



WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 28, 2020 #40/52

Chicken Processing

In last week's email I told you I made the decision to not take our chickens to Roli Roti for chicken stock. First, I have to say THANK YOU to Gary Erwin, who really saved the day. We do not currently have a vehicle with towing capability. Since we can't put crates of live birds into the vans, we really have to have a vehicle to tow the trailer. Once the birds are done we can't transport cases of processed chicken in the back of a pickup, and even if we could, it is not big enough. This is a big problem for us, but I had a solution; rent a truck with a tow hitch and have Cory take the birds to Sacramento for processing. I would meet him with the van to put the processed birds in

and he would drive them to Roli Roti in Oakland for stock cooking. I would come back with the truck and the empty crates. A little crazy, but we could make it work. First step, call to reserve a truck. **No trucks available.** Ok, there has to be someone who will let me borrow a truck, so move on to the second step - make the



appointment with the processor in Sacramento. Called New American only to find out they closed their Sacramento plant the week before! Now they only process at their plant in Stockton. Ok, time to look at the plan again. If I could have rented a truck maybe we could have made it work, but that wasn't an option. I reached out to Gary and he offered to drive me and the girls to Stockton but he would have to drive because of insurance. Did it really make sense to drive the van to Stockton also? And then drive to Oakland? I realized that I was pushing the bar way too far. Then I remembered the Stockton facility had the ability to cryovac. Head spin, pivot, more phone calls. How much is it to bag the birds? How much freezer space would they need? How many would fit into coolers in the back of the truck? Because, remember, very dirty, yucky crates will be in the trailer, so we only have limited space to put coolers. I decided to send only 110 birds down, instead of the 250 I was planning on processing. I learned years ago, when doing something for the first time, don't go big, give yourself the chance to figure out where your problems are. I had a plan in place, granted that meant I had to let go of having finished chicken stock. But, it just didn't make sense, and I am one who believes if you have to push too hard to make something happen there is a reason why, and you should stop. Gary met me on the farm at 4 am, we hitched up the trailer with the girls, packed and tied down many coolers and left the farm just before 4:30. Gary and I spent hours at a Denny's in Stockton, cause where else do you go at 6:00 in the morning in Stockton? We made it back to the farm



before noon, unloaded the trailer and got the girls into two freezers at our warehouse in town. I haven't cooked one up yet, but I will this week. I am sure it will make the best stock. And now you know why we have stock birds rather than stock jars. My life is always an adventure, but that keeps it exciting.

Planting, Planting, Planting

This time of year it is a rush to get the ground prepared, cultivated, beds made and ready for planting. The last several weeks we have had 10's of thousands of plants come in. In these photos you can see a planting of broccoli, cauliflower, romanesco, fennel and lettuce. I am realizing our window for planting is being affected by our longer, hotter and drier Indian Summers. As I sit here writing this newsletter I am once again watching the sun disappear behind smoke clouds. What will this week bring? With all this uncertainty, it is somewhat comforting knowing that we at least have a good start on the food we will be enjoying over the next couple of months. On my walk last week I was happy to see that the Dragoon Romaine lettuce is looking quite good. It came in pretty big with some yellowed leaves on the outside. The fennel is looking straight and happy too. As much as I am still yearning for that ridiculous glut of tomatoes, I have to face the fact that this summers bounty is kind of a lost cause. I will cherish every tomato I eat, while looking forward to the fall crops. In addition to transplants, Roberto has been busy



sowing radish, turnips, carrots and beet seeds. We are planting a lot more beet this year, and I hope we will be able to include it in the box more this year, than years past. I love beetroot. Beetroot hummus is out of this world delicious. On the farm, there is always so much to look forward to.

RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

A note about the hot peppers: Believe me when I tell you, making your own hot sauce out of these peppers is so worth the little bit of time it takes. You will make the best hot sauce you have ever tasted! Last year I used [this recipe](#), I did the non-fermented version. I am hoping to try the fermented version this year. Embrace your spicy side and go for it!

Savory Chard & Raisin Pie

Recipe from [La Vie Rustic](#) by Georgeanne Brennan

Georgeanne and her husband Jim are very dear friends of mine. It makes me so happy to share a recipe from one of her many cookbooks.

5 large or 10 medium Chard Leaves
1 slice thick-cut Bacon
1 lb bulk Pork Sausage
1/2 Yellow Onion, finely chopped
1 clove Garlic, minced
1 TB Raisins, soaked in 1 cup Water
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan Cheese
3 TB Pine Nuts
1 Large Whole Egg, plus 1 large Egg Yolk
1/4-1/2 tsp Sea Salt
1/4 tsp freshly ground Black Pepper
A double Crust Pastry Dough

Cut stems and ribs out of chard leaves, and save for another dish. Stack several chard leaves on top of one another, roll up tightly, and slice thinly into chiffonade. Pour 2 cups water into a soup pot or large casserole, add the chard and bacon and cover. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce the heat to medium and cook until the chard is tender and wilts to about half of its original volume, about 15 minutes. Drain the chard, discard the bacon and set the chard aside to cool. When it is cool enough to handle, squeeze out the excess liquid with your hands. Chop the chard, squeeze again, and set aside. Heat a frying pan over medium-high heat and add the sausage, breaking it up into smallish pieces with a spoon or spatula. Sauté the sausage, stirring often, until opaque but not browned, about 8 minutes. With a slotted spoon, transfer to a paper towel-lined plate to drain. In the same frying pan, sauté the onion and garlic in the sausage drippings over medium heat until soft and translucent, about 2 minutes. Transfer to the plate with the sausage. Drain the raisins. In a large bowl, stir together the chard, sausage, onion mixture, Parmesan cheese, pine nuts, raisins, whole egg, salt, and pepper. Set aside. On a floured work surface, roll out half of the pastry dough into an 11" circle. Drape it over a 9" pie pan and gently press the pastry into the pan, letting the edges hang over the sides. Do not trim the overhang; it will be trimmed later. Line the pastry with aluminum foil and add pie weights or dried beans. Bake until the exposed edges begin to turn pale bisque, 7-8 minutes. Remove the foil and weights. Prick the bottom of the pastry with a fork and bake until the crust turns a pale bisque, 3-4 minutes. If it puffs prick the puff with a fork to deflate it. Let the crust cool

slightly, about 5 minutes. Gently fill the pastry shell with the chard mixture, spreading it evenly. Roll out the remaining pastry dough into a 10" circle. With a pastry brush, brush water around the rim of the lower pastry shell, then gently lay the second pastry round over the top, letting the edges hang over the sides. Press the edges of the pastry together, sealing them. Don't worry if some of the lower pieces break off; they will eventually be trimmed.

Once the top is secure, cut out a circle 1/2" in diameter in the middle to allow steam to escape. Trim the edge of the top and bottom crust, leaving a 1/2" overhang, then fold the overhang under to create an attractive edge. In a small bowl, lightly beat together the egg yolk and 1 TB water. With a pastry brush, brush the top of the pie with the egg wash. Place the pie pan on a rimmed baking sheet and bake until the crust is golden and the sides begin to pull away slightly from the sides of the pan, about 25

minutes. Remove from the oven and let stand for at least 30 minutes. Cut into wedges and serve warm or at room temp.

Spicy Lentil and Sweet Potato Stew With Chipotles

Recipe from [NYT Cooking](#) by Martha Rose Shulman

1 TB Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1 medium Onion, chopped
2 Garlic cloves, minced
Salt to taste
2 tsp Cumin seeds, lightly toasted and ground
2 medium carrots, diced
1 1/2 cups Brown or Green lentils, rinsed
6 cups water
2 medium-size Sweet Potatoes - 1 to 1 1/4 pounds, peeled and cut in large dice
1 to 2 Chipotles in Adobo, seeded and chopped (to taste)
2 TB Tomato paste
1 Bay leaf
1/4 cup chopped fresh Cilantro or Parsley (to taste)
Lime wedges for serving

Heat the olive oil over medium heat in a large, heavy soup pot or Dutch oven and add the onion. Cook, stirring often, until it softens, about 5 minutes, and add the garlic and a generous pinch of salt. Cook, stirring, until the garlic smells fragrant, about 30 seconds, and add the ground cumin seeds and carrots. Stir together for a minute, then add the lentils, water, sweet potatoes, chipotles, tomato paste, salt to taste and the bay leaf. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, cover and simmer 40 to 45 minutes, until the lentils and sweet potatoes are tender and the broth fragrant. Taste and adjust seasoning. Stir in the cilantro or parsley, simmer for another minute, and serve, passing lime wedges so diners can season their lentils with a squeeze of lime juice if desired.

This Week's Box List

Garlic Chives
Tomatillos or Tomatoes
*Chard
*Sweet Potatoes
*Potatoes
*Onions
*Basil
Leeks
Eggplant
Hot Peppers
*Winter Squash
*Raisins from Capay Valley

* = Items in Box for 2