

In the basket . . .

Your baskets floweth over with a wide variety of produce this week.

Okra (organic) – new this week!

This variety of okra, Cajun Delight, is very flavorful with medium-green pods. Okra is a staple in Cajun cooking and is used in a variety of dishes, including jambalaya.

Okra can be steamed and lightly seasoned and eaten like green beans. It can be used as a thickener in soups and stews. Or it's excellent fried (we've included instructions on how to do that in the recipe section).

Brussels Sprouts (organic) – new to many of you this week!

Those of you who get regular and robust baskets got some Brussels sprouts a couple of weeks ago. But this week, they're in all the baskets.

For the most basic preparation, peel the outer leaves and score an "x" in the bottom of larger sprout to even out the cooking. Place in boiling water and cook 2 minutes. Drain and season with butter, salt, and pepper.

Or you can sauté them in butter or oil (we prefer butter because it gives them a richer taste) in a covered skillet for about 20 minutes.

To store, refrigerate unwashed in a plastic bag and store up to 3 days (but you might be able to stretch that out to a week).

Eggplant – new this week!

This season our crop includes three varieties planted for their mild and creamy flavor, tender skin, and small seed development. Tango is the cylindrical white; Orient Charm has alluring shades of fluorescent pink, pastel pink, and white; and Rosa Bianca is the round Italian heirloom fruit streaked with white and violet.

Store in a cool, not super cold area. Eggplants are 90% water and are best prepared within a couple of days of harvest.

Try eggplant, zucchini, potatoes, peppers, Brussels sprouts, and tomatoes oven-roasted. Coat with a little olive oil, toss gently, and heat at 400 degrees until browned. Or, make foil packets to put on your grill.

Heirloom Tomatoes (organic) We picked a bunch of different varieties this week, so there is an

Swap Box – In the swap box this week, we've put **Cabbage** and **Red Beets**. Also remember you can swap out anything for something else another member put in.

assortment (but not all kinds) in your basket. We picked several black and pink tomatoes, including:

- ✓ Black Krim - heirloom from the Black Sea of Russia; sweet but a little bit salty tasting
- ✓ Paul Robeson – black, Russian heirloom; sweet but tangy
- ✓ Cherokee Purple - combination of purple, black, brown, red, and green
- ✓ Arkansas Traveler – named so because it was bred by the University of Arkansas in 1968; it can grow in really hot weather

And we picked several varieties of striped and other heirlooms as well:

- ✓ Mr. Stripey – red- and yellow-striped
- ✓ Big Zebra – red- and green-striped on the outside and green and pink on the inside; mild, sweet flavor
- ✓ Copia – yellow- and red-striped; very juicy and sweet
- ✓ Striped German – red- and-yellow striped exterior with a marbled interior
- ✓ Great White - large white beefsteak; sweet and juicy

Red Slicing Tomatoes and Roma Tomatoes

(organic) Obviously, tomatoes are plentiful this time of year, so we've included some red slicers and romas in addition to the heirlooms. But if you can't eat them all, you can freeze raw tomatoes, either whole (wash them, wrap in foil, and place in freezer) or chopped. Find a recipe below for oven drying.

Green and Sweet Colorful Bell Peppers

Bell peppers make an excellent and refreshing addition to a crudité's dish this time of year. Stuff them with an organic ground beef mixture or rice and veggies for a heartier dish.

Zucchini Find a yummy dessert recipe below!

Sweet Corn While still available, enjoy the sweet corn while you can. Cut off the cob and bag to take up less space in the freezer.

Cucumbers Another summer favorite. Eat raw or put in a salad and enjoy with your favorite salad dressing.

Gold Potatoes (organic) Remember that you don't have to peel organic potatoes, even the larger ones. Since most of the potato's nutrients are in or near the skin, this is an advantage of our organically produced potatoes over conventionally grown potatoes.

In regular and robust baskets only . . .

Cabbage (organic)

Cabbage doesn't usually do very well in hot weather, so we're excited to have another harvest to share with you this week.

Leeks (organic) – new this week!

Leeks and onions are cousins, but leeks actually belong to the lily family. Leeks are milder than onions and scallions, and they sweeten when they're cooked. Smaller leeks are more tender and have more flavor than larger ones.

You should cut the white part in half and wash thoroughly because there could be dirt embedded in there. You can eat leeks raw; you can steam or boil them for about 10 to 12 minutes; and you can sauté them.

To store, don't wash them, wrap them in plastic wrap, and store in the fridge for up to two weeks.

Recipes to enjoy . . .

Chocolate Zucchini Cake

A great way to get a green vegetable into your family's meal, this recipe shared by CSA member, Fiona Y. of Lexington.

½ C soft margarine
½ C vegetable oil
1 ½ C granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 tsp vanilla extract
½ C sour cream
2 ½ C all purpose flour
4 T baking cocoa
½ tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
1 ½ tsp cinnamon
½ tsp ground cloves
2 C grated zucchini
1 12-ounce package semi-sweet chocolate chips
walnuts (optional)

Cream together the margarine, oil, and sugar in a large bowl. Add the eggs, vanilla and sour cream. Mix together the dry ingredients in another bowl, then add to the creamed mixture; beat well. Stir in the zucchini. Pour into a buttered or sprayed 9 x 12 pan and sprinkle the chocolate chips on top of the batter with the nuts, if using. Bake at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes.

Fried Okra

This simple dish is a Southern favorite.

Put enough cooking oil in the skillet or pan just to coat the bottom. Mix some cornmeal with a little salt and sugar to taste. Cut the stems off and slice the okra into half-inch pieces. Dredge in the cornmeal mixture. Fry, turning frequently, until well browned. Some people soak the okra in buttermilk or eggs and buttermilk before dredging, but it's not absolutely necessary.

Oven Dried Tomatoes

Adapted from Nina Planck's The Farmers' Market Cookbook. This is one way to increase the intensity of tomatoes' flavor.

2 pounds ripe tomatoes (any color, any size, including cherries)
2 tablespoons olive oil
salt

Set the oven to 250°. Leave cherry tomatoes whole. Halve or quarter regular tomatoes. Put tomatoes of equal size in each baking dish. Roll the tomatoes in oil and salt and put them in a baking dish – just one layer.

Bake for 3 to 8 hours and remove when they are ready. After 3 hours, smaller tomatoes are ready for a mozzarella sandwich. After 8 hours they are leathery and intensely flavored. Packed in oil, they keep for a week to 10 days in the refrigerator or a cool pantry.

Add to minestrone soup, bean soups, salads. They are good in sandwiches spread with soft cheese, or on pasta, pizza, crostini, or bruschetta. When cherry tomatoes are still juicy and hot, toss them with pasta, olive oil, and basil. The longer the tomatoes sit in the oil, the tastier they get. Strained, the reddish oil is wonderful on bread and salads. You could blend one or two tomatoes with their oil for a more intense flavor, or you could add a clove of garlic or an anchovy for every 3 tablespoons of oil.

Quantities of several items now available. Let us know if you want something to freeze for the winter months.