

Two Onion Farm

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Week of August 29th, 2005

Beets. Beets are making a brief late summer appearance in your boxes. We know three basic ways to cook beet roots. You can slice them about ¼ or ½ inch thick and steam them, you can boil them whole or sliced, or you can roast them covered in a 350 degree oven until they are tender, usually over an hour. Roasting takes longer, but roasted beets tend to taste a bit better. Beet can also be grated into salads. Cooked and chilled beets are wonderful in a number of salads.

The greens can be eaten steamed or sautéed.

Tomatoes. Your box includes a small amount of cherry tomatoes, several of the red slicing tomatoes which you have received in recent weeks and also several Roma (paste) tomatoes.

The Roma tomatoes have an oblong, almost cylindrical shape, unlike the more spherical slicing tomatoes. The Romas are meatier and less juicy than the slicing tomatoes. Many people prefer the Romas for cooking, since they don't dissolve into juice as the slicing tomatoes do. Our chicken soup recipe this week uses Roma tomatoes. You can also try sautéing the Romas together with onions, garlic, roasted peppers, broccoli, and/or cauliflower and serving over spaghetti with cheese. Add tomatoes late to any sauté or stir-fry, since they don't require much cooking.

We generally eat cherry tomatoes raw, but they can be cooked as well. One of our members loved this method: she sautéed tomatoes in olive oil, tossing them until they were mushy. Then she added a spoonful of basil pesto and served over pasta with grated parmigiano reggiano cheese.

Fennel. This is the first time that some of you are receiving fennel in your boxes. It is the flattish, white vegetable with overlapping, semi-circular concentric layers. It has a licorice like flavor. The outer layer or two can be a little tough and stringy; so you may want to discard those and eat only the inner layers. Fennel bulb can be eaten raw and cooked. We are reprinting a beet fennel salad recipe from earlier in the year for those who did not see it then. Our chicken soup recipe this week also calls for fennel. You can also slice it thinly and add to a salad. The taste is a good accompaniment to sweet, colored bell peppers, and a friend of ours makes a simple salad by drizzling a small amount of olive oil over very thinly sliced fennel and colored bell peppers. The young at heart may also like fennel boats, made taking one of the semi-circular rings of the fennel bulb, placing raisins in the middle, and eating the whole. Try adding coarsely chopped fennel to any basic tomato sauce and you will have a very nice pasta sauce.

Peppers. You may receive any of several peppers this week: a green bell pepper, a red or yellow bell pepper, and a Hungarian stuffing pepper. The stuffing pepper is a fairly unusual pepper with a flattened shape and deeply convoluted skin. It's often used in stuffed pepper dishes, but we think it is also a good general purpose pepper for eating fresh or cooking.

Sweet, colored peppers are excellent when roasted: place the peppers under a broiler or over an open flame and turn often until the skins are evenly blackened. Then place the peppers in a closed paper bag and let them sit for 15 or 20 minutes, which will loosen the skins. Peel the peppers and remove the seeds. Peeling is a little messy but not hard; the

charred skins will slip off easily. The roasted pepper can be used in sauces, sautés, or that wonderful chicken soup recipe we've given you this week. Roasting brings out a delicious, full pepper flavor, which is much gentler than the taste of unroasted peppers.

Celeriac. This week we are giving this to biweekly members only, since we put it in weekly boxes last week. This is the vegetable with a gnarly, swollen root and with tops which resemble miniature celery stalks. Celeriac is closely related to celery and has a similar flavor. However, the plant is much better suited to our climate than celery.

The celeriac root is what is usually eaten. After peeling the root, you can use it in place of celery in any recipe. Add grated or finely minced raw celeriac to salads, or eat celeriac sticks with dip. In our house we generally eat celeriac cooked, in soups, sauces, stir-fries, or other dishes. We've included a chicken soup recipe which calls for celeriac.

Store celeriac bagged in the fridge. If you won't eat the green tops, cut them off and discard them before storing, as this will prolong the life of the root. (You can use the green leaves as a celery-like seasoning, but this is uncommon). Note that if you cut open the celeriac root, use part of it, and return the rest to the fridge, then the cut surface will darken with exposure to air. Lemon juice on the celeriac will slow the darkening.

Broccoli, Cauliflower, or Cabbage. All of these vegetables are excellent in stir-fries. You can also steam cauliflower or broccoli until just tender and then melt cheddar cheese over them in the oven and microwave.

Edamame. Some of you received this last week. These vegetables resemble fuzzy green beans or peas in the pod. They are soybeans harvested immature. To eat them, boil the entire pods in very, very salty water until the beans in the pods are tender, generally 8-10 minutes. Drain, and then split the pods open and eat the individual bean seeds as a snack or in a salad.

Lettuce or Swiss Chard. If you receive Swiss Chard, it is the dark green leafy vegetable with the prominent central vein. Chard is almost always cooked. For a chard side dish, sauté onions and garlic in a large pan, then add coarsely chopped chard and cook until it is tender but not absolutely mushy, season with salt, pepper, and a little balsamic vinegar, and serve. Or omit the balsamic vinegar and serve over spaghetti with parmesan cheese.

Onion. Your box contains a red onion and several yellow cooking onions. The yellow onions are more pungent and are usually cooked. The color and mild flavor of the red onion suit it for fresh use in salads and sandwiches. Both onions can be stored in the pantry or on the countertop.

Garlic.

Carrots. We have a handful of carrots for everyone from an early summer carrot planting which germinated poorly in the heat.

Beet and Fennel Salad

3-4 medium beets
1 tsp Dijon mustard
salt and pepper to taste
¼ cup olive oil
2-3 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced
chopped pecans or roasted pine nuts (optional)

Cook the beets as you prefer, either boiling, steaming, or roasting (see the discussion of beets, above). Slice the cooked beets to a comfortable bite size. Mix the mustard, oil, vinegar, salt and pepper together to make the dressing. Stir together the beets, fennel, nuts, and dressing, refrigerate, and serve chilled.

Galena Garlic Festival. On September 17 and 18 this festival will be held in Galena, IL to celebrate garlic with music, art, dance, and good food. You can learn more about the festival at www.GalenaGarlic.com. We will be selling vegetables there and we can provide free tickets to any of you who wish to attend. Let us know if you want tickets.

Chicken Soup

1/4 cup olive oil
1/2 cup chopped yellow onion
1/2 cup chopped fennel bulb
1/2 cup sliced carrot
1 large clove minced garlic
1/2 cup chopped celeriac (optional)
2-3 Roma tomatoes cut into large pieces
2 cups white wine
8 cups chicken stock
1 1/2 Tbsp ground paprika
1 Tbsp anise seed
1 bay leaf
1 Tbsp dried basil
1 tsp thyme
1/4 cup Pernod
1/4 cup grated Gruyère cheese
1 whole chicken
Rouille (see recipe below)
Croutons
Salt and pepper to taste

Sauté onions, fennel, carrots, garlic, celeriac, and tomatoes until soft. Add wine, paprika, thyme, anise, and bay leaves. Cook until wine is reduced by half. Add chicken stock and chicken and simmer covered until chickens are fully cooked. Remove chickens, de-bone, slice meat, and reserve. Boil broth until it has reduced enough that flavor is good. Add salt and pepper. Mix in Pernod, basil, and Gruyere cheese. Return chicken to broth and cook until chicken is heated. Serve topped with a dollop of rouille, croutons, and grated gruyere cheese.

The Rouille:

1-2 large cloves garlic, minced
1 roasted red or yellow pepper, peeled and de-seeded. (see the roasting instructions above, under "Peppers"). You can also buy canned roasted peppers.
1 1/2 tsp paprika
1 egg yolk (optional)
2 Tbsp bread crumbs
1/2 cup olive oil

1 Tbsp lemon juice
salt and pepper to taste

Puree garlic and roasted pepper in food processor. Add paprika, egg yolks, and bread crumbs and puree until mixed. With food processor running, add lemon juice and olive oil until you have a thick blend. Season with salt and pepper. Store in fridge until ready for use. You can freeze any leftovers.

Special offers. We have **drying peppers** available. These are long, slender red peppers with a thin flesh and a moderately hot flavor. They can be cooked or used fresh, but are usually dried. This pepper variety is one used to make the Hungarian Paprika spice.

To dry them, use a sewing needle to run a strong thread through the stems of the peppers and then hang the entire string in a reasonably dry, well-ventilated place. Your kitchen will usually work well for this. (Don't try to dry bell peppers, because they have thicker flesh which will mold or rot instead of drying). To use the dried peppers, remove one from the string, pull off its dry stem, and crumble the rest in your hands, seeds and all. The price is \$4.00 / lb; one pound contains about 10-12 peppers.

We will also soon have **roasting peppers** available. These are medium sized, sweet red peppers of a variety which is especially well suited for roasting. Roasted peppers store well in the freezer. The price is \$3.00 / lb; one pound contains about 8 of these peppers. Peppers shrink a lot when roasted, so 8 peppers makes a modest amount – approximately one cup or a little less.

You can also still order bulk quantities of **basil** (\$6.50 per lb), **garlic** (\$2.50 for three heads), and **paste tomatoes** (\$8.00 per 5 lb). Email farmer@twoonionfarm.com or call 608-762-5335 to place an order and then pick it up at one of your scheduled vegetable pickups.

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