

# Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 1, September 14

ALLEN

Veggie Box

We're on native land. Specifically, Allen Neighborhood Center is on land belonging to the Anishinaabe (Ojawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi people) & Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which today is called Lansing, Michigan. Lansing was originally called "Nkwejong," meaning "where the rivers meet," and Michigan comes from the Ojibwe word "mishigamaa," meaning "large lake." The purpose of this statement is to show respect for indigenous peoples, and recognize their enduring relationship to the land. Practicing acknowledgment can also raise awareness about histories that are often suppressed or forgotten. Given how closely Veggie Box is tied to the land and the environment, we think it's important to acknowledge the history of the relationships that indigenous folks had (and continue to have) with the land, plants, and animals, and how these relationships sustained communities for generations. Over the next fourteen weeks, we ask that you continue to remind yourself of indigenous presence and land rights in our community. What might our local food system look like if it were to have a deeper respect and understanding of indigenous cultures? In what ways has colonialism disrupted indigenous foodways? How can this be combated? Thank you for supporting local food!

## Producer Spotlight

### *Cinzori Farms*

Cinzori Farms is part of an Agriculture Cooperative and was one of the first farms in Michigan to become organically certified in 1985. The farm has grown a great deal since it was first established, and now occupies more than 60 acres - all of which are used to propagate fresh herbs and produce. Cinzori Farms is owned and operated by father and son, Don and Anthony Cinzori, and sells at a number of Michigan farmers markets, as well as Michigan grocery stores.

## Crop Profile

### *Okra*

Okra, a fruit that is native to Ethiopia, is eaten as a vegetable. While many associate okra with summertime in the Southeastern U.S., it was brought to North America by enslaved people and settlers when they arrive centuries ago. It grows best in hot and humid climates, and leading growers include India, Nigeria, Sudan, Pakistan, Ghana, Egypt, Benin, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, and Cameroon. Okra can be divisive for its slimy texture. It contains mucilage, which is a naturally occurring substance that acts as a thickener for stews or gumbos. While some are off put by this, others find its unique texture perfect for roasting or frying. Quick roasting and dry heat can help minimize the sliminess. Okra is rich in fiber and protein, and low in calories.

## What's in the Box?

**Organic Carrots**, MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt  
**Organic Okra**, Cinzori Farms, Ceresco  
**Hot Pepper Mix**, Magnolia Avenue Farms, Lansing  
**Onions**, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing  
**Organic Summer Squash**, Owosso Organics, Owosso  
**Garlic**, Magnolia Avenue Farms, Lansing  
**Organic Celery**, CBI's Giving Tree Farm, Lansing  
**Tomatoes**, Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing  
**Organic Tomatillos**, Cinzori Farms, Ceresco

## Add-Ons

**Bread**, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt  
**Meat Variety**, Heffron Farms Market, Belding  
**Kombucha**, Apple Blossom Kombucha, Lansing  
**Cheese**, Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga  
**Chevre**, Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga  
**Chicken**, Trillium Wood Farms, Williamston  
**Beef**, Heffron Farms Market, Belding  
**Pork**, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte  
**Organic Navy Beans**, Ferris Organic Farms, Eaton Rapids  
**Coffee**, 517 Coffee Company, Lansing  
**Eggs**, Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte

# Recipes and Tips!

## Bamya (Okra stew)

### For the okra stew:

3 Tablespoons olive oil.  
1 cup of cooked, brown lentils  
Veggie Box onions, diced  
4 Veggie Box garlic cloves, minced  
Tablespoon freshly ground coriander.  
2 Veggie Box hot peppers, diced  
2 Tablespoon fresh cilantro chopped.  
Veggie Box okra, chopped  
4 Tablespoons tomato paste.  
Veggie Box tomatoes, cubed and crushed.  
2 cups broth.  
1 teaspoon salt or to taste.  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper.  
1 bay leaf

### For the garlic relish/mix (Tasha):

3 Tablespoons olive oil.  
4 Veggie Box garlic cloves minced.  
1 Tablespoon freshly ground coriander.  
1/2 cup fresh cilantro chopped.  
1 tablespoon red chili pepper diced. Optional for extra heat

**Cook lentils. Then, in a pot, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion, garlic and coriander then sauté for about 2-3 minute until fragrant. Add chopped cilantro, stir until fragrant for almost another 30 seconds. Add jalapeño peppers and keep stirring for a minute. Now, mix in the okra and tomato paste. Pour in crushed tomatoes and broth. Add salt, pepper, and bay leaf, and bring the whole mixture to a gentle boil. Add in your lentils. Reduce heat and cover, let it simmer on low for 20 minutes. Make the garlic topping (Tasha): Heat olive oil in a non-stick skillet on medium-high. Add garlic, cilantro, coriander and pepper if using. Sauté until mixture is fragrant, this will take about two to three minutes. Add half the mixture to the okra stew, stir and keep simmering for another 3-4 minutes. Serve okra stew topped with the remaining Tasha mixture. At the end, add a splash bit of freshly squeezed lemon juice, and serve over rice.**

## Fried Okra

Veggie Box okra, sliced (the thinner you slice it, the slimier it will be)  
3 tablespoons buttermilk  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
2 tablespoons cornmeal  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon garlic herb seasoning blend  
1/8 teaspoon pepper  
Oil for deep-fat frying  
Additional salt and pepper, optional

**Pat okra dry with paper towels. Place buttermilk in a shallow bowl. In another shallow bowl, combine the flour, cornmeal, salt, seasoning blend and pepper. Dip okra in buttermilk, then roll in cornmeal mixture. In deep skillet, heat 1 in. of oil to 375°. Fry okra, a few pieces at a time, for 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Season with additional salt and pepper if desired.**

## Celery Stew

4 cups Veggie Box celery in 1/2-inch chunks  
Veggie Box tomatoes  
1 1/2 cups diced Veggie Box onions  
3 Tbs. butter  
1 Tbs. olive oil  
2 cloves Veggie Box garlic  
2 Veggie Box carrots, sliced  
2 cups hot broth  
1 sprig of thyme  
1 bay leaf  
2 cups cooked beans  
Salt and freshly ground pepper

**Saute onions and garlic in butter and oil. Stir in celery, carrots, salt and pepper; cover and cook over medium-low heat for 5-10 minutes stirring occasionally. Chop tomatoes and add along with herbs and broth. Cover pan and cook for 10-15 minutes longer or until celery is tender. Stir in beans and cook until heated through. Season to taste and serve hot. Serves 6-8.**