

SUMMER CSA NEWSLETTER, WEEK 4



Green & Yellow bell peppers

Lunch box peppers

Eggplant, Farmer's Choice

Basil

Melon, Farmer's Choice

Cukes, Farmer's Choice

Well the dog days of summer are upon us and in Louisiana that means heat and humidity. During this time of year when we all like to retreat into air-conditioned comfort and escape the torment of the sun it's crazy to think that there's things that not only grow under these conditions but flourish as well when the mercury rises into the 90's and above. I wanted to pay homage to this resilient bunch of hot weather fanatics this week and provide you with a couple of good ideas for how to prepare them.

I cannot describe the delight I take in eating cold cucumbers when the heat lingers in mid-day. Cucumbers are probably introduced to us first as pickles. That summertime, childhood snack that you eat after running around at the fair or ball field. But the best way to eat them is fresh, sliced on sandwiches and salads. The history of cucumbers goes back to India and its cultivation back 3,000 years. So the variety is astounding and I hope you enjoy some of the weird ones that come your way this summer. Eat them every way you know how and try them in a cool summer soup too... I've included a recipe with yogurt but they taste great with sour cream and would be great with the next star of this week's CSA too.

I wanted to shed light on one of our better-known varieties at this time of year, the eggplant. I think most of us have probably eaten eggplant at one time or another. It took me a while to truly understand how to prepare this veggie and for the longest time it was an item that didn't get me very excited. But then I ate baba ghanoush. Baba ghanoush comes to us from the Middle East and is a mainstay in the cuisines of places like Lebanon, Israel, Syria and Jordan. In most cases this dish is served as an appetizer, but if you put a bunch of diced carrots and green peppers in front of me I can eat it all day long. If you've got a charcoal grill be sure to blacken your eggplants on that as the coals will add a smoky flavor to the finished product that really blasts your taste buds into the stratosphere.

Thank you as always for your support and know that even though the days are long and hot right now our resolve to supply you with fresh, nutritious food will not wither up in the sun.

If you are interested in learning more about or signing up for our Fall CSA session, which is just a couple of months away, be sure to send your information to CSA@inglewoodfarm.com.

And now the recipes:

Cold Cucumber & Yogurt Soup

For the ice cubes:

- 3 tbsp. basil or mint leaves, cut into chiffonade
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1 1/4 teaspoons coarse salt

For the soup:

- 3 medium cucumbers, peeled, seeded, and diced (about 3 1/2 cups)
- 1 1/4 cup plain Greek-style strained yogurt
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1/4 cup basil or mint leaves
- 2 tbsp. chives, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 tsp. salt

1. Make the ice cubes: Divide the mint, lemon juice, and salt among 4 cubes of an ice cube tray. Top off with cold water and freeze.

2. Make the soup: In a blender, combine the cucumber, yogurt, lemon juice, mint, chives, olive oil, and salt. Blend until completely smooth. Adjust seasonings if necessary. Portion soup into individual bowls and top each with a lemon-mint ice cube.

Baba Ghanoush

- 3 medium-sized eggplants
- 1/2 cup (130g) tahini (sesame paste)
- 1 1/4 teaspoons coarse salt
- 3 tablespoons freshly-squeezed lemon juice
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed
- 1/8 teaspoon chile powder
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- a half bunch picked flat-leaf parsley or cilantro leaves

1. Preheat the oven to 375F (190C).

2. Prick each eggplant a few times, then char the outside of the eggplants by placing them directly on the flame of a gas burner and as the skin chars, turn them until the eggplants are uniformly-charred on the outside. (If you don't have a gas stove, you can char them under the broiler. If not, skip to the next step.)

3. Place the eggplants on a baking sheet and roast in the oven for 20 to 30 minutes, until they're completely soft; you should be able to easily poke a paring knife into them and meet no resistance.

4. Remove from oven and let cool.

5. Split the eggplant and scrape out the pulp. Puree the pulp in a blender or food processor with the other ingredients until smooth.

6. Taste, and season with additional salt and lemon juice, if necessary. Drizzle with olive oil.