



WEEK OF FEBRUARY 21, 2022 WEEK 8/52

PULLETS

Chickens are interesting creatures. Here on our farm they play a very important role. They give us so much more than just delicious eggs, they are our sole source of fertility for the soil. I have had to learn a lot about these funny little creatures, primarily with regard to how they grow, and how they travel through the

year's laying cycles. Trying to figure out when to bring in a flock so that we have enough eggs to get us through the winter, but not too many during the summer has been a challenge. I think I've almost found the sweet spot.



But today I would like to talk about Pullets, which is what you call a chicken after she is no longer a "chick", but still under a year old. We brought a flock in last September, and the girls are finally starting to lay. Had we gotten them in May they would have started laying a few weeks sooner, but winter's short/dark days slow things down. Another lesson learned. We will get a new flock in May this year so that we have more eggs for the Winter next year.

In any case, many say that the first eggs a hen lays are the most nutritious. They certainly are smaller, and I personally think more delicious. To me they have a silkier, richer texture, which I think is most noticeable in a soft boiled egg. As hens mature and age, the size of the egg gets bigger. So the extra large eggs always come from our oldest hens.

I am hoping by Thursday I will be able to offer pullets as a CSA extra. If you are concerned with the size difference throwing off your recipe, consider saving pullets for boiled, poached or fried eggs. If you do want to use them in a recipe the average weight of a large egg, which is what a recipe typically calls for is about 1.75 oz (without the shell), so you can weigh your eggs if that is a concern. Kids love them, the slightly smaller size is perfect for them! I hope you will give them a try and that you find you love 'em as much as I do!



Organic Versus Conventional

I know that I am preaching to the choir here, but this is such a striking example of what goes on in agriculture all around this country. The 40 acres next door to us sold a couple of years back, the land was prepped and a conventional almond orchard was put in. Walking out on the farm the other morning I was struck at the difference between our land and the neighbors. Our "weeds" are a beautiful vibrant green. The soil beneath those "weeds" is teeming with life. In contrast, next door is sprayed and kept "clean". Every bit of life eradicated by chemical killers. When I see this, it breaks my heart. It isn't just because you see the grasses brown and dead, but because I know what this does to the universe under ground.

Sadly, we cannot escape these chemicals, they are everywhere. Walk into any hardware store and you smell it right away. Look around your neighborhoods, how many houses have beautiful manicured lawns? That doesn't happen on its own, there is a lot of yuck going on to get that grass to look like that. Driving down the road I often see landscapers spraying whatever is growing in the cracks in the sidewalk. So unnecessary. But we should never give up hope, the more we demand organic the more land we can convert, the less these chemicals will be needed. Your simple act of supporting a farm like Eatwell is a commitment to keeping these 100 acres chemical free. Our dollars speak loudly.

Cauliflower

Cauliflower is becoming quite the challenge. We have many more hot/warm sunny days, which is no friend to this yummy winter vegetable. Sunshine opens up the heads and also causes the heads to turn yellow or get a light purple tint to them. There is nothing wrong with it, it may actually be a sign that there is more anti-oxidants present. So, no matter what your cauliflower looks like, enjoy it, it is delicious and little kid approved!

RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

Cauliflower Roasted In Chili Butter

Recipe by Yotam Ottolenghi from *Flavor*

My friend Elianna was here with your 1 year old Adina, and we made this dish, it was so delicious! But we really simplified it, we just used some Eatwell Smoked Chili Salt and red pepper flakes. Instead of Harissa and we used Gochujang because it is what we had on hand. We also found it didn't need to roast as long and we didn't fuss about the leaves.

Basically, we really let ourselves be more inspired by the recipe. Also, it calls for 2 cauliflowers, so go ahead and divide it in two, if the weight is very off. We also added some radishes and fennel to the mix!

4 lbs Cauliflower, with leaves

2 Onions, we used the Spring

Onions, cut into chunks

8 Red chillies, whole with a vertical

slit cut into them - we didn't have

any so we used chili pepper flakes

1 Lemon, cut into wedges to serve

Salt, we used Eatwell Smoked Chili

Chilli Butter

1 stick of Butter (4 oz)

OR use Olive Oil instead

7 1/2 TB Olive Oil

1 1/2 TB Red Bell Pepper Flakes

2 1/2 tsp Tomato Paste

1 1/4 tsp Urfa Chilli Flakes

90 g Rose Harissa

3/4 tsp Aleppo Chilli Flakes

3 Garlic cloves, crushed

1 1/2 tsp Sugar

Trim the leaves at the top of each cauliflower, so that about 1 inch of actual cauliflower is exposed. Cut into quarters lengthways, making sure the leaves remain attached at the base. Fill a large pan with well salted water and bring to a boil. Once boiling, blanch the cauliflower for 2 minutes, weighing them down with a lid a little smaller than the pan to ensure they stay submerged. Transfer to a colander to drain well.

Preheat the oven to 375 F. Mix all the ingredients for the chili butter together with a tsp of salt. Place the cauliflower quarters, onions and chillies on a parchment lined baking tray and pour over the butter. Carefully mix to make sure everything is well coated.

Arrange the cauliflower quarters so they are spaced apart as much as possible; one of the cut sides of each quarter should face down, the the leaves are exposed. Roast for 20 to 30 minutes, baste well, then turn the heat down to 325 and roast for another 30 minutes, basting twice until the cauliflower is very well browned and the leaves are crispy. Transfer everything to a platter, spooning over all the remaining chill butter and browned aromatics from the baking tray. Serve at once with lemon wedges alongside.

Kale Crostata

Recipe by Cara Mangini from *Vegetable Butcher*

The original recipe calls for chard, but she says you can sub in RR Kale, and I am guessing the arugula would be great as well.

3 TB Extra Virgin Olive Oil

1 medium Yellow Onion, finely chopped

4 to 5 garlic cloves, minced

1 1/2 lbs RR Kale, stems cut finely chopped

1 tsp fine Sea Salt

1/2 tsp crushed Red Pepper Flakes

2 tsp dried Italian Seasoning

2 pinches of ground Nutmeg

4 large Eggs

1/2 cup chopped Scallions, us the green tops from the Spring Onions

1 cup Ricotta Cheese

1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan Cheese

Heat the Olive oil in a Dutch Oven over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until it just begins to soften, about 2 minutes. Stir in the garlic and kale stems and cook until the stems begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Add the chard leaves in batches if need, salt, red pepper flakes, Italian seasoning, and nutmeg. Cook until the leaves have fully wilted and any liquid has cooked off, about 10 minutes more. Turn off the heat and let cool.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 375F

On a piece of parchment, flatted the crostata dough and roll it from the center outward with a lightly floured rolling pin. Turn the dough and parchment as you to create a circular shape about 15" in diameter and a little less than 1/4" thick. No need to make a perfect circle. Transfer the parchment and dough to a rimless baking sheet, the dough can hang over the edges for now. In a small bowl, lightly beat 1 of the eggs with 1 tsp of water to make an egg wash; set it aside. In a large bowl, lightly beat together remaining eggs, then stir in the kale, scallions, ricotta, and parmesan to combine. Transfer the mixture to the dough, spreading it out evenly but leaving a border of about 1 1/2". Trim any dough edges that seem too long or thick. Gently fold the dough border up and cover the filling, pleating it as you go. Brush the dough lightly with the egg wash. Bake about 40 to 45 minutes, until the crust is golden brown and the filling is firm in the center.

Fennel Seed Crostata Crust

2 tsp Fennel Seeds

2 cups AP Flour

1/2 tsp fine Sea Salt

1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Up to 1/2 cup plus 2 TB ice Water

Toast fennel seeds in a small skillet over medium heat, stirring or shaking, until the seeds are golden and fragrant, about 3 mins. In a food processor, briefly pulse together the fennel seeds, flour, salt, and parmesan until just incorporated. Add the olive oil and blend or stir to combine. While the processor is running, or while stirring, pour in 1/2 cup of ice water, no ice, 1 TB at a time, until the dough begins to form a ball. It should be wet and smooth, but should not stick to your fingers. Knead the dough on a lightly floured board for about 30 seconds until it comes together fully. If it pulls apart at all or is dry and tough, place it back in the food processor or bowl, add up to 2 TB more water and blend until incorporated. Flatten the ball of dough slightly and wrap in plastic, let rest in refrigerator for at least 30 minutes or up to 1 day in advance of assembling the crostata.

This Week's Box List

*Cauliflower

*Fennel

*RR Kale OR Arugula

*Radish OR Turnips

*Spring Onions

*Parsley

*Gold Oak Mandarins

Cabbage OR Romanesco

Mustard

Spinach OR Pea Shoots

Lettuce

* = Items in Box for 2