



47th Ave Farm Winter CSA for the week of March 3, 2014

You're getting quite a few leeks this time around. There are some ideas below but I encourage you to start any sauce or soup with them. Their sweetness and silky texture enrich anything you're making. You can simply cook them gently in a little butter and then spread them on toast and finish them with a drizzle of balsamic vinegar and plenty of freshly ground pepper. You can stir them into eggs or serve them, gently cooked alongside fish. Or make a hash with some of your potatoes, leeks and thinly sliced Brussels sprouts.

Enjoy and stay dry this week!

Leek and Potato Gratin

Two-Potato Curry

Onion/Shallot and Winter Squash Panade

Beans with Tomatoes, Leeks, Sage and Onion

Borlotti Bean and Farro Soup (link)

Braised Shallots (or Shallots and Onions)

Dried Cayenne Notes (repeat from last share)

Brussels Sprout Pasta "Risotto" with Bacon

Quick Braised Brussels Sprouts with Mustard

Leek and Potato Gratin

I made a version of this, this weekend and it was a crowd pleaser. The variations are endless—use broth or milk; add bacon, use different herbs and/or spices, etc.

Serves 6 or more

6-8 or so potatoes, scrubbed

2-3 leeks, cleaned, halved lengthwise and cut into ½-in half rounds

Milk or broth/stock

Grated cheese (optional) cheddar, Parmesan, . . .

1 1/2 teaspoons sea salt and freshly ground pepper, more to taste

2 teaspoons dried or fresh thyme

½ teaspoon (or more or less) crumbled cayenne flakes

1-2 tablespoons flour (optional)

Chopped parsley (optional but very good)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Slice the potatoes as thinly as you can. I use the slicer on my box grater. Place the sliced potatoes in a large bowl.

Sauté the leeks in a bit of olive oil and a pinch of salt until softened, about 10 minutes.

In a small bowl mix the salt, pepper, thyme and cayenne and flour (if using).

Toss the spice mixture with the potatoes and mix as well as you can. Spread half of the potato mixture evenly over the bottom of a 9 x 13 baking dish (or similar oven proof container). Spread the leeks over the potatoes and sprinkle with salt and a bit of grated cheese, if using. Spread the remainder of the potatoes over the pepper layer and top with a little more grated cheese, if using. Pour milk or broth in the dish about 1/3 way up the sides of the vegetables. It doesn't really matter how much. Cover the dish tightly with foil and bake for 40 minutes. Uncover and bake for 15- 20 more. Test for doneness. You want the potatoes to be nice and soft but still keeping their shape.

Two-Potato Curry

--adapted from Plenty by Yotam Ottolenghi

This makes a lot of food. Feel free to have the recipe. It does keep well and is so delicious that if you have enough potatoes, spices, etc. by all means make the full amount. It is a long list of spices but you can adapt and omit if you need to.

1 tablespoon cumin seeds
1 tablespoon coriander seeds
8 cardamom pods, smashed with the side of a knife and little seeds removed-discard shells
½ teaspoon cloves
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons vegetable oil
2 large shallots or 1 medium onion, diced
½ teaspoon brown mustard seeds
½ teaspoon fenugreek (optional)
25 curry leaves (optional—have never used these and it's still wonderful)
2 tablespoons chopped ginger
1 hot pepper, finely chopped
1 14 ounce can tomatoes
1/4 cup cider vinegar
1 3/4 cups water
1 tablespoon sugar
Salt
2 1/2 cups potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch dice
2 1/2 cups sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch dice
Mint or cilantro leaves to serve

Dry-roast the cumin, coriander and cardamom in a small frying pan until they begin to pop. Transfer to a mortar, add the cloves and work with a pestle to a fine powder, discarding the cardamom skins once the seeds are released. Add the turmeric, paprika and cinnamon, and set aside. {I just used a spice grinder!}

Heat the oil in a large, heavy-based pot. Add the shallots or onion, mustard seeds and fenugreek, and sauté on high heat for eight minutes, or until the shallots or onions brown. Stir in the curry leaves, if using, ginger, chilli and ground spices, and cook for another three minutes.

Add the tomatoes, vinegar, water, sugar and some salt, bring to a boil and leave to simmer, covered, for 20 minutes. Add the potatoes and simmer for another 20 minutes. Now add the

sweet potatoes, make sure all the vegetables are just immersed in the sauce (add more water if needed) and continue cooking, covered, for about 40 minutes, or until the potatoes are very tender. Remove the lid and leave to bubble away for about 10 minutes, to reduce and thicken the sauce.

Serve hot with plain rice and garnished with the herbs.

Onion and Winter Squash Panade

This is a great way to use up stale bread, but fresh can be used as well. Just make sure it's a hearty rustic loaf with a good crumb and crust. I used an aged cheddar as my cheese.

4-5 smaller storage onions (about 2 lbs) or combo of onions and shallots
1/2 bunch thyme, leaves picked (can omit in a pinch)
½ a Thelma Sanders squash, cut in half, baked for 20 minutes to soften, peeled and cut into chunks (about 3-4 cups) or you can try to peel is raw but the deep grooves make it difficult
1/2 medium loaf rustic bread (1/2 lb), torn in to chunks
1 ½ cups grated cheese (sharp cheddar, gruyere, aged-Assiago; Parmesan, etc.)
3 1/2 cups vegetable or chicken stock (I use homemade veggie bouillon)

Preheat oven to 400F

Cut onion in half lengthwise. Peel, then slice into half moons about 5mm (1/4in) thick. Heat 3 tablespoons olive oil in a large frying pan. Cook onion stirring occasionally until soft and golden brown. No need to caramelize. Stir in the thyme.

In a medium heatproof dish layer about a third of the onions. Sprinkle over some of the bread and cheese and squash. Repeat until all the ingredients have been used. You want to be able to see a little of each on the top. Bring stock to a simmer. Pour over the dish. Season. Cover and bake for 30 minutes. Remove cover and bake for another 20 – 30 minutes or until the top is golden and crunchy and the stock has been absorbed by the bread. Run under the broiler for a few minutes if it's not crispy enough.

Beans with Tomatoes, Leeks, Sage and Onion

We eat some version of this general idea once a week all winter long. It's more idea than recipe. It can be soupier or thicker, spicy or mild, enriched with bacon or sausage or notIt will be delicious with either black or borlotti beans. And the ratios and quantities are totally up to you.

You can use some of the bean cooking liquid in this dish.

Olive oil

1 onion and/or leek, dice or well-washed and sliced
1-2 slices bacon, diced (optional—or 1 or more pork sausages, slice or crumbled)
2 teaspoons chopped sage
Bit of crumbled cayenne (optional)
1 teaspoon thyme
3 cups cooked beans (cooking instructions below)
1 cup bean cooking liquid
2 cups canned or frozen tomatoes or tomato sauce
Salt and freshly ground pepper
More olive oil and chopped parsley for serving

In a large skillet sauté the onion and/or leek in a 2 tablespoons of olive oil over medium high heat. If you're using bacon or sausage, add it after a few minutes along with the thyme and sage and cayenne, if using. Cook for about 10 minutes, stirring often. Add the tomatoes, beans and bean cooking liquid and bring to a lively simmer. Cook for about 15 minutes until thickened a bit. Taste and adjust seasoning. Serve with a generous drizzle of olive oil and fresh parsley.

Borlotti Bean and Farro Soup (link) from Rachel Eats.com

<http://racheleats.wordpress.com/2009/02/21/borlotti-bean-and-farro-soup/>

A simple, perfect, Italian stew for this blustery weather.

Braised Shallots (or Shallots and Onions)

--adapted from Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone by Deborah Madison



A perfect side dish for most anything. Wonderful with most any roasted, grilled, braised meat though I just enjoyed these with the parsnips (above) and some braised greens. They are rich and luscious and so easy and make your house smell wonderful for hours.

1 tablespoons butter or olive oil
5-6 shallots or 3 shallots and 1-2 onions
2 bay leaves
3-thyme sprigs
2 teaspoons sugar
generous 1/3 cup dry white wine
Salt

Peel the shallots and let them break apart where they naturally do. Then cut them in half lengthwise.

Heat the butter or olive oil (or a combo) in a large, heavy skillet with the bay leaves, thyme sprigs and sugar over medium-high heat. Stir things up a bit so the sugar doesn't burn. Add the shallots and coat to toss and then cook for 8-10 minutes, shaking the pan or stirring occasionally, until the shallots are nicely browned. Take care not to burn them and turn down the heat if they're getting dark too quickly.

When they're nicely browned pour in the wine and a few pinches of salt. Then cook at a gentle simmer, covered until the shallots are tender and coated in syrup about 15-20 more minutes. You may need to add a couple of tablespoons of water if things dry out too much.

Dried Cayenne Notes/Ideas

- You can crush your cayenne peppers into flakes and use those to season soups and sauces
- You can pour boiling water over them to rehydrate a bit, then drain off most of the liquid and add a little olive oil and blend that into a sauce/paste which you can use to season anything from eggs to the Tahini sauce below to soups, stews, This small quantity can be hard to blend and an immersion blender might work best or you might need to add a little more soaking liquid or oil to get enough volume to successfully blend. Or you can use a mortar and pestle and keep it much drier—a good choice too!
- You can add vinegar to the above sauce/paste and make a more tabasco-like sauce to use wherever you'd like as well.

Brussels Sprout Pasta “Risotto” with Bacon

Serves 3-4

1 1/4 lbs. Brussels sprouts, more or less--washed, trimmed and cut in half lengthwise and then sliced into thin half moons

1 medium onion, diced or 2-3 shallots

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 slices bacon, diced

1 1/3 cup tubetti (or ditalini or other small pasta)

4 cups flavorful vegetable broth (homemade veggie bouillon) or chicken stock

1/2 cup heavy cream or half and half

1/2 cup grated Parmesan or other hard, grating cheese (Asiago Stella is a good, cheaper alternative)

Salt

Lots of freshly ground black pepper

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and a few pinches of salt and cook for 5 minutes to soften a bit and then add the bacon. You may need to reduce the heat a bit and cook for another 5 minutes or so until the bacon is beginning to render but is not crisp. Now add the broth or stock and bring to a boil. Add the pasta, stirring well and then simmer for about 10 minutes uncovered. Now add the Brussels sprouts, stir well to incorporate and then cover and cook for another 7 or 8 minutes until the sprouts are tender. At this point add the cream and a generous amount of freshly ground black pepper. Cook uncovered for about 3 minutes until it thickens slightly.

Stir in the Parmesan and adjust salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

Quick Braised Brussels Sprouts with Mustard

You've seen a fancier version of this earlier this year. This version is almost as good and a bit quicker.

Serves 4 as a side dish

1 pound Brussels sprouts, cleaned, trimmed and halved lengthwise
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
3/4 cup water or vegetable broth or chicken stock
2 tablespoons heavy cream
1 scant tablespoon smooth Dijon mustard (or more to taste)

In a large, heavy 12-inch skillet heat oil over moderate heat. Arrange halved sprouts in skillet, cut sides down, in one layer. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, to taste. Cook sprouts, without turning until undersides are golden brown, about 5 minutes. (If your sprouts don't fit in one layer, double them up a bit. It will be fine.)

Add the water or broth and bring to a simmer. Once simmering, reduce the heat to medium-low (for a gentle simmer), cover the pot and cook the sprouts until they are tender can be pierced easily with the tip of a paring knife, about 10 minutes.

In a small bowl mix the cream and mustard and pour it over the Brussels sprouts and gently mix. Let simmer for just a minute or two. Taste for seasoning, and adjust as necessary with more salt, pepper or Dijon, then serve hot.

Basic Dry Bean Soaking/Cooking Instructions

Place dry beans in a bowl covered by about 4 inches of cold water. Soak over night or 6-8 hours. Drain and rinse beans.

Place soaked beans in a large pot and cover with cold water by several inches. Add a few whole, peeled garlic cloves, a bay leaf and a big chunk of peeled onion. Bring to a boil, turn down to a simmer and let cook covered until the beans are tender, stirring occasionally (this helps prevent some beans from softening before others.) I add salt towards the end of the cooking time and when you do add salt, be generous, as in at least 1 teaspoons sea salt to start if you're cooking 1 1/2 cups or so of dried beans. They'll may need more still. The time it takes for the beans to cook will vary depending on the kind/size of bean and the freshness of the dried beans. I'm guessing the borlotti will take about 30-35 minutes. Let beans cool in their liquid (if you're not in a rush) and then use, freeze, etc. If you're freezing some, fill your container with the beans and then ladle in the cooking liquid until the beans are almost covered. Cooked beans also keep in the fridge for 5-6 days and for several months in the freezer.