

CSA Newsletter, Spring, Week 2



Red Ace Beets
Mokum Carrots
Fordhook Giant Swiss Chard
Pasture-raised Inglewood Chicken Eggs
Green Onions
Winterbor Kale
Flashy Trout Head Lettuce
Giant of Italy Parsley
Tyee Spinach
White Globe Purple Top Turnips

I saw some watermelons in front of the supermarket the other day and it made me chuckle a little. Not because they were there, but because it was normal for them to be there. Watermelons. In early April. I'll abstain, thank you.

I love eating with the seasons. I love harvesting leafy greens and spicy radishes in the spring, watching the carrot tops fill out over the course of a few sun-drenched afternoons and impatiently picking a few every couple of days to track the progress of their roots descent into the soil. I love vine-ripened tomatoes in the dead of summer and looking out the window on chilly fall afternoons at the broccoli and cabbage fighting the wind and the cold like all the rest of us.

Some people go so far as to think that our bodies are actually designed to consume certain foods at certain times of the year, that there are forces at work beyond our perception and that our appetites are guided by something more significant than whatever's featured on the end-cap, if we pay attention. Does a pumpkin pie sound as appealing to you right now as it will in mid-October? Seems to make sense: dense, starchy, storable squash and potatoes to get us through the winter, salads, greens and spinach in the spring and sweet, sugary fruits to keep us sane through the dead of the summer heat.

When the time comes for us to be eating watermelons, we'll know it.

Vegetable of the Week: Parsley

I think the obvious choice here are the turnips. I could tell you all about how the misunderstood spring vegetable is just like a potato, only sweeter, how the greens are just as useful as the roots and how delicious the whole thing can be simply sautéed with butter, white wine and sea salt, but... I think I'm gonna slip in through the back door and go parsley here.

The cultivation of parsley dates back the ancient Greeks who didn't actually eat it but used it to decorate graves. There are two popular varieties of parsley: curly parsley (the decorative stuff that I would eat off of my continental breakfast plate to try and get a laugh out of my brothers) and Italian, the flat-leaf variety more often used to actually cook with. Turns out that pound-for-pound, Italian parsley is one of the healthiest garden-grown things you can consume. I really don't like throwing out vitamin and mineral content percentage daily value USDA this-and-that but the charts and graphs do exist, and I've looked at them, and I can tell you that parsley is really nutrient dense. Another great reason to try and use a little bit with every meal is that parsley initiates digestion by stimulating the production of saliva, which is probably why it was ever used as a garnish in the first place.

Note: We're extending the deadline to sign up for an egg share (a dozen eggs a week with your box for the remainder of the session, \$40). Doing it saves you the cost of a dozen eggs of the course of the session, so if you're buying them at market anyway, you might as well just add a share.

Recipes Below.

Kale Chips

Every self-respecting CSA member should burn at least one tray of kale chips in their lifetime. This is a holdover from the Fall Session that a few of people mentioned having some success with. It'll get you on your way, but with kale chips I've found that what works in one person's kitchen will yield a complete disaster in another. Has to do with oven sizes, humidity, feng shui and all that. So, this is more a guide than a recipe. You'll have to play with the details a little and find your own sweet spot.

1 Bunch Kale

Olive/Pecan/Coconut Oil

Salt

Optional: Nutritional Yeast, Parmesan, Cajun Seasoning, Pepper

1. Pre-heat oven to 200 degrees.
2. Wash the kale and cut the leaves from the stems.
3. Dry the kale completely. Don't get impatient here - you cannot spend too much time doing this. If there's any moisture left on the leaves it'll turn to steam and you will have a pile of nasty on a baking pan, not kale chips.
4. Put kale in a mixing bowl and drizzle with the tiniest amount of oil, just enough to coat. Mix.
4. Spread the kale on a baking sheet so that none of the leaves overlap with others.
5. Dust chips with a very thin layer of Parmesan, Cajun Seasoning, Nutritional Yeast, or any other seasoning you'd like. Nutritional Yeast is a deactivated yeast product popular among vegetarians, vegans and people sensitive to dairy because it tastes a lot like cheese and it's loaded with B-vitamins. Sounds gross, tastes pretty good, actually. You can find it at most grocery stores.
6. Bake for ~60 minutes. When the chips start to brown on the edges they're done.

I've always had my best results when I salt after I bake the chips. The most important thing, though, is to make sure that the kale's dry before it goes in the oven.

Sauteed Swiss Chard with Parmesan Cheese

1 bunch Swiss Chard, stems and center ribs cut out and chopped apart from leaves

2 tbsp. butter

2 tbsp. pecan/olive/coconut oil

1 tbsp. garlic / green garlic

½ bunch green onions

½ cup dry white wine

1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

2 tbsp. parmesan cheese

salt

Melt butter and oil together in large skillet over medium heat. Stir in garlic and onion and cook for ~30 seconds. Add chard stems and white wine. Simmer until soft, ~5 minutes. Stir in chopped chard leaves and cook until wilted. Stir in lemon juice and parmesan cheese and season with salt to taste.

Have great week!