

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 14, December 13

Welcome to the final week of the Fall Veggie Box! This year Veggie Box has sourced over 26 tons of fresh, in-season produce throughout the spring, summer, and fall seasons. Measuring the impact of Veggie Box goes beyond the sheer amount of produce that was distributed however—supporting local food after all depends on building relationships between food producers and consumers and education around these processes. Through Veggie Box, we were able to support dozens of local mid-Michigan farmers and businesses while also providing a wide variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables to the community, some of which you may have tried for the first time. We hope that being part of Veggie Box has pushed you to reimagine the way you understood, prepared, and consumed food this year. Veggie Box was likely difficult for you in some ways—if you were accustomed to shopping out-of-season foods that are easy to find in the grocery store, you may have struggled to use what you got in your box. You might have had to adjust to cooking more frequently at home while also trying new types of produce you were unfamiliar with. Hopefully our tips and recipes about preparing the myriad of foods this year were helpful and we're thankful for all the Veggie Box members who shared their own recipes or tips with us and each other such as in the Veggie Box Facebook group! We hope Veggie Box helped open your minds and taste buds to understand and enjoy food in a whole new way. So what does the Veggie Box crew get up to during the off-season? Like many farmers, winter time is a time for us to apply for grants and plan for the year ahead. This includes working with farmers and food producers to get an idea of what crops we would like to have in 2023. Part of this process includes sending farmers bid sheets where farmers can bid on a type of produce to provide for Veggie Box during a specific week. Depending on the season, this means committing to providing between 100-300 shares of an item per week. Sometimes farmers can also bid on half-shares, committing to provide to only one day of Veggie Box instead of two. This is why the produce available in the Tuesday and Thursday boxes can be slightly different or come from different providers. The growing season can be expected to not go to plan so while we plan ahead by the week, this is with the knowledge that produce will often be available at different times or not at all if a crop fails due to reasons like pests or adverse weather. Veggie Box's flexibility allows all of us to better support local producers while being intentional about providing seasonal produce. Thank you for prioritizing preparing and eating foods that were grown and produced right here in our communities by our family, friends, and neighbors. None of this would have been accomplished without your participation. As always, thank you for supporting local food and we'll see you in 2023!

Crop Profile *Celeriac*

Celeriac is a root vegetable that is not as common in the US, but has been enjoyed for centuries throughout Europe. While its green top may look similar to celery, they are not actually the same plant! Celeriac was initially used for religious and medicinal purposes throughout Italy, Greece, and Egypt. While the plant had been known of and used for so many years, it wasn't until 1623 that it was actually recorded as a food. That record brought a new popularity to celeriac, which was then widely cultivated throughout Europe by the end of the 1600s. Today, celeriac is great when paired with potatoes, used in stews, featured in a salad, and more. With a few more weeks left of winter weather, it's the perfect time to try out a nice and warm celeriac recipe (hint: look for it on the back page!). We hope you enjoy this unsung hero.

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Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Organic Sweet Potatoes, *MSU Student Organic Farm, Holt*

Organic Celeriac, *Lake Divide Farm, Stockbridge*

Cabbage, *Yoder Farm, Leslie*

Organic Potatoes, *Cinzori Farms, Ceresco*

Carrots, *Yoder Farm, Leslie*

Salad Mix, *Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing*

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt*

Meat, *Grazing Fields Cooperative, Charlotte*

Newsletters are available online at bit.ly/veggieboxnewsletters

Recipes and Tips!

Celeriac and Garlic Mashed Potatoes

Veggie Box potatoes, cubed
Veggie Box celeriac, peeled and chopped
3 garlic cloves, peeled (from last week!)
2 tablespoons butter
1 1/2 tablespoons milk
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tablespoon minced chives

Place the potatoes, celeriac and garlic in a pot; cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and cook just until tender, 15 minutes. Drain; cool slightly. Mash vegetables with butter, milk, salt and pepper. Stir in chives.

Pan-Fried Potato Mochi

Veggie Box Potatoes, peeled and cut into quarters
5 Tbsp Tapioca Starch or Tapioca flour
3 Tbsp water
2 Tbsp vegetable oil
1 Tbsp soy sauce
2/3 Tbsp sugar
2 Tbsp water

Place peeled and quartered potatoes in a large pot and cover with cold water and bring to a boil until fork tender. Drain the cooked potatoes and mash them until smooth. Add 3 Tbsp of water and the tapioca starch and mix until well blended without being dry or crumbly. Add extra water if needed. Mix the soy sauce, sugar, and water in a small bowl and set aside. Form the potato mixture into disc shapes with your hands. Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium heat then place mochi and cook until bottom is golden brown. Flip and repeat until other side is browned. Then pour the soy sauce mixture into the pan- gently flip over the mochi to coat with the sauce evenly. Once liquid evaporates you can serve (optional: top with a piece of seaweed!)



Whiskey-Glazed Sweet Potatoes

2 pounds Veggie Box sweet potatoes (all from this week)
2/3 cup pecans
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more for preparing baking dish
1/2 cup honey or agave syrup
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 cup whiskey
1 1/3 cups crisp apples, peeled, cored, and sliced into 1-inch pieces (from last week's box)

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Place the potatoes on a baking sheet and cook the potatoes whole, do not pierce. Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Lightly squeeze the potatoes - if they are soft, they are done. Let cool. In a small saute pan over high heat, add the pecans and lightly toast. Add 4 tablespoons of butter, reduce the heat to medium, add the agave and spices, and allow to simmer for 4 to 5 minutes. Add the whiskey and continue to simmer for 5 minutes more. Peel the potatoes and cut into 1/2-inch slices. Butter the bottom and sides of an 8 by 8-inch baking dish. Arrange the sweet potatoes, alternating with the apples. Pour the whiskey-pecan mixture over the top and place in the oven. Bake for 30 minutes, basting the top with the whiskey sauce once at 15 minutes. Remove and serve immediately.

Honey Ginger Roasted Carrots

1 pound Veggie Box carrots (all from this week), peeled whole or cut into pieces
1/4 cup honey
1/4 cup olive oil
1-2 teaspoons fresh grated ginger
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tablespoon brown sugar
Salt & pepper, to taste
Sesame seeds, for garnish (optional)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a small bowl, whisk together honey, olive oil, ginger, soy sauce, garlic, brown sugar and salt and pepper. Toss carrots with glaze (in a large bowl, or right on the pan). Bake for 15-25 minutes (depending on the size of your carrots), turning and stirring once during cooking, until carrots are tender. If desired, sprinkle with sesame seeds before serving.