



A Place on Earth CSA Notes 101420

In your share this week:

Beets; Mixed Greens; Daikon Radish; Turnips; Bok Choy; Sweet Potatoes; Spaghetti Squash; Green Beans; Potatoes; Eggplant; Garlic; Onions; Tomatoes; Collards; Cilantro

Sweet Potatoes: Sweet potato season may be my favorite culinary season. Not because I like the syrupy, marshmallowy, sugary, nutty, buttery dish most folks put on their Thanksgiving table disguised as a vegetable; not a favorite. (OK, so shoot me, but it's certainly OK to disagree in this column/this CSA! We're all entitled to whatever blows our skirts up! In my taste buds, that's a dessert, not a vegetable.) Not that it doesn't taste good, but because it's just too sweet for my main-meal-tastebuds. So, what blows my skirt up? Sweet Potato Soup, that savory, creamy soup that has an umami aura that sends my palate soaring. Yes, I like some sweet potato desserts, too, and I'll feature my favorites another week. I have several favorite soups, but I'll start with this one.

Creamy Sweet Potato Soup

2 tablespoons butter or oil
1 large onion, sliced
1-2 teaspoons ground cumin (I used one)
3-4 sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
1 ½ quarts chicken (or vegetable) broth
1 ¾ cups plain yogurt, sour cream, or cream
2 tablespoons chopped parsley or cilantro, or more
¼ cup toasted pumpkin seeds: optional
1 tablespoon toasted sesame seed oil (not optional)
½-1 teaspoon chipotle powder, optional
2 tablespoons soy sauce, optional
½ teaspoon Bourbon Barrel smoked paprika, optional
Salt and pepper to taste

In a soup pot, combine onions, butter, and cumin. Stir and sauté 3-4 minutes. Add sweet potatoes and broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 20-25 minutes. Puree soup with 1 ½ cups yogurt or cream, parsley, or cilantro, toasted sesame oil, and optional ingredients, if using. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve each portion of soup with a dollop of remaining yogurt or sour cream and a sprinkle of pumpkin seeds. Serves 8-10. Freezes well! A cup of soup goes well with a sandwich, or as a first course.

Mixed Greens: That was a big bunch of mixed greens in the bag today, and if you are not sure how to use them, let's look at options. There are usually single leaves of various tender salad lettuces, plus arugula, which can be eaten raw or cooked. Arugula is a bit spicy, but I love it in a salad. Also, small leaves of greens that are traditionally cooked, but in the small size, may be cooked or used in a salad. It's OK to separate them into lettuce for salads, and other greens to be cooked, with or without the other cooking greens: bok choy, turnip greens, and collards.

Beets: And while we have salad greens in mind, consider adding sliced roasted beets to your salads. I cooked mine in a Crockpot today for about 4 hours on high, cooled, and peeled. Sliced, it is perfect to put on a salad, along with your favorite raw vegetables.

Turnip or Daikon Cakes

Every year, I take my twin daughters, Erin and Jenrose, out to lunch for their birthday, including their favorite "cake," "turnip cake," served by Vietnam Kitchen, one of our family's favorite restaurants, located in Iroquois Manor Shopping Center in Louisville. This is not a sweet cake, but a savory "cake," like what you would call a potato cake, made with leftover mashed potatoes, into patties, and fried. Word has it—though they won't confirm---that instead of using turnips to make the cakes, they use daikon radishes. I have worked to create "turnip cakes", using a "recipe" something like this (not quite as good as Vietnam Kitchen's, but still tasty:

- 1 or more turnips or small daikon radishes, peeled and diced
- 1 or more potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 onion, minced fine
- 1-2 tablespoons butter or oil
- Water or stock
- 1-2 cloves of garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste

For the "cakes"

- 1 egg, beaten
- Flour for dredging (Bloomfield Farms Seasoned Flour is great.)
- Oil for frying

In a pot, sauté onion and garlic in butter or oil until translucent. Add diced vegetables to the pot; cover with water or stock and bring to a boil. Simmer until vegetables are tender. Pour off the water, but save for other uses, if desired, and pour vegetables on a cloth towel to absorb excess moisture. Squeeze excess moisture out into the towel. Put the vegetables into a bowl, and with a potato masher or fork, mash the mixture, adding a little cooking liquid *only if needed* to make the texture of mashed potatoes, albeit a little lumpy. Season with salt and pepper.

To make the "cakes," shape the mashed vegetables into flat round discs, about 4" in diameter. Add a little flour to firm up the mash, if needed. Dip them in the beaten egg, then in flour. Heat 2-3 tablespoons of oil in a heavy skillet until very hot. Brown each cake in the hot oil, turning once, so that each side is crispy. Serve immediately, using your favorite condiment, such as pesto, soy sauce, etc. *You'll be hooked!* (Freeze leftover uncooked "cakes" on round plastic lids to separate them.)

Turnips: Southerners usually grow up eating turnips, loving them, but here on the Mason Dixon line, some of us have not drunk the Kool-Aid. I have grown to like them by adding them to soups, stews, and potato dishes. For the novice, there is a sort of astringent/strong taste that takes some getting used to. Here is a very simple dish to try that will tame that strong taste and make them into something un-turnippy.

Maple Glazed Turnips & Carrots

12 ounces young turnips, 2 inches or less in diameter
1 large carrot, peeled
1/4 cup chicken stock or water
2 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon grade A or B maple syrup
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Scrub and peel the turnips and cut into quarters or sixths, depending on their size. If they are 3" in diameter, peel with a potato peeler. Slice the carrot at an angle into 1/2 inch-thick pieces. Put the vegetables and stock in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Cover and cook until the turnips are barely tender, about 7 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium-high and add the butter and maple syrup. Stir to coat the vegetables and continue to cook uncovered until the vegetables are glazed and beginning to caramelize around the edges, about 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and serve. Serves 3-4.

Still have a pumpkin? Here's a fun & delicious way to use some of that pumpkin pulp in a biscuit recipe that is similar to scones. Sweet potato pulp may be substituted for pumpkin if you like. Delicious! I even freeze 2/3 cup portions just for this recipe.

Pumpkin/Sweet Potato Biscuits

2 cups soft wheat flour such as Weisenberger's or White Lily (or substitute all-purpose)
3 tablespoons sugar
4 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 cup butter
1/3 cup chopped pecans
1/2 cup half and half
2/3 cup cooked, pureed pumpkin or sweet potatoes

Sift together flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon. Cut in butter with a pastry blender until mixture looks like coarse meal or crumbs. Stir in pecans. Combine cream and pumpkin; stir into flour mixture just enough to moisten dry ingredients. You will have a stiff dough. Turn dough onto a lightly floured board and knead gently a few times. Roll out to 1/2" thickness. Cut

with a 2” cutter and place one inch apart on a greased baking sheet. Bake in a hot oven, 425 degrees until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Serve at once. Makes about 20 biscuits. Recipe adapted from “Homemade Bread,” by Nell B. Nichols, Farm Journal Field Food Editor.

Do you have a recipe you think others would like to try? Please send them to me and I’ll share with others.

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