



PlumFresh Harvest Subscription

**Season 8, Week 15
Saturday, September 16, 2023**

First, my apologies for not getting a newsletter to you after the last bag on September 2nd! There's always a danger in postponing a task even though you know there is no way you can get it done on time. That postponed newsletter slowly drifts into the "unseen" category – and then never gets done! My apologies! Please know that if you have a question about something in your bag and want to know what to do with it – just ask! I am more than happy to help!

As we tick closer to the arrival of Autumn, our efforts to get more crops flipped and planted has quickened. Since it is a bit cooler, the soil and air are more hospitable to transplants than what we've had over the past couple of weeks. You don't want to put a transplant into scorching hot soil because the baby plant and its roots will instantly incinerate! Cooler air temps along with cloud cover and some showers will help the plants get established without frying – especially those we are planting on black landscape fabric.

A couple of items in this week's bag deserve a special shout-out! The **Sweet Potato Greens** may be a new thing for you. Thanks for trying them! They are a very nutritious and delicious part of the sweet potato plant (the tubers will be ready in about 3 weeks!) The edible leaves and stem tips of sweet potato vines are well known in many parts of the world. According to Texas Cooperative Extension, sweet potato foliage has a rich protein content that helps supplement the nutritional value of the roots and is often considered a "poor man's food." Some research has shown that the leaves are more nutritious than spinach, celery, carrots and cucumbers when it comes to vitamin B, iron, zinc, protein, antioxidants, and calcium. They supposedly enhance immune function, boost metabolism, lower blood sugar, improve eyesight, and act as an anti-inflammatory. Give them a try with the recipes below – they may become one of your new favorite greens! And what a nutritional powerhouse!

The other new item is the **Aji Dulce Spice Pepper**. This Caribbean pepper has the same shape, size, color and aroma as Habanero, but is sweet, spicy, and delicious, with only a trace of heat. Highly aromatic fruits; their flavor is unusual and complex, with overtones of black pepper and coriander, and undertones of other spicy flavors. An excellent choice for sautéed vegetables, rice and bean dishes, paprika, or herbal vinegars.

Our **Snacking Cucumber** crop is starting to produce (3rd time's the charm!) and we were able to get Regular Bag folks a taste of what's to come. The "net house" we installed around the plants is doing a pretty good job at keeping out the pests so that we can have some pretty good production.

Other coming attractions include a new crop of lettuce, green chile, poblano peppers, hot peppers, radishes (salad and Daikon) and sweet potatoes. We planted a LOT of sweet potatoes back in June and they are about 3 weeks out. Start getting your tastebuds ready for the plethora of ways to prepare them! They are truly one of my favorite foods!

Here's what you'll find in this week's bag.

- Arugula
- Eggplant – *Annina and Rosa Bianca*
- Fingerling Potatoes – *LaRatte*
- Aji Dulce Spice Peppers
- Tomato Fruit Box – *Mix of cherry and grape tomatoes including Valentine, Red Pearl, Cherry Blossom, Chocolate Drop, Citrine, Jasper, Lollipop, Sweet Golden Grape*
- Slicer Tomatoes – *Mix of Heirloom and Hyloom tomatoes*

Regular Bags

- Elephant Garlic
- Snacking Cucumbers – *Picolino*
- Sweet Potato Greens

Add/Sub Items:

- Basil – *Prospera Genovese*
- Beets – *Boro and Touchstone Gold*
- Farmstead Chevre from Buffalo Creek Farm and Creamery
- Garlic Chives
- Garlic: Farmers Choice
- Creamer Potatoes
- Potatoes – *Fingerling, German Butterball, Nicola, Norwiss*
- Hot Peppers -- *Serrano*
- Shishito Peppers
- Sweet Italian Peppers – *Carmen and Escamillo*
- Sweet Peppers – *Lunchbox/Picnic Mix*
- Sweet Peppers - *Jimmy Nardello Sweet Italian*
- Sweet Pepper Mix – *Lipstick, Marconi, Jupiter*

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 your veggies and fruit before eating.**
- **Arugula** stores well in its zip-bag in the crisper. Please make sure you wash it before use!
- **Snacking Cucumbers** should be stored in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer.
- **Sweet Potato Greens** should be stored in their plastic bag in the refrigerator.
- **Garlic** is best stored in a cool dark place or in a bowl on the counter (away from the sun). Do not store in the refrigerator!
- **Potatoes** should be stored in a paper bag (not plastic) in a cool, dark place away from onions. Don't store them in the refrigerator! LaRatte Fingerlings are very susceptible to greening so make sure they are in a dark place.
- **Tomatoes** belong on the kitchen counter. Do not refrigerate!
- **Beets and Peppers** store best in plastic bags in the crisper drawer.
- **Eggplant** should be stored loose in the middle of your refrigerator – not the crisper. It will keep for 1-2 weeks.
- **Basil** should be placed in a jar with water on the counter – like flowers in a vase. Since you have the rootball intact, the basil will last much longer. Do not refrigerate!

Things to Know + How do I use this stuff?

- **Eggplant** is one of those veggies that folks love or hate. I am definitely in Camp Love – but hey, I get it! Several of my favorite food and cooking blogs have had features on eggplant in recent days. The New York Times "The Veggie" newsletter offered up its Eggplant Extravaganza and several of the recipes below come from that. Love and Lemons also featured a special blog on [15 Easy Eggplant Recipes](#). Check out all of these great resources to take your eggplant from yuck to YUM!

Please enjoy this week's adventure in fresh, Organic and local food!



Recipes

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. 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.

EGGPLANTDAL

By Kay Chun, New York Times Cooking

Time 40 minutes

This hearty meal takes flavor inspiration from Indian masoor dal, spiced and creamy red lentils. Here, eggplant pairs with the fragrant spices of dal and brings a silky texture to the final dish. Cumin seeds, coriander, garlic, ginger and fresh chiles are bloomed in ghee to release their fragrant aromas as they toast before they're simmered with lentils and eggplant to form a rich, perfumed stew.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 servings

¼ cup neutral oil, such as safflower or canola	1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
1 cup finely chopped yellow onion	1 red or green serrano chile, finely chopped
1 large eggplant (about 1 pound), peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes (about 4 cups)	2 teaspoons cumin seeds
Salt and black pepper	1 teaspoon ground coriander
2 tablespoons ghee	1 medium tomato, cut into ¼-inch pieces
1 tablespoon minced garlic	1 cup red lentils, rinsed
	Chopped cilantro and basmati rice or naan, for serving

PREPARATION

1. In a large Dutch oven, heat oil over medium. Add onion and eggplant, and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until eggplant is softened and starting to break down, about 8 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons water and stir up the browned bits on the bottom of the pot. Cook until all of the water is absorbed, then transfer eggplant mixture to a bowl.
2. Melt ghee in the pot over medium heat. Add garlic, ginger, chile, cumin seeds and coriander, and stir constantly until fragrant (be careful not to burn), about 30 seconds. Add tomato and cook, stirring occasionally, until completely broken down and lightly caramelized, about 8 minutes. Stir in eggplant mixture.
3. Add lentils and 3 cups water to the pot, and season with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil over high heat, then cover, reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until lentils are tender and mixture is thickened, about 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
4. Divide dal among bowls and garnish with cilantro. Serve with rice or naan.

Eggplant and Bean Chili

Time 50 minutes Yield: 4 servings

By Kay Chun, New York Times Cooking

This rich vegetarian chili is made with meaty eggplant, red kidney beans (which create a hearty texture) and lentils (which create creaminess). Caramelized eggplant and sweet carrots simmer in a garlic-infused tomato sauce with classic chili spices until the eggplant breaks down into a saucy, savory ragù. The kidney beans retain some of their bite to balance the silky eggplant. Serve the chili with a toppings bar for a festive spread. Leftovers transform into a terrific meal with pasta the next day, reheated and tossed with spaghetti and grated Parmesan.

INGREDIENTS

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| ¼ cup neutral oil, such as safflower or canola | 1 teaspoon ground cumin |
| 1 pound eggplant (1 medium), peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes (6 cups) | ½ teaspoon dried oregano |
| Kosher salt and black pepper | 1 (14-ounce) can whole tomatoes and their juices, crushed with your hands |
| 1 small onion, finely chopped (about 1 cup) | 1 (15-ounce) can red kidney beans, rinsed |
| 2 small carrots, peeled and cut into ¼-inch dice (1 cup) | 1 (14-ounce) can lentils, rinsed |
| 2 tablespoons tomato paste | ¼ cup thinly sliced scallions, plus more for garnish |
| 3 large garlic cloves, minced | 1 tablespoon lime juice |
| 1 tablespoon pure chile powder (such as ancho, chipotle or a mix) | Sour cream, grated Cheddar, sliced jalapeños and tortilla chips, for topping (optional) |
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PREPARATION

1. In a large Dutch oven, heat 2 tablespoons of the oil over medium. Add eggplant, season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden in spots, 5 minutes; transfer to a plate.
2. Reduce heat to medium-low. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons oil, then add the onion and carrots to the pot and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 5 minutes. Add tomato paste and garlic, and cook, stirring occasionally, until tomato paste is lightly caramelized, about 3 minutes. Stir in chile powder, cumin and oregano until well blended.
3. Add tomatoes, kidney beans, lentils, the reserved eggplant and 2 cups of water. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring to release any browned bits from the bottom of pot. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low and cook, undisturbed, until eggplant is very tender and flavors have melded together, 30 minutes. Uncover and stir, mashing some of the eggplant to create some creamy texture.
4. Stir in the scallions and lime juice; taste and season with salt and pepper. Divide chili among bowls and garnish with more scallions. Finish with any of the optional toppings and serve warm.

Spicy Chinese Eggplant Stir Fry

- 16 ounces super firm tofu (Trader Joes has a great one)
- 4 tablespoons + 1 teaspoon olive oil, divided
- ¼ cup + 1 tablespoon soy sauce, divided
- 4 teaspoons cornstarch (or arrowroot powder), divided
- 1 long Chinese eggplant
- 1 bunch asparagus
- 1 red pepper
- 2 shallots

- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 serrano pepper or Thai chili
- 1-inch ginger root
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon sriracha
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger

Optional: Sesame seeds, Cooked Rice

1. Remove the tofu from the package and dry it with a paper towel or a tea towel. Cut it into cubes and put it in a Ziploc or reusable silicone bag. Add 1 teaspoon olive oil and one tablespoon soy sauce. Shake the bag to coat the tofu, then add 2 teaspoons cornstarch and shake again.
2. Add 1 tablespoon oil to a non-stick frying pan, bring the heat to medium, and drop in the tofu. Let it cook undisturbed for 10 minutes, then flip each cube over and cook for 10 more minutes. (Alternatively, you can cook the tofu in the air fryer for 15 minutes at 400 F) Remove it from the pan.
3. Chop the eggplant and asparagus. Slice the red pepper. Dice the shallots, garlic, and pepper, and grate the ginger.
4. Add another tablespoon oil to the pan you cooked the tofu in then add the shallots, garlic, and pepper. Saute for 5 minutes before adding the eggplant, asparagus, red pepper, and ginger. Sauté on medium for 10 minutes.
5. While that's cooking, combine ¼ cup soy sauce, 2 tablespoons olive oil, lemon juice, maple syrup, sesame oil, sriracha, and ground ginger in a small bowl. Dissolve the remaining cornstarch in a small amount of hot water, then add it to the bowl,
6. When the vegetables are done, add the tofu and sauce to the pan. Mix well. The spicy Chinese eggplant stir fry is ready to serve.

STIR-FRIED SWEET POTATO LEAVES

Source: The Woks of Life at <https://thewoksoflife.com/2018/01/yam-leaves/>

Prep time 30 mins **Cook time** 5 mins **Total time** 35 mins **Serves:** 4-6

Source Note: Sweet potato leaves are an under-rated vegetable that you can find at more and more Asian grocery stores these days. Here's how to prepare them.

Ingredients

- 1 pound sweet potato leaves (Note: you have about 2/3 lb of just the leaves and stem, not the vine so you have enough for the full recipe)
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 3 cloves garlic, smashed and chopped
- 2 slices ginger, julienned
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon Shaoxing wine (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon ground white pepper
- 2 tablespoons water
- Salt, to taste
- A pinch of sugar

Instructions

1. Pinch off each leaf, including the stem, from the main stalk and any other tender parts of the vegetables. Wash and rinse thoroughly a couple of times and set aside to drain off any excess water before cooking.
2. Heat the oil in a wok over medium heat. Add the garlic and ginger and cook for about a minute. Now turn the heat to high and add in the sweet potato leaves.
3. Stir and add in the sesame oil, Shaoxing wine (optional), ground white pepper, water, salt (to taste) and a pinch of sugar. Stir to cook for a couple of minutes until all the leaves are wilted. Serve immediately.

SWEET POTATO GREENS CHIPS

I saw a post from Debbie Roos, the Extension Agent in Chatham County, about the Sweet Potato Greens Chips that she made last week. I am so glad someone asked her for the recipe! Delicious!

From Debbie Roos: Someone asked how I made these. It's so easy! First preheat the oven to 400°. Then wash and dry the leaves. Put them in a big bowl and drizzle a little olive oil over them and lightly mix with your hand to coat the leaves. Spread in a single layer on a baking sheet and lightly sprinkle with salt. Bake for a few minutes, checking often. It doesn't take long for them to crisp up. I bake them in several batches since they are in a single layer.



SWEET AND SAVORY SWEET POTATO LEAVES

[Sweet and Savory Sweet Potato Leaves \(coonrockfarm.com\)](http://coonrockfarm.com)

- 8 cups de-stemmed, torn and rinsed sweet potato leaves
- 1 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 small yellow onion, diced
- 1/2 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/2 tablespoon cider vinegar
- 3/4 cup vegetable or chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons dried cranberries
- 2 tablespoons crushed pecans
- 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic

Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Stir in the onion and garlic; cook and stir until the onion softens and turns translucent, about 5 min. Stir in the mustard, sugar, vinegar, and chicken stock and bring to a boil over high heat. Stir in the sweet potato leaves, cover and cook 5 min until wilted. Stir in the cranberries and continue boiling, uncovered, until the liquid has reduced by about half, and the cranberries have softened, about 15 min. Season to taste with pepper. Sprinkle with pecans before serving.

PUERTO RICAN-STYLE AJÍ DULCE SAUCE (AJILIMÓJILI)

Makes about 2 1/4 cups

Epicurious | October 2013

by Maricel Presilla, *Gran Cocina Latina: The Food of Latin America*

Ingredients

- 12 Caribbean sweet peppers (ají dulces)
- 1 cubanelle pepper, seeded and coarsely chopped
- 1/2 jalapeño, Scotch Bonnet or habanero chile, seeded
- 7 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 small yellow onion (about 5 ounces), coarsely chopped (about 1/2-2/3 cup)
- 1 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup distilled white vinegar
- 1 bunch cilantro, leaves stripped from stems (about 2 cups)
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin

Combine all the ingredients in a food processor or blender and process to a coarse emerald-green sauce. The sauce will keep in the refrigerator, tightly covered, for 2 to 3 days. Use on chicken, pork, as a condiment for a burger, with chips, on a spoon,

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From New York Times Cooking: [Pasta With Fresh Tomatoes and Goat Cheese Recipe - NYT Cooking \(nytimes.com\)](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1020290-one-pot-pasta-with-ricotta-and-lemon)

PGF Note: This is very similar to our "Go To Pasta" but I looking forward to trying this recipe using goat cheese instead of ricotta.

Pasta With Fresh Tomatoes and Goat Cheese

By Ali Slagle

Time 25 minutes

Rating 4 ★★★★★ (515)

This pasta's sauce comes together using the same trifecta found in lemon-ricotta pasta (<https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1020290-one-pot-pasta-with-ricotta-and-lemon>): a juicy fruit, a creamy cheese and a salty cheese. This recipe makes good use of those summer tomatoes with juices just barely contained by their thin skins. The creamy cheese is goat cheese, whose tang balances the sweetness of the tomatoes. Parmesan adds salty depth, while herbs and red-pepper flakes complete the dish. For a more filling pasta, feel free to add shrimp, corn or green beans to the boiling pasta in the last few minutes of cooking.

Ingredients

Yield: 4 servings

Kosher salt

2 pounds very ripe tomatoes, coarsely chopped

1 teaspoon fresh thyme or oregano leaves

½ teaspoon red-pepper flakes, plus more as needed

2 ounces Parmesan cheese, coarsely grated, plus more as needed

1 pound fusilli or another spiral pasta

1 (4-ounce) log goat cheese, crumbled

Preparation

Step 1

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil.

Step 2

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine the tomatoes, thyme, red-pepper flakes and ½ teaspoon salt. Mash with a fork or potato masher until tomatoes are juicy. Stir in the Parmesan. Set aside while the pasta cooks, or up to 2 hours at room temperature.

Step 3

Add the pasta to the boiling water and cook according to package instructions until al dente. Reserve ½ cup pasta cooking water, then drain the pasta.

Step 4

To the bowl of tomatoes, add the goat cheese and 2 tablespoons of the reserved pasta cooking water. Stir until the cheese is mostly melted. Add the pasta and stir vigorously until the noodles are well coated. Add more pasta water as needed until the sauce coats the noodles. Season to taste with additional Parmesan and red-pepper flakes.



rice-stuffed tomatoes

Rice-Stuffed Tomatoes [Pomodori Ripieni di Riso]

Adapted from a blend of *Rachel Eats*, *Wednesday Chef*, *Silver Spoon* and trial and error

As I mentioned above, you could deck these out with any number of compatible ingredients — crisped bits of prosciutto, mozzarella or pecorino cheese, olives or artichokes and more! Even I couldn't resist straying from the pure tomato-rice-and-seasonings course with a clove of garlic and few tablespoons of minced onion, as well as a starchier risotto variety of rice. But I'm telling you, it needs none of these things to be late summer dinner bliss. The rice cooks inside the most clear-noted, pure tomato sauce you've ever scooped onto a fork and I want August to always taste like this.

Serves 6 as a side and 3 as a main. We had these with sausages, but they'd be equally good with last week's *kale salad* and/or some salumi. Or, you can do this, which is the way it is done in Rome: Peel and cube a few Yukon gold potatoes, toss them with olive oil, salt and pepper. Arrange them in the baking dish around the tomatoes and bake them simultaneously. This not only keeps the tomatoes upright, it provides a delicious accompaniment.

2 to 3 tablespoons olive oil

Coarse or Kosher salt

6 medium-to-large (mine were 3 inches across, averaged 8 1/4 ounces in weight) tomatoes

Red pepper flakes, to taste

1/4 medium or 1/2 small onion, finely chopped

1 garlic clove, minced

9 tablespoons arborio or another short-grained starchy rice

Few tablespoons chopped parsley, oregano or slivered basil (or mix thereof)

Handful breadcrumbs, if using (unless using gluten-free breadcrumbs, this will of course negate the dish's gluten-free status)

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly coat an ovenproof baking dish with olive oil.

Prepare tomatoes: Cut the tops off the tomatoes and scoop out tomato juices, seeds and flesh into a non-reactive (i.e. just about anything but aluminum) bowl. I like to use a grapefruit knife to make the first cuts, then a spoon to remove the rest, but you can use anything you have around, being careful not to pierce the bottom of the tomatoes. Salt the cavities of the tomatoes and turn them upside down on a plate to drain.

Prepare reserve: Run scooped-out tomato flesh and juices through a food mill or pulse in a blender until coarsely pureed. Heat a large skillet over medium heat, then add 2 tablespoons olive oil, heating it too. Once hot, add onion, garlic and red pepper flakes, cooking them together for 2 minutes, or until onion begins to soften. Add rice and cook them together for about 3 minutes, or until rice toasts a little. Add tomato puree and bring to a simmer, then reduce heat to medium-low. Season with 3/4 teaspoon salt, then cover skillet with a lid, and let simmer for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until rice is par-cooked. Adjust seasoning if needed.

Reassemble tomatoes: Stir fresh herbs into tomato-rice mixture. Arrange tomatoes right-side-up in baking pan then spoon mixture into tomatoes, filling them just 7/8 of the way to leave room for the rice to finish expanding. Coat with breadcrumbs that you can drizzle lightly with olive oil, if using, or you can replace the tomato lid on each (though, do not spend 10 minutes trying to match them back up, as I did last summer. It's pointless.)

Bake: Uncovered for 30 minutes, until tomato walls are soft and the rice inside has finished cooking. Serve hot. Repeat again tomorrow.