

Veggie Box Newsletter

Week 2, March 7

Welcome to week 2 of Spring Veggie Box! The social process of sharing food and eating with others is an intrinsically human act that goes beyond just eating food for our sustenance and survival. This phenomenon is also known as commensality, a word that derives from Latin meaning “together at the table.” Commensality is considered by anthropologists to be a global human phenomenon. Some of the most important components of culture concern customs surrounding how and what we eat from traditional foods, traditional ways of eating, and the types of foods that may be eaten for different events and occasions. All of us have partaken in communal meals, whether to celebrate a special occasion like a birthday, or to practice a religious observance like Eid, Shabbat, or Easter dinner. Eating together as we know isn't always centered around events but can be focused on simply gathering together over food-- eating together with family or roommates at

home and having a meal with friends or coworkers are examples of this. Beyond the act of eating together are the meals themselves. When we share food with others, we might simultaneously be sharing aspects of our family history and upbringing, culture, or just our interests and tastes. Shared foods and recipes might be passed down or have other special meanings to us. Can you think of a recipe or food that is significant to you? Do you have a go-to dish that you like to share with others? (Maybe you'd like to bring it to the Veggie Box potluck on March 18th?) We hope you enjoy the produce this week and are able to reflect on the different ways you share food with family and friends, and how food is essential to building community!

Farmer Profile

Hunter Park GardenHouse

Hunter Park GardenHouse is a project of Allen Neighborhood Center and is a hub for year-round farm and garden education. Since 2008, HPGH has empowered neighbors to grow, prepare, and eat healthy food to better their wellbeing and become more connected with the community. HPGH hosts a variety of programs such as the Urban Gardener Certificate Program, a variety of workshops on topics such as composting and propagation, plant sales, as well as youth programs that develop job and life skills in service to the neighborhood. If you would like to learn more about HPGH in-person, Veggie Box will be hosting a potluck and garden tour for Veggie Box members on Saturday March 18 from 11am to 1pm. Check the What's in the Box email you received this week for more information and the sign-up form. Hope to see you there!

Crop Profile

Kale

Kale is a type of brassica oleracea cultivated for its leaves and is related to other vegetables including broccoli, cabbage, and kohlrabi. It was one of the most popular greens through Europe until the end of the Middle Ages when other crops began to outshine it in popularity. It remained in obscurity compared to other vegetables but regained popularity with the rise of the local food movement in the last several decades. These leafy greens come in many different varieties- the leaves can be curly or flat and it comes in several different colors from light green to almost blue to even red and purple varieties. Kale is a great source of iron, Vitamin C and K, calcium, and many antioxidants. It is a versatile vegetable that can be eaten in a myriad of ways—try making kale chips in the oven or air fryer, including it in soups and stews, or adding to stir fries or even smoothies! To store, wrap the bunch in paper towels to absorb moisture and keep in a plastic bag stored in your refrigerator's crisper drawer.

ALLEN
NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER

Veggie Box

What's in the Box?

Organic Kale, *Green Wagon Farm, Ada*

Organic Potatoes, *Monroe Family Organics, Alma*

Microgreens, *Hunter Park GardenHouse, Lansing*

Cabbage, *Yoder Family Cooperative, Leslie*

Organic Spinach, *Green Wagon Farm, Ada*

Carrots, *Yoder Family Cooperative, Leslie*

Add-Ons

Bread, *Stone Circle BakeHouse, Holt*

Meat, *Heffron Farms Market, Belding*

Honey, *Beebehavior Ranch, Ovid*

Newsletters are available online at bit.ly/veggieboxnewsletters

Recipes and Tips!

Kale, Carrot, and White Bean Soup



- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Veggie Box onion from last week, diced
- 1-3 Veggie Box carrots, peeled and diced (~ ¾ cup)
- 2 Tbsp tomato paste
- 4 cloves Veggie Box garlic from last week, minced
- Red pepper flakes, salt, pepper to taste
- 1 Tbsp chopped rosemary or thyme
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 3 cups vegetable broth
- 2 cans (15 oz.) white beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15 oz.) diced tomatoes
- Veggie Box kale, stems removed and chopped
- 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar

Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat and add the onion, carrots, some salt and pepper and cook until softened, 5 minutes. Add tomato paste, garlic, red pepper flakes, rosemary/thyme, and basil and cook until fragrant, 1 minute. Add broth, beans, tomatoes, and more salt and pepper. Mix well, reduce heat to low, and cover and simmer until vegetables are for tender, 15 minutes. Add the kale, turn off the heat, and cover the pot for 5 minutes. Once kale is softened, uncover pot and stir in balsamic vinegar. Taste and add more salt, pepper, vinegar, or red pepper flakes for taste. If you prefer a creamier soup you can also add ¾ cup full fat coconut milk or heavy cream. Optional-serve with parmesan cheese and croutons!

Microgreen and Spinach Pesto

- 1/4 cup pine nuts or walnuts
- 1 1/4 cup Veggie Box spinach
- Veggie box microgreens
- 1 clove Veggie Box garlic, grated or chopped
- 1/4- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1/3 cup grated parmesan
- 1/2 tablespoon lemon juice
- big pinch of salt
- a few turn of pepper

Toast the nuts in a pan or in the oven until they're lightly browned. Throw all ingredients (including the warm nuts) into the food processor. Blend until smooth and taste for seasoning. Store in the fridge for up to a week with a thin coating of olive oil on top to prevent browning. Or you can freeze it in an ice cube tray and then transfer cubes to a ziploc bag. This pesto is great for sandwiches and pasta!

Cabbage Gyoza

- Dumpling wrappers (you can also buy pre-made ones)
- 3 1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 cup tepid water
- Filling
- 3 Tbsp + 1/4 cup oil
- 1 Tbsp ginger, minced
- 1 Veggie Box onion from last week, chopped
- 2 cups shiitake mushrooms, chopped
- 1 1/2 cups Veggie Box cabbage, finely shredded
- 1 1/2 cups Veggie Box carrots, finely shredded
- 1 cup garlic chives, finely chopped (sub green onions if needed)
- 1/2 tsp white pepper
- 2 tsp sesame oil
- 3 Tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp sugar
- Salt to taste

To make the dough put flour in a large mixing bowl. Gradually add water to flour and knead into a smooth dough, should take about 10 minutes. Cover with a damp cloth and let rest for an hour. In a wok or large skillet over medium high heat, add 3 Tbsp oil and add ginger, cook for 30 seconds. Add onion and stir-fry until translucent. Add chopped mushrooms and stir fry until tender and liquid has cooked off, 3-5 minutes. Add cabbage and carrots and cook until tender and liquid cooked off, 2 minutes. Transfer vegetable mixture to large mixing bowl and allow to cool. Add chopped chives, white pepper, sesame oil, Shaoxing wine, soy sauce, and sugar. Season with salt to taste and stir in the last 1/4 cup of oil. To assemble dumplings (if not using store-bought wrappers), cut the dough into small tablespoon-sized pieces. Roll out into a circle. Dip your finger in water and moisten the outer edge of half the wrapper, place a table spoon of filling in the middle, then pleat closed. Cover the dough/wrappers in a damp paper towel while assembling as they can dry out quickly. To cook, steam in a bamboo steamer for 15-20 minutes or pan-fry them on a nonstick pan over medium high heat and 2 Tbsp of oil. Serve with dumpling sauce (dissolve 1 tsp sugar in 1 Tbsp hot water then add 2 Tbsp soy sauce, 1 tsp rice vinegar, 1 tsp minced garlic, 1 tsp toasted sesame seeds, and 1/2 tsp sesame oil. Stir well and enjoy!

