



A Place on Earth CSA Notes
August 5-8, 2020

In your share this week:

Sweet Bell Peppers; Garlic; Onions; Cucumber; Squash/Zucchini; Tomatoes; Chard; Basil

Welcome back, sweet peppers! Fortunately for my cooking, I froze a lot of peppers last season, but I was happy to get fresh, crisp peppers in my share this week. One of my daughters used to eat them like apples when she was in high school in her packed lunch. Instead of slicing them, she just crunched on them whole, working around the seeds and ignoring the strange looks/comments from her lunch mates. I guess she needed the Vitamin C, of which there is plenty. Bell peppers may appear in your box throughout the season in an assortment of colors: green, purple, red, yellow, orange, and a combination of any of these. When they have more red, yellow and orange on them, they are a bit sweeter, which is when I love eating them raw.

I used them in a recipe this week in one of my family's favorite quick main dishes, where I had to improvise, since I didn't have the main ingredient: saffron rice, usually under the brand name of Quigg's or Mahatma. That specialty rice comes in a package of about 1 cup, and already laced with saffron. But I used basmati rice, and it was different, but good. Note: when the kids were small, they complained about the bay leaves, so I offered a nickel to anyone who got a bay leaf in their portion. It is still a joke today, and I am reminded to provide nickels for bay leaf recipients.

Arroz Con Pollo

1 package of Mahatma or Quigg's yellow (saffron) rice, about 1 cup*
1 ½ cups chicken or vegetable broth
½ cup white wine
2 green peppers, diced
1 onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 bay leaves
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 ½-2 cups diced, cooked chicken
Salt and pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Turn to simmer, and cook for about 15 minutes, or until rice is tender and has absorbed all the liquid. Serves 3-4.

*You can substitute 1 cup regular or basmati rice, and add ½-1 teaspoon of saffron, plus salt and pepper, or a different seasoning.

Lotsa Squash! My friend Rebecca Able provided a great recipe for our large squash bounty, and it's good. She found it on the Allrecipes.com website—one of my favorite cooking websites.

**Speaking of websites, I do a bit of surfing for recipes on a given food subject, and one of the worst viruses I've ever gotten on my laptop was on a food website—can't remember which--and it took an I.T. professional 2 weeks to clean it off of my device—even though I had what was considered good virus protection. Be careful what you click on; even food websites can be dangerous, but you can depend on Allrecipes.com, and another favorite, TheKitchn.com. Yes, there are many good ones, and keep track of good foodie websites, but don't assume they're all OK.*

Squash & Zucchini Burritos (from Allrecipes.com)

2 tablespoons olive oil

- 1/2 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, pressed
- 2 zucchinis, shredded
- 1 large yellow squash, shredded
- 1/2 red bell pepper, chopped (or substitute green)
- 1 (15 ounce) can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup green salsa
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
- 1 (8 ounce) package Mexican style shredded cheese blend, divided*
- 6 burrito-size flour tortillas
- 1 (8 ounce) package Mexican style shredded cheese blend

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease a 9x12-inch baking dish.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat and cook the onion and garlic until the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in the zucchini, yellow squash, and red bell pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, until the zucchini and squash are tender, about 10 minutes. Stir in the black beans, green salsa, cumin, and cayenne pepper. Cook and stir the filling until it thickens, 5 to 8 more minutes.
3. Divide one of the packages of Mexican-style cheese among the tortillas. Spoon zucchini-squash filling into each tortilla, over the cheese, in a line down the center. Roll up the tortillas and place them into the prepared baking dish with the seam sides down.
4. Bake in the preheated oven until the cheese is melted and the tortillas are heated through, about 15 minutes. Sprinkle the other package of shredded cheese over the tortillas before serving.

*I would substitute a good quality Monterrey jack cheese.

Chard: My friend and radio co-host Patty Marguet gave me this wonderful recipe for Swiss Chard, and I have really enjoyed it, especially in tomato season. I hope you like it too!

Patty Marguet's Tomato, Chard & Cheese Panade

1 large bunch of Swiss chard (or other greens, large stems removed, cut into ribbons)
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, chopped
½ teaspoon thyme
½ cup white wine
Salt and pepper to taste
1 ½ cups chicken or vegetable broth
½ of a 1-pound loaf of “peasant bread”, baguette, or other substantial bread, sliced ½” thick
3-5 tomatoes, sliced ½” thick—or equal amount of cherry tomatoes, cut in half
1 ½ cup shredded Gruyere or other good quality cheese (avoid supermarket shredded cheese)
2 tablespoons melted butter

In a large pot of water, cook the chard for 2 minutes, drain. When the leaves are cool enough to handle, squeeze out excess water and chop coarsely. Set aside. In the same pot, heat the olive oil and cook the onion and thyme until onion is translucent. Add the chard and wine and simmer until the wine is reduced to about 2-3 tablespoons, about 5 minutes. Add salt and pepper.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a small saucepan, heat the broth to a simmer. Butter an 8” casserole. Overlap 1/3 of the bread slices on the bottom of the baking dish, cutting to fit. Cover bread layer with ½ of the sliced tomatoes. Spread half of the chard over the tomatoes, covered with half of the cheese. Add salt and pepper. Repeat with another layer of bread, tomatoes, chard, cheese, and end with bread layer, salt, and pepper.

Pour hot broth overall, and brush on melted butter. Cover with foil, and bake for one hour, covered; remove foil and bake for 10 minutes more, until the top is crispy. Let sit a few minutes before serving. Serves 4.

Big Honkin' Cucumbers! Yes, I got some, too! As far as how to use them, I have a great solution: Make pickle relish, or more refrigerator pickles! While you may process this in a water bath, I usually do one or two pint or half-pint jars, which I store in the fridge and use in tuna or chicken salad, on sandwiches, grilled cheese, whatever. It keeps for months if you don't contaminate it with dirty utensils or fingers. Also, wash your jars in the dishwasher, and sterilize the jars and lids for 5 minutes in boiling water before filling the jars. Know that you are looking for a total of about 3 ½ cups grated vegetables, so if you want to add more peppers or onions and fewer cucumbers, etc. it is OK. Keep the brine the same. It is also OK to put this in several small jars and give as gifts but alert the recipients that it must remain refrigerated. (Recipe adapted from the Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving, Edited by Judi Kingry and Lauren Devine.

Cucumber Relish

2 cups grated cucumbers, large seeds removed (You may peel, or not)
1 ½ cups grated bell peppers—green, red, yellow, or a mixture
½ cup minced celery
¼-1/2 cup minced onion
2 tablespoons canning/pickling salt
¾ cup white vinegar
½ cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
¾ teaspoon, each, celery seeds and mustard seeds

1. In a large glass or stainless-steel bowl, combine the cucumbers, peppers, celery, onion, and pickling salt. Mix well. Cover and let stand in a cool place—70-75 degrees—for 4 hours. Transfer to a colander placed over the sink and drain. Rinse with cool water and drain thoroughly. Using your hands, squeeze out excess liquid. Set aside.
2. Sterilize the jars and lids by placing them in boiling water for 5 minutes.
3. In a stainless-steel saucepan, combine vinegar, sugar, celery seeds and mustard seeds. Stir well and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Add drained cucumber mixture and return to a boil, stirring frequently. Reduce heat and boil gently, stirring frequently, until vegetables are heated through, about 10 minutes.
4. Ladle hot relish into hot jars, leaving ½” head space. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace, if necessary. Wipe rims and add lids and allow to cool.
5. Store in refrigerator. Makes about 1 ½ pints.

*Yes, you can place pint or half-pint jars, with regulation canning lids, in a boiling water bath for 10-15 minutes to make it shelf stable. If you are inexperienced in food preservation, read the canning directions from the Ball book, or the University of KY website.

Miscellaneous Tip! A few weeks ago, I shared a technique by my friend Eleanor Newnan. She makes breadcrumbs from her hearty whole grain bread, using a food processor, and places them in a warm oven, about 250 degrees for 15-20 minutes to dry. Add 2-3 tablespoons of a mixture of olive oil and butter to about 1 cup of dried crumbs, plus salt or herbal seasoning; stir until the mixture absorbs all the fat. Bake for 10-15 minutes in the oven on a low temperature. Cool and store in a shaker container in the fridge, ready to sprinkle on casseroles, baking vegetables such as squash slices, etc. Today I ate cottage cheese with tomatoes, and sprinkled the seasoned crumbs overall, and it was delicious!

If you have questions, or recipes to share, feel free to contact me and we will add the explanations, or recipes to the next notes page.

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