



47th Ave Farm Winter CSA for the week of March 17, 2014

Greens and beans! I have a hard time containing my enthusiasm for this simple and perfect combination. You can't really go wrong. And through a warm wedge of cornbread in the mix and you've got my son's favorite dinner.

Simple Sautéed Raab
Beans with Kale or Collard Raab (and Cornbread)
Oven-cooked Cranberry Beans
Leek and Winter Squash Risotto
Roasted Spiced Squash and Greens Bowl
Winter Minestrone
Parsnip and Parsley Hash with Fried Eggs
Bruschetta with Stewed Leeks and Goat Cheese
Caramelized Onion and Potato Tart

Simple Sautéed Raab

It's an annual treat to get the first bunch of sweet, tender kale or collard raab. They're at once fresh and strong with a hint of bitterness. By quickly blanching them in salted boiling water and then sautéing them you make the most of these going-to-seed brassicas.

I can eat a whole bunch by myself, cooked this way. You can serve it alongside a piece of fish or hearty salad or beans (see below) or eggs of course, or just a slice of good bread and cheese.

1 bunch (or more) kale or collard raab, washed and any tough stems removed and cut into 3-4-inch lengths
2 cloves garlic, minced
Olive oil
Salt

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add a teaspoon or so of salt. Add the raab and cook for 2 minutes. Drain the raab.

Heat a bit of oil in a large skillet. Add the raab and the garlic and sauté until just tender. Taste and adjust seasoning.

Beans with Kale or Collard Raab (and Cornbread)

Cook the beans one of the two ways described below. Blanch the raab or collards in salted boiling water and sauté as noted above. Serve with plenty of good olive oil drizzled over both beans and greens and corn bread.

Cornbread

--adapted from Fields of Plenty by Michael Ableman

I make this for dinner regularly and it's lovely with the beans and greens this week, see above. It's very quick and nothing beats warm cornbread with honey for dinner and/or dessert. It's really best within a few hours of baking but it never lasts long around here. And you can toast it for breakfast the next day.

You can also make these as muffins (and freeze some for future use). When I make them as muffins I tend to add a cup or so of grated sharp cheddar and a couple of pinches of cayenne.

5 ½ Tbs butter, divided
1 ½ cups cornmeal (I use a fairly coarse/polenta grind but medium grind is fine too)
½ cup all-purpose flour
2 Tbs sugar
2 ½ tsp baking powder
1 tsp kosher salt
1 egg
1 ¼ cups milk

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Melt 4 Tbs butter and let cool slightly. Combine cornmeal, flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar in a medium bowl. Whisk the egg and milk together in a small bowl. Add melted butter and milk mixture to dry ingredients and stir quickly. Do not over mix. Heat a 9 or 10-inch cast iron frying pan over med-high heat. Add the remaining 1 ½ Tbs butter to the pan. When the butter is melted and foaming pour the batter into the skillet. Bake in the oven until the corn bread is golden and a knife inserted in the middle comes out clean, between 15 and 18 minutes. Serve hot out of the oven with butter and honey or just plain.

Oven-Cooked Cranberry Beans

This, no-soaking method takes about 90 minutes in the oven in a covered pot. It works beautifully so if you have the time by all means try this method.

Vermont cranberry beans (however many you have- you might as well cook all 2 or 4 cups at once)

2 bay leaves
2 cloves garlic, peeled and left whole
Small chunk of onion (not chopped)
A few leek tops

Preheat your oven to 300 degrees or 325 if your oven runs cool like mine does.

Put all the above ingredients in large heavy oven-proof pot for which you have a fairly tight-fitting lid. Cover the beans with about 2-3 inches of cold water. Bring the beans to a boil on the stove top and then put in the oven, covered. Check after about an hour and give the beans a good stir. Re-cover and put back in the oven. Cook for another 30 minutes and check for doneness. You may need a little more time still. When tender, remove from the oven, add at least 2 teaspoons of salt, stir well and let sit for a while longer for salt to absorb. You'll likely need quite a bit more salt.

Beans cooked like this create an even richer, creamier broth (than the soaking and stove-top method, below) that you should by all means use, with the beans or in another soup, etc.

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.

Leek and Winter Squash Risotto

I made a leek and chanterelle risotto this week with dried chanterelle's given to me by a friend. It Was a very satisfying dish especially since I had good, homemade chicken stock in the freezer. A vegetable stock or veggie bouillon broth with work nicely too. And leeks and winters squash are one of my favorite risotto combinations and this will likely be some of your last winter squash for a long time.

This will be easier to make if you have a butternut squash as they are easier to peel raw. If you have an acorn type than you might bake the squash for 20 minutes first to make it easier to peel.

Olive oil and or a bit of butter (leeks love butter)
3-4 leeks, washed, trimmed and cut into thin half rounds
3-4 sprigs of thyme or 1 teaspoon dried
3 cups, peeled, 1/2-inch diced squash (see headnote)
6 cups vegetable or chicken stock or homemade veggie bouillon broth
1 generous cup arborio rice
1/2 cup dry white wine (optional)
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons butter
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

In a saucepan bring broth or stock to a boil and keep at a bare simmer. Be sure to taste the broth to make sure it's well-seasoned but not too salty.

In a large sauté pan over medium-high heat cook the leeks and thyme for about 7 minutes in a bit of olive oil and/or butter until soft. Stir in rice, stirring until each grain is coated with oil and cook for 2 minutes. Add wine (if using) and cook, over moderately high heat, stirring, until wine is absorbed. Add about 3/4 cup simmering broth and cook over moderately high heat, stirring frequently, until broth is absorbed. Add the diced squash and then keep adding broth until the rice is and vegetables are tender, about 15-18 more minutes.

Add the butter and Parmesan, another ladleful of broth—you want it to be quite soupy. Let rest for 7-10 minutes, covered, before serving. Most of the liquid will be absorbed. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and or freshly ground black pepper.

Roasted Spiced Squash and Greens Bowl

--inspired by The Sprouted Kitchen

1 small-ish butternut squash skin, peeled and cut into large dice
2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1 tablespoon maple syrup
1 teaspoon whole grain mustard
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes (or less if you don't like much spice)
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon fresh grated nutmeg
Salt and pepper
1 bunch kale or collard raab or 1 bunch kale, washed, trimmed and cut into bite-sized pieces
3 tablespoons minced shallot or red onion

Preheat the oven to 400.

Spread the squash on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil, maple, mustard, cayenne, red pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg and a few generous pinches of salt and pepper. Toss gently to coat everything, adding another drizzle of oil or maple if it seems too dry. Roast in the oven for 30-35 minutes or until the squash is tender and caramelized, tossing the vegetables half way through.

Blanch the greens in salted boiling water for 2-3 minutes. Drain well and toss with a little good olive oil.

Combine the warm, roasted squash, the blanched greens and minced onion and gently toss everything together. Enjoy warm.

Winter CSA Minestrone

You can use some of all the vegetables in your share in this hearty soup. It will be beautiful, rich and complex in flavor. You can season it a variety of ways—thyme or sage or rosemary or cumin and coriander and parsley and some of the cayenne pepper you might still have—and adjust the ratio and combination of vegetables as you see fit. Add a little sausage or bacon at the beginning or use chicken stock or forget all the meaty ideas and let the vegetables shine on their own.

Olive oil and/or butter
2 leeks, well washed, cut in half lengthwise and cut crosswise into 1/2-inch half rounds
1 onion or several shallots, diced
2 cloves garlic, sliced
1 parsnips, scrubbed or peeled and diced
2 potatoes, scrubbed and diced
1 bunch greens (raab or collards) or 3 cups or more chopped cabbage
2 cups peeled, diced winter squash
2 cups cooked beans, drained but liquid reserved
Herbs and/or spices of your choice (see headnote)

Stock, broth and bean cooking liquid and/or water
Salt and freshly ground pepper
A little cider vinegar
Good olive oil for serving

Heat olive oil and/or butter in a large pot and gently sweat the onions, leeks and garlic for 10 or more minutes without browning. If you are using thyme or a bit of sage or rosemary or dry spices or cayenne add them to the cooking alliums.

Then add the potatoes and about 8 cups of liquid and bring to a lively simmer. After a few minutes add the parsnips, squash and beans and cook for another 15 minutes or so at a gently simmer. Add the greens and cook for 7-8 more minutes. The idea is to have all the vegetables tender at about the same time but it doesn't really matter if some of them start breaking down—it will just thicken the soup which I happen to like. Taste and season with salt and pepper and vinegar. If the soup is blah you can always add a few teaspoon of soy sauce, a good all purpose dish-finisher!

Parsnip and Parsley Hash with Lemon

This is my favorite way to eat parsnips right now. It takes about 10 minutes—start to finish!

Serves 2

Slice or dice ½ and onion (or more if you making this for more than 2 people)
Grate 5-6 parsnips (or more) on the large holes of a box grater (or in food processor)
Chop ½ bunch (or more) of parsley.
2 eggs (you want one egg per person)
Lemon juice
Salt and pepper
Olive oil

Generously coat the largest skillet you have with olive oil and heat over medium-high heat. Add the onion and sauté for just a minute or two. Add the grated parsnips and a few generous pinches of salt and sauté, stirring frequently until browned and almost tender. You may want to cover the pan and you may need to add a bit more oil and/or turn the heat down a bit so they don't burn. When the veggies are almost tender add the chopped parsley and mix well. Now scoot the parsnip mixture to one side of the pan. Add a bit more oil to the open side and fry your eggs there. Drizzle the parsnips mixture with a little lemon juice. When the eggs are cooked to your liking, serve the hash topped with the eggs, which you generously peppered and salted and drizzled with more olive oil.

Bruschetta with Stewed Leeks and Goat Cheese

Serves 4 as a side or appetizer or 2 as a main

You can serve this as a hearty appetizer or first course or even as dinner with a big salad on the side. If you don't have goat cheese on hand, feta would work too or even just cream cheese. Quantities are approximate and feel free to make less or more depending on what you have on hand and/or want to use up.

3 medium to large leeks (cut off only the top couple of inches that are tough and scruffy. Most of the green part is great to eat)
5 slices good, crusty bread (something like Grand Central Bakery Peasant Levain)
4 ounces soft goat cheese
3 hard-boiled eggs (chopped)
1 teaspoon fresh or dried thyme, minced or crumbled (optional)
Salt and pepper
1 tablespoon butter
Olive oil
Chopped parsley and a drizzle of balsamic vinegar for garnish (optional)

Clean leeks well and cut in half lengthwise then cut into ½ inch half-rounds. Heat butter and a good splash of olive oil in a large sauté pan over med/high heat. Add the leeks when the butter is melted and oil is hot. Stir well to coat, salt generously with a couple of large pinches of kosher salt. Add thyme and stir well. Cook for a few minutes uncovered, then turn the heat down a bit and cover. Check occasionally to make sure the leeks aren't browning or burning. Add a splash of water if they start to stick and turn the heat down a bit more. Cook for about 15 minutes until leeks are meltingly tender, stirring occasionally.

Meanwhile, toast the bread and hard-boil the eggs and peel and chop those. Spread the goat cheese on the bread, arrange stewed leeks on cheese, sprinkle with egg, salt and a couple of grinds of pepper and drizzle a little good olive oil over the whole thing. Sprinkle with parsley and drizzle with balsamic vinegar if you'd like. There is no way to eat this delicately. They make a mess, the toppings fall off. . . . no matter. It's worth it!

Caramelized Onion and Potato Tart

This is a perfect dish for when you have a few modest ingredients (potatoes and onions) but need an elegant/comforting dish. It's just as good (or better) at room temperature.

Serve with simply sautéed raab.

Olive oil
2 large or 3 medium red (or yellow) onions, sliced
1/2 teaspoon finely chopped fresh rosemary
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
2 medium red or Yukon gold potatoes, about 3/4 lb., parboiled for about 10 minutes, cooled a bit and cut into 1/8 inch thick rounds
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 cup half and half or heavy cream or sour cream or Greek yogurt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Sauté the onions in a large skillet in a bit of olive oil with the rosemary for about 15-20 minutes until tender and beginning to brown. You can certainly cook them longer for an even richer dish but this is sufficient.

Put the onions in a bowl and let cool just a bit. Stir in the remaining ingredients, including the potatoes. Fill the below tart shell with the onion mixture and bake, on a sheet pan to catch any drips, for about 45 minutes until firm, golden and bubbling.

Cool for a few minutes and serve hot or at room temperature.

Tart Dough

1 1/2 cups all purpose flour (or 3/4 cup apf and 3/4 cup whole wheat (pastry) flour)
9 tablespoons butter, chilled, cut into cubes
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 large egg
2-3 tablespoons cold water

Make the dough by mixing the flour and salt in a bowl. Add the butter and use your hands, or a pastry blender, to break in the butter until the mixture has a crumbly, cornmeal-like texture.

Mix the egg with 2 tablespoons of the water. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients and add the beaten egg mixture, stirring the mixture until the dough holds together. If it's not coming together easily, add the additional tablespoon of ice water.

Gather the dough into a ball and roll the dough on a lightly floured surface, adding additional flour only as necessary to keep the dough from sticking to the counter.

Once the dough is large enough so that it will cover the bottom and sides of 10-inch tart pan with a removable bottom, roll the dough around the rolling pin then unroll it over the tart pan. "Dock" the bottom of the pastry firmly with your fingertips a few times, pressing in to make indentations. Chill tart shell if you have the time (not necessary though) while you make the above filling.