



WEEK OF JULY 12TH, 2021 #28/52

The Farmhouse

The home Nigel and I designed and built is an aspect of the farm I have never written about. But as I sit here, quite comfortable throughout this extremely hot weekend, I am so appreciative of the choices we made. Certainly not a normal house, the shape alone brings interesting challenges; many of our walls are curved and concrete so hanging cupboards can only happen on the flat interior walls. My appreciation this weekend comes from the fact that this house is earth covered. All those many tons of soil blanketing the building keeps it fairly temp-stable. The way it works is the soil slowly heats up during the summer months so you go into winter covered in warmth, then slowly it cools back down (if we don't have a hot winter) to keep us cool through most of the summer months. There is no air conditioner in this house, but I do work to manage air flow, getting up early to open our big doors, making sure floor fans are placed in the best spots to move warm air out and cool air in. This style of house is also essentially fire proof, our little cupola on top would burn but the soil over the concrete would protect it and in theory a fire should just role right over us. Of course it is far from perfect; concrete is porous, and water seeps in when it rains hard. But at the moment it is "Hotter than Hades" and I am appreciating this place very much.

Besides the building style choice, we designed the house to be a space to host members and events. This year I made the decision to move the lavender harvest work to the front of the house, rather than out in the garden. The prediction of 108 degrees pushed me to find the best way to keep folks safe and comfortable, and having them working on long, umbrella covered, tables with very easy access to the house was the best solution. I was so happy with the set up I am going to do the tomato saucing out there too. Since the groups will be small if we really need to we can move a lot of the work into the house and



keep the cooking outside. There is a lot of room in my house that is essentially a kitchen with a bit of living space around it, and I am so happy to be putting the house back to work. Of course, it works everyday, as the office is in the house and one bedroom was converted to storage for all of the pantry items we offer, but my dreams were all about having people in and around the kitchen, cooking together, eating together, sharing together. I look forward to hosting folks for small saucing events. If you are interested in scheduling one please shoot me a text 530-554-3971 or email me at lorraine.ottens@gmail.com

And as long as I am talking about Tomato Saucing...

We are doing it very differently this year. Because I do not want to have any large events, we will do it up in front of the house as I mentioned. The other big change is, we are not selling tickets but will require that everyone purchase their tomatoes in advance. This will allow the crew to actually harvest the day before and have them ready for you first thing. It also means we won't be over picking and guessing how many tomatoes to pick. I am really hoping we won't have the smoke issues like last year and the year before and we will be able to host several weekends of saucing. Tomatoes are starting to come in, but in limited quantities. The Marzanos are not ready yet, and are blooming slowly. So glad it is cooling a bit this week because none of the plants like it when the temps are well over 100, perhaps those great saucing tomatoes will kick it into gear!



RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM ELISE

Eggplant, Squash, and Tomato Hash with Baked Egg

Recipe adapted from [Serious Eats](#)

1-2 **eggplants** (1 very large one should do), sliced in half and cut into 1/2" discs
1/2 c olive oil
S&P to taste
2 medium **zucchini**/**summer squashes**, sliced in half and cut into 1/4" discs
2-4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1-2 **tomatoes**, cut into chunks
4 eggs
2 tbsp sliced **chives**
Hot sauce or chili paste for serving

Cook Eggplant in Oven: Adjust oven rack to center position

and preheat oven to 375°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with a double layer of paper towels. Spread eggplant slices over towels in a single layer and top with a second layer of paper towels. Top with a second rimmed baking sheet. Bake until eggplant slices are easily compressed, about 30 minutes. Remove from oven and press down on top tray to compress slices. Let cool, then transfer eggplant to a large plate and continue with step 3. Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and increase heat to 400°F. Heat 1/4 cup of olive oil in a large non-stick or cast iron skillet over high heat until shimmering. Add eggplant, season to taste with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring and tossing occasionally, until well browned, about 3 minutes. Return to large plate. Add additional 2 tablespoons of oil to skillet and heat until shimmering. Add squash and zucchini slices, season to taste with salt and pepper, and cook, tossing occasionally, until well browned, about 5 minutes. Add remaining 2 tablespoons oil to skillet and heat until shimmering. Add onions, season to taste with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring, until onions are softened and just beginning to brown, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add tomatoes and cook, stirring, until they soften, about 5 minutes. Return eggplant, zucchini, and squash to skillet. To complete, divide mixture between four individual oven-safe serving dishes. Create a well in the center of each one and break an egg into it. Bake until egg is barely set but yolk is still soft, about 6 minutes. Alternatively, leave mixture in large skillet, create four wells, break an egg into each, and bake until eggs are barely set but yolks are still soft, about 6 minutes. Season eggs with s & p and sprinkle with chives. Serve immediately with hot sauce or chili paste.

Baked Cheesy Zucchini Bites

Recipe adapted from [Mel's Kitchen Cafe](#)

1 1/2 c packed shredded **zucchini** or **summer squash**
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1/4 to 1/2 c shredded cheddar or monterey jack ([Spring Hill](#) makes both!)
1/4 c panko or regular bread crumbs
1-2 tsp fresh **basil**
1-2 garlic cloves, diced finely
S&P to taste
*While you're at it, throw some diced **chives** in there—can't hurt!*

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper and lightly coat with cooking spray or lightly grease an unlined baking sheet. Place the shredded zucchini in a clean kitchen towel and wring out all the excess water over the sink until the zucchini is really dry. You should have a little over 1 cup after squeezing out the water (if you have a scale, you'll want about 6 ounces of zucchini that's been squeezed dry). Place the zucchini and remaining ingredients in a medium bowl and mix until combined. Drop the mixture by tablespoonfuls on the prepared baking sheet and lightly press the mounds with your hands to flatten slightly. Bake for 16-20 minutes until the edges are golden.

Stone Fruit and Tomato Salad with Burrata and Hot Sauce

Recipe adapted from [Epicurious](#)

2 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp mild hot sauce
2 tsp rice vinegar
2 tsp honey (try [Pleasants Valley's honey](#) from our webstore if you haven't!)
3 ripe **nectarines** or **plums**, cut into wedges
1 lb **tomatoes**, sliced
1 ball burrata or fresh mozzarella, torn into large pieces
Tarragon sprigs (eh, you could use torn parsley or basil)
Flaky sea salt for serving

Whisk oil, hot sauce, vinegar, and honey in a small bowl until honey is dissolved; season with kosher salt. Toss stone fruit, tomatoes, and half of dressing in a medium bowl; let sit 5 minutes. Transfer fruit salad to a platter.

Top with burrata and drizzle with remaining dressing. Scatter a few torn tarragon sprigs over and season with sea salt.

Potato-Stuffed Roasted Bell Peppers

Recipe from [All That's Jas](#)

4 medium **bell peppers**
3 medium **potatoes**, grated
1/4 c white rice ([Chico's](#) is great)
2 tbsp oil
2 **spring onions**, chopped
1 c **tomatoes**, chopped into 1/4" chunks
S&P to taste
2 tbsp fresh **parsley**, chopped
Sour cream, optional

Cut a thin slice from the stem end of each of 4 bell peppers to remove the top. Remove seeds and membranes; rinse peppers and set aside. Peel and grate 3 medium potatoes on the big holes of a cheese grater. Rinse them until water runs clear. Boil 1/4 cup rice in 1/2 cup water for 5 minutes; drain. In a large cast-iron skillet or non-stick pan, heat the 2 tablespoons of oil over medium heat. Add chopped onion and sauté until translucent. Add 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes and sauté for 2 more minutes. Stir in grated potatoes and parboiled rice; season with salt or Vegeta and pepper. Cook, occasionally stirring, until vegetables are softened but not cooked through, about 3-5 minutes. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Fill each pepper with potato mixture. Place stuffed peppers in a greased baking dish and cover tightly with aluminum foil. Bake for 15 minutes, then remove the foil and continue baking for another 30-45 minutes or until peppers and potatoes are done.

This Week's Box List

*Tomatoes
*Parsley
Chives
*Potatoes
*Collards
*Basil
*Bok Choy or Mustard
*Nectarines or Plums
Spring Onions
Eggplant
Bell Peppers
Zucchini/Summer Squash

* = Items in Box for 2

More Ideas for the **Greens** in your box...

Grilled Eggplant & Greens w/ Spice Yogurt
Potato Salad with Spring Onions and Mustard Greens
Mediterranean Bok Choy w/ Feta & Tomatoes
Sausage & Greens Squash Boats