

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 11: November 27

Welcome to Week 11 of the Fall Veggie Box, and happy Thanksgiving! Thanksgiving is the easiest and best time of year to "eat local," for the simple reason that this holiday dates back to a time when "fresh and local" were not marketing terms, but just the way it was. This means that most of what you find on a traditional Thanksgiving menu has its roots in local, seasonal foods. Yet too often we feel obliged to follow more recent traditions. We fill a Thanksgiving menu with an industrially raised turkey that's been injected with saline to make it seem juicy, Jell-O salad with canned fruit cocktail, green bean casserole with canned mushroom soup, or sweet potatoes from a can, baked with butter and brown sugar with marshmallows on top. There's nothing wrong with family traditions, but it's easy and fun to give those old favorites new life with fresh, locally raised foods. Thanksgiving is the perfect time to choose from autumn's bountiful cornucopia of locally grown foods. And there's even more to be thankful for, because local foods, when grown without synthetic chemicals, enhance our personal health, the health of our farmers, their farms, and our communities. There is just no better way to express gratitude for good food, local farmers, and their active stewardship of the land than to buy one or more local items for the big meal on the day we join together and give thanks. Thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight

Hunter Park GardenHouse

The Hunter Park GardenHouse, a project of Allen Neighborhood Center, is a hub for year-round farm & garden education, where neighbors volunteer to grow food, flowers, and community, and youth develop job and life skills in service to the neighborhood. Since 2008, the Hunter Park GardenHouse has empowered neighbors to grow, prepare, and eat healthy food to better their health and become better connected with the community.

Crop Profile

Beets

Beets are said to have grown in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Humans originally ate beet greens but not the thin and fibrous roots, which were occasionally used in medicine. The large beet leaves and stalks were consumed like chard, a close relative. The colorful, sweet root vegetable known as the beet tends to spark an impassioned response from folks who either love it or loathe it. Beets contain a substance called geosmin, which is responsible for that fresh soil scent in your garden following a spring rain. Humans are quite sensitive to geosmin, even in very low doses, which explains why our beet response ranges from one extreme to the other. Today, around 20% of the world's sugar comes from sugar beets. Furthermore, Beets are a source of folic acid, vitamin C and potassium, which is important for the health of your bones, kidneys and muscles.



What's in the Box?

- Red and Yellow Onions**, *Hunter Park GardenHouse*, Lansing
- Organic Beets**, *MSU Student Organic Farm*, Holt
- Cabbage**, *Titus Farms*, Leslie
- Russet Potatoes**, *Hillcrest Farms*, Eaton Rapids
- Sweet Potatoes**, *Titus Farms*, Leslie
- Sage**, *Hunter Park GardenHouse*, Lansing
- Organic Garlic**, **Owosso Organics**, Owosso
- Organic Carrots**, *MSU Student Organic Farm*, Holt
- Dumpling Squash**, *Titus Farms*, Leslie

Add-Ons

- Bread**, *Stone Circle Bakehouse*, Holt
- Meat Variety**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative*, Charlotte
- Sweet Treats**, *Stone Circle Bakehouse*, Holt
- Cheese**, *MSU Dairy Store*, East Lansing
- Chevre**, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery*, Onondaga
- Eggs**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative*, Charlotte
- Coffee**, *Rust Belt Roastery*, Lansing
- Kombucha**, *Apple Blossom Kombucha*, Lansing
- Pork**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative*, Charlotte
- Chicken**, *Trillium Wood Farm*, Williamston
- Beef**, *Heffron Farms*, Belding
- Cold Brew**, *Rust Belt Roastery*, Lansing

Recipes and Tips!

Veggie Box Stuffing

1 Veggie Box dumpling squash
½ cup butter, softened (1 stick)
1/2 of Veggie Box Onions, finely chopped
3 stalks celery, finely chopped (about 1 cup)
1/2 of Veggie Box cabbage, sliced thin
1 tbs Veggie Box fresh sage, finely chopped
1 tbs fresh thyme, finely chopped
2 cloves of Veggie Box Garlic
3 cups vegetable stock
2 eggs
¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
16 cups day-old, cubed French or Italian bread

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Slice the squash into quarters and then roast for about 30 minutes. Melt the butter in a pot over medium heat. Add the onions, garlic, celery, cabbage, sage, and thyme and cook for 3 minutes. Add in the squash. Cook and stir occasionally for 5-7 minutes or until softened. Add the broth, bring to a simmer, then remove from the heat. Beat the eggs in a 6-qt. mixing bowl and add the chopped parsley. Stir in the cubed bread and the broth mixture. Transfer the mixture to a buttered baking dish. Cover and bake for 30 minutes. Uncover and bake for 15-20 minutes or until the top is golden brown.

Crunchy Sesame & Ginger Honey Glazed Carrots

Veggie Box carrots (washed, halved lengthwise, then cut into sticks)
2 tbs sesame oil
2 tbs ginger honey (or two tbs honey with a sprinkle of ginger)
some toasted sesame seeds to sprinkle

Toss carrots in sesame oil. Place them on non-stick baking tray and roast in the oven preheated to 400°F for about 25 minutes or a little bit longer, if you don't like them crunchy. Remove from the oven, glaze with some ginger honey, optionally sprinkle with some toasted sesame seeds and serve immediately.

Whiskey-Glazed Sweet Potatoes

Veggie Box sweet potatoes
1/2 cup pecans
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more for the dish
1/4 cup agave nectar (preferably amber)
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
2 tbs whiskey
Kosher salt
1 crisp apple (such as McIntosh or Cortland), peeled, halved, cored and cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Place the sweet potatoes on a baking sheet (do not pierce) and bake 25-30 minutes. Lightly squeeze the potatoes: If they're slightly soft, they're done. Let cool. Lightly toast the pecans in a medium saute pan over high heat, shaking the pan occasionally, about 3 minutes. Add the butter, then reduce the heat to medium and stir in the agave, cinnamon, nutmeg and cayenne; let simmer 4 to 5 minutes. Add the whiskey and a dash of salt; simmer 5 more minutes. Butter the bottom and sides of an 8-inch-square baking dish. Remove the peel from the sweet potatoes and cut crosswise into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Arrange the sweet potato and apple slices in the prepared pan, alternating. Pour the whiskey-pecan mixture over the top. Cover with aluminum foil and bake 15 minutes. Remove the foil and baste the top with the whiskey sauce that's collected in the bottom of the pan; continue baking until the apples are soft and glazed, about 18 more minutes.

Maple Glazed Beets

Veggie Box beets, peeled and quartered
3 tablespoons butter, divided
2 1/2 tablespoons maple syrup
1 lemon, zested and juiced

Heat the oven to 400 degrees F. Place the beets in a roasting pan. Dot with 1 tablespoon of butter, and roast the beets, covered, for about 30 minutes. Melt the other 2 tablespoons of margarine in the microwave. Stir in the maple syrup and 1 tablespoon of the lemon juice. Pour this mixture over the beets. Bake, covered, for another 30-40 minutes, or until the beets are tender and the sauce is thick. Sprinkle with the lemon zest and serve.