



High Ground Organics Community Supported Agriculture

Week 12, June 1st and 2nd, 2016

Eat Your Fennel, by Steve Pedersen

I can remember back to a time that I just didn't get the appeal of fennel. This course, stringy, strongly scented vegetable didn't seem worth the trouble to cook. But now I can honestly say that it is among my very favorite vegetables. I fully realize that there are many of our CSA members who still don't "get" fennel, and if you are among these, you simply must try Jeanne's recipe for roast fennel and onions. The key is to cook it long enough and to use enough olive oil so the fennel doesn't dry out. When the fennel and onions become soft on the inside, and caramelized on the outside, the combination is sublime. This simple dish was one of my step-father's favorites when he came to visit us on the farm, and is one of mine as well.

Why learn to like fennel? Aside from the fact that your CSA farm grows fennel, and you are therefore confronted with it several times a year, it is a vegetable that offers good nutritional benefits. According to the FDA, it is an excellent source of vitamin C, and a very good source of dietary fiber, potassium, manganese, folate, and molybdenum. The website the World's Healthiest Foods says that fennel contains unique phytonutrients that make it a strong antioxidant. One phytonutrient particular to fennel, called *anethole*, has been shown in animal studies to reduce inflammation, help prevent cancer, and protect the liver from toxic chemical injury. In addition, fennel's high vitamin C content offers antioxidant protection and immune support. Its high fiber can help reduce cholesterol and improve colon health, and the good potassium levels can help lower high blood pressure.

Here are some other ideas for using your fennel. While you're cooking up the bulbs, you can chop the leaves and add them to your salad, and give the stems to kids to chew on if they are clamoring for snacks right before dinner. (I actually chew on them myself if I find myself getting too hungry when I'm working on dinner.)

Andrew Cohen uses minced fennel in a "soffritto" with onions, carrots, and celery, to freeze and have on hand for a quick start to any meal. This week he presents a recipe for a fennel and summer squash gratin that looks delicious. If you are a meat eater, fennel also pairs sublimely with lamb, or pork.

Finally, from the farmer's perspective, fennel is simply a joy to grow. As a Mediterranean vegetable, it seems to really like our cool coastal climate. Fennel growing in the field is one of

Blueberry U-Pick This Saturday 10 AM to 2 PM

Picking blueberries is easy and fun! We invite you out to the farm to pick your own this Saturday. Bring your own containers if you can. Best to wear closed-toe shoes and long pants, as there are some prickly weeds on the farm. If we're lucky a bald eagle will make an appearance for us, so you may want binoculars too. Price for Blueberries = \$6 per pound.

Location: High Ground home farm, 521 Harkins Slough Rd., Watsonville. See directions on the web site.

Strawberries

Savoy Cabbage OR
Cauliflower

Carola and Purple
Majesty New Potatoes*

Fennel

Summer Squash

Collard Greens

Romaine OR Red Leaf
Lettuce

Bacon Avocados*

Everything is certified organic. Potatoes are from Thomas Farm. Avocados are from Marsalisi Farm. All other vegetables and fruit were grown by High Ground Organics. Note: last minute substitutions may be made.

the most visually pleasing crops that we plant, presenting a sea of feathery bright green fronds waving in the wind.

So, please enjoy your fennel—it's a taste worth cultivating.

Veggie Notes, by Sarah Brewer

Always rinse produce before use. Everything should be refrigerated.

Strawberries will be your berry of the week. Except that strawberries are not true berries in scientific terms, but what is called an "aggregate accessory fruit". If you want to get botanical, true berries are made from a single ovary of a plant and the seeds are on the inside, like a blueberry. Aggregate fruits are made up of multiple ovaries (seeds) from a single flower. Raspberries and blackberries are also aggregate fruits. "Accessory" means that, unlike most fruit, the flesh comes not from the ovaries (which hold the seeds on the outside of the strawberry), but from adjacent tissue of the plant. But you can call them berries, if you want. Everyone does. We do.

If you received **Savoy cabbage** last week, you should get **cauliflower** this week and vice versa. Slaw? Kim Chi? Steamed cabbage? Boiled cabbage? Roasted cauliflower? Cauliflower soup? What is on the menu?

New potatoes are a very special treat! These are little potatoes that are freshly harvested. They have more moisture and sweetness than the stored potatoes and are great in a potato salad or simply steamed with some butter and spices! Waxy yellow Carolas and gorgeous Purple Majesties are the varieties.

You can use the **fennel** fronds to make a Fennel Frond Pesto. Or use it as a little "nest" to protect the meat you are roasting from sticking to the pan.

Summer squash has been coming in different colors and sizes lately. From the deep green zucchini tubes to the squat

UFO-shaped patty-pan, the varieties of these mild and buttery squash show off their stuff.

Collard Greens are ubiquitous in Southern cooking, but are just getting a toe-hold here on the West Coast. Although most Southern recipes include the braising of the nutrient-packed fan-shaped leafy-green with fatty pieces of pork, collard greens have actually been shown to reduce cholesterol and the chances of heart disease with its bile-acid binding superpower.

Your lettuce this week will be either **Romaine lettuce**, or **Red Leaf lettuce**. Caesar salad or green (and red) salad?

The flexible skins of **bacon avocados** make for easy peeling and buttery flavor and smooth texture make a great guacamole!

Enjoy your veggies!

Chef Notes, by Andrew Cohen

This week a couple technical chef terms get used. So, a lesson in culinary French; *lyonnaise* cut refers to a radial cut going from one pole of a vegetable to another. For example, an onion. Slice away the root section and the other end from the onion. Stand on its head cut and halve the onion pole to pole. Peel and lay on the cut side, and then make cuts with the blade edge oriented pole to pole, and then slice as though you were following the edge of an arc. You should wind up with wedges of onion, wider at the back and pointed at the end of the cut. This cut is used for braises, and sautés.

Another technique mentioned is *chiffonade*. Here, you stack thin leaves one atop another, and then roll from the bottom up, and slice across the roll to yield fine strands of whatever it is you are cooking. Classic examples would be mint or basil, stacked and held until needed, then sliced and scattered where wanted. You can do this and use the term when you stack leaves such as chard or collards as well. Using this technique makes things quicker when prepping, and it also ensures uniform size of the items being cut. For things such as mint and basil, this method is very handy, allowing for uniformly thin slices in a single pass. Using a thin blade that is very sharp also is great as it helps prevent bruising and discoloration, which with herbs is the beginning of decay.

Ideas for this box included a gratin of potatoes with cheese and stock, with fennel and onions sautéed and layered through the potatoes. A salad of **romaine** with quickled **cauliflower** and cubes of **avocado** sprang to mind, as did a sauce of charred and mashed **summer squash** with Meyer lemon vinaigrette for grilled lamb kebabs, or the same with a yogurt-Meyer lemon dressing for steamed or roasted **potatoes**. A salad using the **Savoy cabbage** shredded with scallions, steamed cubes of **summer squash**, all dressed with a mint dressing garnished with pepitas, scallion greens, and **avocado** also came to mind.

A sauté of **cauliflower** florets caramelized and mixed with steamed and sautéed cubes of **potato** and **summer squash**, with a fine *chiffonade* of **collards** sautéed in would be good with a fried egg on top and lashings of hot sauce for brunch, breakfast, or dinner as well.

Rhubarb is at farmers markets right now, so a **strawberry** rhubarb crumble sounds good to me, especially with home-made vanilla ice cream.

Note: We can't print them all, but Chef Andrew's recipes are always available in full at highgroundorganics.com.

Roast Fennel

1 bunch fennel	1 onion
Olive Oil	salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 425. Cut off the stems of the fennel and trim off any browned area on the base of the bulb. Slice the fennel bulbs into six or eight wedges each. Cut them through the base so that each wedge holds together. Clean any dirt that has collected in-between spaces. Slice an onion in half and slice each half vertically so that you have slim wedges of onion. Toss the fennel and onions with olive oil, salt and pepper. Dollop a generous amount of olive oil in a roasting pan, then add the onions and fennel. Cover pan with foil and cook for 30 minutes. Uncover and cook another 15-30 minutes until fennel and onions are tender and caramelized.

Simple Grilled Lemon Orange Summer Squash, from Chef Andrew E Cohen

Simply flavored, easy to execute, simply delicious. Much of the secret lies in the thickness of the cut, and having fresh squash which are moist and not bitter. The rest lies with finding the sweet spot on the grill, where it is not scorchingly hot, nor where the heat is sort of feeble. The heat should be a 5-second heat, meaning it should take 5 seconds for your hand, 5 inches above the grill, to become painfully hot and you have to pull it away. This would be like medium-high on the stove.

1½ to 2 pounds summer squash	Salt and pepper to taste
Garlic powder to taste (but not too much as you want to taste the squash)	Olive oil as needed
Juice from ½ a Meyer lemon	Juice from 1 1¼-inch Cutie type mandarin

Remove the stem and flower ends of the squash. Cut the squash into slices 5/8ths of an inch thick. Use a ruler at first if need be until you get the motion down. For Patty-pan type squash (the UFO looking ones), halve them through the poles after removing the top and bottom. If large, quarter into wedges, then trim to size or slice through equator and trimming.

Put into a non-reactive bowl and add the juices. Toss to evenly coat. Marinate 10-15 minutes, tossing every couple minutes.

Drizzle liberally with oil and toss to coat well. Put squash onto grill skewers edge to edge, so the flat parts are the largest exposed surfaces. Try to do this so the squash is evenly placed on the skewer. Lay skewers onto a flat rimmed tray and then season with salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Drizzle with the juice/oil mixture remaining in the bowl.

Get the grill hot and find the 5 second spot as described above. Grill the squash in that spot until it is golden and has grill lines, but not long enough to get soft. The squash should be golden and charred here and there, but crisp and tender at the same time.

When ready, drizzle with juices remaining in rimmed tray, then put on a platter or remove from skewers and place in a bowl. Serve right away.

Serves: 4