



WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 7, 2020 #37/52

How Did We Get Here

I read in the news this morning one of the new fires that started this weekend, was caused when someone at a gender reveal party lit some kind of a “smoke-generating pyrotechnic device”. We are in the middle of fire season in California, who thought that was a good idea? Raging fires have dominated the news for weeks now. How did we become such self-absorbed people that we cannot see the bigger picture outside of our personal reality that we don’t stop to think, hey maybe lighting this thing might cause a fire? I truly feel terrible for the family, as I can only imagine the guilt they must be experiencing right now. And I am not blaming them, I blame *us*. When did we stop thinking? What happened to common sense? How did our celebrations and Instagram photos become so important that we don’t even realize the

damage our actions might cause? Like the people who fall off cliffs because they are trying to get a better selfie. I just don’t understand how we got here. And believe me, I am not exempt from this. Before it heated up this morning, I



went for a walk around the farm. The air felt cool, and didn’t smell smokey at all. So I stupidly went out without a mask and now I am paying for it. My lungs are a heavy weight in my chest and they hurt. It made me realize how easily we can be lulled back into complacency. It didn’t smell like smoke and it was cool, I don’t need a mask, everything is ok, right? But it isn’t. I took this photo and it shows a row out in the orchard. Normally you would see the Berryessa hills in the background, today, you can’t even see an outline of them. It’s supposed to be windy here tomorrow, which could clear the air OR it could fan the flames. I wonder, will the fire season dominate our summers from now on? How long can we live this way? Or farm this way? I am literally watching the sky get darker as I type. It worries me, in a seriously big way. Not only is this smoke-filled air bad for the health of all the farmworkers, or anyone who has to work outside, at some point it becomes hard on the crops. Some ash is beneficial, containing many of the nutrients that plants need. But give them too much, you end up

with the same result as over-fertilizing. The farm is usually a place of peace and healing, but it is hard to feel that when simply going outside is so unhealthy.

And Now, Things That Make Me Happy

Enough with the horridness of fire season. As I continued on my walk this morning, I walked past a couple of crates of lemon cucumbers which the guys had already harvested. Their sunny yellow color put a smile on my face and I couldn’t help but feel a little refreshed just thinking about their crunchy goodness. From there, I worked my way



down to the strawberries, where my friend Lindsey was picking berries to make jam for the Barn and Pantry’s new cafe in town. We chatted for a while, eating berries as we spoke, reflecting on how amazing it is to come out to the field and eat warm berries. Talking about the importance of teaching people the beauty of eating locally and all the benefits that come with it. Heading back to the house, I passed Jose who was starting to harvest sweet potatoes for this week’s boxes. Not far from him, Roberto was cultivating and I could smell the earth. It was remarkable because it immediately struck me that I was not smelling smoke, but rather the scent of life-giving humus in freshly dug soil. I enjoyed every moment of it, knowing that no matter how many questions I have about this world and this life I live, there is one thing I know deep to my core, this land is a truly magical place, and I am one very lucky person to be a part of it.



RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

Tomatillos are here! I have been waiting such a long time for them to be ready. Like tomatoes, and summertime sauce making, it is well worth roasting then freezing your tomatillos, if you don't have a use for them, to enjoy later in the year. Liz, who helps us with our new members, makes the best chicken enchiladas with roasted tomatillo sauce, just thinking about them makes my mouth water!

Grilled Swordfish With Tomatillo Sauce. I will get her recipe and share it with you maybe next week. In the meantime, I am scrambling to get the recipes done because I put it off until the last minute and it is early Tuesday morning, so I have to hustle. The wind is blowing hard out there and the sky is dark again from smoke and dust, and all I want to do is hide under the covers! So I have decided a fancy dinner was appropriate for our first of the season tomatillos.

Grilled Swordfish with Tomatillo Sauce

Moira Hodgson [NYT Cooking](#)

Serves 4

2 Swordfish Steaks about 1-inch thick (about 1 1/2 to 2 pounds)

2 TB Olive Oil

FOR THE SAUCE:

3 cloves Garlic, unpeeled

1 lb Tomatillos

2 Jalapeno chilies, seeded and sliced

1 to 2 tsp Sugar (or to taste)

1/3 cup dry White Wine

1 TB White-Wne Vinegar

2 TB Unsalted Butter

Coarse Salt and freshly ground Pepper to taste

1/3 cup fresh Coriander leaves

Coriander sprigs to garnish

Cut the swordfish steaks in half. Wipe them dry with paper towels and coat them on both sides with the olive oil. Set aside. Make the sauce. Boil the garlic for 10 minutes. Peel the cloves, mash them and set aside. Chop the tomatillos coarsely and put them in a saucepan with the chilies, sugar, wine and vinegar. Cook until soft, stirring frequently. Add the garlic. Taste to see if more sugar or vinegar is needed and season with salt and pepper. Add the butter to thicken the sauce. Pour the sauce into a food processor with the garlic cloves and add the coriander leaves. Puree, taste and correct seasoning. Set aside. Preheat broiler or coals. Broil the fish steaks six inches from the heat for about five minutes on each side or until cooked. Meanwhile, reheat the sauce. To serve, pour some sauce on each of four individual plates. Put the steaks on top and sprinkle with coriander leaves.

Mediterranean Baked Sweet Potato

Recipe from [minimalistbaker.com](#)

This recipes sounds so yummy and what a fun way to use sweet potatoes AND cherry tomatoes, and if you have them at home, Rancho Gordo garbanzos!

1 1/3 lb Sweet Potatoes

1 15-ounce can Chickpeas, rinsed and drained, or cook your own

1/2 Tbsp Olive Oil

1/2 tsp each Cumin, Coriander,

Cinnamon, smoked or regular

Paprika

1 pinch Sea Salt or Lemon juice, optional

GARLIC HERB SAUCE

1/4 cup Hummus OR Tahini

1 TB Lemon juice

3/4 - 1 tsp dried Dill (or sub 2-3 tsp fresh per 3/4-1 tsp dried)

3 cloves Garlic, minced (3 cloves yield ~1 1/2 Tbsp or 9 g)

Water or unsweetened Almond milk, to thin the sauce

Sea Salt to taste (optional // I didn't need any)

Top With:

1/4 cup diced Cherry Tomatoes

1/4 cup chopped Parsley OR use

your Garlic Chives

2 Tbsp Lemon Juice

Chili Garlic Sauce, optional

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (204 C) and line a large baking sheet with foil. Rinse and scrub potatoes and cut in half length wise. This will speed cooking time. Otherwise leave whole and bake longer (approximately double the time (45 min - 1 hour). Toss rinsed and drained chickpeas with olive oil and spices and place on a foil-lined baking sheet. Rub the sweet potatoes with a bit of olive oil and place face down on the same baking sheet (or another baking sheet depending on size). While the sweet potatoes and chickpeas are roasting, prepare your sauce by adding all ingredients to a mixing bowl and whisking to combine, only adding enough water or almond milk to thin so it's pourable. Taste and adjust seasonings as needed. Add more garlic for more zing, salt for savoriness, lemon juice for freshness, and dill for a more intense herb flavor. I found mine didn't need anything else. NOTE: If you don't have hummus, tahini will make a great base substitution for the sauce - just adjust the seasonings a bit. Prepare the parsley-tomato topping by tossing tomato and parsley with lemon juice and setting aside to marinate. Once sweet potatoes are fork tender and the chickpeas are golden brown - roughly 25 minutes - remove from oven. For serving, flip potatoes flesh-side up and smash down the insides a little bit. Then top with chickpeas, garlic herb sauce, parsley-tomato salad, and chili garlic sauce (optional). Serve immediately.

This Week's Box List

*Padron or Mixed Sweet Peppers

*Tomatoes, Cherry or Mixed

*Tomatillos

*Sweet Potatoes

Zucchini or Cucumbers

*Potatoes

*Onions

Garlic Chives

Rosemary

Eggplant or Melon

Chard or Basil

*Valencia Oranges

* = Items in Box for 2