



PlumFresh Harvest Subscription

Season 8, Week 22
Saturday, November 4, 2023

What we thought as Endless Summer has finally made an abrupt exit. Two mornings in the mid-20s really make you realize that our days of 85+ degrees are gone until next year. Your farmers really like summer (especially Ray).

Preparations for the seasonal shift are pretty extensive. We must close up tunnels, drain water lines, set up auxiliary heating in the tomato tunnel and harvest any cold sensitive crops. It's always a scurry to get things done before big weather events. And while we hate to see our warm weather crops wither, it's just part of the changing seasons. With Fall's death comes Spring's new life. Working outside really keeps you attuned to these rhythms.

REMINDER! We wanted to give you a heads up on our schedule for the remainder of the season. There are only **TWO** more bags after today's. The final bags are on November 11th and 18th (which is our Thanksgiving bag— more details on this soon).

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

- Apples -- Golden Delicious from Dawson's Orchard in Ararat, VA
- Elephant Garlic
- Mizuna and Mustard Greens Mix
- Pie Pumpkin – *Cinnamon Girl* from M & M Plant Farms in Elon
- Potatoes – *German Butterball*
- Tomato Mix – Slicers and Fruits

Regular Bags Only

- Eggplant – *Annina and Rosa Bianca*
- Sweet Pepper Mix – *Lipstick, Purple Beauty, Truhart NR, Marconi*

Add/Sub Items:

- Asian Greens – *Tokyo Bekana*
- Escarole -- *Eros*
- Garlic Granules and Powder -- *Lorz Italian*
- Poblano Chile Peppers -- *Bastan*
- Roasted Poblano Peppers
- Hot Peppers – *Early Jalapeño, Serrano*
- Roasted Green Chile – *Medium (Big Jim), Mild (Joe E. Parker)*
- Roasted Aji Dulce Peppers
- Shishito Peppers
- Potatoes – *Creamers, Bintje, Nicola, Plum Gold*
- Sweet Potatoes – *Bayou Belle*

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.
- **Store Pumpkins** in a cool, dry, dark place at around 50 degrees, but make sure they do not freeze. Under the best conditions, they should keep for 3-4 months. And they get sweeter in storage as the starch converts to sugar. Once cut, wrap in plastic, and store in the refrigerator for 5 to 7 days.
- **Garlic** is best stored in a cool dark place or in a bowl on the counter (away from the sun). Do not store in a plastic bag or in the refrigerator.
- **Potatoes** should be kept in a cool, dry, dark place, such as a loosely closed paper bag in a cupboard. Do not store in plastic or in the refrigerator.
- **Store apples** in the refrigerator in a plastic bag. They are odor-absorbent, so keep them away from onions, potatoes and other strong-flavored items.
- **Sweet Potatoes** should be stored in a cool, dark place, such as a loosely closed paper bag in a cupboard. Do not store in plastic or in the refrigerator.
- **Tokyo Bekana, Mizuna/Mustard and Escarole** should be stored in a plastic bag in the crisper section of your refrigerator.
- Keep the **Roasted Peppers** frozen until ready to use.
- Refrigerate **Peppers** unwashed in a sealed plastic bag in hydrator drawer for 1-2 weeks.
- **Tomatoes** belong on the counter – not in the refrigerator!

Things to know + How do I use this stuff?

- **Elephant Garlic** is not a true garlic; however, this close relative of the garden leek has a very mild flavor. It can be used raw or in cooked applications as it is often treated as a vegetable versus an herb because it is so mild in flavor. Roasting, baking or grilling will enhance its flavor, and its large size makes it perfect for slicing and deep frying to make garlic chips. It can also be roasted whole and used as a spread on bread. Elephant garlic's mild flavor also makes it ideal to be used raw in salads. Crushing, chopping, pressing or pureeing Elephant garlic releases its essential oils and provides a more assertive flavor than slicing or leaving whole. Use Elephant garlic in any application that you would use true garlic varieties with the knowledge that it will have less pungency. Elephant garlic pairs well with pasta, poultry, parsnips, potatoes, broccoli, and asparagus. Un-cut Elephant garlic will keep for a couple of months when stored in a cool, dry, and dark place away from humidity.
- **Pie Pumpkins** are very versatile. They aren't just small pumpkins, they are actually bred with eating quality in mind. Their flavor, dry matter content, sugar content, and texture have been developed over time. These small pumpkins are perfect for rich and flavorful soups and baking — especially pies. And it doesn't hurt that they are so darn cute!
- Yes, **Pie Pumpkins** are great for pie but try them in other preparations as well, including:
 - Risotto
 - Quick bread or cake
 - Mashed
 - Pasta dish
 - Pureed with goat cheese
 - Braised or steamed
 - Salads
 - Soups
 - Casseroles
 - Grilled
 - Sauteed
 - Dip or Hummus

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



Recipes

4 WAYS TO COOK PUMPKIN



BOIL

Halve and peel pumpkin, then cut the flesh into uniform cubes and boil until tender, 15 to 30 minutes, depending on size of cubes.



BAKE

Place halved pumpkin, cut sides down, in a 350 oven for 1 to 2 hours until tender. Cook, then scrape out the tender flesh with a spoon; discard rind.



ROAST WHOLE

Hollow out the pumpkin. Roast in a 350 oven for 1 to 2 hours until tender. Scoop out the flesh or use the pumpkin as a vessel for cooked rice stuffing.



MICROWAVE

Place pumpkin pieces in a glass bowl. Cover with plastic wrap. Cook on HIGH until tender about 15 minutes. Move pieces around twice during cooking. Cool, then scrape out flesh. Discard rind.

Prep:

Wash squash. Peel if desired by slicing off the skin with a chef's knife. You can either cook squash whole, or cut it in half before baking or roasting.

Substitutes:

You can substitute any of the winter squashes in place of pie pumpkin. The taste will be almost indistinguishable. Any winter squash can be used in place of pumpkin for making pie as well.

How to roast seeds.

Seeds from any winter squash are edible. Get the goop off by placing the seeds in a bowl of water and swishing them around.

Blot the seeds dry, then spread them out on a baking sheet coated with cooking spray or olive oil. Sprinkle spices on top like kosher salt (if you're thinking basic), cumin (smoky), or garlic powder. Roast at 300° F for 30 minutes until dry and crunchy.



DIY Pumpkin Puree

To make your own puree for pie, start with a "sugar" or "pie" pumpkin.

Stem, quarter, and remove the seeds from the pumpkin, then place the pieces skin side up on a foil-covered baking sheet. Bake them at 350 until tender, about 45 minutes. Allow to cool. Scrape the flesh from the skin of each quarter into a food processor or blender and puree until smooth.

To store the puree, pack single cup portions in a sandwich size freezer bag labeled with the date. Freeze up to 6 months.

How to Freeze:

Scoop out the cooled, cooked squash into Ziplock bags. Label the bags with the date, and squeeze out the air.

When you need a quick veggie for dinner, just thaw and reheat your squash; add some toppings for a quick side dish.

ANOTHER TAKE ON ROASTED PUMPKIN SEEDS

From NY Times Cooking, 10/30/23
Melissa Clark

The Great Pumpkin Seeds

If you are jack-o'-lanterning, be sure to save the seeds for roasting. You certainly can wash the pulp off the seeds first, as many recipes suggest, but I never do. I simply spread the pumpkin guts, seeds and all, on a parchment-lined sheet pan, drizzle with oil, sprinkle with salt, and bake at 325 degrees until the pulp dehydrates and the seeds turn golden brown (20 to 40 minutes). Let that cool completely, then season with a little more salt and ground cumin if you like. I adore nibbling on the crisp bits of pumpkin pulp nearly as much as I like crunching the seeds, which is a lot.

Pumpkin Apple Soup

From Shared Legacy Farms -- Adapted from CookingLight.com

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups chopped onion
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 4 cups (1/2-in.) cubed peeled fresh pumpkin or butternut squash (about 1 lb. 2 oz.)
- 1 large Granny Smith apple, cut into 1/2-in. cubes
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, divided
- 3 cups unsalted vegetable stock
- 2 tablespoons raw hulled pumpkin seeds
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1/4 cup apple cider

Directions:

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat; swirl to coat. Add onion; cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add garlic; cook 2 minutes. Add pumpkin, apples, cinnamon, and 1/4 teaspoon salt; cook 5 minutes, stirring often. Add stock; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer 25 minutes or until pumpkin and apples are tender.

While soup cooks, combine pepitas, sugar, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt in a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat. Cook 7 minutes or until sugar melts and pepitas are toasted, stirring often. Transfer to a plate; cool completely, breaking up any clumps.

Place half of pumpkin mixture in a blender, remove center piece of blender lid (to allow steam to escape). Secure blender lid on blender. Place a clean towel over opening in blender lid (to avoid splatters); blend until smooth. Place soup in a bowl. Repeat procedure with remaining pumpkin mixture. Pour in apple cider, and reheat in pan if needed. Divide soup evenly among 8 bowls and sprinkle with pepitas.

Pumpkin Hummus

From Shared Legacy Farms

Ingredients:

- 2/3 cup pureed pumpkin
- 1 15 oz. can of garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 1/2 T. tahini
- 1 1/2 T. lemon juice (half a lemon)
- 1 garlic clove
- 1/2 t. sea salt
- 1/2 t. ground cumin

Directions:

Add all the ingredients in your blender. Puree until smooth, stirring if necessary. Add more olive oil to incorporate ingredients. Serve immediately with pita chips!

PLUM GRANNY FARM'S "PLUM GOOD STUFFED PUNKIN' "

- 1 Pie pumpkin (size depends on how many you want to feed)
- 1 box Wild rice mix
- 1 cup Brown rice, uncooked
- 1 cup Lentils, uncooked
- ~4-6 cloves Garlic, roughly chopped
- ~¾ cup Celery, chopped
- ~½ cup Carrots, sliced
- ~5-8 Dates, chopped (could also use dried raisins or other dried fruit)
- ~½ cup Walnuts, chopped (could also use almonds or pecans)
- To taste Garam Masala curry

This has been a Ferguson-Tuegel Thanksgiving tradition for many years. It is such a festive and beautiful dish!

Wash the pumpkin and prepare it by cutting the top off (like making a jack-o-lantern) and scraping out the seeds. Keep the top because that will be the lid for the dish. Set aside.

Prepare wild rice mix, brown rice, lentils separately as directed but cook to the not-quite-done phase. Drain water from lentils. Mix together all ingredients. Season to taste with the garam masala and salt as desired. You have basically created a pilaf for stuffing.

Place the pumpkin in an oven-safe dish or pan. Lightly pack the lentil-rice mixture into the pumpkin cavity. Replace the pumpkin lid. Bake at 350° for approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours. Check doneness by opening pumpkin and scraping some of the pumpkin flesh – if it flakes, then it is done. If not, then cook some more. If the pumpkin is browning too much, wrap it in aluminum foil. When done, remove from oven and serve. Parmesan or Romano cheese make a nice topping – as does feta!

NOTE: We have also used a Seminole squash and it worked great. This stuffing recipe makes more than will fit but you could put it in a pan and bake the extra separately. We didn't have the wild rice mix so we just used the brown rice and lentils. Wild rice is a very nice addition. Also, I would use 4 cloves of garlic – 6 was a bit much for a small squash. Instead of curry powder, you could use more traditional spices like sage, nutmeg or cinnamon to taste. Enjoy!

Here's another – fancier and richer version of a stuffed pumpkin

Stuffed Pumpkin

From Shared Legacy Farm -- Adapted from Dorie Greenspan, Epicurious.com

Makes 2 very generous servings or 4 more genteel servings

Ingredients:

- 1 pumpkin, about 3 pounds
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1/4 pound stale bread, thinly sliced and cut into 1/2-inch chunks
- 1/4 pound cheese, such as Gruyère, Emmenthal, cheddar, or a combination, cut into 1/2-inch chunks
- 2-4 garlic cloves (to taste), split, germ removed, and coarsely chopped
- 4 slices bacon, cooked until crisp, drained, and chopped (my addition)
- About 1/4 cup snipped fresh chives or sliced scallions (my addition)
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme (my addition)
- About 1/3 cup heavy cream
- Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

Directions:

1. Center a rack in the oven and preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with a silicone baking mat or parchment, or find a Dutch oven with a diameter that's just a tiny bit larger than your pumpkin. If you bake the pumpkin in a casserole, it will keep its shape, but it might stick to the casserole, so you'll have to serve it from the pot—which is an appealingly homey way to serve it. If you bake it on a baking sheet, you can present it freestanding, but maneuvering a heavy stuffed pumpkin with a softened shell isn't so easy. However, since I love the way the unencumbered pumpkin looks in the center of the table, I've always taken my chances with the baked-on-a-sheet method, and so far, I've been lucky.
2. Using a very sturdy knife—and caution—cut a cap out of the top of the pumpkin (think Halloween Jack-o-Lantern). It's easiest to work your knife around the top of the pumpkin at a 45-degree angle. You want to cut off enough of the top to make it easy for you to work inside the pumpkin. Clear away the seeds and strings from the cap and from inside the pumpkin. Season the inside of the pumpkin generously with salt and pepper, and put it on the baking sheet or in the pot.
3. Toss the bread, cheese, garlic, bacon, and herbs together in a bowl. Season with pepper, and pack the mix into the pumpkin. The pumpkin should be well filled—you might have a little too much filling, or you might need to add to it. Stir the cream with the nutmeg and some salt and pepper and pour it into the pumpkin. Again, you might have too much or too little— you don't want the ingredients to swim in cream, but you do want them nicely moistened.
4. Put the cap in place and bake the pumpkin for about 2 hours—check after 90 minutes—or until everything inside the pumpkin is bubbling and the flesh of the pumpkin is tender enough to be pierced easily with the tip of a knife. Because the pumpkin will have exuded liquid, I like to remove the cap during the last 20 minutes or so, so that the liquid can bake away and the top of the stuffing can brown a little.
5. When the pumpkin is ready, carefully, very carefully—it's heavy, hot, and wobbly—bring it to the table or transfer it to a platter that you'll bring to the table.

Serving: You have a choice—you can either spoon out portions of the filling, making sure to get a generous amount of pumpkin into the spoonful, or you can dig into the pumpkin with a big spoon, pull the pumpkin meat into the filling, and then mix everything up.

Tokyo Bekana is an Asian green in the cabbage family that makes a wonderful substitute for lettuce. It's buttery leaves have a mild flavor, and the crunchy ribs add a wonderful texture to salads. These greens can also be wilted in addition to making a great salad.

SAUTÉED TOKYO BEKANA WITH SESAME, GINGER & SOY SAUCE

Fragrant ginger and sesame oil lend big flavor to this dish of sautéed greens.

Ingredients:

2 pounds Tokyo bekana (or any Asian green)

4 tablespoons light sesame oil

2 tablespoons sesame seeds

4 teaspoons peeled and minced ginger

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 tablespoons soy sauce, divided

4 teaspoons rice vinegar

Method:

1. In a wide heavy sauté pan or wok over medium heat, warm the oil. Add the sesame seeds and stir until they pop and become fragrant. Add the ginger and garlic and sauté for 1 minute.
2. Add the greens and 1 tablespoon soy sauce, raise the heat and cook, covered, for 1 minute. Uncover and sauté for 1 or 2 minutes more, until the greens are tender but still bright green. Stir in more soy sauce and vinegar to taste and serve immediately.

A variation on the recipe above

TOKYO BEKANA

INGREDIENTS:

1 tablespoon thinly sliced or minced garlic

2 teaspoons minced ginger

¼ cup coconut oil

1 tablespoon soy or tamari

1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar

1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

1 head Tokyo bekana, chopped

DIRECTIONS:

1. Heat a large wok or saute pan to medium-high heat
2. Add coconut oil, once melted add garlic and ginger and cook until aromatic, do not brown.
3. Add tokyo bekana and saute until tender, add all other ingredients and allow to deglaze and cook for two minutes.
4. Serve sprinkled with sesame seeds.

This comes from one of our PlumFresh members who wanted to add a few more meat-inclusive recipes to our repertoire!

Greek Stuffed Eggplant***

Recipe courtesy Emeril Lagasse, 2001

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients

- 3 medium eggplants (about 1 1/4 pounds each), split lengthwise
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 pound ground lamb, or lamb sausage removed from casings and crumbled {or any preferred ground meat: beef, pork, Italian sausage, 50/50 lamb & beef, etc.}
- 1 1/2 cups chopped onion
- 1/2 cup chopped green bell peppers {or red pepper, which is sweeter and prettier and kinder to the stomach}
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon Essence, recipe follows {or any preferred seasoning blend or seasoned salt, or omit – it's only a half teaspoon}
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 3 medium Roma plum tomatoes, seeded and chopped {any meaty tomato; out of season use well-drained canned tomatoes, preferably Italian plum}
- 1/4 cup minced fresh parsley leaves
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh oregano {or 1 tsp. dried}
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- 1 cup crumbled Feta {from the Greek Market on Healy Drive!}

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Halve the eggplants lengthwise and with a sharp knife score the pulp in a diamond pattern, being careful not to pierce the skins. Scoop out the pulp with a spoon, leaving a 1/2-inch shell. Chop the pulp.

Place the eggplant shells on a greased baking sheet and lightly brush the inside of each half with about 1 teaspoon of olive. Bake until the shells are softened but not brown, about 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool.

In a heavy skillet heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil over medium-high heat. Add lamb and cook, stirring, until no longer pink, about 5 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon to drain on paper towels. Add the onions and bell peppers to the fat

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in the pan and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes. Add the garlic, eggplant, salt, Essence and pepper, and cook until the eggplant is soft, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the tomatoes and cook until they give off their liquid, 3 minutes. Add the parsley and oregano, and stir well. Remove from the heat. Stir in 3/4 cup of bread crumbs and mix well into the vegetables. Stir in the feta, and re-season as needed.

Divide the filling among the eggplant shells, and sprinkle the remaining 1/4-cup of bread crumbs over the tops. Bake until the tops are golden and the stuffing is heated through, about 30 minutes.

***** This filling is great in zucchini or any mild-flavored squash, peppers, tomatoes – any vegetable that lends itself to stuffing; it can even be used in pita wraps or as a pizza topping. Serve with tzatziki, a cucumber salad or a salad of fresh greens dressed with a lemony vinaigrette.**

Essence:

- 2 1/2 tablespoons paprika
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon cayenne pepper
- 1 tablespoon dried leaf oregano
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme

Combine all ingredients thoroughly and store in an airtight jar or container.

Yield: about 2/3 cup

Recipe from New New Orleans Cooking by Emeril Lagasse and Jessie Tirsch. Published by William and Morrow, 1993.

Here's one of her recipes for Italian Sausage, tomatoes, peppers and potatoes

Salsiccia con Patate e Pomodori di Paolo
(Paolo's Baked Sausages with Potatoes and Tomatoes)

1 ½ pounds sweet Italian sausage, cut into 2-inch lengths
3 bell peppers, seeded and cut into strips
1 large onion, thinly sliced
1 ½ pounds potatoes, cut into ¼-inch slices
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1/3 cup olive oil
1 ¾ cups fresh or canned tomatoes, chopped
1 cup cubed pecorino or provolone
½ cup freshly chopped Italian parsley
Crusty Italian bread

Put first four ingredients into an oiled baking dish or pan. Season well with salt and pepper and drizzle with olive oil. Turn oven to 350 degrees and cook for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add tomatoes, pecorino or provolone and parsley; stir and cook for about 10 minutes. Serve hot with bread. Makes 6 servings.

Notes:

- You could easily make this with Italian-style turkey sausage. (I wouldn't, but you could.)
- I use all red peppers or a combination of red, yellow and orange. You could use green bell peppers, which is what we grew up with..
- We like lots of onion, so we use one that is about the size of a softball.
- I don't peel the potatoes, although the original recipe calls for peeling.
- Out of season I always use canned Italian tomatoes. Make your life easy by using crushed, chunky style (not pureed) or drain whole, plum tomatoes and chop or squeeze them into smaller pieces.
- My preferred cheese for this is Asiago.
- I NEVER use curly parsley for anything other than garnishing, and rarely for that. Italian, flat-leaf parsley is the only way to go.
- Buy your favorite Italian bread. Add a salad if you're feeling ambitious.