



My Favorite Way To Travel

It's Saturday morning, and I am on the Vallejo Ferry on my way to help out at the market. I absolutely LOVE taking the boat to SF. There is a lot to be said for not driving the car all the way to the city and getting on that boat. The cost of the round trip ticket is about as much as I would pay in bridge toll. Parking is the same cost, but the best part is I don't have to drive all the way down and back. I get off the boat I am right in the middle of the market, how convenient is that?



Mike has the stand set up completely under control, so I am not needed at the start of the morning.

Traveling this way, I get an extra 2 hours of sleep, a bit of time to eat breakfast, and take Beau out for a walk. While on the boat I can work on the computer, like I am right now, writing this newsletter.

Being on the boat right brings me great joy and true sense of peace. But it has been a struggle letting go of the idea that I have to be at the market first thing in the morning. I wonder how many things we commit to doing that aren't really necessary? What could we do instead that would be of greater benefit to our overall quality of life. I find, when I give myself the time, cooking brings me that sense of peace. How many of you feel that too when you grab a few things from your CSA box and spend some time in the kitchen making yourself and your family a nourishing meal. It is so easy to fall into the hussle/bussle, rush here and there mode of life we are all accustomed to, that we don't even know how to make better choices for ourselves. Getting on the boat this morning, is definitely my better choice for today. I hope you find a few for yourself this weekend as well.

Chard & Pride

Jose sent me this photo a week ago. I love it when he sends me these photos, because I know he does that with great pride. This chard is weed free, growing tall and gorgeous. When I see the chard in our boxes, I think of photos like this, but I know most people don't give much thought to the food they eat beyond "what should I do with this?"

Long before it arrives in a store, or in your CSA box, there is a lot of thought and planning going on. There were seeds started and little transplants put into the ground, or tiny little



seeds sown in long rows. Over the next several weeks, those precious seeds grow, requiring care. We water them, tend the weeds and pray the squirrels don't eat the majority of them. Chard may not seem like much, but when Jose sends me a photo like this, I know what he is saying, "look at how beautiful this is!" I thought you would like to know that too.

Holiday Gifts

Alicia made a big box of Lavender Sachets a couple of weeks back, and we sold almost all of them in one week. Our sachets are a very popular item at the market, something anyone can pick up, look at and smell. I love showing folks that when you role them in your hands with a lot of pressure, it releases the essential oil from the buds, and the aroma is incredible. I guess because it is such an experience, it sells them just about every time.



Normally, by this time of year, we would be incredibly busy packing up salt and lavender orders. We typically sell a lot more salt than lavender products, but this year I have been limited because of the difficulty getting the salt from France. Who knew really coarse gray sea salt from the coast of Brittany would become such a hot item? Apparently they just can't keep up with the orders and it has been months since I have been able to get a decent

amount from our supplier. It has been so bad that I have been purchasing bags of this salt from an online store that has decent prices, but still I'm buying it at retail! For years packaging supplies have been a hit or miss. It isn't even the fact that the costs have gone way up, no thanks to hefty tariffs, but it is the unreliability of getting orders in. I finally settled on ordering from one of the more expensive suppliers, who have been very consistent.

Fortunately, sachet bags are easy to get. The lavender that we harvested and dried this past summer, gets re-bunched and wrapped in lavender colored tissue paper, and while the ladies work on that, they catch the buds that fall off. They also save the reject stems that don't make it into a bunch and take the buds from those. The buds are then used to fill sachet bags, or ground into salt for our famed Lavender Salt. I also macerate lavender in olive oil to use in our Massage Balm, salves and sugar scrub. Between the lavender and the salts, and all the body products in between, the botanics side of the farm has a lot going on. I hope you will consider including a few on your holiday shopping list. We are happy to box them up and ship them out for you too, just let us know.

Eggplant Portobello Meatballs

Recipe found on [Confessions Of A Mother Runner](#)

Eggplant is a great substitute for meat. If you really want to up the heartiness factor, pair eggplant with mushrooms.

Here is a recipe that is a great example of just that. If aren't ready to use it this week, you can pre-cook then freeze it.

1 1/2 - 2 lbs Eggplant-skin on and cut into slices

3 large Portobello mushrooms-halved

15 oz can of White Beans-drained

2 Garlic cloves

1 cup of Panko bread crumbs (can use GF)

Olive Oil for cooking

1-2 tsp of Sage, Oregano, Basil

Dash of Red Pepper, salt and pepper

Parsley for garnish

Preheat oven to 375. On a baking sheet place eggplant, mushrooms and garlic cloves. Drizzle on olive oil, salt and pepper. Bake for 20 min. In a food processor add: cooked eggplant, mushrooms and garlic, white beans, all spices, pulse until large pieces of eggplant are chopped. Transfer to a mixing bowl and stir in bread crumbs. chill in fridge for 10 min. Form meatballs with mixture. Heat a large skillet with olive oil, cook meatballs for 3 -5 min on each side. Serve with your favorite tomato sauce and enjoy.

Butternut Mac N Cheese

Recipe by Tara Parker Pope on NYT Cooking I love Mac N Cheese. Finding ways to add veggies to the dish makes it even better.

1 lb Elbow Macaroni, cooked according to package directions

1 large Butternut Squash

2 TB Olive Oil

6 TB Butter

3/4 cup All-purpose Flour

7 cups Milk

2 cups Sharp Cheddar Cheese, shredded

Salt & Pepper

Roast the butternut squash. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Cut squash in half lengthwise; remove seeds. Place in roasting pan and drizzle with olive oil. Place in oven and cook until soft all the way through, about 1 hour. Set aside until cool. When cooled, remove skin and place in food processor. Purée until smooth. Make cheese sauce. Melt butter in saucepan. Add flour. Stir to make a roux and cook 3 minutes, stirring the entire time. Add 3 cups milk and stir until thickened. Add the rest of the milk and bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Add shredded cheese and stir until melted. Season with salt and pepper. To assemble the dish: Place cooked elbow macaroni in bowl. Pour half of the cheese sauce over and add puréed, roasted butternut squash. Fold together. If it seems too dry, add the rest of the cheese sauce. Place in an oven-proof dish and heat for 15 minutes at 325 degrees.

Lettuce/Salads

How do you store your lettuce? I like to pull mine apart and give it a good washing, then I keep it in the salad spinner.

There is always a little bit of water at the bottom of the spinner that keeps leaves from drying out. I don't pre rip or slice, I do that when I am ready to use it. When you have items like turnips, radishes or even fennel in the box, you can wash, slice very thin, then store in a jar with water, salt and a little vinegar. Then it's ready to use on top of any salad.

Red Cabbage

Funny, when I search for Red Cabbage recipes, I find loads of "German Red Cabbage". And that makes me think of my Mom and Christmas. Our holiday dinner was always German Goulash, Potato Dumplings and Red Cabbage. It is hard for me to look at those beauties and not think of that meal. But

red cabbage also makes a yummy sauerkraut or a quick kraut, essentially pickled. Food52 has this very simple and quick recipe you might like to try, although I wouldn't call it a kraut:). Also, I would consider adding some shaved fennel to the mix.

1/4 head Red Cabbage (shaved or thinly sliced)

3 cloves Garlic (minced)

1 tsp whole Caraway Seeds

1 tsp Yellow Mustard Seeds

1/2 cup Apple Cider Vinegar

Salt and Pepper

Olive Oil

Shave the 1/4 head of cabbage with a mandolin. If you don't have a mandolin, cut the cabbage into really thin strips, like sauerkraut or coleslaw. In a medium sauce pan, heat

olive oil over medium heat. Add garlic and cook for 2 minutes. Add cabbage, caraway seeds, mustard seeds, vinegar, salt and pepper. Mix to combine and lower heat to low. Cook for 10 minutes. Remove from heat. The sauerkraut can either be served warm or chilled on your favorite brats and dogs.

Member Meal Suggestion

One of our members sent me an email with a stew/soup she made this week. Her dish was inspired by a Japanese YouTube Takasu Tile she follows. Here is what she did:

Cut up a few sweet potatoes and a squash, brush with avocado oil, and roasted in a 400* oven, about 30 min. Fry up a few onions, I added shallots & garlic. Then I fried carrots & shi-take over high heat. Turned down the heat & added in just a tiny bit of broth, plus a handful of chopped up sage & thyme and a big dash of rosemary salt. Added a big glup of soy milk, brought it to a boil, lowered heat & covered. Melted a big spoonful of miso in a bowl -never boil miso-. Stirred in miso to the simmering soup & then added the roasted veg. Dished it up and added a big handful of fresh greens (I used spinach)."Itadakimasu!": Japanese for : "I am receiving", said in gratitude to the farmers, the cook, & any other benevolent entities.

For this kind of dish this week, you could use the bok choy and chard. And if you don't have sweet potatoes, you will have plenty with the Butternut.

This Week's Box

*Lettuce

*Turnips

*Bok Choy

*Butternut

*Fennel

*Eggplant

*Chard

*Red Cabbage

Mustard OR Mizuna

Rosemary

Radishes

* = Items in Box for 2