



In the Share

Butternut Squash, 1 piece
Beets, 1 bag or bunch
French or Italian Beans, 1 bag
Leeks, 1 bunch
Red Potatoes, 1 bag
Carmen Red Peppers, 2 long pieces
Small Sweet Peppers, 2 pieces
Bell Pepper, 1 piece
Salad Mix, 1 bag
Choice of Herb, 1 bunch
Garlic, 1 head

The squash of the week is butternut, the simple tried and true butternut. Back when I first discovered delicata squash, I was so impressed with its sweetness and beauty that switched over as much squash ground as possible to its production. I then discovered that delicata does not always produce well and it almost never stores well. It is as delicate a squash, in both flavor and cultivation, as the name indicates. While I still enjoy a delicata for dinner, it is now the butternut that I hold most dear. This elegant squash is fairly easy to grow, it stores until spring with little effort, and it is perfect for most every squash recipe I find.

My favorite way to prepare butternut is in soup. Sauté an onion and a couple of celery stalks in butter until tender. Then add about 6 cups of vegetable stock, a Parmesan rind, and a couple of bay leaves. Bring to a boil and then simmer a bit. Add a peeled and cubed butternut and simmer until squash is tender. Remove the Parmesan rind and bay leaves and puree the soup. Finally stir in some chopped sage, salt, pepper, and a dash of nutmeg. Serve the soup topped with fresh parsley.

This is also a good week for the classic potato leek soup. See Laurel's column on the back for a recipe. The leeks are lovely as usual. And the red potatoes are better than they could have been given

(continued on the back)

Claire's Comments

Michael Pollan Comes to Madison

We live in one of the most progressive local and organic food communities in the U.S. While I will admit that my circle is a bit skewed due to my occupation and the people that I tend to interact with as a result, I cannot remember the last time I met someone (kids included) who did not have at least a basic understanding of "organic food." Likewise, those who wonder what it means to "buy local," are becoming few and far between. We take local and organic seriously here and we are lucky enough to live in a place still surrounded by farm land and inhabited by an increasing number of farmers who grow food for people, not the commodity market.

Why are we so lucky? It probably has something to do with the rich farmland available in the Madison area, our climate, and our abundant fresh water. Simply, we are in a place where people can grow food on a relatively small scale relatively easily compared to many other places in the world.

In addition to those environmental factors, we also live in a place where people have long organized around food. The Willy Street Co-op was first established as a small storefront in the 1970s selling mainly bulk goods to a handful of members. Today the local items alone that the co-op provides greatly outnumber the entire inventory of that first store; the produce department is a fertile field of purple "local" tags throughout the spring, summer, and fall; and the co-op invests time and money in educating its thousands of members on the importance of local and organic food choices. Similarly, the Madison Area CSA Coalition (MACSAC) was established in the early 1990s as a way to bring together potential CSA farmers and members interested in embarking on the unique relationship that is CSA. Today there are 35 MACSAC farms feeding thousands of CSA members and MACSAC provides education and resources to farmers and members alike through the *A to Z Cookbook*, its Partner Shares program, and events like the annual Bike the Barns bike tour of local farms. We are a healthy mix of farmland, farmers, gardeners, food organizers, and a quickly growing community of educated and conscientious food eaters.

As many of you may know, Madison is hosting Michael Pollan this week. Through his articles and books Pollan is reaching out to a wide audience of eaters and challenging us to make connections between where our food comes from and the health of our own bodies as well as our communities. Where we have had a sense of how our food system is both healthy and dangerously sick, Pollan illuminates the details for us and enables us to make informed choices. He is speaking at the Kohl Center tonight at 7 PM and again at the Food For Thought Festival (off of the capital square on Martin Luther King Ave) on Saturday at 10 AM (where I will have the honor of introducing him.) One of the reasons I have read his books with great hunger is that he reinforces the importance and value of the kind of food community that is already growing and thriving here in Madison. And he sparks ideas on how we can make it even better. I hope to see some of you at Michael Pollan's various events this weekend, where there will be good people, good ideas, and likely good food!

Leeks

Leeks are a member of the lily family and closely related to their cousins, onions, garlic, and scallions. Elephant garlic and ramps are actually varieties of leeks. Don't throw away the dark green leaves at the top—they are rich in long-chain carbohydrates which will gel when chilled and give body to stocks, soups, and stews.

To Store: wrapped lightly in plastic, unwashed, in the refrigerator. Bury in sand and keep in a cool location for long-term storage.

To Clean: Cut off dark green tops (1-2 inches of light green can remain). Split the white leek in half lengthwise and wash in running water, opening the layers to remove all the dirt.

Leeks have a mild, sweet flavor and taste delicious with lemon, butter, cheese, cream, fennel, potatoes, garlic, chicken, ham, dill, nutmeg, parsley, and chives. They can be braised, roasted, grilled, steamed, or fried.

Recipes:

- **Roasted:** Preheat oven to 300. Clean leeks. Bring 1.5 cups stock to a boil in a large skillet. Add leeks and return to a boil. Cover and cook 2 minutes. Drain, saving the stock for another use. Butter a 13x9 baking dish. Place the leeks in layers, cut sides up. Brush with more melted butter, season with salt and pepper, and roast, uncovered, for 40-60 minutes, basting occasionally. (*Joy of Cooking*) Try them in quiche, or pasta salad.
- **Fried:** Clean leeks. Slice thinly 1/8" and dry by spreading on a towel or using a salad spinner. Once dried, toss in flour, salt and pepper. Fry in small batches in a 1/2 cup of olive oil 'til browned, about 6 minutes. Drain on paper towels. Use as a garnish for soups, salads, or stews, especially SE Asian dishes (a favorite in Malaysia and Indonesia).
- **Leek and Potato Soup:** 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, 4 pounds leeks, 1 tablespoon unbleached all-purpose flour, 5 1/4 cups chicken or vegetable stock, 1 bay leaf, 1 3/4 pounds medium red potatoes (about 5), peeled and cut into 3/4-inch dice. Clean leeks and chop into 1-inch sections. (You should have about 11 cups). Heat butter in Dutch oven over medium heat; stir in leeks, cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until leeks are tender but not mushy, 15 to 20 minutes; do not brown. Sprinkle flour and cook until flour dissolves, stirring, about 2 minutes. Increase heat to high; whisking constantly, gradually add stock. Add bay leaf and potatoes; cover and bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, until potatoes are almost tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove pot from heat and let stand until potatoes are tender and flavors meld, 10 to 15 minutes. Discard bay leaf, season with salt and pepper; serve immediately. (courtesy CooksIllustrated.com)
- **Vichyssoise:** chill leek and potato soup, above. Serve with roasted beets for Vichyssoise A La Russe (courtesy Julia Child)



(continued from "In the Share")

the late blight that took down the tomatoes and continues to threaten the potatoes. While Jake and I were quite pleased with the quality of the potatoes, we were very disappointed in the quantity. It took 400 feet of plants to get just 1.75 pounds of potatoes per share. This yield is less than half of what we expected. Still our disappointment is tempered by the knowledge that the blight could have ruined our entire crop. In this case we are grateful for a few lovely potatoes where we could have had none.

Green beans are back for a quick showing. The extremely dry weather of the last six weeks has kept the productivity of this last planting low, so there is just a half-pound in your share. Both the Italian (flat and wide) and the French (round and skinny) beans are a delicious reminder of summer. I am not sure if I just miss them so much at this point that I find their flavor so exquisite or if they really are better tasting in September. Either way, they are a real treat this week.

Salad mix is also back for a quick fall salad. It has been difficult to get these greens to grow in this unusually dry and warm September, but we were finally able to take a first harvest this week. Now that the ground is saturated with the three inches of rain we got on Tuesday, I am hoping that the lettuces will rebound for a delicious and tender second harvest in the next couple of weeks.

Red peppers are starting to wane. As you can see both the quality and the quantity of this crop is declining. Still, there are a few more roasted red peppers in our future! My neighbor Audrey, who is also a CSA member, made this roasted red pepper spread for a party a few weeks ago. It was the best red pepper spread I have ever had! Audrey shared the recipe: **Pimento Cheese** – 4 or 5 red peppers, 8 oz. Neufchatel cheese, 2x2x4 chunk of two-year cheddar. Roast the peppers. (See Laurel's Farm to Table from 9/3/09 for assistance.) Chop peppers in a medium-small dice. You should have about a cup and a half. Mix all the cream cheese, half the peppers and half the cheddar in a bowl. (Audrey used a food processor, but she says it is not necessary.) After the mixture is blended and fairly smooth, add the rest of the cheddar. Mix well by hand. Then add the peppers by gently mixing well so that there are flecks of cheddar and peppers throughout. Chill for 20 minutes or so to firm up. Audrey served it with crackers and crusty bread.

Next week: Acorn or Carnival squash, Brussels sprouts (for sure this time), more leeks, carrots, and maybe even spinach.