

Veggie Box Newsletter

Summer 2024 · Week 11 · Tuesday, August 13th

It's rewarding to try new recipes and flavor experiments. But it's equally important to keep a few "comfort recipes" in your back pocket (or on your fridge!) for days when you just want to eat without putting too much thought into it! Almost everybody who cooks frequently will fall back on their comfort recipes in between more ambitious dinners, even very experienced chefs. Here are a few quick and easy base meals that can be modified to use with almost any veggie.

Stir Fry: Extraordinarily versatile, works with almost any veggie. Serve alone, or over rice or noodles.

Tacos: A taco bar style setup makes it easy to customize a single meal for various dietary requirements. Spicy or mild, meat or veggie, cheese or no. Tacos are love.

Kitchen Sink Salad: Leafy greens, plus whatever is chilling in the crisper. The key to a good improv salad is to hit as many of the classic salad elements as possible: greens, crunch, bulk (meat, beans, grains), creaminess, sweetness, and bitterness/acidity. Don't overlook herbs, either! Tip: plan the veggies first, then use dressing and garnishes to supply the missing elements.

Soups, Stews and Stocks: These take time, but very little effort. The ultimate comfort food. Be your own gran.

Curry: Cooked bite-sized veggies and/or meat, stewed with Southeast Asian style sauce. Complex in flavor, often spicy. Curry has range! Memorizing a curry sauce or two will unlock dozens of veggie-rich dinner options.

Pizza: Traditional crust, or build it on the fly using french bread, bagels, or naan. A tomato-based sauce, pretty much any roasted or sliced veggies (or even pickles!), and cheese. Don't forget a little basil, oregano and garlic!

Frittata, Omelet, or Scramble: Cooking eggs takes a little practice to master (technique can even vary slightly depending on the stove or pan), but once you've got your favorite down pat, it's time to add a truckload of greens and diced veggies.

And more... kabobs, rice bowls, skillet hash, sandwiches! What are your go-to, clean-out-the-fridge meals?

Producer Spotlight *Hillcrest Farms*

Hillcrest Farms is a four season farm in Eaton Rapids that offers an extensive selection of fresh produce. Owner, Mark Kastner, started farming in 2008 gaining inspiration from his grandmother, a fantastic chef and farmer with whom he spent summers with as a child. Now he is known around town for his deliciously unique spinach and salad mix, as well as for the impeccable quality of the rest of his produce. His sustainable farming practices assure customers that products are safely produced with regards to environment and human health.

Crop Profile *Hot Peppers*

Chilis, also called hot peppers, are native to South America and have been cultivated in Mexico for thousands of years. The heat of the pepper comes from a group of alkaloid molecules known as capsaicin. These compounds are very soluble in fat and alcohol, but are not soluble in water! Wear gloves and keep hands away from face when handling hot peppers.

The Scoville scale measures the heat of chili peppers:

- Hungarian Hot Wax: 1,000 to 15,000
- Serranos: 10,000 to 23,000
- Bell Peppers: 0 SHU (Scoville Heat Units)
- Jalapenos: 4,000 to 8,000
- Dragon's Toe: ??? Sources say 3,000 to 100,000!



What's in the Box?

White Peaches, Phillips Orchard and Cider Mill, *St. Johns*

Organic Parsley, Monroe Family Organics, *Alma*

Organic Kale, MSU Student Organic Farm, *Holt*

Cucumbers, Hillcrest Farms, *Eaton Rapids*

Jalapenos, Hillcrest Farms, *Eaton Rapids*

Organic Tomatoes, Lake Divide Farm, *Stockbridge*

Sweet Corn, Felzke Farms, *Dewitt*

Organic Sweet Onions, Owosso Organics, *Owosso*

Organic Garlic, Owosso Organics, *Owosso*

Hot Pepper Mix, Titus Farms, *Leslie*

Add-ons

Eggs, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*

Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, *Holt*

Meat Variety: Hot Italian Pork Sausage, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*

Chicken: Whole (Pieced), Heffron Farms, *Belding*

Beef: Stew Meat, Heffron Farms, *Belding*

Pork: Chops, Grazing Fields Cooperative, *Charlotte*

Honey, Beebehavior Ranch, *Ovid*

Recipes and Tips!

Garlic Tahini Kale Salad

GARLIC TAHINI:

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup tahini
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 cloves Veggie Box garlic, minced
- Kosher salt, as needed
- Freshly ground black pepper, as needed

KALE SALAD:

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 ounces Halloumi cheese, cut into ½” slices
- 1 bunch Veggie Box kale, ribs removed and shredded
- 1 15.5-ounce can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1/3 cup packed Veggie Box parsley leaves
- 1/2 Veggie Box onion, thinly sliced

In a small bowl whisk together the olive oil, tahini, lemon juice, garlic and 3 tablespoons of water until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside until ready to use.

Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the olive oil and heat through. Add the cheese to the pan and cook until the cheese is golden brown, about 1 minute per side. Remove to a plate then tear into pieces and set aside.

Add the kale to a large salad bowl or mixing bowl and massage the dressing into the kale. Add the chickpeas, parsley and onion, tossing to combine. Top with the crispy halloumi and serve.

Recipe adapted from cookingwithcocktailrings.com



Dehydrator method:

- Place garlic slices onto dehydrator racks without overlapping pieces.
- Dry garlic in a food dehydrator from 100 to 130 degrees Fahrenheit until slices are bone dry. They should snap crisply in half rather than bending.
- Once fully dried, place the garlic in a blender or food processor and blend until a fine powder is achieved. You can also use a mortar and pestle.
- Use a fine mesh strainer to sift the blended powder before placing in storage container. If there are leftover hard bits remaining, return these to the blender or food processor and grind further into a powder.
- Store garlic powder in an airtight container and use within one year. Store in the freezer or add a few grains of dry rice to prevent clumping.

Oven method: To dry garlic in the oven, peel and chop your garlic cloves (do not use a food processor for chopping, as it may make more of a sticky clumpy paste). Next, spread them in a thin layer on a baking pan covered with parchment paper. Bake at 140°F until it is completely crunchy dry, stirring and re-spreading the garlic bits every 30 minutes as you go. This method takes a few hours. Then proceed with grinding, sifting, and storage as above.



Peach Salsa

- 1 Veggie Box tomato, diced
- 1 Veggie Box Dragon's Toe pepper, seeded and finely diced
- 2 Veggie Box jalapenos, seeded and finely diced
- 1 Veggie Box onion, finely diced
- 2 Veggie Box peaches, diced
- 1/2 bunch last week's Veggie Box cilantro, chopped
- 2 Tbsp lime juice
- 1/2 tsp salt, or to taste
- 1/4 tsp freshly ground black pepper or to taste

Chop tomatoes and transfer them to a large bowl. Finely chop seeded bell pepper and jalapeños. Finely chop onion and transfer all your veggies to the bowl. Dice the peaches. I liked the slightly larger dice for peaches to give them more of the center stage in this salsa. No need to peel them. You won't notice the peels and the color is prettier with the peel on. Transfer peaches to your bowl.

Add 1/2 bunch chopped cilantro, 2 Tbsp lime juice, 1/2 tsp salt and 1/4 tsp pepper. Add more salt and pepper to taste if desired. Fold everything together until well mixed and enjoy with chips!

Recipe adapted from natashaskitchen.com

DIY Garlic Powder



Garlic has been available in abundance lately! If you're struggling to keep up with it, consider making your own garlic powder. This recipe is adaptable to however many heads of garlic you've accumulated :)

Prepare the garlic: Separate and peel the garlic cloves. Thinly slice into 1/8 inch pieces.