



## A Place on Earth CSA Notes August 26-29, 2020

### In your share this week:

Sweet Corn; Watermelon or Cantaloupe; Eggplant; Sweet Peppers; Garlic; Onions; Cucumber; Squash/Zucchini; Tomatoes; Cherry Tomatoes; Chard; Basil, (and I also got radishes!)

**Corn!! Everyone's FAV!** I've been waiting for corn, so this is a real treat. My BFF, Carolyn Morgan recently sent me a recipe for corn and tomatoes—in a soup! Carolyn is one of the best southern cooks I know, who peruses gourmet cookbooks and magazines, so when she sends something, it is going to be good. And sometimes her instructions come right from her southern roots, and are a little eclectic, but *so Carolyn!* I tried it, and it was delicious, but I prepared it as a vegetable side dish instead of a soup. Heaven! Either way, it is simple and delicious!

### Fresh Corn and Tomato Soup - 4 servings

1/2 onion	5 ears corn
1 stalk celery	4 good sized tomatoes
dash cayenne	1/2 cup water
1 clove garlic, minced	1/2 tsp-1 tsp salt
1 tablespoon oil	handful fresh coriander/cilantro leaves, lightly chopped

- Sauté onion, celery, garlic, cayenne in oil-- use a heavy 2-quart pan. Use low heat, stir frequently until tender.

- Cut corn from cobs with small sharp knife.

- Remove stem from Tomatoes and dice

- Add corn and tomatoes, water, and salt to sautéed vegetables. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to low and simmer, covered until corn is tender,

- The soup is pretty now, but even better if you take your courage in hand and proceed to with the next step: puree it all.
- Thin with approximately 3/4 c water if you want and correct the salt.
- Heat, stirring in coriander leaves just at serving time.

“I MOST enjoy this soup served AT ROOM TEMP.”

**Too Much of a Good Thing:** I adore tomatoes, but for those who don't feel so emotional about fresh summer tomatoes, perhaps this week or next, you may think you have too many. Please let me tell you how to solve this dilemma! Those of us who really cook a lot often have a recipe that tells us to add one tablespoon of tomato paste to a dish, which sometimes causes us to waste the rest of the can. Solution: make your own, and freeze in ice cube trays so you can take out as much as you want. This is especially good for helping you to avoid waste, since sometimes you have a few slices of tomatoes left from dinner, which you can freeze. Or maybe you can't use all your oval Roma tomatoes or cherry tomatoes; all may be used to make tomato paste. Here's the amazingly easy method:

**Tomato Paste:** Wash and remove stems from tomatoes, but don't peel tomatoes. Cut larger tomatoes in half and add to a blender or food processor, including frozen leftover tomatoes. Process them until they are totally pulverized. Pour into a colander lined with a paper towel and set over a bowl. Place bowl and colander in the fridge overnight. The liquid from the tomatoes will drip through the paper towel, and the next morning it will be a thick paste. Spoon this paste into an ice cube tray and freeze until hard, a couple of hours. When solid, remove from ice cube tray into a good quality freezer bag and freeze. You don't need to cook; just remove one or several cubes of this paste when you need them in cooking. You won't even notice that it has peel and seeds, since it is so well blended.

**Large Cucumbers:** A few weeks ago, I shared how to use the large cucumbers by making a pickle relish. I found another way and was surprised that it worked so well. My friend Norah Kute had sent a recipe for a fresh pickle\*, which was wonderfully crisp and delicious, but the red pepper flakes were a bit too spicy for my palate. I decided to make another batch but leave out the red pepper flakes. Instead, I added garlic, but on giving it more thought, you could add almost any flavoring. This time I experimented using a very large cucumber, **removing peel and seeds**, to see if it would work, but cut the recipe in half. I was amazed! The fresh pickles were very crisp and crunchy, and last in the fridge for almost a week. You can cut the recipe in half or fourths, but I can vouch for it being good!

\*Fresh pickles often taste just like other pickles but are not shelf stable. They must be refrigerated, and don't last as long as pickles that are submerged in brine. This one lasted about a week in the fridge.

### **Spicy Pickled Cucumbers**

12 med cucumbers (about 2 lbs.) sliced lengthwise into spears and toss in a large bowl with

¼ cup white wine vinegar or unseasoned rice vinegar  
2 teaspoon Kosher salt  
1 teaspoon sugar  
¾ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (I substituted 1 clove minced garlic)

Cover and chill, tossing once, 1-6 hours. Just before serving, add 2 Tablespoons chopped dillweed and 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice to combine. Taste and season with more salt if needed. 8 servings

**A Different Benedictine:** My friend Katharine Hill sent me another Benedictine from her friend Jeanette Bisig that she swears is fabulous, and I believe her.

1-2 good sized cucumbers, peeled and seeds removed  
¼ of a sweet yellow onion  
¼ cup mayonnaise  
2 8-ounce packages of cream cheese, set out to soften  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 clove garlic, minced.

In a blender, puree cucumber and onion and garlic until smooth. Drain liquid in a sieve for about ½ hour. Push any remaining liquid out with a spoon by hand. By hand, blend puree, mayo and cream cheese, salt, and pepper. Add a few drops of food coloring if desired. Serve with vegetables, or as finger sandwiches.

**What to Take to a Potluck!** Not sure how many of us are going to potlucks during the pandemic, but remember they usually have a gazillion casseroles. My sister Helen Wheat, who provided this recipe from Allrecipies.com, loves a good casserole, and this fits the CSA menu of summer, since it features yellow summer squash, though I have made it with the yellow zucchini we've been getting in our CSA boxes. This serves 10, which is about right for a potluck, but it's OK to cut in half for a summer meal.

### **Helen Wheat's Yellow Squash Casserole**

- 4 cups sliced yellow squash
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 35 round buttery crackers, crushed
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- ¾ cup milk
- ¼ cup butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ground black pepper to taste
- 2 tablespoons butter

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F). Place squash and onion in a large skillet over medium heat. Pour in a small amount of water. Cover, and cook until squash is tender, about 5 minutes. Drain well, and place in a large bowl.

In a medium bowl, mix cracker crumbs and cheese. Stir half of the cracker mixture into the cooked squash and onions.

In a small bowl, mix eggs and milk, then add to squash mixture. Stir in 1/4 cup melted butter, and season with salt and pepper. Spread into a 9x13 inch baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining cracker mixture, and dot with 2 tablespoons butter.

Bake in preheated oven for 25 minutes, or until lightly browned. Serves 10.

**Radishes:** Greens and all! No, I did not put them in a salad. The thing about radishes that few people know is that they're very much like turnips, except that their skins are not bitter, so you can use them in place of turnips in soups and stews. You can also roast them, along with other vegetables, coated in a little olive oil and salt. I quartered them and blanched them to freeze for later.

Please offer your favorite recipe so everyone can share.

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