

THE TIPI TIMES

May 20, 2010, week 2 (purple EOW)

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THIS WEEK'S BOX CONTAINS:

Asparagus, 1 lb.
Spinach, 3/4 lb.
Green garlic
Red leaf lettuce
Radishes
Mint
Rhubarb, 1.5 lb.
Leeks OR a parsnip

NEXT WEEK'S BOX WILL PROBABLY CONTAIN:*

Spinach, asparagus,
lettuce, green garlic, white
salad turnips and more

*depending on weather, critters &
other forces of nature.

I have not told you much about our farm yet, but there will be time for that in future newsletters. I will again focus on produce and recipe ideas in this newsletter.

FOR LONGER STORAGE, SPIN YOUR SALAD GREENS DRY.

The spinach and lettuce we send you are still wet from washing. To keep your salad greens fresh longer, separate the leaves, wash them and spin them dry in a salad spinner. Store in a closed bag or container in the fridge. They will stay fresh much longer when handled this way.

VEGGIE NOTES. The lettuce will need careful washing again this week.

There is still grit in the heads from recent rains. See last week's newsletter for storage and preparation information for asparagus, green garlic and rhubarb. FYI, I provide info on a vegetable the first week that we send it.

Spinach - We harvested from two spinach fields this week. One field was planted last fall. Leaves from these overwintered plants are large and substantial. They can be used for either cooking or for salads. Our second spinach field was planted this spring. These plants are younger and more tender, and are best suited for salads. They will cook OK, but will shrink dramatically because the leaves are so fine and tender. (Your bag of spinach will have one of these types, not a mixture.)

Green garlic - (looks like scallions) - The green garlic has grown since last week. There is more useable bulb at the base, and the tops have grown more fibrous. Use just the white base and pale green stems, not the darker green leaves or stem. You will need to peel the garlic.

Lettuce - You will receive red leaf lettuce this week.

A few leeks or a parsnip - When the snow melted two months ago, we were pleased to find that many unharvested leeks and parsnips had survived the winter. It was a fairly mild winter with good snow cover, and an easy year for overwintering plants. "Spring" leeks and parsnips are great to eat, tender and mild. We used to grow them deliberately, but stopped because survival over the winter is unpredictable. Some members will receive one parsnip from us. Others will receive one or two leeks. The leeks have soil between the layers, so split lengthwise and rinse between the layers. Saute leeks with other veggies, or use them as a substitute for onions in any recipe. To bring out the best flavor in parsnips, slice then fry in butter or oil until tender, browned and caramelized. With such a small amount of parsnip, you'll have to combine with other veggies.

SPRING ROLLS with MINT, SPINACH and ASPARAGUS

This is a good way to use a small quantity of leftover cooked asparagus, and is a favorite with our children. You can buy spring roll wrappers at Asian food stores and some grocery stores. You can prepare spring rolls with different ingredients (eg., lettuce, carrots, cucumbers), but the mint seems to make them authentic.

1 spring roll wrapper, 4 spinach leaves, 1 spear cooked asparagus, a large pinch of minced mint

Lay out the spring roll wrapper. Stack the spinach leaves at the corner closest to you, place the asparagus spear in the middle, and sprinkle with mint. Roll up the spinach stack, pull the wrapper corner over it, and roll a bit toward the middle of the wrapper. Fold in the two side corners. Continue rolling until the wrapper is used up, keeping the sides tucked in. Check the package for the spring roll wrappers; they often have illustrations.

Make a dipping sauce of 1 Tbsp. rice vinegar, 1 Tbsp. soy sauce, 1 tsp. sesame oil and 1/2 tsp. sugar. Adjust sugar to taste. You can add some ginger or slivered garlic if you wish, but it's not necessary.

MINTED YOGURT. This is a simple dish that our children like to make. It can be eaten alone as a refreshing snack, or used as a dipping sauce (eg., with asparagus.)
Combine 1 cup yogurt, 2 pinches salt, 1 tsp. olive oil and 4 leaves mint (finely minced). Stir together and let the flavors combine for about 5 minutes. Adjust mint to taste.

HOMEMADE PIZZA. Pizza dough recipe adapted from Deborah Madison's "Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone." Yield: two 12- to 14-inch pizzas, or one and one half 16-inch pizzas, or one and one half rectangular pizzas prepared to fit 17 x 11 inch cookie sheets

Beth's notes: We make pizza almost every week. It is so much better than takeout pizza and is easily adapted to the varied tastes within a family. It's also a good way to use small quantities of leftover vegetables. For example, a small handful of cooked asparagus spears makes a great pizza topping. We do not have any special equipment like a peel or pizza stone. Instead, we use a normal cookie sheet, and cook the pizza on the bottom rack of the oven for a crisp crust. Cookbook author Deborah Madison writes "oven temperature is most important to the success of your pizza. It takes a hot oven to make a crisp, brown crust without drying out on top. Preheat your oven to 500oF, allowing 30 minutes rather than the usual 10 minutes." Regarding cheeses, Madison writes "Cheese smells irresistible and tastes wonderful, but a light hand keeps it from overwhelming the other ingredients. Good pizza cheeses are fresh mozzarella, Fontina, Gorgonzola and goat cheese with freshly grated Parmesan, dry Jack or pecorino providing a sharper accent."

1-1/2 cups warm water	1-1/2 tsp. salt	your choice of
2 tsp. active dry yeast	1 cup whole-wheat flour (all-purpose or bread)	sauce, cheese and
2 Tbsp. virgin olive oil	3 to 3-1/2 cups white flour (all-purpose or bread)	toppings

Pour 1/2 cup of the water into a mixing bowl, stir in the yeast, and set aside until foamy, about 10 minutes. Add the remaining water, olive oil, and salt, then beat in the whole wheat flour followed by enough white flour to form a shaggy dough. Knead until smooth, adding more flour as needed to keep it from sticking. For a crisp, light crust, pizza dough should be on the moist side, which means it will be slightly tacky.

Put the dough into an oiled bowl, turn it once to coat, then cover with a towel and set aside to rise until doubled in size, 40 to 60 minutes. Lightly oil the bottom of a cookie sheet but not the sides. Divide the dough into the number of pizzas you want. Shape each piece into a ball, set on the cookie sheet, cover with a towel and let rise for another 20 to 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 500oF.

To shape the dough, take one ball at a time, flatten it into a disk, pushing it outward with your palm. Working from the middle, push the dough out with your fingers until it's about 1/4 inch thick and fairly even, thickening slightly at the edge. Let rest about 10 minutes before you add toppings.

Spread a thin layer of tomato sauce (or pesto or salsa verde) over the dough, leaving a 1/2-inch border around the edge. Lay the cheese over the sauce. Add toppings over or under the cheese, see below for suggestions. Bake on the bottom rack until the crust is browned and the cheese bubbly, about 10 to 18 minutes depending on how much you've loaded your pizza with toppings. The pizza will cook more quickly on a pizza stone.

Spring Pizza Toppings: These quantities are sufficient for a pizza prepared to fit a 17 x 11 inch cookie sheet (equivalent to a 16 inch round). It is essential that you do not overload a pizza with toppings, as they can make the pizza soggy. This is especially important with summer toppings like tomatoes and peppers.

Asparagus: Top with cooked, well-drained asparagus chopped into bite-sized pieces.

Green garlic: Slice raw green garlic very thinly. Scatter over the sauce, and under the cheese.

Spinach, raw: Wash, dry well and cut into thin ribbons. Scatter up to 1 1/2 packed cups over the sauce, and under the cheese. The cheese weighs the spinach down, and helps protect it from drying out. Raw spinach placed on top tends to get crispy.

Spinach, cooked: Cooked spinach can be put on top of the cheese.

Aruqula: Good combined with raw spinach, up to 1 1/2 cups total. Handle like spinach.

Tips to speed pizza making:

Buy pre-grated cheese, or use thin slices of cheese scattered over the pizza. Or just rip mozzarella cheese into shreds. Anything to avoid washing the grater. Evansville members, Theresa at Alberici's sells mixed grated cheese.

Buy pre-made dough. Alberici's makes and sells fresh pizza dough.

Make the dough in advance. I've had good success refrigerating pizza dough overnight after the initial 40 minute rise.

Buy a "half baked" cheese pizza. Some pizza parlors will sell you a plain cheese pizza that's partially cooked. Add your own toppings at home, then bake at 500oF until the crust is done. Still much better than delivered pizza, and you get to use your own veggies.

ROASTED ASPARAGUS SALAD with SHALLOT VINAIGRETTE

This recipe was suggested by CSA host Jan Schaefer. Jan made several adjustments. Instead of roasting, she grilled the marinated asparagus. She substituted green garlic for the shallots, and combined the cooked asparagus with a mixture of arugula and lettuce (instead of just arugula.) We didn't send arugula this week, but the dish should be good with lettuce.

Adapted from Bon Appetit, March, 2005.

Yield: Makes 6 servings.

1/3 cup minced shallots (about 2 large) *or substitute green garlic*
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons Sherry wine vinegar
2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
1 1/2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 pound slender asparagus, tough ends trimmed

6 cups (lightly packed) arugula (about 5 ounces) *or substitute lettuce*
3 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (about 1 1/2 ounces)

Whisk first 5 ingredients in small bowl to blend. Gradually whisk in oil. Season vinaigrette to taste with salt and pepper. (Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Cover and chill. Let stand at room temperature 30 minutes and rewhisk before using.)

Preheat oven to 400° F. Place asparagus spears on rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle 1/4 cup vinaigrette over and turn to coat, then spread in single layer. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast asparagus until just crisp-tender, about 12 minutes.

Combine arugula, chives, and asparagus in large bowl. Add remaining vinaigrette and toss to coat. Transfer salad to platter; sprinkle with salt, pepper, and cheese. Serve warm or at room temperature.

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