



A Place on Earth CSA Notes September 9-12, 2020

In your share this week:

Butternut Squash; Potatoes; Sweet Corn; Beets; Eggplant; Cabbage; Sweet Peppers; Garlic; Onions; Cucumber; Tomatoes; Cherry Tomatoes; Chard

Sweet Corn: this note from my friend and amazing cook Tomese Buthod: “a tip for you on microwaving corn - don't shuck it first. Put the un-shucked ear in the microwave - no paper towel needed. I use 2 minutes for 1 ear, 3.5 for 2 ears. Let it cool enough to handle - the silks and husks come off like a dream! I have never had such an easy time getting the silks off. Once I discovered this method, I haven't cooked corn any other way for years.” I tried it, and it worked like a charm!

Gazpacho: Last week I added my favorite gazpacho recipe (Spanish cold vegetable soup), and this week I'll do one better. The former has you chop each vegetable by hand, according to the Farm Journal Cookbook, one of my favorite cookbooks. However, my friend Cynthia Adelberg gave me this blender/food processor version, which I have come to use more and more, since there is no chopping, and everyone raves over it. It takes just a few minutes to prepare and is also wonderful.

Cynthia Adelberg's Blender Gazpacho

1 clove garlic	1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1/2 small onion	1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 rib celery	2 Tablespoons olive oil
1/2 small bell pepper	3 Tablespoons red wine vinegar
3 ripe tomatoes	1 cup V-8 juice (or plain tomato juice), chilled
1 small cucumber	Dash Tabasco

Place all ingredients, chopped a little, in the order listed, in blender container. Cover and blend 3 seconds or until last slice of cucumber is pulled down – NO LONGER. Chill and serve with croutons as garnish.

Cynthia's Notes: I hardly ever include the celery. I often put all the ingredients in the blender container, place it in the refrigerator until just before the guests arrive and then process it. (Blending it longer is okay, but you'll miss the crunch of the veggies).

Phyllis' Notes: I do add the celery, and often substitute the “tomato water” from dripping excess tomatoes (when making tomato paste) for the V-8 tomato juice. I start with the celery, onion, and garlic, and process with the tomato juice for a few seconds, then add the rest, and am careful to process for only 3-4 seconds, then pour it into serving cups. Serves 4-5. And, *wink wink*, make sure your sweetheart eats some, too!

Stuffed Peppers: I think that many families have a recipe for stuffed peppers. I don't have a recipe; just a technique, and the same technique may be used to stuff a vegetable such as peppers or zucchini, yellow or white squash, eggplant, as well as cabbage leaves and—well, use your imagination. Here's the technique we use:

Preparing the vegetable:

1. First prepare the vegetable to be stuffed by cutting it open and removing seeds or tough stems. Our family likes peppers and other vegetables cut in half, with the filling spooned on top, but others want the pepper cut near the top, forming a “hat.”
2. If stuffing other vegetables, remove extra flesh from the veggie such as thick squash, or eggplant, and chop up to add later to the filling.
3. Salt the inside, if appropriate. Turn them upside down on a baking sheet and bake in a 400-degree oven for 10-15 minutes, until soft but firm—or microwave for 5-10 minutes, cut side down. (Stuffing is an especially good use for oversized squashes.)

Filling:

1. I usually start with sautéing onion, garlic, and diced green peppers in a little olive oil.
2. Add some ground meat while sautéing the onions if you like; it's a great time to use a spicy meat like sausage in small amounts. If you want to keep it vegetarian, add some cubed tofu or cooked beans such as pinto, northern, navy, black, etc.
3. Add cut up tomatoes—peeled and seeded if you like— or canned tomatoes; allow to simmer for 5-10 minutes until meat is mostly cooked and the tomatoes are juicy.
4. Add fresh or dried basil or oregano. At this point add any vegetable you like green beans, zucchini, other squash, sliced cabbage, broccoli, or diced insides of the host vegetable, and put a lid on the pan to steam until barely done. When the vegetables in the filling are crisp-tender, add some cooked rice, potatoes, or pasta—just enough to fill the cavity of the host vegetable, and season with salt and pepper.

Spoon the filling into the host vegetable, and sprinkle with cheese, if desired. (I prefer a small amount of feta, asiago, or parmesan instead of a larger amount of bland cheese.) Bake at 400 degrees, uncovered, until slightly browned. Serve hot or warm. Reheated, it makes a lovely lunch. (Don't worry about proportions; add more or less, depending on what you have. If too dry, add tomatoes or broth.) If you have too much filling, it can spill over the sides, or put the extra in a small ramekin. It still makes a great lunch!

Eggplant: Eggplant is one of the most boring vegetables ever grown, but with the wonderful ability to take on any flavor put with it. The following recipe is one that I have shared several times through the years, but I go back to it over and over, and my family and guests always love it. While I do make a good crust, I keep refrigerated, rolled crusts in the fridge, just waiting for the last-minute creation where I don't have time to make a crust. This happened this week, and I was able to get this delicious dish in the oven in 10-15 minutes. Sometimes I use a top crust, but

more often, I top with seasoned breadcrumbs (seasoned with butter/olive oil, salt, pepper, and herbs/spices). For a vegetarian version, substitute vegetarian “meat” crumbles. Make sure you use a very flavorful cheese such as sharp cheddar, or spicy Monterrey Jack cheese.

HAMBURGER-EGGPLANT PIE

1-pound ground beef
1 small onion, chopped
1 bell pepper, seeded, and diced
1 cup fresh or canned tomatoes (or fresh tomatoes, skins and seeds removed)
1 teaspoon sugar
3 cups cubed eggplant
3 tablespoons good olive oil, or butter
1 ½ teaspoons dried oregano or basil (or 2 tablespoons, fresh)
2 tablespoons fresh chopped parsley
1 clove garlic, minced
1 cup sharp cheddar or jack cheese, shredded
Salt & pepper to taste
9” pie crust for top and bottom

Put olive oil or butter in a large heavy skillet. Add eggplant, onions, pepper, and garlic. Cook slowly until about half done, but do not allow to brown. Place eggplant in a small bowl. In the same skillet, add the ground beef, stirring over medium heat until beef is cooked through. Soak up extra fat with paper towels. Return eggplant to skillet. Add tomatoes, herbs, salt, sugar, and herbs. Taste and correct seasonings.

Put mixture into a 9” pie shell (unbaked), and cover with shredded cheese. Cover with pie crust, crimp edges, and prick the top crust. (Or sprinkle with seasoned breadcrumbs.) Bake for 40-45 minutes at 375 degrees, or until nicely browned. Serves 5-6.

Potatoes: Tiny potatoes like the ones I receive call me to make potato salad. I was never crazy about potato salad until many years ago I was at a convention, and the potato salad on the buffet was amazing. I asked for the recipe, and they gave me their secret, not a recipe. Dice the potatoes and cook in a small amount of water until barely tender. Add diced celery, minced onion, salt and pepper, pickles, as you like, and add this blender mayonnaise, so easy to make. It is delicious in the potato salad, as well as a spread on sandwiches, and most uses, as long as you don’t freeze it.

Blender (or Food Processor) Mayonnaise (From “Joy of Cooking”)

1 egg
1 teaspoon ground mustard
Dash of cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon sugar
¼ cup vegetable oil
Blend all in a blender or food processor until well blended. With machine still running, add
½ cup vegetable oil
Then add

3 tablespoons lemon juice

Blend until thoroughly blended; then slowly add
½ cup vegetable oil (that's 1 ¼ cups in all) and blend until thick.

Makes about 1 ¾ cups of mayonnaise, which should be refrigerated.

**There are several variations of this mayo: you can add fresh garlic, or a bit of horseradish, herbs such as parsley, basil, chives, or dill; even finely chopped spinach, to name a few.

Please offer your favorite recipe so everyone can share.

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