

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 12: December 3

Welcome to Week 12 of the Fall Veggie Box! We know you love to support local food since you're already part of the Veggie Box program, but what about when you go out to eat? Are you thinking about where that food is coming from, too? The Farm to Table movement focuses on producing food locally and then transferring that food to local restaurants. On top of the food being fresher and healthier, benefits of a locally sourced restaurants are: keeping money local, which boosts the local economy, fresh produce offers for in season produce, contributes to a sustainable agricultural economy and workforce, and creates shorter transport distances which reduces gas emissions. Most restaurants that source locally are also locally owned. When you are supporting these restaurants, you are supporting the families of Lansing, too. Some of our favorite locally sourced restaurants in Lansing are Red Haven, Gracie's Place, Midtown Brewing Company, The Purple Carrot Food Truck, and Golden Harvest! What other locally sourced restaurants do you know of?

Producer Spotlight

Lake Divide Farm

Lake divide Farm is a first generation family farm. Helen and Jim fell in love with growing food because of the satisfaction of an honest days work and the joy of doing something constructive and tangible for their community and the environment. They believe in food equality, that farming is an essential profession, and that producing food doesn't have to abuse the natural world. Helen and Jim plan on forging a business that affords them , and those who work with them, a living wage, while making nutrient dense, fresh food available to all members of their community.

Crop Profile

Napa Cabbage

Napa or nappa cabbage originated near the Beijing region of China, and is widely used in East Asian cuisine. It is a naturally hybridized cross between pak choi and a turnip! Since the 20th century, it is also a widespread crop in Europe, America and Australia. In much of the world, this is the vegetable referred to as "Chinese cabbage". Like tofu, Napa cabbage absorbs the flavours of the foods around it. That's why a lot of Chinese people like to add Napa cabbage in their soups or cook in a hot pot. The tender sweetness of Napa cabbage can also bring a sweetness to your soup. You can also eat it raw in salads and it's often added to stir-fries and steamed food. In Korean cuisine, napa cabbage is the main ingredient of baechu-kimchi, the most common type of kimchi.



What's in the Box?

- Salad Mix**, *Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing*
- Organic Napa Cabbage**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
- Gold Rush Apples**, *Hillcrest Farms, Eaton Rapids*
- Organic Kale**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
- Organic Popcorn**, *Ferris Organic Farm, Eaton Rapids*
- Organic Arugula**, *Lake Divide Farm, Stockbridge*
- Organic Cooking Turnips**, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
- Organic Rutabagas**, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*

Add-Ons

- Bread**, *Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt*
- Sweet Treats**, *Rooted Home Farm & Goods, Lansing*

Recipes and Tips!

Turnip and Rutabaga Gratin

1 Veggie Box rutabaga, peeled and thinly sliced
1 teaspoon thyme leaves
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more for buttering the baking dish
Veggie Box turnips, peeled and thinly sliced
2 1/4 cups bread crumbs, preferably homemade
1 1/2 cup vegetable stock, preferably homemade
1 1/2 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/4 cup of parmesan

Preheat the oven to 450° and lightly butter a 9x11 baking dish. Arrange a thin, even layer of the rutabaga slices across the bottom of the dish. Sprinkle with a pinch of thyme, salt and pepper, then dot with tiny pats of the butter. Arrange a thin, even layer of turnip slices over the rutabaga. Sprinkle with thyme, salt and pepper and dot with more butter. Continue the layering process, alternating between the rutabaga and turnip, until the dish is approximately two-thirds full and all the vegetables have been included. Season the bread crumbs with salt and black pepper and spread over the vegetables. Pour the stock and cream over the bread crumbs; press down on the bread crumbs gently to absorb the liquids. Drizzle with the olive oil. Bake until the gratin is golden brown and the vegetables in the center of the dish are tender when poked with a paring knife, about 30 minutes. Add parmesan, and then add back to the oven for another 5-8 minutes. Remove the gratin from the oven and let rest for 20 minutes, then serve.

How to Peel a Rutabaga!

One of the most common mistakes made with rutabagas is not peeling them correctly, and in turn, believing rutabagas naturally have a woody-like texture. Preparing a rutabaga for cooking can be a daunting task for the cook who has never handled one of these thick-skinned vegetables before. Place the rutabaga on a cutting board. Using a sharp knife, slice the vegetable in half. Turn each half onto its flat side, then cut it into 1/2 inch thick semi-circles. Throw away the first and last piece which are covered in thicker skin. Use a paring knife to remove the outer skin of each semi-circular piece. This method is much easier than trying to peel a rutabaga with a potato peeler – really a mission impossible. Next, lay each piece flat and cut into 1-inch cubes.

Traditional Kimchi

Veggie Box Napa Cabbage
1/2 cup coarse sea salt
2 1/2 cups water
1/2 pound daikon radish
3 - 4 scallions
1/2 tablespoon glutinous rice powder* (Mix it with 1/4 cup water simmer over low heat until it thickens to a thin paste and then cool)
1/4 cup Korean red chili pepper flakes
1 1/2 tablespoons minced garlic
1/2 teaspoon grated ginger
1/2 teaspoon sesame seeds optional
1/4 cup water

Cut the thick white part of the cabbage lengthwise in half. Then, slowly pull apart by hand to separate into two pieces. Do the same for each half to make quarters. Running the knife through all the way would unnecessarily cut off the cabbage leaves. In a large bowl, dissolve 1/4 cup of salt in 2.5 cups of water. Thoroughly bathe each cabbage quarter in the salt water one at a time, shake off excess water back into the bowl, and then transfer to another bowl. Using the other quarter cup of salt and starting from the outermost leaf, generously sprinkle salt over the thick white part of each leaf. Pour the remaining salt water from the first bowl over the cabbage. Set aside for about 6 - 8 hours, rotating the bottom ones to the top every 2 hours. The cabbages should be ready to be washed when the white parts of the leaves are easily bendable. Rinse thoroughly 3 times. Drain well, cut side down. Mix the rice powder with 1/4 cup water and simmer over low heat, stirring occasionally, until it thickens to a thin paste, and cool. Combine all the seasoning ingredients, including the rice paste and water, and mix well. Set aside until the red pepper flakes to dissolve slightly and become pasty. Cut the radish into matchsticks and transfer to a large bowl. Cut the scallions diagonally into about 1-inch long pieces. Add the prepared seasoning mix to the radish, and mix well by hand. Throw in the scallions, and mix everything lightly. Taste a little bit. It should be a little too salty to eat as is. Let it sit for about 30 minutes to allow the flavors to meld nicely. Cut off the tough stem part from each cabbage quarter, leaving enough to hold the leaves together. Place one cabbage quarter in the bowl with the radish mix. Spread the radish mix over each leaf, one to two tablespoons for large leaves. Fold the leaf part of the cabbage over toward the stem and nicely wrap it with the outer leaf. Place it, cut side up, in a jar or airtight container. Repeat with the remaining cabbages. Once all the cabbages are in the jar or airtight container, press down hard to remove air pockets. Rinse the bowl that contained the radish mix with 1/2 cup of water and pour over the kimchi. Leave it out at room temp for a full day or two, and then store in the fridge.