

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 5, June 28

Welcome to week 5 of the Summer Veggie Box! The South is distinctive in its customs, dialect, and cuisine. It's made up of many different people who came to the region, each contributing to what is now called Southern cuisine. For example, indigenous peoples had a strong influence in the early beginnings of Southern food: crops like corn, and techniques like frying and barbecuing. However, Spanish explorers in the 1500s brought pigs with them, introducing pork to the region. West Africans carried some of their traditional foods with them, such as watermelon, eggplant, collard greens, and okra, when they were brought by force as slaves beginning in the 1600s. Creoles, known for their unique use of spices, are descended from French and Haitian immigrants who later mingled with Spanish settlers in the New Orleans area. "Cajuns," also recognized for their unique style of cooking, were originally Acadians, French settlers in Nova Scotia who were driven out by the British in the 1700s and made their way to New Orleans. However, African slaves have had the largest impact on this cuisine by far: the intersections of African food preparations, class status, laws that prevented equal access and innovative survival prevailed and mixed with other cultures to create what we consider Southern Cuisine. Another interesting fact - much of the distinct nature and flavors of Southern foods come from preservation methods. Using salt and frying foods were used to make food last longer without refrigeration, as was drying meats to make jerky. Thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight

Felzke Farms

Felzke Farms is a family farm located in Dewitt, Michigan that was founded in 1960. They are the largest producer of strawberries in mid-Michigan, offering both U-Pick opportunities as well as prepicked options at their indoor farm market that has been in operation since 1978. Felzke Farms also grows a variety of vegetables such as asparagus, summer squash, cucumbers, peppers, and more!

Crop Profile

Green Tomatoes

There are two types of green tomatoes: red tomatoes that haven't yet ripened and some varieties (normally heirlooms) that have a naturally green color once fully ripe. Both can be eaten and taste delicious, although they each have their own flavor profile and best uses. For the most part, when you hear the term "green tomatoes" or see it on a restaurant menu, it usually refers to unripe red tomatoes, which have an entirely different taste and texture than when ripe. Green (unripe) tomatoes are much less juicy than their red counterparts. They have a firm, crunchy texture and a tart, acidic flavor that lend them well to completely different uses. They'll soften and mellow as they cook, but their crisper texture allows them to hold up well to slicing and frying, something that's impossible to do well with a soft red tomato - which is probably why this is one of the most popular ways to prepare them.



What's in the Box?

Organic Mint, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
Green Tomatoes, *Peckham Farms, Lansing*
Organic Spinach, *Green Wagon Farm, Ada*
Strawberries, *Felzke Farms, Dewitt*
Organic Hakurei Turnips, *Green Wagon Farm, Ada*
Organic Collards, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*
Organic Garlic Scapes, *Owosso Organics, Owosso*

Add-Ons

Eggs, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
Bread, *Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt*
Chevre, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*
Cheese, *Hickory Knoll Farms Creamery, Onondaga*
Kombucha, *Apple Blossom Kombucha, Lansing*
Coffee, *The 517 Coffee Company, Lansing*
Organic Black Turtle Beans, *Ferris Organic Farm, Eaton Rapids*
Meat, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
Pork, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*
Beef, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*
Chicken, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

Recipes and Tips!

Southern Fried Green Tomatoes

Veggie Box green tomatoes

1 egg mixed with a splash of buttermilk (or regular milk)

A shallow bowl of flour

A shallow bowl of cornmeal

paprika, salt, and pepper to taste

Slice the tomatoes into 1/4 inch slices, and sprinkle with salt, pepper, and paprika on both sides. Next, dredge the tomato slices in flour, then the egg/milk mixture, and finally the cornmeal. Heat oil 1/4 - 1/2 an inch of oil in a cast iron skillet until hot, and then fry each side until golden brown. Commonly, fried green tomatoes are served with a mayonnaise/ ketchup dipping sauce (flavored with cayenne or paprika and garlic powder). Enjoy!



Southern Collard Greens

Veggie Box collard greens washed, and cut

1 medium sized ham hock (optional)

1 1/2 cups broth

1 tsp seasoning salt

1/4 tsp ground black pepper

1/2 tsp red pepper flakes

1/2 large onion diced

1 tsp vinegar white or apple cider vinegar will do

4-5 Veggie Box garlic scapes, minced.

Start off by placing the smoked ham hock and the water into a slow cooker. Set the slow cooker on high, and let cook for 2 hours, or until tender. Next, transfer the ham hock, and the liquid to a large pot. Place the pot over medium high heat, and start adding in the collard greens. Once all of the collard greens are in the pot, add in the onions, garlic, and seasonings. Give everything a nice stir, then add in the vinegar. Reduce the heat to medium, and let the greens cook for about an hour, or until tender. Enjoy!

Strawberry Shortcake with Mint Whipped Cream

For the biscuits:

2 cups (240 grams) all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon (14 grams) baking powder

1 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

1/2 cup (1 stick, 113 grams) cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

3/4 cup-1 cup (175-240 milliliters) milk or buttermilk

For the strawberries:

1/2 Veggie Box strawberries, sliced

1 tbsp granulated sugar

For the mint whipped cream:

1 cup heavy cream

1/4 cup sugar

2 tablespoons water

a handful of Veggie Box mint leaves

For the mint whipped cream, combine sugar, water, and mint leaves in a small sauce pan and bring to a boil. Cook and stir the mixture until the sugar has fully dissolved. About five minutes. Sift out the mint leaves and put the syrup into the refrigerator. Let it cool completely. Whip the heavy cream in a mixing bowl until you see soft peak. Set aside. Slowly fold the mint syrup into the whipped cream. Set aside. Preheat the oven to 450 F. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt together. If you want to add any herbs or spices you can add them here. Add the pieces of cold butter and cut into the dry ingredients with a pastry cutter or fork until the consistency of coarse meal. Add 3/4 cup of the milk and stir just until combined. If the batter is very dry, add a little more milk until the consistency of a very thick batter. Do not over-mix. The batter will be quite lumpy. Drop large mounds (about 1/4 cup each) onto a baking sheet. Bake for 18-22 minutes until golden brown. While the biscuits are baking, mash together the strawberries and sugar and let rest for at least 10 minutes for the juices to release. To serve, cut a warm biscuit in half, spoon strawberries over the biscuit, and top with whipped cream. Enjoy!