

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 6, July 6

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

MSU Student Organic Farm

The MSU Student Organic Farm is a 15 acre year-round educational, organic farm located in Holt, MI about 3 miles south of the Michigan State University campus. Started in 1999 by students who desired a more hands-on learning experience, the farm now offers a nearly year-long intensive program for those interested in learning everything they can about organic farming. Not only do the students tend to the fields, but the program also involves caring for the farm's livestock. The farm also operates an 8-month Organic Farmer Training Program (OFTP) in year-round organic farming focusing on diversified production of vegetables, flowers, fruits, and herbs for local markets. The OFTP is a robust learning platform for those who are committed to owning their own farm business, managing farm operations, or working with others on their path to food production and sustainable agriculture

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 Elizabethans enjoyed them in tarts and stews. Thomas Jefferson planted them at Monticello. Medieval cooks stuffed them into pies. 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 percent 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?

Organic Basil, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
Organic Carrots, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*
New Potatoes, *Titus Farms, Leslie*
Fresh Garlic, *Magnolia Farms, Lansing*
Organic Cucumbers, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
Blueberries, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*
Organic Beets, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*

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.

Roasted Beets with Feta and Basil

Veggie Box beets
2 tablespoons Veggie Box basil, cut into thin strips
1/4 cup feta cheese, crumbled
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, divided
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided
Salt and pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 350F degrees. Cut off beet greens. Scrub beets well and dry, then coat each with a little olive oil. Place in an ovenproof pan, cover with foil and roast for 40-45 minutes, or until the beets are tender. Remove the beets from the oven and set aside until they are cool enough to handle. Remove the skin from the cooled beets and cut into bite sized pieces. Place the cut beets back in the pan and toss with 2 tablespoons each of balsamic vinegar and olive oil. Roast for an additional 10 minutes. Place the cooked beets in a large bowl. Add the basil with the remaining 1 tablespoon each of balsamic and olive oil and mix well. Add feta cheese and toss gently, then season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve immediately or cover and chill in the refrigerator until ready to use.

Creamy Cucumber Salad

Veggie Box cucumbers (2)
2 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt divided
Cracked black pepper (to taste)
1 cup sour cream
3 tablespoons white vinegar
1/2 teaspoon sugar
1 small clove Veggie Box garlic, minced

Peel (if you wish) and thinly slice cucumbers. Sprinkle them with 2 teaspoons of kosher salt and place them in a colander in the sink. Allow the salt to draw out the excess moisture for about 30 minutes. Make the dressing by combining, the sour cream, remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt, vinegar, sugar, and garlic, and mix well. Once the cucumbers have drained, shake off the excess moisture and combine them with the dressing in a large bowl. Refrigerate until serving.

Caramelized Beet-Lentil Pilaf

3/4 cup brown lentils, rinsed
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil, plus more for serving
1 onion, thinly sliced
Veggie Box beets, greens and stems chopped, root peeled and coarsely grated
Kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1 cup long-grain white rice
Yogurt, for serving
Paprika or cayenne for serving

Add lentils to a small saucepan and cover with 3 inches of water. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and partially cover. Cook until lentils are almost tender, 10 to 12 minutes; drain. In a large straight-sided skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion, grated beets, and a generous pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden and caramelized, 10 to 12 minutes. Add 1 teaspoon salt, cumin, and rice and cook until rice looks opaque, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in 1 1/2 cups water and lentils and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer until rice is crisp-tender, 15 minutes. Uncover and top with beet greens. Cover and cook until greens are bright green and tender, 5 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand, covered, for 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork. Serve with yogurt, paprika/cayenne, and a drizzle of oil.