

Veggie Box Newsletter

Fall 2024 · Week 4 · Tuesday, October 8th

Compared to grocery store prices, Veggie Box isn't the cheapest way to get produce--but what is the true cost of our food? What we aren't paying for financially, we might be paying for in other ways, like pollution and its associated health impacts, climate change, or loss of habitat for wildlife. True Price Foundation is a global movement striving to communicate the price of our food in way that accounts for these environmental factors. Last month, the New York Times published an article using research on this topic to outline the true cost of staples such as meat, cheese and plant-based proteins (find the link in your What's in the Box email).

While identifying the true price of our food and figuring out the best ways to fund work that keep agriculture environmentally sustainable is a work in progress, you're taking steps in that direction by being a Veggie Box member. Your investment in Veggie Box is an investment in over two dozen local farms. Farmers set their own prices when they sell to Veggie Box, allowing them to factor in fair labor costs, regenerative agricultural practices, on top of the cost of the inputs it took to produce your veggies. By purchasing seasonal produce from these small local farms, you're supporting farmers having the ability to sell at what is closer to the "true price" of the food they produce. In 2023, Veggie Box bought \$225k of local food!

It's important to note that low food costs have benefits too, like ensuring that food is affordable. Veggie Box offers a Reduced Cost program, which this season has made 30 memberships available for only \$6.25 a week, thanks to donations from fellow Veggie Box members and support from the Michigan Fitness Foundation. Farmers are able to ask for the prices they need, while low-income households or those experiencing hardship are able to enjoy affordable produce. Thank you for supporting local food!

Producer Spotlight *Green Wagon Farm*

Owner of Green Wagon Farm, Chad Anderson began their journey with farming through their time in the Peace Corps and working in Uganda with dairy farmers. Chad opened, ran the farm while working a factory job, and sold produce at their veggie stand in 2010. Co-Owner Heather volunteered at the farm in 2012 when they discovered their shared passion for and career in farming. Green Wagon Farm has a year-round crew of 13 and up to 18 at the season's height. The Anderson family has grown the farm from a small roadside stand on borrowed land to the certified organic, family-owned, year-round operation it is today. "We relish our time working and celebrating together as we study and experiment with ways to better serve the land and our community."

Crop Profile *Leeks*

As a cousin to the onion, leeks offer a similar but more subtle taste when used in your kitchen. Leeks have been cultivated since the time of Ancient Egyptians and have been regarded as a superior vegetable throughout history. Associated with anything from improving your singing voice and purging your blood, to curing nosebleeds, the leek is commonly viewed as a healthy and virtuous plant. According to an old Welsh legend, St. David advised the Britons to wear leeks in their helmets as a clever way to distinguish themselves from an enemy army on the battlefield. They emerged victorious and to this day, Welsh Guardsmen wear a special green and white plume in their helmets as a tribute. If you don't want to wear them on your head, you can use leeks in place of an onion in most roasts and stews to add a dose of vitamins A, B, and K, magnesium, and dietary fiber. Try them in a classic fall and winter dish - potato leek soup, or sautee them with your veggies to add a sweet, oniony flavor.



What's in the Box?

Organic Red Potatoes, Monroe Family Organics, Alma
Lemon Balm, Magnolia Avenue Farms, Lansing's Eastside
Organic Beets, Green Wagon Farm, Ada
Organic Celery, Green Wagon Farm, Ada
Organic Leeks, Green Wagon Farm, Ada
Cherry Tomatoes, Peckham Farms, Lansing

Add-ons

Bread, Stone Circle Bakehouse, Holt
Meat Variety, Pork Chops, Grazing Fields, Charlotte
Pork Add-on, Bacon, Heffron Farms Market, Belding
Organic Beef Add-on, Ground Beef, Starlight Farms, Lake Odessa
Chicken Add-on, Smoked Chicken Sausage, Heffron Farms Market, Belding
Bi-Weekly Coffee

Recipes and Tips!

Lemon Balm Vinaigrette Salad

- 1 tablespoon shallot, minced
- 2 tablespoons of Veggie Box lemon balm, leaves finely minced
- 1/2 teaspoon of lemon zest
- 6 tablespoons of lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon of Dijon mustard
- 4 tablespoons of white wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon of brown sugar
- 8 tablespoons of oil (olive, grape seed, walnut, etc.)
- 1 bag of salad mix

Mix all ingredients except for oil and salad mix in a non-reactive bowl. Slowly whisk in the oil. Let sit for at least an hour. Mix with salad mix and any other veggies you'd like in your salad. Enjoy!

Adapted from food.com/recipe/lemon-balm-vinaigrette-426094



Potato and Leek Soup

- Full share Veggie Box Red Potatoes, diced
- Full share Veggie Box Leeks, white and light green sections only
- 3 cloves garlic
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 fresh thyme sprig
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup sour cream

Melt the butter over medium heat in a large soup pot. Add the leeks and garlic and cook, stirring regularly, until soft, about 10 minutes. Adjust the heat as necessary so as not to brown.

Add the potatoes, broth, thyme, salt and pepper to pot and bring to a boil. Cover and turn the heat down to low. Simmer for 15 minutes, or until the potatoes are very soft.

Remove the thyme sprig, then purée the soup with a hand-held immersion blender until smooth, or use a standard blender to purée the soup in batches. Bring to a simmer, and reduce to desired thickness. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Add sour cream prior to serving and whisk to incorporate. Garnish with fresh herbs or bacon if desired. Enjoy!

Note: If using a standard blender to purée the soup: be sure not to fill the jar more than halfway; leave the hole in the lid open and cover loosely with a dishtowel to allow the heat to escape.



Roasted Beetroot Hummus

- 2-3 Veggie Box beets
- 1 can chickpeas (14 oz.), drained and rinsed
- 2 1/2 tablespoons tahini
- 2 cloves last week's Veggie Box garlic
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon cumin
- Water to thin

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Wrap each beetroot in aluminum foil and roast them for 1 to 2 hours (depending on the size of your beets) or until soft and tender. Once the beets are roasted, remove them from the oven and let them cool. Remove the skin and chop them into chunks. Place the beets, chickpeas, and garlic into a food processor or blender and blend for 1 minute. Add tahini, lemon juice, salt, cumin, 1 teaspoon of water, and blend until the hummus becomes smooth and creamy. If it's too thick, add more water until the consistency is perfect. Taste and adjust the seasonings, adding more salt or lemon if needed. Enjoy!