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WEEK 18

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TRANSITIONS

Last week was a challenging week. Our little Jack started kindergarten on Wednesday, after sleeping in his new school shoes Tuesday night. By Friday, he was pooped, as were his parents (and I expect all the school staff). Crew member, Susan Reyes, sent her first-born off to college at Spalding in Louisville where she will pursue a degree in Fine Arts. Laurie White's kids are making the transition from homeschooling to attending Berea Community School. Three year old Molly begins going to the Montessori school on Monday. Life is certainly about change.

In the midst of all the changes for our farm family, it seems like Monday's eclipse is creating a sense of excitement and adventure - a reprieve of sorts from the troubling events of the past couple of weeks. Today, one of my friends asked if the chickens will start roosting when day darkens. Hmmm, I guess they will be confused, won't they? Maybe we won't know what to do either!

However, when uncertainty reigns, it's always appropriate to eat, right? So, thanks to crew members Derek Dietz and Shelby Wheeler, we celebrated with a chocolate and orange eclipse cake! I rustled up some red beans and rice, brats, with a side of LESF onions and green peppers. Too bad the potatoes will not have been dug in time for us to sample them before putting in this week's CSA share. . . I guess we'll just have to plan another farm crew meal that's heavy on potatoes sometime soon.

Of course, by the time you read this newsletter, the eclipse will be history. And, you'll be thinking about how to use all that okra that is popping up in your CSA share. Maybe now's the time to try making a Creole gumbo while you have the peppers, onions, and tomatoes. Omit the meat for a tasty vegetarian entree.

Creole Gumbo

4 tbsp. lard or butter, 1 (3 1/2-4) lb. chicken, cut into 8 pieces, Kosher salt and cayenne, to taste, 4 oz. tasso, minced (Optional) (Louisiana pork shoulder meat, substitute with three slices of fried bacon, if desired.), 2 tsp. minced thyme, 1 bay leaf, 1 large yellow onion, minced, 1 red bell pepper, minced, 1 tbsp. minced parsley, 6 large vine-ripe tomatoes, peeled, cored, and minced, 6 cups chicken stock (or vegetable stock), 1 lb. okra, trimmed and sliced 1/2" thick crosswise, Cooked white rice, for serving

Melt 2 tbsp. lard or butter in an 8-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high. Season chicken with salt and cayenne; cook, turning as needed, until browned, 10-15 minutes. Add tasso or bacon; cook 5 minutes. Add thyme, bay leaf, onion, and bell pepper; cook until golden, 10-12 minutes. Add parsley and tomatoes; cook until tomatoes break down, 4-5 minutes. Add stock; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook until chicken is cooked through and gumbo is slightly thickened, about 1 hour. Meanwhile, melt remaining lard or butter in a 12" skillet over medium-high. Cook okra until golden brown and slightly crisp, 8-10 minutes, then stir into gumbo; cook 15 minutes more.

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Serve with rice. (Retrieved from Savour website, 8.20.17).

We are missing crew leader, Jessica Burton, who flew to Nebraska to be with family for a couple of weeks. Many thanks to our amazing team for stepping up while she's enjoying time away - Melissa, Hailey, Sean, Shelby, Derek, Laurie, and Susan. Don't tell her that we failed to put the newsletter in some of last week's boxes. If you didn't get a newsletter, check your inbox. We hope it arrived there.

Freezing Green Peppers

Peppers will continue to bear well in the coming weeks. If you have a bottleneck of peppers in your fridge, you might consider freezing them. I mentioned this a couple of weeks ago, but just in case you need a refresher, it's a very easy process that rewards you nicely during the cold winter months. Just wash them, cut out the stems, cut them in half so you can remove the seeds and membrane. Then, cut into strips, dice or clise, depending on how you plan to use them. Freeze peppers in a single layer on a cookie sheet with sides, about an hour or longer until frozen. Then, transfer to a freezer bag when frozen, excluding as much air as possible from the bag. The peppers remain separated for ease of use in measuring out for recipes.

Sweet Potato Greens

New to your CSA share and perhaps new to your eating experience are sweet potato greens, the leafy greens of the sweet potatoes that will be harvested before the season's frost. According to information from Prevention website, a "new analysis published in the journal HortScience . . . found the leaves have 3 times more vitamin B6, 5 times more vitamin C, and almost 10 times more riboflavin than actual sweet potatoes." Given that they taste similar to spinach, kale, and chard (without the bite that these greens sometimes have), we hope you find that the greens assimilate easily into your menu this week. Here's a recipe to get your started.

1 bunch sweet potato greens

½ sm white onion, diced
2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper

1½ Tbsp maple syrup

1. REMOVE sweet potato leaves from stems and set aside. Remove smaller stems from the larger, tougher stems. Discard the larger stems and roughly chop the smaller stems.
2. HEAT olive oil in medium-sized pan over medium high heat. Add onion and sauté until just softened, about 3 minutes.
3. ADD stem pieces and sauté until tender, about 5 minutes.
4. ADD leaves, salt and pepper to taste, and maple syrup. Sauté until leaves are wilted, about 2 minutes. Serve. Recipe courtesy of The Bitten Word.