

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 6, July 8

Food traditions that have been passed through your family are more than just recipes – they're windows into the culture and history of those who came before you. For most people, there are specific foods and recipes that help to connect us to a culture or history that has been handed down for generations. The intersection of food with culture and history is understood through the study of foodways. Foodways are all of the traditional activities, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors associated with the food in your daily life. Foodways include customs of food production, preservation, preparation, presentation, gathering, marketing (both buying and selling), uses of food products other than for eating and food folklore. Foodways connect people to a geographic region, a climate, a period of time, an ethnic or religious group, and a family. New foodways are being created or revived all the time - for example, there is a renewed

interest in canning and preserving as a result of foodways being rediscovered. Considering how foodways are alive in your life can help create an appreciation for the role and importance that food plays in our lives. What role do you think Veggie Box play in foodways? Thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight

CBI's Giving Tree Farm

CBI's (Community Based Interventions) Giving Tree Farm is a seven acre, non-profit CSA farm just north of Lansing, MI between Old Town and Dewitt. The farm originally began as a community garden for people with disabilities. As it's volunteer base grew, so did the available programs. The farm has established a heated greenhouse and eight hoop houses for year-round horticultural therapy programs. Monday through Friday, the farm provides vocational training for people who have suffered from traumatic brain injuries, allowing them to organically cultivate the produce provided to provide to the community.

Crop Profile

Fennel

Fennel is a flowering plant in the carrot family that is native to the Mediterranean region. There are two main types of fennel: herb fennel and Florence fennel, or the Italian finocchio. Herb fennel's stems, seeds, and feathery leaves that look just like its cousin dill are all harvested and used. Florence fennel, however, is grown primarily for its large, bulb-like bottom that is eaten as a vegetable. Typically, the trimmed off green tops only garnish dishes. Regardless of type, fennel has a strong anise or licorice flavor. The crisp bulbs can be eaten raw by cutting into thin slices for salads and slaws. If it's cooked, the bulb's flavor becomes softer and more mellow. In various cultures, fennel has a long history for its uses as an herb, food source, and object in important rituals. It has also been considered one of the best carminatives, which are used to reduce gas, bloating, and nausea, and was baked or boiled along with other foods to make them easier to digest. Today, fennel is still used in many of the same ways and may make a helpful digestive aid in addition to being a delicious vegetable or spice.



What's in the Box?

Basil, Magnolia Avenue Farms, Lansing

New Potatoes, Titus Farms, Leslie

Summer Squash, Peckham Farms, Lansing

Fresh Garlic, Magnolia Farms, Lansing

Organic Fennel, CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing

Cabbage, Ten Hens Farm, Bath

Tomato, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing

Blueberries, Felzke Farms, Dewitt

Add-Ons

Bread, Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt

Meat, Heffron Farms Market, Belding

Recipes and Tips!

Blueberry-Basil Limeade

1 cup sugar
3 sprigs fresh Veggie Box basil, plus basil leaves, for garnish
1 1/2 cups fresh lime juice (from about 12 limes)
Half of your Veggie Box blueberries
Gin, for serving, (optional)

Place the sugar, basil sprigs and 1 cup of water into a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring every so often, until the sugar has dissolved, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat, add the blueberries and muddle them. Let steep for 30 minutes. Filter out the basil and blueberries and pour the syrup into a pitcher. Stir in the lime juice and 4 cups of cold water. To serve, put some ice in a glass, pour over the limeade and garnish with basil leaves. To make into a cocktail, add ice to a rocks glass and top with 1 1/2 ounces gin. Top off with the limeade and garnish with basil.

Herbed Summer Squash and Potato Torte with Parmesan

1 onion, thinly sliced
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons all purpose flour
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
1 teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
Veggie Box potatoes cut into 1/8-inch-thick rounds
All Veggie Box summer squash, cut into 1/8-inch-thick rounds
6 teaspoons olive oil

Preheat oven to 375. Butter an 8-inch-diameter cake pan. Toss onions, cheese, flour, parsley, salt and pepper in medium bowl to blend. Layer potatoes in circular pattern in bottom of pan, overlapping slightly. Layer squash in a circular pattern atop potatoes. Drizzle with 1 teaspoon oil. Sprinkle with cheese mixture. Repeat two more times, and press firmly to flatten. Cover pan with foil. Bake until potatoes are almost tender, about 40 minutes. Remove foil; bake uncovered until tortes begin to brown and potatoes are tender, about 25 minutes longer. (Can be made 6 hours ahead. Cool. Cover with foil and chill. Rewarm, covered with foil, in 350 oven until heated through, about 30 minutes.) Cut each torte into wedges.

Sweet Fennel Butter

1/2 pound (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
3 tablespoons chopped fresh fennel fronds
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed orange juice
2 teaspoons freshly grated orange zest
1 teaspoon honey

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Mix together butter, fennel or dill, orange juice, zest and honey until smooth, either in a food processor, in an electric mixer, or by hand. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Scrape butter into a decorative small bowl and serve.



Fennel & Potato Gratin

3 tablespoons butter
1 onion, sliced
2 Veggie Box garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 1/4 cups half-and-half
1/2 (10-oz.) block sharp white Cheddar cheese, shredded
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
Veggie Box potatoes thinly sliced
Veggie Box fennel bulb, thinly sliced

Preheat oven to 400°. Melt butter in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add onion; sauté 2 to 3 minutes or until tender. Add garlic, and sauté 1 minute. Whisk in flour; cook, whisking constantly, 1 minute. Gradually whisk in half-and-half; cook, whisking constantly, 3 to 4 minutes or until thickened and bubbly. Remove from heat. Whisk in cheese until melted and smooth. Stir in salt and next 2 ingredients. Layer potato and fennel slices alternately in a lightly greased, broiler-safe ceramic 2-qt. casserole dish. Spread cheese sauce over layers. Cover with aluminum foil. Bake at 400° for 50 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Remove from oven. Increase oven temperature to broil with oven rack 5 inches from heat. Uncover dish, and broil 2 to 4 minutes or until golden brown.