

Veggie Box Newsletter

Fall 2024 · Week 8 · Thursday, November 7

Unlike shelf-stable processed foods, fresh produce has a brief shelf life and a wide variety of storage methods. Different fruits and veggies benefit from different techniques. Learning what works best is a knowledge-set that we develop over time!

We included a link in this week's email to the [Veggie Box Produce Storage Guide](#). It's a Google document that includes many Veggie Box items, and the best ways to store each of them. The quick version:

Refrigeration works well for most produce not listed below. High humidity benefits many items: use crisper drawers, covers, or place cut stems in water.

Room temperature or slightly below, with moderate humidity, is best for some items: potatoes, garlic, onions, and winter squash. Rutabagas, apples, and tomatoes appreciate higher humidity.

Preservation techniques extend the lifespan of items you will use more slowly. These can include: freezing, canning, fermenting, pickling, dehydrating, infusing, and more.

And then there's some oddballs, like basil, which hates the cold and should be stored on the counter. If you've ever had a beautiful head of lettuce you were looking forward to using next weekend go all slimy on you, remember it's not a personal failure, it's part of learning. The grocery store doesn't teach us these things! Knowing how to store vegetables comes from experience, community, and culture. Next time you're waiting for the crew to grab your Veggie Box from the cooler, trade storage tips and recipes with the neighbor standing next to you.

Producer Spotlight *Ferris Organic Farms*

The Ferris family farm was established more than 160 years ago and was farmed organically until the early 1950's. The land was farmed conventionally until the 1970's when the farm transitioned to organic to improve the health of the soil. Now the 200-acre farm is certified organic and have an 'on-farm' certified organic dry bean and grain cleaning facility which was the first of its kind to be certified organic in the Midwest.

Crop Profile *Spaghetti Squash*

Spaghetti squash (*Cucurbita pepo* subsp. *pepo*) is a type of winter squash with several cultivars that range from white to yellow-orange in color. When cooked, the squash's yellow flesh falls away from the skin in long strands similar to spaghetti noodles. Its mild flavor goes well with many different sauces and toppings. The strands run around the squash's circumference, not its length. So to produce the longest spaghetti-like strands, cut the squash in halves horizontally or into rings before cooking. Leaving the halves intact will also create convenient bowls for your spaghetti. Just cut a sliver off each end to give the bowls a stable base while roasting. In addition to beta carotene, each serving of spaghetti squash will also give you a boost of folic acid, potassium, vitamin A, and vitamin C. Spaghetti squash can be stored for up to 3 months in a cool, dry place.



What's in the Box?

Organic Baby Greens Salad Mix, Monroe Family Organics, *Alma*

Fingerling Potatoes, Green Eagle Farm, *Onondaga*
Spaghetti Squash, Tomac Pumpkin Patch, *Chesaning*
Leeks, Magnolia Avenue Farms and Highwater Farms, *Lansing*

Organic Rutabaga, MSU Student Organic Farm, *Holt*
Organic Black Spanish Radishes, Cinzori Farms, *Ceresco*

Organic Popcorn, Ferris Organic Farms, *Eaton Rapids*

Add-ons

Coffee (bi-weekly), 517 Coffee Company, *Lansing*
Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, *Holt*

Meat Variety (Weekly), Heffron Farms, *Belding*

Chicken Add-on (Bi-Weekly), Heffron Farms, *Belding*

Beef Add-on (Bi-Weekly), Starlight Farm, *Lake Odessa*

Pork Add-on (Bi-Weekly), Grazing Fields, *Charlotte*

Recipes and Tips!

Sarah's Sweet & Sour Rutabaga

- Full share Veggie Box rutabaga, peeled
- 1/4 cup bacon drippings*
- 1/2 cup last week's Veggie Box onions, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 tablespoon sugar
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 3 green onions, chopped

Select a saucepan which will be deep enough to fully submerge your rutabaga (quarter rutabaga if needed). Add water to saucepan and bring to a boil. Cook until almost tender, about ten minutes. Drain and cool. Dice into 1/2 in cubes and set aside.

Heat bacon drippings in heavy skillet over medium heat. Once hot, add onion. Cook for 3 minutes, stirring, then add rutabaga cubes. Cook until onion is soft and golden, about 15-20 min. Pan browning is good (this will make the sauce!) but stir frequently enough to prevent burning.

To make the pan sauce: reduce heat slightly. Add salt, pepper and sugar. Stir to coat. Add vinegar and quickly stir, scraping browned glaze from the bottom of the pan. Simmer and stir until veggies are glazed. Add green onions and serve.

*substitutes for bacon grease: **vegetarian**, salted butter; **vegan**, sub mix of 1/2 coconut oil 1/2 veggie oil with a dash of soy sauce; to either, add dash of smoked paprika or liquid smoke

Thank you Veggie Box member Sarah Laurens for sharing this recipe, adapted from Cajun-Creole Cooking (1986) by Terry Thompson!

Rutabaga Spice Cupcakes with Browned Butter Frosting

Cake:

- 1 cup packed Veggie Box rutabaga (raw, peeled and grated)
- 3 eggs
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour plain flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Frosting:

- 3 cups powdered sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3-4 tablespoons milk
- 1/2 cup butter, at room temperature

Recipe from November 2023 Veggie Box Rutabaga Cooking Class! Original from ANC Kitchens Manager Matt Jones



Spaghetti Squash Hash Browns

- 2 cups Veggie Box spaghetti squash, cooked and shredded
- 1 tbs vegetable oil

To cook spaghetti squash: Preheat oven to 375F. Cut squash in half shortwise. Remove membranes and seeds. Add a little water to a baking dish to prevent drying, and bake squash cut-side down for about 45 minutes, or when it can be pierced easily with a knife. Use a fork to scrape the squash to get long, lovely strands. If the squash seems difficult to scrape, bake for an additional 10 minutes.

To make hash browns:

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Press moisture out of squash strands with paper towels, or wring out in a clean kitchen towel. Form the patties by taking around 2 tablespoons of squash strands, ball them loosely, and then press firmly between your palms to flatten.

Transfer patties carefully to hot skillet. Cook for 5-7 minutes per side until nicely browned. Only flip these once if possible to get the nice browned exterior. Transfer to paper towels and serve warm.

Adapted from TheHonourSystem.com

Preheat oven to 350F. Grease or line muffin tin.

Cake: Beat eggs, sugar, yogurt, oil and vanilla together well. Stir in the grated rutabaga. Sift in the flour, baking powder, baking soda, nutmeg and salt. Stir to combine.

Pour batter into muffin tin, 3/4 full per cup. Bake 25-30 min or until an inserted skewer comes out clean. Cool for 10 min, then turn onto a wire rack to cool completely.

Frosting: Put powdered sugar, vanilla and 1 tablespoon of the milk into a large bowl. Set aside. In a saucepan over a low heat, melt the butter. Continue to heat until it turns brown and smells nutty. Pour into the bowl of powdered sugar and beat until thick and smooth, adding more milk if necessary. Top the cooled cake with the frosting. Enjoy! (Optional: top with toasted nuts)