



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

Week 3: March 28th and 29th 2012

The Joys of Eating Seasonally, from

Jeanne

When we did our subscriber survey last year we asked what your main reasons were for being part of a CSA. The choices were: to eat more vegetables, to support small sustainable organic farms, to get the freshest food possible, and to connect with where food is grown and support a local economy and community. There was also an 'other' option which allowed you to write in your own reasons. All of the options got lots of votes (you could choose as many options as you wanted), but a lot of people also wrote in the 'other' category: "to eat seasonally."

With grocery stores carrying the same produce year round (with only a few exceptions) it's hard to even know what might be in season at any given time. And how to define "in season?" If it's being grown somewhere in the United States, is it in season? Even in California there are several distinct growing regions where the seasonality varies quite a bit. Being part of a CSA you get to experience eating seasonally on a very local scale. All of the produce in your boxes is produced at our farm or by a few other local farmers. It's a Central Coast seasonality that you get to experience. (Fortunately we live in a climate that is very favorable for growing a lot of different crops!)

One thing that happens when we try to eat seasonally is that we find ourselves getting out of the rut of preparing the same vegetables every week. We try new things, and we even start to look forward to those times of year when something we got to try the year before might be coming in. Sometimes we get a little tired of a vegetable if it's available during a long season, but then still find we look forward to it after some time off when its season comes again.

I remember how delighted I was when I first tried parsnips—where had they been all my life? They may not be as flashy as a ripe tomato, and I think I would get tired of eating parsnips all year long. But to me they are a sweet treat for the winter and spring, when the summer vegetables are still a long way off.

Spring can be the most challenging time of year to eat seasonally. If you think about it, historically spring was the leanest time of year, the time when people were the hungriest. The stored and overwintered vegetables were running thin, and the spring vegetables grew slowly in the often cool, rainy, and still short days. Fortunately, we don't have to worry about going hungry by eating seasonally. But it's a good time of year to take on the challenge of eating some vegetables you may not be as familiar with, and learning to love them and look forward to them each year.

Veggie Notes--Storage and Usage Tips

Store the **mushrooms** in the refrigerator in the paper bag they came in. Use these in the first day or two if you can. Store the **parsnips** in the crisper drawer with the **carrots** (greens removed) – the roots can be used later in the week if you like; they will last a long time. Store **leeks** in the crisper drawer too; they can be used anytime in the week. You can cut some or all of the top dark green leafy parts of the leeks off if they won't otherwise fit neatly in your fridge! The leek tops are good for soup stocks, along with the **carrot tops**. You might want to be sparing with the carrot tops, which are very nutritious but can add too much bitterness. Keep the **broccoli**

and **mustard greens** in the refrigerator in plastic bags and use within a few days. The broccoli is small heads or side shoots. If they are skinny enough, you can just throw the whole thing, stem and all, in the steamer. **Mustard Greens** are spicy when raw and have a bitterness that comes out more with long cooking. You can use the same simple sauté method as you might use for kale. Fresh **dill** should be used as soon as possible for maximum freshness. You can store it in the fridge wrapped in a damp towel or placed upright in a glass with an inch of water. You can also dry the dill for later use or freeze it as is in a freezer bag. If you freeze it, you can just trim some off the frozen bunch whenever you need it and put the rest back in the freezer. I often think fish when I get dill, but dill also goes nicely with cooked carrots or egg salad.

This Week

Leeks

Bunched Chantenay Carrots

Mustard Greens

Broccoli*

Oyster mushrooms*

Parsnips*

Dill*

Flowers: Sweet William,
Ranunculus, Calendula

Notes from Chef Andrew Cohen

Parsnips! For me, parsnips are the candy vegetable. They are so sweet with a lovely nutty flavor. I like them for many things--roasted with lots of other roots and a little oil of course, but I also love them in a soup and in gratins. They go so well with potatoes. I have used them to make a dish similar to Pommes Anna (Concentric rings of circles of potato-or parsnip- layered into a buttered cast iron skillet and then seared on the bottom until crispy yet tender, then finished in the oven. I also like them as a mash mixed with potatoes or they stand up well on their own. One thing to keep in mind is that they have a very high sugar content and burn easily. One second they are almost done, and the next they are carbon! So, keep your eyes peeled when you are learning to cook parsnips. Another thing about parsnips is they cook faster than most other roots, and if they are exposed to wet cooking they can turn quite mushy. I will roast them and glaze them with maple syrup as that is a favorite around here. I think **mustard greens** have a bright flavor, and I like the bite that mustard greens

sometimes have, so I like to contrast them with something earthy. In this case I will make the lentils and mustard dish and serve some grain to make it into a complete protein. The **leeks** and **oyster mushrooms** will get sautéed together to be used as a topping. I will either use it on rice or it will go on the fish that will accompany the rice. For a fish topping, I would make it a little wet (a little extra wine or stock) and then roast or grill something like halibut or roast some black cod. I like to hand shred oyster mushrooms before sautéing them as I like it when the tear lines get crisp along the edges. If the mushrooms are pretty big, I like to toss them in oil and some wine and roast them on a bed of pine needles. The Chantenay **carrots** will see me continuing to play with sauce variations and plain whole roasting them. I might try roasting **leeks** as well and combining the two. The **broccoli** will further my experiments with vegetable “flans”. (See recipe on website.) I also love the side shoots and small **broccoli** florets for searing in a hot pan with lemon and chili, and I use it chopped fine with minced capers, minced onion, garlic, scads of mint, and pine nuts with lemon juice and bread crumbs and plenty of olive oil as a pasta “sauce”.

Gingered Parsnip Soup, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

3 medium leeks, sliced fine	6 medium parsnips, peeled and chopped medium
2 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced fine	3 medium potatoes, peeled and sliced ¼ inch
4 “nickels” of ginger, minced	1 cup white wine
2 cup vegetable stock or water	1 bay leaf
Neutral flavored oil (such as grapeseed) or butter as needed-around 2 TBS	Salt and white pepper to taste
Water as needed	

Heat a 4 quart soup pot over medium heat. Once the pot is hot, add the oil or butter to the pot. As soon as the fat is hot, add the leeks and parsnips and sauté until tender. Add the garlic and ginger, then the thyme. Cook to soften these items. Add the potatoes. Cook a few minutes to color them a little. Add the wine, bring to a boil and reduce by 80%. Add the stock; cook until everything is soft. Season with salt and white pepper to taste. Puree in the pot with a stick blender. If you don’t have a stick blender, add the contents to a blender (Not more than 2/3rds full!) and put on the top, cover the top with a thick towel, and start on lowest setting and work up slowly to puree. (This is important. I have seen hot liquid spray out of a blender onto walls and chefs when started at higher speeds!) Thin to desired consistency with water. Garnish with a streak of yogurt and chervil or mint for a nice look and pleasant tasting garnish.

Sauté of Mustard Greens, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 bunch mustard greens, stemmed, washed, and drained	1-2 pieces bacon, cut into ¼ inch batons, or just use olive oil for vegetarian version
1 small onion, peeled and diced (or use leeks here)	2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
Salt and pepper to taste	2 TBS cider vinegar
2 TBS olive oil, or as needed	

Bring enough water to cover the greens to a boil, then add the greens. Boil 2 minutes, the drain. When cool enough to

CSA Box Cooking Classes by Chef Joni Sare

Location: Chef Joni's 10-person kitchen in Cupertino (near I280 and Foothill). \$25 for each class, pre-payment is required. Info at www.jonisare.com/csa-cooking-classes.

handle, squeeze out the excess water. If you wish, you can chop the greens into small bits. Reserve.

Heat a sauté pan large enough to hold the greens over medium-low heat. When hot, add the bacon and cook gently until crisp, rendering the fat without burning it. When the bacon is crisp, remove to paper a towel to drain.

Add the onion to the bacon fat and toss to coat. If needed, add just enough oil to coat the pan bottom, then cook the onions until softened and translucent. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant and softened. Add the greens to the pan and toss to mix with the onions and garlic, and coat with the oil. Season with salt and pepper. Add the vinegar and toss to coat. Cook to reduce the vinegar, and heat the greens through. Scatter the bacon over the greens and toss to mix.

Lentils with Stewed Mustard Greens and Cilantro, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

1 cup du Puy lentils	3 cups water
½ brown onion, peeled and diced finely	1-2 serrano chilis, split, seeded, and cut into long thin strips, <i>optional</i>
1 inch of ginger root, peeled, grated finely, reserved with any juices	½ cup packed cilantro, washed, dried, and chopped
1 bunch mustard greens, stemmed, washed, and chopped into 1 inch bits	2 tsp. cumin seeds, powdered
Neutral flavored oil as needed	Salt and Pepper to taste,
1 lemon, juiced, juice reserved	

Rinse lentils and pick over. Add to a 3 quart pot and cover with the water. Bring to a boil, skimming and discarding any foam that forms on the surface. Lower heat after 5 minutes and simmer until lentils are tender, but not mushy, around 30-45 minutes. There should be a little liquid left, do not drain the lentils. When the lentils are tender, heat a large (12-inch) skillet over medium heat. When the pan is hot, add enough oil to generously coat the bottom of the pan. When the oil is hot, add the chilies and stir to coat with oil. Cook 30 seconds. Squeeze the ginger juice into the oil in the pan, or just add the grated ginger, and sauté 10 seconds. Add the mustard and cilantro to the pan, toss to coat, and cook until wilted-a minute or maybe two.

Add the lentils to the pot with their liquid and stir gently to mix. Season with salt and pepper. Lower heat, cover the pot, and very gently simmer for 15 minutes, until mustard is tender and has a deeper flavor. Just before service, season with fresh ground pepper, and drizzle with 2 tablespoons of lemon juice. Taste, add more if needed. Serve hot with rice and raita for a complete protein.

Everything in your box and the flowers are certified organic. This week the Oyster Mushrooms are from Far West Fungi. Parsnips and dill and some of the broccoli are from Lakeside Organics. All other vegetables were grown by High Ground Organics. Organic flowers are from the Thomas Farm.