

Veggie Box Newsletter

Summer 2024 · Week 7 · Tuesday, July 16th



For some, Veggie Box can feel like a big lifestyle change. If you find yourself racing to get through the week's produce, check out our Produce Storage Guide: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1A252XjT2wJB7kWS6XiXoP-q-Sbd3lw2yX1udXl7hwY> (link also available in your "What's In the Box" email). Our previous food hub assistant manager, Faith, created this great resource for how to best store your produce, and ensure you enjoy all your Veggie Box splendor. Enjoy this guide they put together to assist with storage and preservation techniques.

Proper food storage is essential for maintaining the freshness and quality of produce. Preventing food waste is beneficial to your household and the planet: using the food you've already invested in saves you money, and prevents methane emissions from landfills. When your food is stored well, you're able to get the full advantage of the inputs used growing your fruits and veggies, including water and food miles.

Some quick rules of thumb:

- dark leafy greens do best when they are rinsed and then wrapped in some type of towel, and then sealed in either a plastic bag or Tupperware container.
- Tomatoes should be kept at room temperature and out of the way of direct sunlight. Once tomatoes are completely ripe, they can be kept in the fridge. Store tomatoes in the fridge if they have been sliced.
- If you cannot eat your produce right away, freezing is a great way to maintain the nutrients. A trick to preventing freezer burn is blanching it before sticking it in the freezer! To do this, boil your veggies for 1-2 minutes, then place them in a bowl of ice water to stop the cooking process. Freeze in a single layer on a cookie sheet before transferring to a bag to prevent clumping. They are good in the freezer for up to a year!

Producer Spotlight *Lake Divide Farm*

Helen and Jim, the owners of Lake Divide Farm, farmed on leased land in New Jersey for four years before deciding to buy a farm in Michigan. In 2016, they found a farm in Jackson County and began the arduous process of moving everything and making the house livable. They are a first generation family farm. They fell in love with growing food because of the satisfaction of an honest day's work and the joy of doing something constructive and tangible for our community and the environment. They believe in food equality, that farming is an essential profession, and that producing food doesn't have to abuse the natural world. They plan on forging a business that affords the farmers, and those who work with them, a living wage, while making nutrient dense, fresh food available to all members of our community.

Crop Profile *Dinosaur Kale*

Kale's popularity has risen in recent years, but this leafy green has been an important crop for a long time. It was one of the most popular greens throughout Europe until the end of the middle ages. During World War II, food rationing caused widespread malnutrition. Increased kale crops provided a source of important vitamins. Kale has lots of iron, Vitamins C and K, calcium, and antioxidants! Kale is frequently used in salads, soups, smoothies, and casseroles. To store kale, wrap the bunch in paper towels in an open plastic bag and store in the fridge crisper drawer.

Dinosaur Kale is named after its dramatic bumpy texture, which reminds people of dino skin! This variety, also called Lacinato Kale, is common in Italian cuisine.



What's in the Box?

Organic Summer Squash (assorted types), Lake Divide Farm, *Stockbridge*

Blueberries, Felzke Farms, *Dewitt*

Organic Salad Mix, MSU Student Organic Farm, *Holt*

Organic Basil, MSU Student Organic Farm, *Holt*

Dinosaur Kale, Titus Farms, *Leslie*

Organic Carrots, Monroe Family Organics, *Alma*

Organic Baby Fennel, Monroe Family Organics, *Alma*

Add-ons

Eggs, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*

Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, *Holt*

Meat Variety: Whole Chicken, Heffron Farms, *Belding*

Chicken: Thighs, Heffron Farms, *Belding*

Beef: Ground Beef, Heffron Farms, *Belding*

Pork: Bacon, Heffron Farms, *Belding*

Recipes and Tips!

Turmeric Roasted Fennel, Chickpeas, and Kale Salad

- 2 Veggie Box fennel bulbs (small/medium)
- 1 bunch Veggie Box dinosaur kale
- 15oz can of chickpeas
- 3 garlic cloves, halved
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 4 tbsps olive oil
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, peeled and grated
- ½ tbsp lemon juice
- Salt to taste

Preheat oven to 400F. Trim fronds off fennel and cut bulbs into wedges, approximately 6 per bulb. Place into bowl and toss with ½ tsp turmeric, ½ tbsp olive oil, and a little salt. Place onto one side of baking sheet. Drain and pat dry chickpeas, then place in the same bowl, tossing with another ½ tsp turmeric, salt, and ½ tbsp olive oil. Place on other side of same baking sheet. Bake 30 min, occasionally stirring to prevent burning.

Tear kale leaves from stems and wash. Pat dry and toss with salt and 1 tbsp olive oil. Spread on second baking sheet and add to the oven for 10-15 minutes, pulling and setting aside when lightly crisped.

Dressing: Mix together 2 tbsps olive oil, grated ginger, ½ tbsp lemon juice, and salt. Toss fennel, kale, and chickpeas together. Drizzle with dressing and serve warm.

Recipe adapted from NirvanaCakery.com



Pan-Seared Summer Squash with Basil Whipped Feta

- Veggie Box summer squash, approx 1 lb*
- 8oz feta cheese
- Veggie Box basil, approx 1/2 cup
- ¼ cup ricotta or cottage cheese
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic
- 5+ tbsp olive oil
- Salt and pepper

Slice stem off squash and cut in half lengthwise. Score cut side of squash with 5-6 deep diagonal cuts, being careful not to cut through. Season with salt and pepper. To a skillet on medium heat, add 3 tbsp olive oil. Cook squash cut side down for about 3 minutes, or until browned. Flip and cook for 3 min on the other side. Work in batches if necessary to maintain skillet temp.

Add feta, ricotta or cottage cheese, basil, lemon juice, and 2 tbsp olive oil to a blender or food processor and blend until smooth, adding more olive oil if needed. Spread whipped feta on a plate and top with zucchini to serve.

Suggested Garnish: Delicious with chopped pistachios, Veggie Box basil, and hot honey.

**this is written with long, zucchini-shaped summer squash in mind. However, this week's distribution includes an assortment of shapes. You may have to slice creatively! Any squash sliced approx 1 to 1.5inch thick, scored on one side, should work.*

Recipe adapted from SomethingNutritiousBlog.com

Tips: Freezing Blueberries



It is usually best not to wash berries, as it keeps them from freezing together and losing their natural protective layer. To freeze, you'll need a rimmed baking sheet, parchment paper, and a zip-top plastic bag. Sort your berries and pick out any moldy or mushy berries, selecting nice, firm ones to freeze. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and place berries in a single layer. Freezing will take 2-4 hours, or overnight. Label and date your bag, pour in your blueberries, squeeze out as much air as possible, and return to freezer. Enjoy for up to a year!

