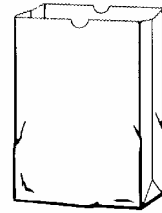


IN THE BAG
Potomac Vegetable Farms
August 9, 2005



Mini: cucumber, peppers, tomatoes, Juliets (mini-Romas), eggplant, beets, thyme, basil, onions, garlic

Regular: cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, eggplant, okra, beans or carrots, basil, celery or sorrel, onions, garlic

Robust: most of the above

After seven straight weeks of summer squash, you are getting a break. The first patches are finished and the second planting is not yet in high gear. But all this hot weather makes okra grow really fast, so some of you are getting to try this prickly Southern food. You can always batter-fry it (delicious) but you can also add it to any stove top vegetable combination – the texture is quite unique.

If you don't manage to eat a whole bunch of thyme in its fresh state, it is extremely easy to dry. You could just leave it on the counter for a couple of days, and then you have a dry version of thyme, to store in a clean bottle and use for months. Experiment with it.

We welcome our new Recipe Maven, Roz Gold, who will provide us with a fresh selection of menu suggestions each week, taken from her large file of recipes. She is perfect for this job – she loves to cook, her recipes are already organized by vegetable, and she reads cooking magazines for entertainment. (This does not let you off the hook, of course. If you have recipes to share, please send them to hana.newcomb@cox.net.)

Lemon-Macerated Okra and Olives (serve as a side dish or a snack food)
(from *Cooking Light* magazine)

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| 3 c. small okra pods | ½ tsp. kosher salt |
| ½ c. kalamata olives | ½ tsp. crushed red pepper |
| 1 tbl. lemon rind | 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced |
| 1/4 c. fresh lemon juice | 2 bay leaves |
| 2 tbl. extra virgin olive oil | 2 thyme sprigs |

Combine all ingredients in a large zip-top plastic bag and seal. Marinate in refrigerator two to three days, turning bag occasionally. Strain the mixture through a sieve over a bowl, discarding marinade. Yield: 14 1/4 cup servings.

Mondo Bizzaro Sauce (jazzy pesto sauce for pasta)
(from the *Moosewood Cookbook*, 1977 edition)

Puree in blender:

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| 4 cloves garlic | 10 fresh basil leaves |
| 2 c. tomato puree | ½ lb. fresh, chopped spinach leaves |
| ½ c. chopped parsley | ¾ c. olive oil |
| ¾ c. freshly grated Parmesan or Romano cheese | |

Heat gently and toss with hot pasta (note: I think it would also be OK to have the pesto at room temp. and toss with hot pasta, for a cooler kitchen)

Oven Dried Tomatoes

Adapted from Nina Planck's The Farmers' Market Cookbook

2 pounds ripe tomatoes (any color, any size, including cherries)
2 tablespoons olive oil
salt

Set the oven at 250 degrees.

Leave cherry tomatoes whole. Halve or quarter regular tomatoes. Put tomatoes of equal size in each baking dish. Roll the tomatoes in oil and salt and put them in a baking dish – just one layer. Bake for 3 – 8 hours and remove when they are ready. After 3 hours, smaller tomatoes are ready for a mozzarella sandwich. After 8 hours they are leathery and intensely flavored.

Packed in oil, they keep for a week to 10 days in the refrigerator or a cool pantry.

Add to minestrone soup, bean soups, salads. They are good in sandwiches spread with soft cheese, or on pasta, pizza, crostini, or bruschetta. When cherry tomatoes are still juicy and hot, toss them with pasta, olive oil, and basil. The longer the tomatoes sit in the oil, the tastier they get. Strained, the reddish oil is wonderful on bread and salads.

You could blend one or two tomatoes with their oil for a more intense flavor, or you could add a clove of garlic or an anchovy for every 3 tablespoons of oil.

Uncooked Tomato Sauce

6 good tomatoes, diced
2 cloves garlic, smashed, peeled, and finely chopped
1 small sweet onion, diced
20 basil leaves, chopped
2 T. olive oil

Mix together all the ingredients and let the sauce sit for 4 – 8 hours in a cool place. Toss with hot spaghetti and season to taste.

While you are baking sometime, make some Whole Roasted Garlic: one head garlic per person, olive oil or butter.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Rub off the outer papery skins, leaving the cloves encased in the last layer. Set the heads upright in an oiled baking dish, spoon a little olive oil or place a knob of butter on each, add a few tablespoons of water to the dish. Cover tightly with foil. Bake for 45 minutes, then remove the foil and bake 30 minutes more, until the garlic is completely soft inside. Long cooking sweetens pungent garlic. Squeezed out of each clove, the soft garlic is delicious with potatoes or on toast.