

# Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 13, December 10

You have probably heard of the term 'food desert' but what about 'food swamp'? Although related, the two are different issues and have unique health, environmental, and policy implications. A food desert is an area that, simply put, doesn't have access to healthy foods. This is defined in a number of ways, but most commonly means an urban area more than one mile from a grocery store, or rural area more than 10 miles. Food swamps, however, may have access to healthy, fresh foods and may have grocery stores, but healthy foods are outnumbered by fast food and other unhealthy options by at least a 1:4 ratio. So, for every one grocery store or place to get healthy foods, there are at least four unhealthy options. Food swamps are cropping up more and more in low-income and urban areas, and disproportionately impact People of Color and low-income individuals. Recent studies have shown that food swamps, when compared to food deserts, have much stronger correlations with obesity and other diet-related health conditions. There are a multitude of reasons for this, but most -simply put, food swamps create an environment where it's hard to escape the pull of junk food. Constantly seeing unhealthy food options means that the brain's reward center is being repeatedly stimulated, causing the body to crave the sweet, salty, fatty foods that it knows it can easily have. Making the choice to seek out and eat a healthier option requires mental energy, and often the folks stuck in food swamps face these decisions over and over. Being forced to make these choices repeatedly and use that mental energy each time can result in a phenomenon called 'decision fatigue', when someone has to make many hard decisions and their ability to reason and make good decisions becomes weaker and weaker. Eating unhealthy foods can also impact our decision making since foods rich in fats and sugars can lead to chronic inflammation and poor gut health, which research has indicated may have a negative impact on brain chemistry leading to mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and poor mood regulation, all of which make choosing healthy options even more difficult.

## Producer Spotlight *Grazing Fields Cooperative*

Grazing Fields is a Michigan, multi-farm cooperative and wholesaler of natural free-range brown eggs. They have been delivering great products to mid and southeast Michigan grocery stores and restaurants every week since 1997. Grazing Fields supports small and medium size farms throughout the region. When you purchase Grazing Fields eggs you purchase the assurance that your Michigan natural brown eggs are delivered fresh to your door each week by cage-free chickens and people who care.

## Crop Profile *Hakurei Turnips*

Like all turnips, the Hakurei, or Tokyo, turnip is a member of the Brassica family. This Japanese variety is sometimes referred to as a salad turnip, due to its crisp, delicious raw flavor. Unlike other turnip varieties, hakurei do not need to be cooked. They have an even-textured density and the flavor pairs well with a variety of different food items. Eat them raw (just whole, or chopped/grated in salads), make a quick pickle, or cook to enhance their natural sweetness.

ALLEN  
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Veggie Box

## What's in the Box?

**Organic Rutabaga**, *Cinzori Farms*, Ceresco  
**Garlic**, *Side Hustle Farm*, Potterville  
**Gold Rush Apples**, *Hillcrest Farms*, Eaton Rapids  
**Kale**, *Ten Hens Farm*, Bath  
**Blue Potatoes**, *Titus Farms*, Leslie  
**Organic Yellow Onions**, *Cinzori Farms*, Ceresco  
**Organic Hakurei Turnips**, *CBI's Giving Tree Farm*, Lansing  
**Lemon Thyme**, *Hunter Park GardenHouse*, Lansing

## Add-Ons

**Eggs**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative*, Charlotte  
**Bread**, *Stone Circle Bakehouse*, Holt  
**Coffee**, *Rust Belt Roastery*, Lansing  
**Cold Brew**, *Rust Belt Roastery*, Lansing  
**Kombucha**, *Apple Blossom Kombucha*, Lansing  
**Cheese**, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery*, Onondaga  
**Chevre**, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery*, Onondaga  
**Meat**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative*, Charlotte  
**Chicken**, *Trillium Wood Farm*, Williamston  
**Beef**, *Heffron Farms Markets*, Belding  
**Pork**, *Grazing Fields Cooperative*, Charlotte  
**Organic Navy Beans**, *Ferris Organic Farm*, Eaton Rapids

# Recipes and Tips!

## Veggie Box Curry

2 tablespoons canola oil  
1/2 cup of Veggie Box onion, sliced vertically  
4 cloves Veggie Box garlic, minced  
1 tablespoon minced ginger  
1/2 tablespoon ground turmeric  
1/2 tablespoon of curry powder  
1 teaspoons ground cumin  
2 teaspoons ground coriander  
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper, or to taste  
1 cup vegetable broth  
1 can (15-ounce) coconut milk, regular or light  
1 can (15-ounce) diced or crushed tomatoes  
1 cup of cubed Rutabaga  
Veggie Box potatoes cut into cubes  
Veggie Box kale, chopped  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
Brown basmati rice, for serving

**Heat canola oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the onion, reduce heat to medium and cook 4-5 minutes or until beginning to soften. Add the garlic, ginger, turmeric, curry, cumin, coriander and cayenne. Stir briefly (approximately 30 seconds) or until fragrant. Add the rutabaga and potatoes and cook for a few minutes. Add the kale. Add the vegetable broth, coconut milk, and tomatoes. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover and simmer 15 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Season to taste with salt and black pepper. Serve with brown basmati rice.**



## Pasty

*For the Shortcrust Pastry:*

3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
10 tbsps unsalted butter, very cold, diced  
3/4 cup lard, very cold  
2/3 cup ice cold water

*For the Cornish Pasties:*

1 pound beef skirt steak or sirloin, cut into small cubes (for vegetarian option, leave out the meat and add more vegetables!)  
1 pound firm, waxy potato, peeled and diced in 1/4 inch cubes, or slice them according to personal preference  
1/2 pound of rutabaga, peeled and diced in 1/4 inch cubes, or slice them according to personal preference  
1 1/3 cup of Veggie Box yellow onion, chopped  
4 cloves of Veggie Box garlic, minced  
salt and pepper to taste  
unsalted butter (for cutting in slices to lay inside the pasties)  
all-purpose flour (for sprinkling inside the pasties)  
1 large egg, lightly beaten

**To Make the Shortcrust Pastry: Place the flour and salt in a food processor and pulse a few times until combined. Add the cold butter and lard and pulse a few more times until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add the water a little at a time, pulsing between additions, until the mixture begins to come together. Form the dough into a ball, flatten into a 1-inch thick disk, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 3 hours before using (this is crucial). To Make the Cornish Pasties: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Roll the pastry dough into a log and cut it into 6 equal pieces. Wrap and keep the other 5 pieces chilled in the fridge while you're working on one at a time. Roll the dough out on a lightly floured work surface to a 8 inch circle that's about 1/8 inch thick. Layer the filling (each ingredient to be divided out between 6 pasties, there may be some excess remaining): Put layer of potatoes down the center of the pastry circle, leaving about 3/4 inch space on the top and bottom edges of the pastry dough. Lightly sprinkle with salt and pepper. Next add a layer of rutabagas, onions and finally the beef, adding a light sprinkling of salt and pepper between each layer. Lay a couple of pats of butter on top of the beef and sprinkle a little flour over the filling. Wet the tips of your fingers and lightly moisten the edges of the pastry dough. Bring the sides up and seal the pasty down the middle. Turn the pasty onto its side and crimp the edges. Assemble the remaining pasties and lay them on a lined baking sheet. Use a sharp knife to cut a slit in the center of each pasty. Lightly brush each pasty with the beaten egg mixture. Bake the Cornish pasties on the middle rack for 40-50 minutes until golden in color. Remove from the oven and let them sit for about 10 minutes**