



News From Provident Organic Farm

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Season 3, 2004 "dedicated to a safe, just, and sustainable food system"

August 1st - 7th

Notes From the Field v. 3, #17...

Even Martha Stewart Knows about CSAs! While Jay is out in the field, trying to deal with the latest onslaught of rain, we thought we'd bring you part of an article from the June '04 issue of our Favorite Felon's magazine...(Eds.)



"There is something very exciting about knowing that what comes to my table is not only fresh, not only in season, but also a bit of a surprise," says Heather Topcik, a librarian and new mother in Brooklyn, New York, referring to the produce she picks up each Tuesday at her local community supported agriculture (CSA) distribution center. "What will I discover when I walk through the doors? Plump red tomatoes? A basket of pears? Enough greens to make a huge salad for a group of friends?"

One advantage of joining a CSA is that produce grown in the area tends to be fresher than what is available at supermarkets. In part, this is because it spends less time on the road. According to the Cornell Cooperative Extension, even domestic produce may travel more than a thousand miles before reaching your table. Not only is the food then less fresh (or kept fresh with preservatives and additives), it may be less nutritious, since fruits and vegetables tend to lose nutrients as they sit on a shelf. Much commercial produce is bred to look uniform and to last as long as possible - at the expense of flavor. Many fruits and vegetables are further enhanced with waxes, for a pristine appearance that's purely cosmetic.




The lettuce you get from a CSA might have soil between the leaves, and the tomatoes, less-than-perfect shapes, but what you sacrifice in looks is more than compensated for in flavor and quality. This is often the case with organic produce - another valuable commodity offered by many CSAs. Their organic items are likely to cost less than those found in stores because there is no overhead to pay and no long-distance fuel expenses or associated distribution costs. What is considered high-end produce at a supermarket or gourmet-food store can be standard fare with a CSA.

Perhaps one of the most delightful benefits of belonging to a CSA is the sheer variety of fruits and vegetables. Since members don't order specific items but rather receive whatever is freshest and most abundant each week, they often find themselves experimenting with foods they have never considered before. In addition to conventional produce, such as peppers, squash, tomatoes, and strawberries, shares may include less-familiar items such as Japanese herbs, Jerusalem artichokes, and Chinese vegetables, such as bok choy. To ensure that members enjoy these foods to the fullest, recipes and preparation tips are often provided; these may come from the farmer or from a CSA coordinator in charge of print materials. With some CSAs, members are also encouraged to share recipes of their own or to go online to join CSA chat rooms, where they can exchange menu ideas and information.

Today, approximately 1,700 U.S. farms participate in CSAs. Drawn by the promise of fistfuls of cosmos in July, baskets overflowing with berries just in time for canning, and golden pumpkins in fall, members that once numbered in the hundreds are now in the thousands. There is something comforting about knowing you are supporting a farmer, and something powerful about knowing that in doing so, you are protecting the land. - Text by Bethany Lyttle.




Despite the once-popular saying, real men (and women) in fact DO eat quiche...and for good reason. This easy dish is flavorful and simple- and tastes just as good the second day cold as it does the first day warm... Served with a side of vegetables (sliced tomatoes?) and some crusty bread or a salad, you couldn't ask for a better summer dinner or lunch. 

Summer Vegetable Quiche

“You have to ask children and birds how cherries and strawberries taste.” - Proverb, quoted by Goethe

Tart Dough:

- 1 3/4 cups all purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp coarse salt
- 9 Tbsp cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces 
- 1 large egg
- 1 large egg yolk
- 3 Tbsp very very very cold water


Process flour and salt in a food processor until combined (or stir well, if you're using manual labor.) Add butter, and process just until mixture resembles coarse meal. (Use a sharp knife and a fork to chop up the butter into tiny pieces and mix with the flour, if doing by hand.) Whisk together egg & yolk and the water in a small bowl. With processor running (or stirring with fork), pour in egg mixture, process until dough starts to come together. Shape dough into a disk. Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate at least 30 minutes.

Quiche Filling:

- 2 Tbsp. Olive oil
- 1 Tbsp + 1 tsp minced garlic
- 2 medium summer squash, cut into 1/2" cubes
- 1 cup frozen edamame or lima beans, thawed (or fresh - if using fresh beans, blanch first)
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 cup finely grated Parmesan or Romano cheese

On a lightly floured surface roll out dough to 1/4" thick. Cut out a rough 14" circle from dough. Fit dough into pie plate, and crimp extra dough into a rough collar around top edge. Prick bottom all over with a fork. Freeze until firm, at least 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line pie plate with parchment paper and fill with dried beans. (NB: this will render the dried beans unfit for future consumption!) Bake until dough edges start to feel firm, about 20 minutes. Remove paper and beans and continue baking until crust is pale golden brown, about 10 minutes. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Leave oven on. Meanwhile, heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until hot but not smoking. Add garlic, and cook, stirring until softened, about 20 seconds. Add zucchini, and cook, stirring frequently until softened, about 4 minutes. Add edamame or limas, and cook another minute. Season with salt and pepper. Let mixture cool completely. Whisk eggs, cream, milk, and 1/2 tsp salt in a large bowl; stir in zucchini mixture, scraping the bottom of the skillet, and 3/4 cup cheese. Pour into tart shell and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake, tenting with foil after 35 minutes, until puffed and pale golden brown, about 50 minutes. Let cool at least 30 minutes before serving.



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COMMENTS & CONTRIBUTIONS

We welcome your comments and contributions, including recipes! Please send to ubuubok@dmv.com or Provident Organic Farm CSA, PO Box 62, Bivalve, MD 21814.

