



THIS WEEK'S MUSINGS

Early Saturday morning I felt inspired and wrote most of this week's newsletter. So proud of myself for getting ahead of the game!). But then Sunday's Olive Picking and Brunch happened and I decided to re-write the entire thing!

The Olive Picking was just a perfect day. Even the sprinkling of rain that blessed us just as the last couple of folks finished picking and came up for a bite to eat, wasn't a bother. No big deal, we moved into the house and the four of us had a great conversation about herbs, natural foods, and fashion!). Earlier in the day, one of the members, Sandy, who is our Pleasant Hill host, told me they had a gathering at their house a while back for all the CSA members who pick up at their house. One of the other members brought a jar of olives they had brined after picking them here last year.

That inspired Sandy and Behruz to come out yesterday to pick olives for themselves! I love the idea that the members got to gather at their house, meeting one another and sharing stories and adventures on the farm. I have to say, our CSA members are some of the nicest and most interesting people I know! There were members I have corresponded with many times, but never had the chance to meet. And the big bonus they came up with one of our very long time members Carol. Carol's kids used to help us at the market stand, and they were some of the very first Eatwell people I met, back when Nigel and I just started dating. Fun connections are made when you come to the farm because our CSA world is small and so precious.

The main reason I wanted to write about Sunday's event was to actually talk about the food. It was such a great brunch, and a great example of cooking what you have on hand from the box and the farm. I don't say this to brag, I am by far one of my toughest critics, and most often not as happy with what I cook as I would like to be. But over the years I have learned to acknowledge it when I do get it to land exactly where I want and I think this brunch landed quite nicely. Everyone asked if I would share recipes, so that's what I am going to do now.

When I plan my brunch menus I always try to make sure I have gluten free options, and keep it vegetarian.



Both goals are pretty easily achieved, many meals are truly delicious and satisfying without the addition of meat, and there are plenty of delicious GF options to incorporate in. This time around it was fairly dairy heavy, my friends refer to me as the Dairy Queen, so sometimes I just can't help myself. And no one had said they couldn't eat dairy, sooooo....

One of the first dishes I worked on is called Biercher Muesli. I wanted to include this "dish" because we had a bunch of random apples left from the past few weeks and since it is made with oats, it was my GF option. Biercher Muesli, a super popular breakfast food in Switzerland, and the original "overnight oats".

I am sizing it down, but here's what I did:

- 1 cup of old fashioned rolled oats, organic of course
 - 1/3 cup Ruhstaller Walnuts, chopped
 - 1/3 cup Golden Flax Meal
 - 1/2 cup Capay Canyon Raisins
 - 1 TB Old Dog Ranch Walnut Butter
 - 1 Apple, cored and grated, I left the peel on
 - 1/2 cup Milk
 - 1/2 cup Greek Yogurt
 - 1 TB Honey
 - Pinch of Cinnamon
 - Pinch of Salt
- Mix it all up, store in a sealed container overnight. I have to say the grated apple really makes it fantastic.

The main dish was a Strata. If you are not familiar with Strata it is essentially a savory bread pudding, and such a delicious dish to serve at brunch for a bunch of folks! You do have to plan ahead with this dish because you have to let the bread soak in the egg mixture overnight. Often it includes ham or sausage, but it really doesn't need to, and you can make it with all kinds of ingredients, as long as you follow the basic recipe. It's versatile, kind of like Risotto! One thing I do make sure of, is to use really good cheese. Good cheese has better/more flavor, which means you don't need to use as much. In this dish it was half Gruyere and half Emmentaller, both from Switzerland. For the veggies I used kale and lunchbox peppers. I have mostly made Strata with Chard and have made it with Broccoli too. The basic recipe for strata is:

- 12 oz Bread, I used a round Sourdough, cut into cubes
- 12 Eggs, beaten

Strata Recipe Cont'd from the other side

3 cups of Milk, although I used 2 cups milk + 1 cup of cream

1 1/2 cups of grated Gruyere/Emmentaler Cheese, plus a bit more to sprinkle on top

From this point on you can add the other ingredients however you see fit, for mine I did this:

1 bunch Kale, stems removed and leaves chopped

You can save the stems for stock

1 cup thinly sliced Lunch Box Peppers

2 cloves Garlic, minced

Olive Oil for sautéing

2 tsp Salt

A good grinding of Black Pepper

In a large bowl mix up the eggs, milk/cream, salt and pepper. Put the cubed bread in and mix it up so all the cubes are well coated.

Cover and put into the fridge overnight. The

next morning I sautéed the lunch box peppers slowly until they were nice and soft,

then I added the kale and garlic. Cooking until the kale was tender. While the veggies

cooked we grated the cheese. When everything was done, we added the veggies and the

cheese to the big bowl with the eggs/bread

and mixed well. Then I carefully ladled it

into a 9 x 13 baking dish. I topped it with a

little extra cheese, because, like I said, I am a

Dairy Queen!). Bake at 350 for 50-60 min-

utes. Set the timer for 30 minutes, because I

found in one oven it baked a lot faster and since all

ovens are different you will want to keep an eye on it.

You can do a knife test in the middle which should

come out clean when done. It will puff up beautifully

and turn golden, and is so delicious!

Kale, Arugula & Butternut Salad

This was the straight up veggie dish we served. It was delicious and has held up well for leftovers. For this

dish I had some Dino Kale from the market and used that, but you could easily use Chard or Tatsoi, or even

finely shredded cabbage. Turnip greens, plus thinly

sliced turnips would be a great addition to this salad as

well. It's all about using what you have on hand. We

did remove the stems of the kale, then tore the leaves,

trying to massage them as much as possible in the

process. The arugula we just cut the bottom end off and

chopped the rest. The butternut squash, was pre-roasted

the night before, so the morning of, it was really easy to

peel and cube up. I tossed it with olive oil, salt, pepper,

a little smoked paprika and a pinch of cinnamon. Put it

on a baking sheet and roasted it at 375 for about 20

minutes, gave it a good stir then roasted another 10

minutes or so. I let that cool a bit then added it to the

greens. I made a simple vinaigrette with olive oil, champagne vinegar, one bunch of chives and some fresh oregano, salt and pepper. But you can use what ever herbs/seasoning you like. I did not over dress this salad because I didn't want to weigh it down too much.

Crumbled in some fresh goat cheese, mixed, added a bit more, mixed, then topped it with just a little more:) I think toasted pumpkin seeds would have been a really delicious addition.

For a side treat I baked up a bunch of carrot cake in muffin form. I love the carrots from Terra Firma for this cake because they have such great carrot flavor. First I juice them, yay for carrot juice! Then I use the pulp for my carrot cake. And I added Ruhstaller Walnuts. I am not a fan of raisins in carrot cake, but if you are, the Capay Canyon Ranch raisins are so good. I normally make this with 1/2 Capay Mills Sonora Flour and 1/2 All Purpose, but I was making these with my grandson David and forgot! David, at 2 1/2, juiced the carrots with me AND he cracked all the eggs! I will include the recipe for the carrot cake in the email.

This Week's Box

*Turnips

*Green Cabbage OR Broccoli

*Sweet Potatoes

*Arugula

*Eggplant

*Tatsoi

*Butternut

*Tomatillo

Chard

Onions

Green Tomatoes

* = Items in Box for 2

Green Tomato Chutney

This was not from Sunday's brunch, but I opened up my computer and saw this recipe from David Lebovitz and had to share it. You can also make this using tomatillos

1 3/4 lb (825g) Green Tomatoes or Tomatillos, stemmed and cut into bite-size pieces

2 firm Apples, cored, and cut into chunks (peeled or unpeeled)

1 cup (100g) peeled and sliced Shallots

1 to 2 dried Chiles, split and seeded, or 1 fresh Chile, seeded and finely chopped

1/3 cup (65g) chopped candied Ginger

1 cup (250ml) Apple Cider Vinegar

1 cup (160g) Raisins

1 cup (180g) light or dark Brown Sugar

1 TB Yellow or Black Mustard Seeds

1 teaspoon ground Cardamom, (or cinnamon)

1/2 teaspoon ground Allspice

Zest of one Orange or 1/4 cup (45g) chopped Candied Orange Peel

Mix together all the ingredients in a large, **non-reactive** pot. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to a low boil and cook, stirring frequently, for 45 minutes, until the mixture is thick and jam-like. Once finished, ladle the chutney into clean jars.