



WEEK OF AUGUST 10TH, 2020 #33/52

### Farm Family

There are 6 brothers working here on the farm: Ramon, Agustin, Josezito, Jesus, Luis, Viktor, plus their dad “Papa Ramon” who is with us from April until October. If I remember correctly, their mother is Jose’s mother’s cousin. Jose is the farm boss. They’re all from the same city in Mexico, Jesus Maria in Jalisco. Agustin, our chicken-whisperer, and Ramon, our second tractor driver/Jose’s right hand man, are actually twins. Yes, the farm has two sets of twins! Out of our farm crew, I think the only one who isn’t from Jesus Maria is Miguel, our second chicken whisperer, oh, and his brother Rafael, who works with him on Sundays. Our lead in the pack house is Nacho, who is our former driver Manny’s brother-in-law. You can imagine there are a lot of family dynamics going on around here.

COVID has really upended all of our lives, but in addition to the real struggles the virus presents us, there are the life events that would happen anyway, some good and some bad. The last couple of weeks we, our farm family, have been dealing with a couple of those big non-COVID related life events. First the good news, Luis and his wife had a baby a few weeks ago. Initially there were some complications and the baby had to spend a couple of days in the hospital. But baby (when last I asked, there was no name yet), and mother are home and doing well.

On the other end of the good news/bad news spectrum, we have been dealt a real blow. Ramon, one of the brothers, was rushed to the hospital the same week Luis’ baby was born. His kidneys are failing. I found out last night that he will need a kidney transplant as soon as possible. His name has been added to the emergency donor list. Ramon is married and has 4 young children. You can imagine that this is weighing heavy on our minds and spirits. We are all very worried for Ramon and his family, and trying to figure out how to help. I know that feeling of real fear and dread that comes with not knowing what is going on with your beloved—praying for that slim chance for a positive outcome, realizing that there is no way to prepare yourself if you don’t get it. I wish I spoke fluent Spanish so I could reach out to Ramon’s wife and support her better. Ramon will need dialysis several times a week while he waits for a kidney. I am hoping to get a GoFundMe set up for them but I am not familiar how it works, particularly for people on Medi-Cal. If any of you has any experience that you could share with me, I would really appreciate it, please email me at [lorraine.ottens@gmail.com](mailto:lorraine.ottens@gmail.com) or text me at 530-554-3971. It is very hard to imagine the farm without Ramon’s laughter and his care.

As a side note to this, I did want to mention that if you find mistakes with your box please let us know. We are running one man short. The crew is feeling the pressures from worry, the increase in our weekly box numbers, and working while one man down. I ask for your patience, but please let us know about mistakes; I know they happen, but at least we can get you credit.

On the positive side, thank you for all those emails letting us know how much you are loving your CSA.

### End Of An Era

Last week, I said goodbye to our geese. I made the decision some time back that after this year’s egg season I would work on finding a new home for them. It wasn’t easy, they do good work in the orchard, but the fact is, Agustin already has too much work to get done in a day, and this will take one burden off his daily task list. The look of joy on his face when I told him they were going proved to me that I had made the right decision. But what to do with them? If only I knew someone with an orchard who would be the type of grower who would like to incorporate geese into their practices. Thinking this as I was walking back to the house with a box of Guru Ram Das Valencia



oranges there was that flash of aha! So I texted Joanna and she and Abbie came out last week to load them up into their trailer. Abbie’s mom came along to help us. After 2 1/2 hours we finally got them corralled and called it quits. Joanna came back out first thing the next morning and she and I watched Agustin and Miguel get them rounded up and into the trailer in about 10 minutes. It was an amazing sight to behold; Agustin is a true animal whisperer. I have learned so much just watching him. I said goodbye to those loud creatures, was happy I could relieve Agustin of some daily chores, and even happier knowing they are going to a good home.

# RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

Some surprises in this week's box: Lemon Cucumbers. And if you have the family box, we have a little treat for you: a couple of ears of corn. I ordered this corn seed actually for our guys, and not for the boxes. But it is producing enough to put a couple of ears in the large box. Jose and I were both kind of surprised by that. I have enjoyed a couple of cobs and they were yummy and looked pretty decent. PLEASE keep in mind, this is completely unsprayed corn (yes, they spray organic corn too) and there is no way getting around bugs. That is why we don't grow corn anymore for the boxes, too many folks couldn't handle the worms. For me, I cut that spot out and enjoy my cob.

Both boxes will have a lemon cucumber, these too were a bit of a surprise. We have grown them in the past, and I know in the more recent years Nigel did not have great success with them, so he gave up. But this year they are growing very well, we just don't have quite enough to put lots of them into each box. But we don't want them to go to waste so we decided to go ahead and put one or two in each box. Chop those babies up with some of the cherry tomatoes and make yourself a delicious Schopska Salad!

## Schopska Salad

Recipe from [Mein Kleiner Foodblog](#) (translated from German)

5 oz Tomato  
5 oz Cucumber  
3 oz Bell or Gypsy Pepper  
1.5 oz Red Onion, when I visited Bulgaria we used regular onion  
3 TB Olive Oil  
1 1/2 TB White Wine Vinegar  
3 TB minced Parsley  
Salt  
Pepper  
1.5 oz Feta

Wash the tomatoes, cucumber and peppers, then cut into bite sized cubes. Mince the onion. Put all the veg into a bowl and toss with olive oil, white wine vinegar, salt and pepper. Grate the feta over your salad and let sit 10 to 20 minutes, enjoy.

## Zucchini and Potato Pancakes

Recipe from [A Taste of Home](#)

My mom was visiting last week and I thought it would be fun to make this twist on one of my favorite dishes from childhood. They were spectacularly

delicious! Lighter than potato pancakes, and, as Nigel would say, "very morish". I did alter the recipe a bit, I balanced the potato and squash, and I added 1/3 cup Parmesan.

Enjoy this with a Schopska salad and you will have a fantastic vegetarian meal.

## This Week's Box List

\*Onions  
\*Heirloom Tomatoes  
\*Cherry Tomatoes  
Corn  
\*Potatoes  
\*Basil  
\*Nectarines  
Bell Peppers  
Chard  
\*Shishito or Padron Peppers  
Zucchini  
\*Lemon Cucumber

\* = Items in Box for 2

2 cups shredded Zucchini  
2 cup shredded peeled Potato  
1/2 cup Bread Crumbs  
3 TB All-purpose Flour  
1/2 tsp Baking Soda  
1 tsp Salt  
1/4 tsp Pepper  
3 Eggs, lightly beaten  
1 small Onion, grated  
2 Garlic cloves, grated  
4 TB good Frying Oil, I'm sure I used more

In a sieve or colander, drain the zucchini and potato, squeezing to remove excess liquid. Pat dry; set aside. In a large bowl, combine the bread crumbs, flour, baking soda, salt and pepper. Stir in eggs until blended. Add the onion, garlic and zucchini mixture; toss to coat. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Drop batter by 1/4 cupfuls into oil. Fry in batches until golden brown on both sides, using remaining oil as needed. Drain on paper towels.

## Tomato Sandwich with Basil Mayo

Recipe found on FoodNetwork by [Ina Garten](#)

I have a craving for this sandwich but I want it made with some really well-aged cheddar and on super flavorful bread. I am thinking of Vital Vittles' "Real Bread". Think I will have to make a trip to Davis to get some aged cheddar and good bread!

1 cup good Mayonnaise  
10 to 15 Basil leaves, chopped  
1 tsp Salt  
1/4 tsp freshly ground Black Pepper  
1 tsp freshly squeezed Lemon juice  
1 TB good Olive Oil  
1 tsp minced Garlic  
2 slices Country Loaf Bread  
Tomato, sliced

Whisk together the mayonnaise, basil, salt, pepper, lemon juice, olive oil and garlic. Spread the mayonnaise mixture on the top of 2 slices of bread. Place the sliced tomato on top of one bread slice. Place the remaining slice of bread, mayonnaise side down, on top of the tomato. Cut the sandwich in half and serve.