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Box #15
Odd Box
4 October 2023

Contents

Beets: Chioggia – Family Shares Only
Cauliflower: Purple
Broccoli—a few Couple Shares
Garlic
Lettuce: Mixed
Melon: Watermelon
Peppers: Anaheim, Red Bell, Red Carmen, Jalapeño
Tomatillos
Tomatoes – Couple Shares Only
Winter Squash: Chuck's Special Spaghetti Squash

New Stuff: cauliflower, watermelon
Choice Box: peppers, ??

Cauliflower has no saturated fat, is low in cholesterol, high in dietary fiber, vegetable protein, vitamins C, K and B6 as well as many minerals. Research has found that regularly eating cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, etc.) may lower your overall risk of cancer. (Broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and olives have the highest concentration of plant sterols that can lower serum cholesterol.)
Like broccoli, a head of cauliflower is a collection of small flower buds. If left to mature, small, yellow flowers bloom all over the head.
You may have seen different colored heads of cauliflower at farmer's markets. Some are orange, light green, dark green and purple. We've grown them all, and they all taste like white cauliflower. Which is interesting, considering that orange beets taste different from red beets, and the various colors of rainbow chard all taste a little different. Go figure.
The advantage of these other cauliflower colors is none of them require you to tie the leaves over the head in order to protect it from the sun. White cauliflower turns a bit off-white when sunlight shines on it.
Store cauliflower in the refrigerator, inside a plastic bag. It should keep for a week or 2. The sprayer on your sink does a great job of blasting off dirt and other debris.
These heads of cauliflower vary in size, and some of them did not get very big. Also, a few heads have been grazed on by cabbage worms, who leave a lighter-colored area where they've tasted the top of those flower buds. Their sampling does not change the flavor. Do expect to remove some cabbage worms when you clean and cut up this cauliflower.
Purple cauliflower gets a little lighter in color after cooking.
The cauliflower patch did not quite give us enough for everyone, so a few Couple Shares will get broccoli instead.
This recipe is usually made with a large head of cauliflower:

Braised Cauliflower

In a Dutch oven large enough to cover the cauliflower with a little to spare, on high heat, put:
3 Tbsp. olive oil
Add: **1 Lg. onion, coarsely chopped**
-sauté until the onion just starts to brown, stirring constantly.
Add: **3-4 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped**
1 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. paprika/smoked paprika
4 anchovies, chopped ***optional***
1 tsp. capers ***optional***
-sauté until the garlic just starts to brown, stirring constantly—this won't take long.
Add: **25 oz. can chopped tomatoes (3 cups)**
1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
1/3 cup Kalamata olives, pitted and halved
¼ cup chopped basil or parsley
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
-stir to mix, then add:
1 lg. whole head cauliflower, core removed
-ladle some of the sauce over the cauliflower. Turn the heat to low, cover, and simmer until the cauliflower is tender, 30-40 minutes.

Melons, so good when they're ripe, so disappointing when they're not. This season, we grew 2 kinds: muskmelon and watermelon.
People often ask us "How do you know when a melon is ripe?" There are a couple of ways. First, look for the ground spot: it should be yellow. A "ground spot" or "field spot" is the place where a melon's skin rests on the ground while it grows. When a green melon matures, its ground spot turns from green to yellow. The deeper the yellow, the more mature the melon. Even yellow melons have yellow ground spots, they're just a different shade. The next way is overall color. Muskmelons have a green undercolor that turns to beige/yellow/orange when it's ripe. If a melon has ribs, like a muskmelon does, those ribs should be brown or beige instead of green. Canary melons turn a deeper shade of yellow. Color is tough to use as a

measure on watermelon, tho. Look for a yellow ground spot on those, not white or light green. The last way is smell. A ripe muskmelon or canary or honeydew should smell wonderful. Again, this is a hard one to use on watermelons because they don't have a strong smell and that thick rind blocks most scent, but experts say a ripe watermelon will smell slightly sweet. Lots of people say to thump a melon with your finger and listen for a "plunk" sound. This would be easier if you had melons of different ripenesses to test all at the same time for comparison. Chuck is pleased that the watermelons ripened in time to go into your boxes.

We also planted 2 kinds of muskmelons, a small, round melon which tastes wonderful, and an oval melon. Few of the oval melons have ripened enough to pick, so they are not likely to be in your boxes this year. Chuck picked some of the small, round muskmelons, but not enough to pack into 125 boxes. With all the equipment repairs we've needed to make this year, it's been rough getting some crops into the ground early enough. Another problem has been diseases. A fungal disease attacked a large percentage of the muskmelon crop, defoliating the vines and causing lesions on the melons. Geez, it's always something.

But the peppers are going gangbusters, and the tomato plants are finally starting to ripen. Grape tomatoes are usually the first, so the Couple Shares mostly have grape tomatoes. We're starting to get a few slicers, and a few lucky souls will get a slicer instead of grape tomatoes. Fingers crossed we have enough for everyone next week. Cross your toes too as we're expecting several frosty mornings over the weekend.

I love Chioggia beets, the pink and white Italian heirloom beets that are so sweet. They do retain those colors after cooking, at least for awhile.

Now that everyone has tomatillos, here's my very own salsa verde recipe:

Raw Salsa Verde *Makes about 2 cups*

In a blender or food processor, put:

1 lb. tomatillos, husks removed, washed and cut into quarters
1 tsp. chopped garlic (or more as you wish)
1 shallot or small onion, coarsely chopped
1/3 cup cilantro, roughly chopped, loosely packed
½ tsp. ground cumin
½ cup Anaheim or Italian pepper, roughly chopped, or 1-2 Tbsp. Jalapeño
salt & freshly ground pepper

Process until the ingredients reach a fine consistency. Serve with corn chips, in tacos, etc.

The winter squash in this week's box has a story. A few years ago, Chuck saved seed from some Thelma Sanders Sweet Potato Squash, a beige, acorn-shaped winter squash with orange flesh that tastes a little like sweet potatoes. When he planted the seeds the next year, he got a mixture of long, oval squash and ones that looked like a proper Thelma Sanders. They were mild-tasting, and the oval fruits had a texture just like spaghetti squash. We named it Chuck's Special Spaghetti Squash.

Field Notes

Wow! 1.4" of rain last week! A deluge! The ground still looks damp in some spots.

The tomatoes and peppers are enjoying the warmer weather. Sadly, it's about to end with frost expected out here Sunday, Monday and Tuesday mornings. We will cover the entire pepper and tomato patch for those days when we expect morning frost and hope for the best.

Farm Day was glorious, sunny, warm--so unusual for October. We had about 25-30 folks come out for apple picking, cider making and The Grand Tour of our fields. Chuck and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting our CSA members, their families and kids. And everyone took home freshly pressed cider!

And a special Thank You to Amanda, Tessa and Liam, who stayed late to finish the mash and make yet another batch of cider. You're the best!

Thanks for coming folks!

Enjoy this Indian Summer weather. The evenings have been magical.

Cheers,

Terry & Chuck