



WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 5TH 2016 #36/52



Another Year, Another Amazing Meal

Every year Eric Tucker from Millenium comes up to the farm with a small crew to taste, pick and plan their Tomato Dinner.



Unfortunately this year Nigel couldn't go, but Connie and I went down. For those of you who are not familiar with Millenium - it is a vegan restaurant, that was in SF for years. Last summer, they moved over to Oakland, just a short walk from the Rockridge BART station. Now most of you know Nigel and I are not vegetarians, and obviously not vegans, so believe me when I say, every year this meal is one of the best I have ever had. Eric is truly an inspired chef and creator, and the food Millenium puts on the plate has such rich, deep flavors, every bite is a delight and a surprise. This level of fine cooking is only achieved when you spend hours and hours in the kitchen making rich vegetable stocks and reductions. The Tomato Dinner is 5 courses, each one featuring the tomato, including the dessert. Not one single dish disappoints, not even slightly. Joyce and Havel (our dedicated market helpers and CSA members) joined us and all of us left the restaurant completely stuffed, very happy and totally satisfied. If you live in SF or anywhere in the Bay Area close to BART I strongly encourage you to hop on and head to Millenium for dinner, you will not be disappointed. And if you are in the Oakland area, parking in the neighborhood is really easy, a big bonus! Head on over before the weather changes, and sit out on the back patio, it is beautiful.

An Update on the State of the CSA

I am really happy to point out the number of shares this week is well over 500! Thank you all for the support, but let's keep it up. Although I am extremely encouraged by the numbers, my goal is 700 by October 31st. Seeing how we have jumped in just



two weeks, I am confident we can achieve this goal. Connie has been really busy processing orders and staying on top of it all. We have been talking a great deal, looking at options for drop sites, and other opportunities for us to grow. We have two new sites starting up in Vacaville with close to 20 new members between them. Another exciting prospect is working with Rickshaw, the home delivery service we use in SF. They have expanded to the East Bay and down the Peninsula. Home delivery is an option more and more of you are taking advantage of, so much so we are having to rearrange where we deliver those shares for Rickshaw to pickup, the sites are getting too full. This is a great problem to have and we are thrilled to expand! We were recently approached by the Library in Vallejo, they are looking to partner with a local CSA as a drop site. Their thought is, it is a healthy reason for people to come to the library and they are looking to expand the cook book section as well as health and nutrition sections. They will promote the CSA so it is a win/win for us all! This is a great example of being creative and partnering with groups or businesses to help us all grow. If we all think outside the "box" I am sure we can find more great ideas. Thank you all, we can't do this without you!

Young Farmers

Recently we had our annual visit with the students from the California Farm Academy based at the Center for Land Based learning in nearby Winters. This is an intensive 7 month course on farming that covers much of the business side of farming, as well as

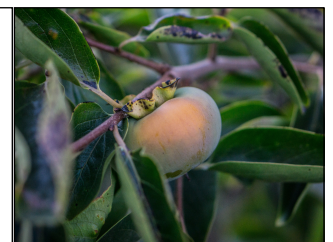


hands on practical work at the academy's small farm. A big part of the program is going to visit farms all around Northern California and our tour is always the final one for the session (I am told it is everyone's favorite, maybe because I cook them dinner!). We were fortunate enough that on that particular day Nigel rested up and had enough energy to come out to speak with the students for about an hour. He spoke and was able to answer many questions. Having such an intense conversation is not anything Nigel has been up for these past few months, but that night we all saw the passion in that farmer, his commitment to the work he does, and to his own continued learning, but most importantly his love of sharing knowledge. His parents were really astonished and I was smiling ear to ear.

Connie and I took them out for a tour of the farm and shared our knowledge and fielded more questions. Connie actually graduated from the Farm Academy a couple of years ago. I was very thankful I had her with me to help with the farming questions. My knowledge is more from the "after you grow, how the heck do you sell it" side of farming. So I tend to share my thoughts on how to market what you produce or even offer some advice on what you choose to grow. In today's market young farmers must realize we are competing with organic produce coming up from Mexico where the cost of labor is almost nothing, so how do they get started in this world? My biggest suggestion was to look at what they want to grow and figure out how to expand what they offer from those few crops. For instance, you can grow cabbage, sell cabbage, but also make sauerkraut, or turn unused vegetables into pickles. Our lavender is a great example of a multi-product crop. We sell dried bunches, the buds that fall onto the drying room floor are gathered for lavender sachets, the lavender buds that we collect on the table while making the bunches beautiful are used for salt, etc. We also send the fresh lavender in to distill for essential oil and hydrosols. Those are sold individually, but also used to make massage balms, salves, sugar scrub and my Softers. Many products from one crop.

By the end of the evening, I know the students left the farm feeling a little more empowered. Maybe some ideas were knocked down a bit, but they were taking another look at how to approach their dreams and adjust their goals to compete in today's market. Time with Nigel is really invaluable, he is one of the more innovative farmers around. I think this year, having the opportunity to speak with Connie was a real bonus as someone who completed the program they are in. It shows that there are smart ways to move forward with farming. There is so much to learn. The bottom line is, if we want farming to continue in California we need to encourage and teach our young farmers, so here's to this year's class of California Farm Academy Students, best of luck to you all!

This Week's
Total CSA
Boxes:
526



Recipes and Menu Suggestions

Chilled Avocado, Tomatillo and Cucumber Soup; serve with bread and sliced Tomatoes sprinkled with a Eatwell Lavender Salt

Uses: Tomatillos, Cucumbers, Tomatoes

Ricotta Hotcakes topped with Cherry Tomato Salad; on its own as a light meal or served with Chilled Soup as a starter

Use: Cherry Tomatoes, Basil

Shrimp with Lunchbox Peppers served over Grits; add another vegetable as a side dish, Baked Southern Summer Squash would be great with shrimp and peppers, or serve on its own

Uses: Lunchbox Peppers, Onion

Southern Baked Summer Squash; serve as a side dish with your choice of protein, grilled, barbecued chicken or pork would be great, add breadcrumbs for more carbs

And for Dessert - Watermelon Coconut Ice Cream

Uses: Watermelon

All recipes can be found at: www.eatwell.com under the "CSA Farm Box" tab. Just click "Recipes."

Chilled Avocado, Tomatillo, and Cucumber Soup with Saffron Lime Ice

From the Artful Vegan by Eric Tucker

I have loads of avos from the market this week, so I am looking forward to making this one!

Saffron Lime Ice

Juice of 2 limes

1/4 tsp Saffron threads; soaked in 1/4 cup warm water for 20 minutes

1 tsp unrefined Sugar

1 tsp Hungarian or Spanish Paprika, toasted

1/2 cup Water

1/3 tsp Salt

Soup

1/2 Yellow Onion, cut into 1/2" dice

4 cloves Garlic, peeled

1 Jalapeño Chile

3 ripe Avocado, peeled and pitted

8 Tomatillos, peeled

1/2 cup loosely packed cilantro leaves

1 tsp dried Oregano

1 Cucumber, halved lengthwise and seeded

1/4 tsp ground Nutmeg

1/4 tsp freshly ground Black Pepper

Juice of 1 lime

2 tsp light Miso

3 cups Water

Salt

Cayenne Pepper (optional)

1/3 cup slivered Almonds Toasted and very coarsely crushed for garnish

To make the ice, mix all the ingredients together in a bowl, and pour into a 2" deep pan. Freeze for 3 to 4 hours, until frozen solid.

To make the soup, heat a large nonstick sauté pan over high heat. Add the onions, garlic, and jalapeño. Dry-toast, stirring frequently, for 7 to 10 minutes, until half of the onions, garlic, and jalapeño are charred. Remove from the pan and let cool to room temperature. Peel and seed the jalapeño. Place the avocado in a mixing bowl with the cooled onion, garlic, and jalapeño. Add the tomatillos, cucumber, cilantro, oregano, nutmeg, black pepper, lime juice, miso, and water. In a blender, or using a handheld immersion blender, blend the ingredients in batches until smooth. Add salt and cayenne pepper to taste. Refrigerate for 2 hours, or until well chilled. To serve, ladle the soup into 6 martini glasses. Sprinkle toasted almonds over the top of each. Scrape the saffron ice crystals off the pan with a fork, and place 2 tsp on each serving of soup. Serve immediately.

The Southern Baked Summer Squash, Watermelon Coconut Ice Cream and all other recipes can be found at: www.eatwell.com under the "CSA Farm Box" tab. Just click "Recipes."

Ricotta Hotcakes

Recipe by Yotam Ottolenghi

1/2 lb Ricotta Cheese

3 TB Parmesan, grated

4 oz Milk

2 Eggs, separated

3 oz Self-Rising Flour

5 TB Butter, for frying

For the topping:

5 oz Cherry Tomatoes

2 TB Olive Oil

Salt and Black Pepper

1/2 clove Garlic, crushed

1/2 TB Balsamic Vinegar

2 oz Baby Spinach

2 TB Basil leaves, shredded

1 oz Pine Nuts, toasted and chopped

Preheat the oven to 300 F. Cut the tomatoes in half and toss them in a bowl with half the oil and some salt and pepper. Arrange skin-side down on an oven tray and bake for an hour, until the tomatoes have lost much of their moisture. About 20 minutes before the tomatoes are ready, start on the hotcakes. Combine the cheeses, milk and egg yolks in a large bowl, stir in the flour and a quarter tsp of salt, and mix to a uniform batter.

Pour the egg whites into a separate bowl and whisk until foamy but not totally stiff. Fold into the ricotta mix. Heat half the butter in a large, nonstick frying pan. Drop in two to three TB of batter per pancake and use the back of the spoon to help shape them into round pancakes roughly 1 cm thick and 10 cm in diameter. Cook for a minute or two on each side, until golden. Keep warm and repeat with the remaining batter. Mix the remaining oil, garlic, vinegar and some salt and pepper in a bowl. Add the spinach and using your hands, toss gently. Serve two pancakes per person, topped with the spinach salad and tomatoes and finished off with a sprinkling of fresh basil and pine nuts. Serve at once.

This Week's Box List

Cherry Tomatoes
Red or Heirloom Tomatoes
Tomatillos
Lunchbox Peppers
Cucumbers
Summer Squash
Onions
Basil
Plums
Strawberries
Watermelon or other Melon

Shrimp with Lunchbox Peppers over Grits

Eatwell Farmhouse Kitchen

The flavor from the peppers, onions and a bit of sausage is enough to really flavor this dish. It is one of my summertime favorites. While we were visiting Cameron in Bulgaria during his Peace Corp stint, we met John Taylor, the owner or Hoppin Johns. His company fresh mills heirloom corn for the most delicious grits you will ever taste. I have recently ordered a case (it is cheaper that way!), if anyone is interested in getting one from me let me know. They work out to \$11.00 for a 2 lb bag, more than what we are used to paying for grits, but trust me, they are so worth it!

1 to 3 TB Olive Oil

1/2 lb Andouille Sausage, chopped into small chunks, you can remove the skins if you like

1/2 to 1 box Lunchbox Peppers, topped and sliced into strips

1 - 2 cloves Garlic, chopped

1 Onion, sliced thinly

1 TB Butter

1 lb uncooked Large Shrimp, deveined

1/2 cup Eatwell Chicken Stock

Cream, optional

Chopped Parsley for garnish

Heat oil, determine how much to use depending on how fatty your sausage is, then add the sausage, onion and peppers. Cook on medium low until the peppers and onions are really soft. If the meat hasn't browned somewhat by then, turn the heat up a bit and cook until it is browned. Add the butter and the garlic. Cook and stir until the garlic begins to cook a bit, then add the stock. Scrape the bottom of the pan to release any of what might be stuck, then add the shrimp and cook until they are done. This happens very quickly. You could even just put the shrimp in the pan of very hot food, cover with a lid and turn the heat off. Taste for salt and pepper and add what you like. If using cream you can add it after the shrimp has completely turned pink. Serve over Grits and garnish with parsley.

