutes, or until the edges of the mushroom turn brown.
6. Gently flip the mushroom so that the gills are now down in the oil. Press with your spatula again, keeping the mushroom as flat as possible. Cook for 2 minutes.
7. Remove the mushrooms from the oil and let them drain gill-side down on a paper towel.
8. Serve on top of steaks or under pasta for a dramatically beautiful and delicious crunchy bite!



Let's celebrate eggplant, shall we? Two options for the great summer dish, Ratatouille. Enjoy it while watching the Disney movie of the same name! 😊

## PEAK-OF-SUMMER ROASTED RATATOUILLE

Serves: 3

Source: Linda Ly in The CSA Cookbook via <http://honestcooking.com/cooking-the-csa-way/>

### Ingredients

- 3/4 pounds tomatoes, cut into 1-inch chunks
  - 1/2 pound crookneck squash, cut into ½ -inch slices
  - 1/2 pound eggplant, cut into ½ -inch slices
  - 1 bell peppers, cut into 1-inch pieces
  - 1/2 yellow onion, cut lengthwise into eighths
  - 5 garlic cloves, smashed with the flat side of a knife
  - 2 T olive oil
  - 3/4 teaspoons kosher salt
  - 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper
  - 1 rosemary sprig
  - Thinly sliced fresh basil
1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. If your oven cannot fit two large baking sheets side by side, place one rack in the top third of the oven and one rack in the bottom third of the oven.
  2. As you prepare all the vegetables, cut the tomatoes first and let them drain in a colander while you break down the remaining ingredients.
  3. In a large bowl, gently toss all the vegetables with the garlic, oil, salt, and pepper until evenly coated.
  4. Strip the leaves off the rosemary sprig and scatter them on top.
  5. Spread the vegetables across two large rimmed baking sheets in a single layer, with the tomatoes cut sides up. You want the vegetables packed in tightly, but not piled on top of each other.
  6. Roast until most of the vegetables are soft, shriveled, and slightly browned, about 45 minutes. If your baking sheets are on two separate racks, swap their positions halfway through the roasting time for even cooking.
  7. Transfer the vegetables and all their juices to a serving bowl and toss with the basil. Serve warm or chilled.

## RATATOUILLE

Source: <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/member/views/RATATOUILLE-FROM-MOOSEWOOD-COOKBOOK-50049551> Original

Source: Moosewood Cookbook

- 3 Tb olive oil
  - 4 med cloves garlic, minced
  - 2 cups chopped onion
  - 1 bay leaf
  - 2 medium eggplant, peeled and cubed
  - 1 1/2 tsp salt
  - 1 1/2 tsp basil
  - 1 tsp marjoram or oregano
  - 1/2 tsp rosemary
  - 1/2 tsp thyme
  - 2 medium red peppers, seeded and cut into 1-inch chunks
  - 2 medium tomatoes or 1 14-oz can diced tomatoes (with juice)
  - 2 medium zucchini, cubed (optional)
  - black pepper
  - fresh minced parsley
  - sliced olives (optional)
  - fresh parmesan cheese, grated (optional)
1. Heat olive oil in a deep pan. Add garlic, onion and bay leaf and sauté over medium heat for about 5 minutes.
  2. Add eggplant, salt and herbs and stir. Cover and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, for 15-20 minutes until eggplant is soft.
  3. Add zucchini, peppers, black pepper, and tomatoes. Cover and simmer for about 10 more minutes, or until zucchini and bell peppers are tender.
  4. Top with grated parmesan cheese and/or other goodies to serve.

# One Pot Eggplant Parmesan Orzo

**PREP TIME**

10 minutes

**COOK TIME**

20 minutes

**TOTAL TIME**

30 minutes

## Ingredients

- 3 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 1 medium eggplant, cut into large cubes
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1 tsp black pepper, more for serving
- ½ tbsp chopped fresh thyme leaves, more for serving
- 1 tbsp low sodium soy sauce
- 12 ounces/350 g orzo
- 3 ¾ cups/900 ml chicken broth
- 3 tbsp tomato paste
- 4 ounces/120 g sun-dried tomatoes, drained
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 2.5 ounces/70 g grated Parmesan
- chili flakes, for serving

## Instructions

1. Get your prep done before you start cooking. Chop the thyme leaves, mince the garlic, finely chop the shallot. Cut eggplant into cubes. Chop the sun-dried tomatoes.
2. Add oil to a large high-sided/thick-bottomed skillet. Heat over medium, add eggplant. Cook until it starts to brown, about 2 minutes. Then add the remaining oil, cook until the eggplant starts to soften, about 3 minutes. Add garlic and shallot, sauté for 2 minutes. Stir in pepper, thyme and soy sauce. Add orzo, stir to combine.
3. Pour in half of the chicken broth, and add tomato paste. Stir until dissolved. Then add sun-dried tomatoes and the remaining broth. Bring to a boil.
4. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 10-15 minutes or until the orzo is al dente. Stir occasionally to prevent orzo from sticking to the bottom of the skillet.
5. When ready, add lemon juice and Parmesan. Stir until silky. Top with freshly ground black pepper, chili flakes and some extra fresh thyme. Enjoy!

## Notes

Calories Per Serving: 452 kcal Nutritional information is only an estimate. The accuracy of the nutritional information for any recipe on this site is not guaranteed.

This recipe comes highly recommended from PlumFresh member, Janie Hughes.

Recipe intro: *One pot eggplant parmesan orzo. This one could very well become your new favorite stress-free weeknight dinner. There's so much to love here! Bright flavors, sweet sun-dried tomatoes, hearty sautéed eggplant and silky parmesan orzo. Quick, easy and so delicious!*

Source: [One Pot Eggplant Parmesan Orzo - Serving Dumplings](#)



## ANOTHER WAY TO LOVE EGGPLANT Source: From Bounty from the Box: The CSA Farm Cookbook, by Mi Ae Lipe

Here's a salty, savory, simple dish: Heat a preferred oil in a saucepan until hot (peanut or vegetable are good choices). Add eggplant that has been cut into 1-inch chunks, and brown them on each side. Then add garlic, shallots, and tamari or soy sauce. Top with chopped green onions and serve hot or cold.

## LENTIL AND ORZO STEW WITH ROASTED EGGPLANT

Source: Yewande Komolafe in NYT Cooking (<https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1019860-lentil-and-orzo-stew-with-roasted-eggplant>)

• **YIELD:** 4 servings

**TIME:** 45 minutes to 1 hour

*Cheryl note: I am so glad that eggplant is starting to kick into gear because I have been wanting to make this recipe since last Fall. It is SO Good! This recipe has become my absolute favorite! I think I could eat this every day! And leftovers are wonderful too -- just add more eggplant. Coriander is the perfect spice – not something I would have considered. And the lemon juice and zest really are essential and makes the flavors pop.*

*Source note: For rich, golden cubes of roasted eggplant, a high-temperature oven is crucial. Here, lentils and pasta make for a hearty stew, and the coriander seeds introduce a robust, clean flavor. Use a mortar and pestle, a spice grinder or the base of a wine bottle to crush the seeds, opening them up before they're tossed with the eggplant. Serve this stew warm or hot, topped with an aged, salty cheese like ricotta salata or feta, and a soft-poached egg if you like. The lemon zest and juice are essential and enhance the finish.*

- 1 ½ pounds eggplant (2 small or 1 large, skin on, or peeled, if desired), chopped into 1-inch pieces
- ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds, crushed
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 medium carrot, finely chopped
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 cup dried lentils (green, black or brown)
- 5 cups chicken or vegetable stock, or water
- ½ cup orzo or other small pasta, such as ditalini, stelline or macaroni
- Zest and juice from 1 lemon, plus 4 lemon wedges for garnish
- ¼ cup shaved ricotta salata or crumbled feta

- 1 tablespoon tomato paste (Note: I used more)

1. Heat the oven to 425 degrees. In a large bowl, toss the eggplant with 1/4 cup olive oil and crushed coriander seeds until coated; season with salt and pepper. Arrange in an even layer on a large rimmed baking sheet and roast until eggplant is tender and golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes, giving the baking sheet a shake halfway through roasting to toss the eggplant pieces for even cooking.
2. In a large skillet, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons oil over medium. Add the carrot, onion and celery. Season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, until vegetables are softened, about 3 minutes.
3. Stir in the garlic and tomato paste and cook, stirring occasionally, until tomato paste begins to darken on the bottom of the pan, about 5 minutes.
4. Stir in the lentils until coated. Pour in stock or water and bring to a boil over high heat. Lower to medium and simmer until lentils are tender, 20 to 30 minutes, depending on the type and age of lentils you use.
5. Stir in the orzo and cook until softened, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the lemon zest and juice.
6. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Top with the roasted eggplant pieces and large shavings of ricotta salata, and serve with lemon wedges for squeezing.

Thanks to PlumFresh member Kara Yates for sharing this recipe. She says it calls out for our garlic! And now you have mushrooms – although 8 ounces, not 20 ounces.

Source: Rabbit and Wolves ([Vegan Roasted Garlic Mushroom and Barley Stew - Rabbit and Wolves](#))

## Vegan Roasted Garlic Mushroom and Barley Stew

A whole bulb of roasted garlic is added to this amazing, healthy and easy mushroom and barley stew. So comforting!

Course: Main Course, Soup    Servings: 4    Author: Lauren Hartmann



4.97 from 33 votes

### Ingredients

- 1 Large bulb of Garlic
- 1 Tablespoon + 2 Teaspoons Olive oil, divided
- 20 Ounces Mushrooms, I used half baby bella and half button
- 3 Large Carrots
- 1/2 Cup Pearl Barley
- 4 Cups Vegetable broth
- 1 Tablespoon Soy sauce or liquid aminos
- 1/2 Teaspoon Thyme, dried
- 1/2 Teaspoon Rosemary, dried
- 1 Tablespoon Apple cider vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Cut the top off the bulb of garlic, exposing the tops of all the garlic cloves. Place the bulb of garlic on to a sheet pan. Drizzle the top with about 2 teaspoons of olive oil and a pinch of salt and pepper.
2. Roast the garlic at 400 degrees for about 30-40 minutes, until the garlic is very soft and very brown. Remove from the oven and set aside.
3. While the garlic is roasting, cut the mushrooms into large chunks, I usually quarter mine. Then chop the carrots.
4. When the garlic is close to being ready, heat the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large soup pot on medium high.
5. Then add the mushrooms and carrots, saute, reducing heat as needed, until the mushrooms have released their liquid and are starting to brown. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper.
6. Next, when the garlic is ready, squeeze all of the roasted garlic cloves out of the peel and into the pot with the mushrooms and carrots. Stir to combine.
7. Now, pour the vegetable broth, soy sauce and apple cider vinegar into the pot. Stir to combine. Then add the dried thyme and dried rosemary.
8. Bring the stew to a simmer, then pour the barley into the pot. Season with another pinch of salt and pepper. Continue to simmer on medium low until the barley is cooked. Check the package for timing. I like to use parboiled barley, which only takes 10-15 minutes, but regular barley takes about 30-45 minutes.

Recipe continued

9. Once the barley is soft, taste the stew and adjust seasoning. Serve immediately with fresh herbs on top if you want.

### **Notes**

Trader Joe's has parboiled barley that makes things way quicker if you can find any brand of parboiled barley.

You can roast the garlic in aluminum foil if that is how you are used to doing it, I just wanted to test an alternative, in case you don't like cooking with foil.