Mariquita Farm

MYSTERY THURSDAY

INCANTO

December 22nd, 2011

Beets
French Tarragon
Mixed Yellow and Orange Imperator Carrots
Fennel
Sweet Dumpling Squash
Baby Chard
Rapini
Parsley Root
Potatoes
Purple Cauliflower
Mystery – Celery OR Escarole

Disclaimer to the above vegetable list: The list above is approximate. There may be differences in your box. We ask for patience and a sense of adventure with these boxes. Thank you!

Storage: Beets: If bunched, remove greens and store greens in a separate plastic bag. No coldest drawer. Use greens as you would any cooking green. Store beets in a plastic bag in the fridge. **Tarragon:** Rinse, shake excess water off, and store in a plastic bag in the fridge. No coldest drawer. **Carrots:** Remove and compost greens. Carrots will stay crisp longer without their greens. Store carrots in a plastic bag in the fridge. **Fennel:** If you need room in your fridge, cut off the greens above the bulb and compost the greens. Store bulb in a plastic bag in the fridge. **Sweet Dumpling Squash:** Check for nicks and cuts, and use sooner if there are any significant breaks in the skin. Otherwise, store in a cool spot on the counter. Similar to delicate squash. **Chard, Rapini & Escarole**: Give a good drink and store in a plastic bag in the fridge. No coldest drawer. **Parsley Root:** Remove greens and use the greens just like the parsley it is! Store roots in a plastic bag in the fridge. **Potatoes & Cauliflower:** Store in a plastic bag in the fridge. **Celery:** Store completely enclosed in a plastic bag in the fridge or celery will wilt.

(Rapini Photo by Andy Griffin)

Matzo Ball Soup (Chef Jonathan Miller)

Since there is parsley root in the boxes this week, I am contributing my famous (and the best, if I may say so myself) Matzo Ball soup recipe. The two keys here are taking the proper amount of time to do this right, and absolutely using the right fat in your matzo balls. Chicken fat, duck fat, or goose fat will all work best, with chicken fat being my favorite. Other fats will not yield the same texture and deliciousness. I know chicken fat is a little less common for home cooks to keep around, but the next time you roast a chicken, strain all the fat that gets rendered after you roast it and keep it in a jar in the refrigerator or freezer. Worth the trouble.

Soup
1 chicken (all parts but the liver, but definitely including the feet)
2 onions, quartered
6 cloves
2 carrots, roughly chopped
2 celery stalks, roughly chopped
1 parsnip, chopped
2 parsley roots (or 1 large), roughly chopped
10 black peppercorns
1 bay leaf
6 branches parsley, roughly chopped

Matzo Balls
1/2 c chicken fat (or duck or goose fat)
1 c boiling water
1/4 t freshly grated nutmeg
1/4 t powdered ginger
1 small shallot, minced
2 T parsley, chopped
1/4 t paprika
1 c matzo meal
3 eggs, separated

Put the chicken and its parts in a large pot, cover with cold water, bring to a boil, then pour off all the water. Rinse the chicken and pot out to remove all the particles. Return the chicken and parts to the pot, cover with 12 cups of cold water, bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes (uncovered). Try to keep the simmer very low so that the boiling action doesn't cloud the soup. Add the remaining soup ingredients plus a teaspoon of salt and continue to simmer for an additional hour. You want the chicken to cook for 90 minutes total. Remove the chicken and reserve the meat for another use (a chicken salad is a nice use of leftover broth meat). Strain the broth through the finest strainer you have, twice if necessary, to get as clear a broth that you can. Chill the broth overnight or in an ice bath until very cold. Any fat in the soup will solidify on the top of the broth. Lift that off while still cold and save it for another use (salad dressings are really good with chicken fat, too).

For the matzo balls: in a saucepan combine the chicken fat with the boiling water, nutmeg, ginger, shallot, parsley, paprika, and matzo meal, stirring well. Cook for about 5 minutes, stirring all

the time to make sure you it doesn't scorch. The meal should start to pull away from the sides of the pan. Allow to cool somewhat. Add the egg yolks, one at a time, stirring well to make sure the yolks don't cook. Beat the egg whites in a separate bowl until you have soft peaks. Fold the beaten whites into the matzo batter. Do not over mix - use a light hand here, it will help with create a lighter texture to the matzo balls. Chill the batter until cold (overnight is fine, but a few hours at least). Bring a medium pot of water to a simmer (do not use a roiling boil for cooking the matzo balls, as the boiling action could break them apart). Using wet hands, shape the dough into 1 inch balls and slip them into the water. Maintain a low simmer, but do not boil rapidly. Matzo balls may float before they are fully cooked, so use a timer and simmer for 15 minutes. Heat the broth while you are cooking the matzo balls, and check it for seasoning. It should taste clear, and have a clean chicken-y flavor. Ladle some into serving bowls or into a tureen. Lift the cooked matzo balls out of the simmering water with a slotted spoon or strainer and slip them into the hot chicken broth. Serve hot with minced fresh parsley or chives as garnish.

Tuscan Vegetable Stew with Polenta
(Chef Jonathan Miller)

I've adapted my recipe somewhat to incorporate more of the vegetables from the box, but substitutions may be made to suit your taste. Do take your time with this dish. Time is what makes it so good. And really finish it with lots of olive oil. I presented it last night at the table (family style) and drizzled about a third of a cup of finishing oil over top in front of everyone. Because this is cooked so long, there is no need to soak any of the beans overnight.

1 onion, chopped
1 red onion, chopped
1lb chard (basically your bag of baby chard), chopped
1 bunch rapini, chopped (or substitute kale here)
1 potato, diced
1 parsley root, chopped
1 turnip, chopped
2 c chopped cabbage
2 celery stalks, chopped
2 carrots, any color, chopped
1 small or half a large dumpling squash, peeled and diced
1 c dry cannelini beans
1 c lentils (preferably french green, or black beluga, or brown pardina)
1 c dry cranberry (borlotti) beans
1 1/4 c polenta
olive oil

Use a very large pot and heat some olive oil in it. Add the onions and saute until golden, about 10-12 minutes. Add everything but the polenta to the pot and stir well. Pour in 3 1/2 quarts of water, add some salt, and simmer over low heat, covered and stirring occasionally, for 2 hours.

Remove the lid and taste for salt. Stir in the polenta, stirring well, and cook over low heat, stirring constantly so the polenta doesn't lump up, for an additional hour. Make sure you are stirring the very bottom as well, so the stew doesn't scorch or stick to the bottom of the pot. Allow to rest for half an hour, then check again for salt. Serve warm with plenty of quality olive oil drizzled over the top. Yum!

And, some recipes suggestions from Julia:

Mashed Potatoes and Parsley Root
(Adapted from *Uncommon Fruits and Vegetables* by Elizabeth Schneider)

¾ pound parsley root (weighed with leaves)
1 ¼ pounds potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks
Butter to taste
A few Tablespoons hot milk or to taste
S & P (can use white pepper if you like)

Cut off parsley root tops and reserve for use in any recipe calling for parsley. Scrub roots with a brush, then cut into ½ inch slices. Drop parsley root and potatoes into a pot of boiling salted water. Return to a boil and cook until tender – check after about 15 minutes. Drain well. Add butter and hot milk and then mash with an official potato masher. Season to taste with S & P.

Broccoli Raab
(From *Vegetables* by James Patterson)
Serves 4

2 pounds broccoli raab
1 tablespoon salt
1 tablespoon white or brown pale miso
1/4 cup mirin or 6 tsp sugar dissolved in 3 Tbsp hot water
1 teaspoon Asian dark sesame oil
2 teaspoons white sesame seeds

Cut the broccoli raab flowers and leaves away from the larger stems. Discard the stems. Rinse and drain the leaves and flowers in a colander. Bring about 4 quarts of water to a rapid boil with the salt. Boil the broccoli raab for five minutes, uncovered, over high heat, and drain in a colander. Immediately rinse the broccoli with cold water and pat it dry in towels or spin it in a lettuce spinner to get rid of excess water. In a mixing bowl large enough to hold the broccoli raab, work the miso, mirin and, and the sesame oil to a paste with a whisk. Just before serving, tossed the broccoli raab with the the paste. Arrange the broccoli on one large plate and sprinkle with the sesame seeds or arrange it on individual plates and sprinkle each serving within the sesame seeds.

Tarragon Vinegar
Tomatoes Love Herbs

1 Cup Loosely Packed Fresh Tarragon
2 Cups Sherry Vinegar Or White Wine Vinegar

Place the herbs in a clean, sterilized jar and use a spoon to bruise them slightly. Pour the vinegar over the herbs and cover the jar tightly. Put the jar in a dark place at room temperature to let the herb vinegar mixture steep. Shake the jar every few days and taste the vinegar after one week. If the flavor is not strong enough, let it stand for another 13 weeks, checking the flavor weekly. If an even stronger flavor is desired, repeat the steeping process with fresh herbs. When the flavor is right, strain the vinegar into a different sterilized bottle; cap tightly

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More recipes at http://mariquita.com/recipes/index.html