

September 17, 2008

Hello Friends!

It's hard to believe the CSA is almost over! The growing season has gone so fast. Soon we'll be getting the land ready for the below freezing weather. While there is still only a few weeks left, we would love to hear your feedback about your experience with our CSA this year before you nestle up and hibernate for the winter months.

Feel free to e-mail [tracy@oldenproduce.com](mailto:tracy@oldenproduce.com) with your opinion about how the CSA went for you so far this year. What could we improve on for next year? Let us know. We're here to serve you and we hope that you'll consider doing the CSA again with us next year. ☺

As for this week, in your boxes, you will find beets, eggplant (asian and Italian), tomatoes (heirlooms and regular), cabbage, and sweet corn. Like always, we're including a few recipes later in this week's newsletter. Enjoy!

Bon appetit!

Your dedicated farmers,

Tracy and Dick



*We believe the only way to get produce fresher, is if you grow it yourself...or in our case, when you get it locally, from your neighbor's at Olden Produce.*

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MELBOURNE'S CAPER OF THE WEEK

**How to Tell When Foodstuffs  
Should Be Discarded**

**The Gag Test**

Anything that makes you gag is spoiled except for leftovers from what you cooked for yourself last night.

### **Eggs**

When something starts pecking its way out of the shell, the egg is probably past its prime.

### **Dairy Products**

Milk is spoiled when it looks like yogurt. Yogurt is spoiled when it starts to look like cottage cheese. Cottage cheese is spoiled when it starts to look like regular cheese. Regular cheese is nothing but spoiled milk anyway and can't get any more spoiled than it already is.

### **Mayonnaise**

If it makes you violently ill after you eat it, mayonnaise is spoiled.

### **Frozen Foods**

Frozen foods that have become an integral part of the defrosting program in your freezer compartment will probably be spoiled..or wrecked, anyway..by the time you pry them out with a kitchen knife.

### **Meat**

If opening the refrigerator door causes stray animals from a three block radius to congregate outside your kitchen door, the meat is spoiled.

### **Lettuce**

Bibb lettuce is spoiled when you can't get it off the bottom of the vegetable crisper without Comet.

### **Canned Goods**

Any canned good that has become the shape or size of a basketball should be disposed of. Carefully.

### **Carrots**

A carrot that you can tie in a clove hitch is not fresh.

### **Wine**

It should not taste like salad dressing.

### **Potatoes**

Fresh potatoes do not have roots, branches or dense leafy undergrowth.

### **Chip Dip**

If you can take it out of its container and bounce it on the floor, it has gone bad.

### **General Rule of Thumb:**

Most food cannot be kept longer than the average life span of a hamster. Keep a hamster in your refrigerator to gauge this.

Found online at <http://chef2chef.net/features/chef-humor/joke-archive/WhenshouldFood.htm>.

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### **VEGETABLE COUSCOUS, GOAT CHEESE, AND BEETS**

1 teaspoon chopped fresh dill  
1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh chives  
1/8 teaspoon black pepper  
1 (4-oz) piece soft mild goat cheese from a log  
2/3 cup water  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
4 tablespoons olive oil  
1/2 cup couscous (3 oz)  
1/4 cup diced (1/4 inch) red onion  
1/2 cup diced (1/4 inch) zucchini  
1/2 cup diced (1/4 inch) red bell pepper  
1/4 cup fresh corn kernels  
1 small beet (about 2 inches in diameter), trimmed  
1 tablespoon Sherry vinegar  
4 thin prosciutto slices (optional)

Special equipment: a Japanese Benriner\* or other adjustable-blade slicer; a 4-oz **ramekin**

Accompaniment: *grissini* (long thin breadsticks) or flatbread

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Stir together dill, chives, and pepper on a plate, then roll cheese in herb mixture to coat sides (not ends). Wrap cheese in plastic wrap and chill.

Bring water, salt, and 1 tablespoon oil to a boil in a 1-quart heavy saucepan. Stir in couscous, then cover pan and remove from heat. Let stand, covered, 5 minutes.

Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderate heat until hot but not smoking, then cook onion, stirring, 1 minute. Add zucchini, bell pepper, and corn and cook, stirring, until zucchini is bright green, about 3 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and transfer to a bowl.



Fluff couscous with a fork and stir into vegetables, then season with salt and pepper.

Peel beet and cut half of beet into very thin slices (less than 1/8 inch thick) with slicer (discard remainder), then stack slices and cut into thin matchsticks. Rinse beets and pat dry, then transfer to a bowl.

Whisk together vinegar, remaining 2 tablespoons oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Add 1/2 tablespoon dressing to beets and toss to coat.

Fill ramekin with couscous, pressing it firmly into mold with a rubber spatula. Invert ramekin onto a salad plate and carefully unmold couscous, then make 3 more couscous mounds on 3 more plates.

Drape each couscous mound with 1 prosciutto slice (if using), then top with some of beets.

Unwrap cheese and cut crosswise into 4 equal slices with a lightly oiled knife, then arrange 1 cheese slice alongside each couscous mound and spoon remaining dressing around

mounds.

**Cooks' note:**

Couscous can be made 1 day ahead and chilled, covered. Bring to room temperature before stirring into vegetables.

\*Available at Asian markets and some cookware shops.

Found online at

<http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/VEGETABLE-COUSCOUS-GOAT-CHEESE-AND-BEETS-109734>.

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PROVENCAL TOMATO POTATO GRATIN

10 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
2 lb medium tomatoes (about 6), cut crosswise into 1/2-inch-thick slices  
About 1 3/4 teaspoons salt  
1 teaspoon black pepper  
2 lb medium red potatoes, scrubbed well  
1 garlic clove  
1/2 cup plain fine dry bread crumbs  
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh basil  
1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme

Special equipment: a 3-qt shallow flameproof gratin or casserole dish (about 2 inches deep; not glass)

Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 425°F.

Brush a shallow baking pan (1/2 to 1 inch deep) with 2 tablespoons oil. Arrange tomato slices in 1 layer in baking pan and sprinkle with a scant 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Roast tomatoes until just tender (not falling apart), about 20 minutes.

While tomatoes roast, cut potatoes crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick slices and toss with 5 tablespoons oil in a large bowl.

Remove tomatoes from oven and put oven racks in upper and lower thirds of oven. Arrange potato slices in 1 layer in 2 shallow baking pans (1/2 to 1 inch deep) and sprinkle each pan with a scant 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Roast potatoes, switching position of pans halfway through roasting, until tender, about 16 minutes total.

While potatoes roast, mince garlic and mash to a paste with a pinch of salt using a large heavy knife. Transfer paste to a bowl and stir in bread crumbs, basil, thyme, remaining 3 tablespoons oil, remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon pepper.

Preheat broiler.

Arrange tomatoes and potatoes in 1 layer in gratin dish, alternating slices and overlapping them, and spoon any juices from tomatoes into dish. Sprinkle top with bread crumbs and broil 5 to 7 inches from heat, checking frequently after 1 minute (crumbs can brown quickly), until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**Cooks' note:**

Gratin can be assembled (but not broiled) 1 hour ahead and kept at room temperature.

Found online at

<http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/PROVENCAL-TOMATO-POTATO-GRATIN-109645>.

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**CABBAGE AND WHITE BEAN SOUP**

1 cup dried white beans such as Great Northern, navy, or cannellini (7 oz), picked over and rinsed  
1 whole clove  
1 medium onion, peeled and left whole  
2 1/2 lb smoked ham hocks  
3 qt water  
6 fresh parsley sprigs  
1 Turkish or 1/2 California bay leaf  
1 fresh thyme sprig  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
1 lb yellow-fleshed potatoes such as Yukon Gold (3 to 4 medium)  
1 lb cabbage, cored and cut into 1/2-inch pieces (6 cups)  
1/2 stick (1/4 cup) unsalted butter, softened  
12 (1/2-inch-thick) slices from a baguette



Soak beans in cold water to cover by 2 inches at room temperature at least 8 hours, or quick-soak (see cooks' note, below). Drain in a colander.

Stick clove into onion. Bring ham hocks and 3 quarts water to a boil in a wide 6- to 7-quart heavy pot, skimming off any froth, then reduce heat and simmer, covered, 1 hour. Add beans, onion, parsley, bay leaf, thyme, and garlic and simmer, uncovered, stirring

occasionally, until beans are almost tender, 40 to 50 minutes.

When beans are almost done, peel potatoes and cut into 1-inch pieces. Add potatoes and cabbage to beans, then simmer, uncovered, until vegetables are very tender, 20 to 25 minutes.

Remove ham hocks. When ham hocks are cool enough to handle, discard skin and bones, then cut meat into bite-size pieces. Stir into soup with salt and pepper to taste. Discard bay leaf and onion.

Spread butter on both sides of bread, then toast in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderate heat, turning over once, until golden, about 2 minutes total.

Serve soup with toasts.

**Cooks' notes:**

- Beans can be soaked up to 12 hours, chilled.
- To quick-soak beans: Cover beans with cold water by 2 inches in a 5- to 6-quart pot and bring to a boil, uncovered. Boil beans, uncovered, 2 minutes, then remove from heat and let stand, uncovered, 1 hour.
- Soup improves in flavor if made 1 day ahead, cooled completely, uncovered, then chilled, covered. Remove any solidified fat and reheat, thinning with water if necessary.

Found online at

<http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/CABBAGE-AND-WHITE-BEAN-SOUP-109446>.

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