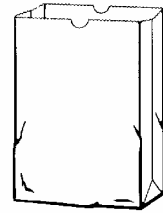


IN THE BAG
Potomac Vegetable Farms
July 5, 2005



There is definitely leaf lettuce in each bag and the regular shares (delivery only) have escarole or very frizzy looking endive and everyone else has beets and some sort of basil and some cucumbers and way too much squash. We are giving you a break from the Swiss chard, but while you are taking that break, it keeps growing, so keep looking for more recipes. Like last year (an excellent growing season), we are still a few weeks ahead of schedule, in terms of crops that are ready to harvest. The peas are all over, and the fences have been taken down, but the beans are coming in – it really is getting to be summer. We just started digging our Red Gold potatoes, and we are about to start the garlic harvest in earnest. For the next week or two, the garlic will need to be refrigerated. It isn't cured yet. Tomatoes are just a few weeks away (to us, tomatoes define "summer").

The lettuce was quite flavorful last week (some would call that bitter), and it probably hasn't improved since then. We recommend a strong vinaigrette with lots of garlic. Everyone has a different tolerance for bitter lettuce, we notice. This may be the last week for this spring crop, so find a good salad dressing and pour it on, one more time.

Mini-shares: Lettuce, squash, cucumber, basil, beets, fresh garlic, beans, sorrel

Regular: Lettuce, squash, cucumbers, Thai basil, fresh garlic, parsley or sweet onions, potatoes, escarole/endive or beets, chocolate mint or sorrel

Robust: Lettuce, squash, cucumbers, basil, garlic, parsley, beans, potatoes, sweet onions, escarole/endive and sorrel

Braised Escarole with Onion

1 head escarole
2 T. extra virgin olive oil
1 small sweet onion, finely chopped
1 plump garlic clove, minced
salt and pepper
chopped parsley

Separate the escarole leaves and wash well – check for dirt at the base of the inner leaves. Drain and coarsely chop. Heat oil in a heavy skillet. Add onion, cook until limp. Add garlic and cook until it starts to turn color, but not until it's brown. Add the damp escarole, salt lightly, cook covered until greens are wilted and tender. About 10 minutes. Season with pepper and toss with parsley. Serves 2 to 4.

Broiled summer squash, any shape or color

Turn the broiler on. Slice the squash into rounds and brush with olive oil and put on baking sheet. Broil five minutes per side. Salt lightly. Eat hot. Indescribably delicious.

Mixed Greens with Cumin and Paprika
(adapted from Madison's Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone)

12 cups (about two bunches) mixed greens – kale, chard or beet greens, escarole
salt
4 large garlic cloves
1 cup chopped parsley
1 cup chopped cilantro
3 T. olive oil
2 t. paprika
2 t. ground cumin
For garnish: oil-cured black olives, wedges of lemon and tomato

Discard inedible parts of greens. Steam the leaves until tender. Chop into pieces.

Pound garlic with ½ tsp. salt, in a mortar until smooth, then work in parsley and cilantro and pound them briefly to release their flavors.

Warm the oil with the paprika and cumin in a wide skillet over medium heat until they release their fragrances. Don't burn. Stir in garlic, add greens and cook until any extra moisture is gone. Taste for salt. Pile into a dish and garnish with olives, lemon, and tomato.

If you find you have some leftover cooked greens, you can make a cold salad with chickpeas, pasta, diced tomatoes, freshly grated Parmesan.

Or mix finely chopped greens with cooked rice or other quick-cooking grains.

Chop and combine greens with soft cheeses (feta, ricotta, Gruyere), black olives, capers, and spread over toast.

Remember, there are many ways to cook these vegetables:

Blanche: To briefly immerse in boiling water, then plunge into cold water to stop the cooking. Greens will retain their bright color.

Braise: To brown meats and vegetables in a small amount of fat, then cook, tightly covered, in a small amount of flavored liquid for a long time over low heat.

Sauté: To cook quickly, in fat, over high heat.

Steam: To steam, in a steam basket over simmering water in a wide, tightly covered saucepan.

Stir-fry: To cook small pieces of food quickly in a large pan in a small amount of very hot fat over high heat. Stir constantly.

Wilt: To wilt, first rinse the leaves, then place the wet leaves in a pot or skillet over low heat and cover tightly. Greens become limp and pliable.