



WEEK OF JUNE 28ST, 2021 #26/52

A Farming Family

We often talk about family farms, and I very much consider Eatwell to be one, but there is a family I don't often write about, our crew. I choose to keep them out of the spotlight mostly to respect their privacy, but this past weekend they all came together to celebrate Jose's wife Lupita's birthday, it was such a fun party, I wanted to share that with you. Jose is the farmer that keeps this place running. His wife Lupe is so kind and generous, she brings me delicious food all the time. She makes some of the best spicy Camerones ever! And their 3 daughters have grown up on the farm. Jose's older brother Martin and his family came out for the big bash. Martin was the foreman years ago when Jose was still a teenager. He now lives in Missouri where they own and run 5 restaurants. They drove out in their giant trucks bringing loads of margarita mixes. Jose and Martin are cousins to the Camerena family. The Camerena family is made up of the 6 brothers, plus their father, mother and one of their wives, who all work here. It is a lot of fun seeing them all gathered together. The little girls were dressed up in their fancy party dresses, and the boys in their special jeans and boots. Agustin and Victor manned the grill, cooking up delicious tacos all night, while Martin and his sons manned the bar. This was Lupe's first birthday party, ever. She was clearly thrilled to have everyone here.



My time with the crew is always a little challenging because of the language barrier. Their English is pretty limited and my Spanish even more so, but I am having fun learning and trying. As a person who grew up in a house where two languages were always spoken I am comfortable being in a situation like this, even if I don't understand much of what is being said. I find if I sit back and listen with my eyes as much as my ears I can feel a part of it all. Nigel would have been thrilled to hang out with all of the "guys". He loved them dearly and had great respect for the hard work they do to grow the food this farm produces.

Beau was a big hit at the party, all the kids went bonkers over him. Even the ones who were afraid at first, eventually warmed up to him. He loved it. Agustin's son was a joy to watch with Beau. I often refer to Agustin as the ultimate animal whisperer because he is incredible with every animal I have ever

seen him work with; chickens, geese, cows, bull calves and horses. It is clear his son is following in his father's footsteps. Having the puppy with me made it easy to get to know the kids a little better. Most of them tend to be really shy around me, but puppies make such great



ice breakers. Watching Papa Ramon and Mama Lupe playing with their very young grandsons was also a treat (the Camerena parents). Papa Ramon works seasonally for us, hoeing weeds most of the day, and he often has such a serious look on his face; so nice to see a different side. Mama Lupe works in the pack house. During the week, I get glimpses of the crew's family life and fun times, but seldom do I get to be a part of it all. Celebrating a Mexican style birthday was a new experience for me, I was surprised when they sang Happy Birthday in English. I am grateful I got to enjoy this celebration with them last night, feeling comfortable enough to muddle through with my "google" Spanish, and so happy Lupe got her big Birthday Bash on the farm!

Distilling

Yep, another story about lavender. Now that we have our bunches hanging in the drying room, it is time to start the distillation process. Last Monday I brought the first load to Wally's in Sonoma. Wally has been distilling for us for years and is kind of the reason I met Nigel, but that's another story. We tried something a little different this time. Three bins were harvested over the weekend for hanging but we didn't get to them so we kept them in the cooler over the weekend and I decided to distill it and see how it goes. Normally we harvest first thing in the morning, load up the van and off I go. Wally typically distills the lavender right away, sometimes he holds off until the next day. Distilling lavender that has been in the cooler for two days was an experiment, but I didn't want it to go waste, so we gave it a try. I haven't picked it up yet, but Wally says it has a beautiful, rounded scent and he was really pleased with how it turned out. From those 3 bins (600+ lbs of lavender) we got 110 gallons of hydrosol, and over 160 oz of essential oil. 100 gallons are already sold, hallelujah, and I will deliver that today right after I pick it up from Wally. This is just round one of distillation, I might do one more run of Grosso, followed by one or two runs of Lavender "Super" and a run of Lemon Verbena and Rose Geranium.

RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM ELISE

Zucchini, Garlic, and Turnip Soup

Recipe from *Spark People*

I was in the city on Saturday night and was reminded how cool the evenings get in the Bay Area— I like this recipe for a light but warming summer night soup. Serves 4

1 tbsp olive oil
1 small onion, sliced
1-2 cloves of **garlic** (more if you love it)
4 medium **zucchini**, sliced
1 **turnip**, diced
4 c of vegetable broth
1 tsp ground ginger
Pepper to taste

Cook garlic & onions in olive oil on medium-low heat until the onion is soft and translucent. Keep the heat low enough that garlic doesn't brown. When onions are soft, add zucchini and turnip and cook until soft. Add the broth and bring to a simmer. Simmer at a low to medium heat for about 20-30 minutes. Let cool slightly, then blend with an immersion blender until creamy, or transfer small amounts at a time to a standing blender to puree. Be very careful if you use the latter; only fill blender half full with each batch, and hold the lid down tightly with a towel. Taste and season with ginger, salt and pepper. Like most soups, this is significantly better after a night in the refrigerator to let the flavors meld. Serve with a good crusty bread.

Soba Noodles & Bok Choy in Sesame-Ginger Dressing

Recipe adapted from *Dishing Up the Dirt*

9oz soba noodles
2 tbsp grapeseed oil
2-3 cloves of **garlic**, minced
1 bu scallions (can absolutely substitute with spring onions leftover from last week)
1 head/bunch **bok choy**, coarsely chopped (throw in some chard if you want to go heavy on the greens)
2 tsp rice vinegar
4 tsp tamari or soy sauce
1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
2 tsp honey
1 tsp fresh grated ginger
2 tsp toasted sesame oil
4 tbsp lightly toasted sesame seeds
1 c tightly packed **parsley**, coarsely chopped
1 fried egg per serving (optional)

Cook soba noodles in boiling water according to package directions. Drain and set aside. Heat oil in a large frying pan. Add garlic and scallions/onions and sauce over medium-high heat until they begin to soften. Add bok choy and continue to sauté over medium heat, tossing occasionally until bok choy is tender (6-8 min). Fry 1 egg per serving while the veggies cook. In large bowl, whisk together the rice vinegar, tamari, crushed red pepper flakes, honey, ginger, and sesame oil. Add the noodles to the bowl and toss to coat. Stir in cooked veggies, toasted sesame seeds and parsley. Divide among plates and top each with a fried egg.

Feeling pretty juiced over here about seeing our summer nightshades in the box for the first time! I'll try to contain my excitement out of empathy for those of you who won't see some of them quite yet. The boxes this week are a bit hodgepodge as these warm-weather big hitters are just making a soft entrance and we don't quite have enough of them for every box yet. Also, we were supposed to have some cucumbers for the box this week but Jose came in to the office today with news that the cursed ground squirrels destroyed those babies over the weekend.. I am hopeful that some of our cukes will make it through this season so we all can have a taste—not just the squirrels.

This Week's Box List

*Potatoes
*Parsley
*Garlic
*Basil
Chard
Red Kale
Collards
*Turnips
*Bok Choy
*Nectarines

Zucchini or Savoy Cabbage
Strawberries or Tomatoes

* = Items in Box for 2

Colcannon (Irish-Style Mashed Potatoes)

Recipe adapted from *Simply Recipes*

2-2.5 lbs **potatoes**, peeled and cut into large chunks
5 to 6 tbsp butter (and more for serving)
3 lightly packed cups chopped **kale**, **cabbage**, and/or **chard**
3 green onions, minced (could use spring onion tops from last week, or sub **parsley**)

1 c milk or cream

Put potatoes in a medium pot and cover with cold water by at least an inch. Add 2 tbsp of salt, bring to boil and continue boiling until potatoes are tender, 15-20 min. Drain. Return pot to the stove and set over medium-high heat. Melt the butter in the pot and once it's hot, add all chopped greens. Cook for 3-4 mins or until they're wilted and have given off some water. Add green onions/tops/parsley and cook 1 minute more. Pour in milk or cream, mix well, and add potatoes. Reduce heat to medium. Use fork or potato masher to mash potatoes, mixing them up in the greens. Add salt to taste and serve hot, with a knob of butter in the center.

Turnip Hash with Basil Vinaigrette

Recipe from *Feed Me Phoebe*

Basil Vinaigrette:

1 clove garlic
1 c loosely packed basil
1 tsp dijon mustard
Juice of lemon to taste
1 tsp honey
1/3 c olive oil
1/4 tsp salt

Combine all ingredients in food processor and puree. Will keep in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

Turnip Hash:

2 tbsp olive oil
1 lb turnips, finely diced
1 lb potatoes, finely diced
1 onion, finely diced
1 tsp paprika
1/4 c basil vinaigrette
Coarsely chopped basil leaves for garnish

In large cast iron skillet, heat oil over high flame. Carefully add turnips and potatoes to pan. Stir occasionally until tender and dark browned on all sides (approx 30 min). Add onions, season with paprika and salt. Turn the heat down to medium-low and sauté until translucent. To serve, spoon the hash onto plates and drizzle with vinaigrette, top with basil leaves.

Additional Recipe Inspo:

Strawberry & Kale Smoothie
Nectarine, Cucumber, Basil & Goat Cheese Salad
Bok Choy & Tomatoes with Ginger
Kale & Tomato Pasta with Garlic & Thyme