



TOMATOES

This time of year, especially in my neck of the woods, it feels like everything is about tomatoes. The trucks are now flying down our roads, loaded to overflowing, bringing tomatoes to the Campbell's Soup factory here in town. And of course, every market you see stand after stand with incredible varieties of tomatoes, slicers like Early Girl/New Girl or even Dirty Girl's own variety the "Dirty Girl", and heaps of heirlooms like the gigantic Brandywine's, or Costoluto Genovese, and of course saucing tomatoes like our San Mariano's. This year we have a small assortment of heirlooms, mostly the two varieties I mentioned. For the time being they are only available in a 10 lb case because they are just too fragile for the CSA box. I am hoping to get a 5 lb case for you too, but for now you can order the 10 lb as an extra item. This keeps them safe in a protective box, and if 10 lbs is too much, maybe you can split an order with a friend?

What is an **heirloom**? There are so many terms thrown around in agriculture and food, that it can be very confusing. According to Webster's, the definition of heirloom (pertaining to plants) is: *a variety of plant that has originated under cultivation and that has survived for several generations usually due to the efforts of private individuals*. Some people define heirlooms as a variety that has not been hybridized, has been grown for 40 or more years, stays true to its characteristics, so if you sew seeds from this year's crop next year it should look and taste the same.

Years ago when heirloom tomatoes first hit the market, most of us flocked to those huge, expensive, oddly shaped honkers, because they had great flavor. The tomatoes we were used to were typically very disappointing, often with little flavor and the texture was mealy and they could be kind of white on the inside, yuck! So these precious heirloom tomatoes, that had been vine ripened, and grown with great care and love were a **REAL TREAT**. Today we can get great tasting tomatoes of many varieties, not just heirlooms. I think our



slicers are absolutely delicious! I have been enjoying tomato & cheddar sandos all week, as a matter of fact I am making one as soon as I finish the newsletter. Personally I no longer turn to the those big heirlooms because I find they are too wet for most of what I like to use a tomato for, sandos, even salads, cooking. Although it is hard to beat a freshly made heirloom tomato salad with good olive oil and some delicious burrata!

This year we grew the Costoluto Genovese's which are an heirloom variety. They have been grown in the Genoa region of Italy since the 18th century! It is not a particularly wet tomato for an heirloom and is truly delicious. The term *costoluto* means deeply ribbed, which is very obvious when you look at those gorgeous, dark red tomatoes. There is also a Costoluto Fiorentino and a Cantanese. They are considered a beefsteak tomato, which are typically very large, with smaller seed pockets than most tomatoes. I remember beefsteaks from my childhood, but over time it seems they have become less popular in su-

permarkets, replaced by the more common slicer type tomato, which I am sure holds up much better in production and travel.

You all have heard me go on and on about our San Marzano's, so what makes them so special? Well, if you like to make sauce, you will immediately notice a big difference in meatiness. San Marzanos, pictured on the far right, are plum tomatoes, but longer and more slender than most plums. There is a lot of meat to them and not a lot of seed or liquid, so when you cook sauce you get a lot of bang for your buck AND your time cooking!



The Early Girl or New Girl tomatoes we grow (that is in the photo above on the left) are considered slicer tomatoes. Compared to Beefsteaks, which sometimes are called a sandwich tomato, often weigh in at well over a pound. Slicers on the other hand are typically only 6 to 8oz. The plants are sturdy, heavy producers. I have made plenty of sauce with our slicers, but I typically drain off a bunch of the liquid before I put up my sauce. I roast my tomatoes, then drain them in a colander or a Chinois, then puree, can or freeze. Sometimes I reduce the tomato "water" and add it back in or freeze it separately and use it for cooking rice. But now that the San Marzano's are coming in I will be making loads of sauce with those beauties.

You will often find your bag of tomatoes has some that are very red and ripe and some that are not so ripe. Don't distress, leave those maters on the counter and they will ripen up deliciously in a couple of days. I always tell folks this gives you tomatoes for today and tomatoes for tomorrow!). And this time of year, you need to eat them every day until you can't stand the site of them, at least not until next year!

CHICK UPDATE

Our babies arrived in good health last Friday, and are thriving in their new home. These cuties come to us in trays of about 100 per, and were hatched just on the other side of Dixon earlier that morning. We handed them off to Agustin who gave them a gentle toss for a soft landing in their new home. About an hour before they arrived, my friend Xo showed up to take 70 of our old hens. We loaded them up and she made the trip down the road to the farm at Ruhstaller, got our old ladies settled in their walnut orchard, then headed back to us to return the crates. Perfect timing as she was here to help us bring in the the new flock. I thought the synchronicity of it all was pretty great, out with the old, in with the new:)



RECIPES AND IDEAS FROM LORRAINE

Baked Eggplant Fries

Recipe from *Vegetable Butcher* by Cara Mangini
The recipe serves these “fries” with Balsamic Ketchup, which I have included below. She combines breadcrumbs and cornmeal for extra crispiness. You can also make these using medium to large zucchini.

6 TB Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1 large Globe Eggplant, cut into 1/2” by 3” long sticks
1/2 tsp fine Salt, plus extra as needed
1/4 tsp freshly ground Black Pepper, plus extra as needed
2 large Eggs
3/4 cup fine, dry, plain Breadcrumbs
3/4 cup Cornmeal, fine or medium grind
1 TB Za’Atar - optional

A small handful coarsely chopped fresh flat leaf parsley and or basil leaves, for garnish
Preheat oven to 400F and brush 2 rimmed baking sheet with 2 TB of olive oil each. Place the eggplant sticks in a large bowl and toss them with the remaining 2 TB of olive oil, 1/4 tsp of the salt, and the 1/4 tsp of pepper to coat. Lightly beat the eggs in a shallow bowl. In another shallow bowl, combine the breadcrumbs cornmeal, and the za’atar, if you are using it. Place a handful of eggplant sticks in the beaten eggs and turn them to coat fully. Gently remove them one by one with tongs, allowing the excess to drip back into the bowl, and play e them in the crumb mixture until they are full coated, then place them on a prepared baking sheet. Repeat this process until all the sticks are coated, spreading them out in a single layer on the baking sheets. Bake the eggplant sticks until just tender, about 15 minutes. Using tongs, flip them over and bake until the7 are golden and crispy, another 10 minutes. The fries can be made up to 2 hours in advance and stored, uncovered, on a cooling rack at room temp. Transfer them back to the baking sheet and crips them at 400 F for 10 minutes. Sprinkle the eggplant fries with more salt and pepper to taste, then top with a sprinkle of chopped herbs. SERve immediately with the Tomato Balsamic Ketchup alongside.

Tomato-Balsamic Ketchup

Recipe from *Vegetable Butcher* by Cara Mangini
Heat 1 TB Extra Virgin Olive Oil in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add 1 Garlic Clove, minced, and cook until fragrant, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Add 1/2 tsp fine Salt, 2 cups chopped Tomatoes or halved Cherry Tomatoes, 1/4 tsp crushed Red Pepper flakes, and 2 tsp Brown Sugar and cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture thickens, about 10 minutes. Stir in a 1 1/2 tsp Balsamic Vinegar and simmer for another 2 minutes. Carefully transfer the tomato mixture to a food processor or blender, and puree until smooth. The ketchup will keep, refrigerated, in an airtight container, for up to 3 days. Before serving, reheat it in a small saucepan over medium-high heat until warmed through. Makes about 1/2 cup.

Beet Stem Relish

Recipe from *Root To Leaf* by Steven Satterfield
This recipe is also made with chard stems, but as we have those beets with such long stems, I thought this would be a great recipe for this week’s box.
2 cups diced Beet Stems
1 cup Red Wine
1/2 cup Red Wine Vinegar
1/2 cup Sugar
1 tsp Salt
1/2 tsp freshly ground Black Pepper
Combine all the ingredients in a medium saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cook until the stems are tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove the stems with a slotted spoon and reduce the liquid by half, about 5

minutes. Let the stems and liquid cool separately and then combine. Serve chilled or at room temperature. Store covered and refrigerated for up to 4 weeks.

Caramelized Leek Flatbread with Black Olives & Soft Cheese

Recipe from *La Vie Rustic* by Georgeanne Brennan Serves 4
Georgeanne and her husband Jim are dear friends and neighbors. Nigel considered Jim his mentor, and still to this day, he is the man I go to when I have questions about almost anything.

For The Dough:

1 pack (2 1/2 tsp) Active Dry Yeast
1 cup warm Water (105F)
1/2 tsp Sugar
2 3/4 to 3 cups All Purpose Flour, plus more for dusting
3 TB Extra Virgin Olive Oil, plus more for brushing
1 tsp Sea Salt
Dissolve the yeast in the warm water, then add the sugar and let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes. In a food processor, combine the yeast mixture, 2 1/2 cup of the flour 2 TB of the oil and the salt. Pulse, adding more flour 1/4 cup at a

time, just enough to create a soft ball of dough - not too sticky, not too dry. When you touch the dough, it should not stick to your fingers. Knead the dough on a floured work surface with your hands until smooth and elastic, about 7 minutes. Form the dough into a smooth ball. Rub a large bowl with 1 TB of the oil. Place the kneaded dough ball in the bowl and turn to coat the dough with the oil. Cover the bowl with a damp kitchen towel and let the dough rise in a warm, draft-free spot until doubled in size, 1 1/2 - 2 hours.

For the Leeks:

2 large Leeks
2 TB Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1/2 tsp Seas Salt
1/4 tsp freshly ground Pepper
3 oz soft Goat cheese, farmer cheese, or other fresh, soft cheese
12 - 15 oil-cured Black Olives, pitted
Extra Virgin Olive Oil for brushing
To prepare the leeks, trim the roots and the dark green upper parts and discard. Cut the leeks in half lengthwise and thoroughly wash before chopping. Finely chop the pale green and with parts. In a frying pan or sauté pan with a lid, heat the 2 TB oil over medium-high heat. When it is hot, add the leeks, salt and pepper. Stir several times, then cover and reduce the heat to low. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the leeks are lightly golden, 35 to 40 minutes. Set aside, you can cover and refrigerate for up to a day. Place a pizza stone or heavy baking sheet in the oven and preheat the oven to 500. Punch down the dough and transfer it to a floured work surface, turning it over once. Roll it into a 15 x 12” oval about 1/2” thick. Lightly dust a baking sheet with a little flour. Partially drape the rolled out dogs over the rolling pin and unroll it onto the baking sheet/. With a spatula, spread the leeks over the dough, leaving a 1/2” uncovered border around the edges. Dot the leeks with the goat cheese and the olives. Brush the edges of the crust with the olive oil. Bake until the crust is puffed and golden along the edges and the bottom is crips and golden, about 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and while still hot, brush the edges once again with olive oil. Cut into pieces and serve at once.

This Week’s Box

*Slicer Tomatoes
*Leeks
*Potatoes
*Beets
*Cherry Tomatoes
* Grapes OR Nectarines
*Basil
* Eggplant
Chives
Fennel
Cucumbers

* = Items in Box for 2