

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 6, October 18

Welcome to the sixth week of the Fall Veggie Box! When talking about our food system, it is imperative that we understand how racial injustice has pervaded the industry for hundreds of years. The food system we know today was built on the mistreatment and exploitation of people of color including the taking of land from Indigenous peoples, the enslavement of Black individuals to work in the fields, discriminatory immigration laws against Asian farm laborers, and the ongoing mistreatment of Latinx farmworkers. These are all examples indicative of a system built on control and corruption. For centuries, the capitalist food system that we primarily know has concentrated its power in the hands of the privileged few and pushed social and environmental injustices primarily onto racially stigmatized groups. Farms are predominantly run by white farmers whereas farm workers are disproportionately people of color. These workers are often paid poverty level wages and experience high levels of food insecurity, wage theft, harassment, in addition to a lack of benefits. Race, poverty, and food insecurity are all interconnected. Recognizing racism in our food system is an important step in creating a system that is rooted in equity. What could a system that is rooted in equity look like? What are other instances of racism in our food system, how did they originate, and what are their impacts?

Producer Spotlight

Green Eagle Farm

Steve and Chela of Green Eagle Farm are 30 year veteran farmers and stewards of the land operating out of Onandaga, Michigan. Not long after they met, the two knew that they were destined to be together as life partners and land stewards. They take great joy in growing a wide variety of vegetables, flowers, and herbs, including heirloom and open-pollinated varieties, all while being earth friendly in their practices and care for the environment. They feel committed to passing on heirloom types by saving seed and supporting seed companies that offer heirlooms. You know they care about what they do when you see the mature lemon and fig trees carefully protected from the Michigan winters in one of their hoop houses. All their produce is ecologically grown, following organic standards.

Crop Profile

Rutabaga

The rutabaga is a root vegetable that originated as a cross between the cabbage and the turnip. The root can be prepared in a variety of ways, and the leaves can be eaten as a leaf vegetable. Various European countries have a tradition of carving them into lanterns at halloween, similar to the way we carve pumpkins! The first known printed reference to the rutabaga comes from the Swiss botanist Gaspard Bauhin in 1620.

Introduction to North America came in the early 19th century with reports of rutabaga crops in Illinois as early as 1817. Finns cook rutabaga in a variety of ways: roasted, baked, boiled, as a flavor enhancer in soups, uncooked and thinly julienned as a side dish or in a salad, and as the major ingredient in the popular Christmas dish lanttulaatikko (swede casserole). Rutabaga is nice baked into a casserole with potatoes and cheese-gruyere is a family favorite for us! The flavor of raw rutabaga tastes milder than turnips almost like a carrot without sweetness. It's crisp, juicy, and just a tiny bit piquant. Rutabagas truly shine in baked dishes.

ALLEN
NUTRITION CENTER

Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Strawberries, Peckham Farms, Lansing

Organic Red Potatoes, Cinzori Farms, Ceresco

Organic Spinach, MSU Organic Farm, Holt

Organic Rutabaga, Cinzori Farms, Ceresco

Organic Cilantro, Monroe Family Organics, Alma

Garlic, Ten Hens Farm, Bath

Sweet Potatoes, *Green Eagle Farm*, Onondaga

Organic Onion, *Owosso Organics*, Owosso

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle BakeHouse*, Holt

Meat, Heffron Farms, Belding

Recipes and Tips!

Sweet Potato Black Bean Enchiladas

Veggie Box Sweet Potatoes, cubed in small chunks

1 Veggie Box Jalapeño (from last week), minced

1/2 Veggie Box Onion, diced small

2 teaspoons olive oil

1 teaspoon cumin

1 teaspoon chili powder

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon black pepper

1 can (15 oz) black beans drained & rinsed

¼ cup chopped Veggie Box Cilantro

juice of 1 lime

Optional: 1 cup corn

2 cups shredded cheese

10 tortillas

1 can (16 oz) enchilada sauce (or make your own!)

Heat oven to 425°. In a bowl or on a baking sheet stir together the sweet potatoes, diced jalapeno, onion, olive oil, cumin, chili powder, salt, and pepper. Cook for 18-20 minutes until soft, stirring halfway through. Add roasted mixture into a large mixing bowl and add the black beans, lime juice, and half of the chopped cilantro. Stir to combine. Pour 1/3 cup of the enchilada sauce in the bottom of a 9x13 baking pan. Assemble the enchiladas adding sweet potato filling and shredded cheese, rolling them up tightly. Place seam side down in the pan and repeat with remaining tortillas. Pour the remainder of the enchilada sauce over the tortillas, top with remaining cheese. Cook uncovered for 20-25 minutes. Garnish with cilantro and serve with preferred toppings like sour cream.

Strawberry Cilantro Salsa

Veggie Box Strawberries, chopped

2 Tbsp Veggie Box Cilantro, roughly chopped

2 green onions white and green portion sliced

1 Veggie Box Jalapeno, minced

Juice of one lime about 2 tablespoons

1/4 tsp teaspoon fine sea salt

Add all ingredients to a medium bowl and stir well. Let rest in the fridge for 10 to 15 minutes before serving. Serve with chips!



Frozen then Baked Sweet Potatoes

Roasted sweet potatoes are a common wintertime snack you can get from street food vendors around East Asia that have an amazing unique texture due to them being frozen before baking! To recreate this delicious snack, scrub your sweet potatoes and put them in the freezer for 1-2 hours (DO NOT puncture them!). Then roast on parchment paper or aluminum foil at 450F. Once caramelized sugar is seeping from the potatoes and trapped steam has separated the skin from the flesh they're finished.

Rutabaga and Potato Gratin

4 Tbsp unsalted butter

2 Tbsp olive oil

4 cloves Veggie Box Garlic, finely chopped

1 Veggie Box Onion, thinly sliced

1/4 cup flour

2 cups milk

1 cup heavy cream

2/3 Veggie Box potatoes (about 1lb), peeled and very thinly sliced

Veggie Box rutabaga, peeled and very thinly sliced

1 Tbsp minced thyme leaves

2 cups (about 4 oz.) grated Gruyère cheese

Salt and pepper, to taste

Heat oven to 425°. Heat butter and oil in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat; add garlic and onion, and cook, stirring often, until soft, about 6 minutes. Stir in flour, and cook until smooth, about 1 minute. Add milk and cream, and stir until smooth. Add potatoes, rutabagas, and 2 tsp. thyme, and bring mixture to a boil; cook, stirring often, until vegetables are slightly tender and broken apart, about 5 minutes. Stir in half the cheese and salt and pepper, and then transfer to a 9" x 13" baking dish; top with remaining cheese and bake until golden brown and bubbling, about 25 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining thyme before serving.