



Community Supported Agriculture

WEEK 20

It's week 20. We made it. The only thing holding us back from our 3-week camping, hiking, reading, cooking, perfect Southwestern honeymoon is some extra brassicas that we hope to get sold and a whole lot of clean up. And that's it. That's the end of year 2.

I know you've been with us on this whole journey so you may think you understand our trials and our tribulations, our joys and our woes, but I have a secret. There were things I kept from you, my always faithful CSA members. There were deep dark moments that were too extreme to share with a group of people who had so much



enthusiasm and love for us. The truth is, during weeks 1- 6 or 7 or 8, we wanted to give up. We honestly

believed we were on the wrong path in life and we thought often about fleeing, about making it through the season however pathetically we could muster and then moving to another state with a new plan and a new path. We cried in each others' arms and wondered what we'd done wrong. Why we weren't better at this life we so desperately wanted. It was heavy. And it was terrible.

And every week we looked at our boxes as we packed them and it was like a perfect photograph

In your box this week:

FULL SHARE

- Large head Cauliflower
- Large head Red Perfection Cabbage
- 1 bunch Curly Kale
- Large head Red Leaf Lettuce
- 2 Mixed Color Bell Peppers
- 2 Jalapenos
- 1½# Leeks
- 3½# Butternut Squash
- 5# Kennebec Russet Potatoes

HALF SHARE

- Small head Cauliflower
- Large head of Broccoli
- Small head Red Perfection Cabbage
- Small head Red Leaf Lettuce
- 1 Mixed Color Bell Pepper
- 1 Jalapeno
- 1# Leeks
- 2# Butternut Squash
- 2½# Kennebec Russet Potatoes

in time of the product that was no where near as good as we wanted.

People told us that they loved our CSA. People told us that we were doing great and though we appreciated every kind word, it didn't matter because we didn't feel good about what we were doing. We weren't selling off any excess to restaurants because we had no excess. We weren't going to the farmer's market because there was no produce to take there. We were no where near where we wanted to be and so then we

continued to worry and stress even as things began to turn around. In weeks 5-8, though the boxes were beautiful, we didn't want to get our hopes up. We didn't want to push our luck. We didn't want to get too excited only to see that again, our farming season was a dud.

Things continued to get better on the farm and we continued to get a little happier, though still quite nervous. There were weddings and festivities and so much planning of our own big day that for me, the farm began to slip. I couldn't find a way to both run a business and plan a wedding and again I questioned if this was my path. I felt defeated and exhausted and now it was worse because Kyle was loving the farm and I was still resenting it.

Our wedding came and it was perfect. Our wedding was over and suddenly I could breathe again. The stress had been mounting for weeks and I hadn't realized that maybe the farm wasn't the cause, maybe it was this "had-to-be-perfect" event that had been on a pedestal for 18 months in my mind. Suddenly, I became the person I'd been last season: a young woman full of enthusiasm and energy and life. We became a team that could work together again and I no longer worried that there were things I wasn't good at because with Kyle, I felt like anything was possible. He'd teach me to be a better farmer and I began to accept that I'd find my way in time.

These 20 weeks have been a test of our relationship and ourselves: a beautiful journey of questioning and wondering and always finding solace in one another. These 20 weeks have been the most beautiful weeks of my life. 2013 was our first season so it will always have a warm place in our hearts, but for me, the 2014 season will forever stand out.

2014 was the year we decided to push ourselves and move the farm from a hobby to a career: the year we went from 8



members to 36 and from $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre to a very full 2. 2014 was the year we thought rototilling 2.5 acres was going to be a piece of cake and that “no we don’t need a tractor.” 2014 was the year we attended 5 weddings and planned our own. 2014 was the year we got married. 2014 was the year we became a real team in both farming and life. 2014 was the first year we grew garlic. 2014 was the first year we grew melons. 2014 was the year we attempted to grow 160 varieties of vegetables and herbs: some successfully, some definitely not. 2014 was the year my confidence grew in the kitchen though it waned in the field. 2014 was the year I learned I was meant to cook for people as well as grow food for them. 2014 was the year we sporadically bought a farm truck for a phenomenal deal and then realized there was no way we would have made it through the year without this unexpected purchase. 2014 was the year we decided to raise three animals under a year old while simultaneously raising a farm. 2014 was a year of tears and laughter, of total chaos and beautiful simplicity.

And more importantly than anything, 2014 was the year we pushed ourselves in

everything that we did and came out the other side as stronger, wiser, happier, more complete people. We couldn’t have asked for a more wonderful second season in all its ups and downs. We are excited to begin another season knowing that we can handle whatever life throws at us. We thank you all endlessly for your support and your belief in us (even when we didn’t believe in ourselves). We love you all and it may sound silly, but you can never know how much each and every one of you means to us. Thanks for supporting us in all our crazy dreams.

Lots and lots and lots of love until the ground thaws next spring,

Farmer Lauren



Pan-Roasted Chicken with Leeks

Adapted from [Food Network Magazine](#)

Difficulty Level: Medium

There are a million things you can do with leeks. They are easily as variable as garlic or onions. You can add them to almost anything cooked or raw, but every once in a while I want to make a meal that highlights the leek in all its beautiful complexity. This recipe is the perfect marriage of elegant yet pungent leeks and rich, fatty chicken drumsticks.

Takes about 1 hour

Serves 4-6

3 slices bacon, cut into ½-inch pieces
8 chicken drumsticks, about 2 pounds
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 garlic cloves, minced
1-1½# leeks, white and light green parts only, halved and sliced
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup chicken broth
½ cup half & half
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley, optional
Cooked rice, for serving, optional

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.

Meanwhile, put the bacon into a large heavy ovenproof skillet (cast-iron is ideal) and cook over medium-high heat until the fat begins to render, about 5 minutes. You want the bacon just barely cooked as it will cook more in the oven later.

Remove from pan but keep the pan hot.

Season chicken with salt and pepper and place in hot pan. Turn every minute or so until browned all over, about 5 minutes. Again, it does not need to be cooked through, just nice and browned. Remove chicken to a plate and remove pan from heat.

Add garlic and leeks to pan along with reserved bacon and stir to combine. Arrange drumsticks on top of bacon-leek mixture. Transfer to oven and roast for 25-30 minutes until the drumsticks are cooked through (with an internal temperature of 160). Remove from oven and remove chicken to platter of cooked rice (if using).

Carefully return the skillet to the stovetop over medium-high heat. Sprinkle in flour and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the broth and half & half and cook, stirring, 2 minutes. Bring to a boil and cook until slightly reduced, about 5 minutes. Spoon mixture over the chicken and garnish with parsley (if using).

Kale Salad with Butternut Squash & Almonds

Adapted From [Bon Appetit](#)

Difficulty Level: Easy

Takes 40 minutes

Yield 4 servings

3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
2 cups, ½-inch cubed butternut squash
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
½ bunch kale, stems removed, loosely chopped (about 4 cups)
¾ cup whole almonds, toasted, coarsely chopped
2 ounces parmesan, shaved

Dressing:

3 tablespoons olive oil
1½ tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon whole-grain mustard
1 garlic clove, minced
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Toss squash with 2 tablespoons oil in a medium bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to a baking sheet and roast, turning occasionally for about 20 minutes, until squash is tender and outside is lightly golden. Set aside.

Whisk together all dressing ingredients and adjust seasonings as needed. Set aside.

Meanwhile, heat remaining tablespoon of oil in a large skillet over high heat. Add kale and cook, tossing frequently, until bright green and slightly wilted. This should take 1-2 minutes. Remove from heat and toss with dressing to coat in a large bowl. Add squash and almonds. Taste and adjust seasonings. Add shaved parmesan and serve still slightly warm.

Butternut Squash & Bacon Hash

Difficulty Level: Easy

You do not necessarily need the potatoes in this recipe. You could absolutely just use double the amount of butternut squash and be very happy, but I'm a potatoes-for-breakfast-kind-of-girl so I like to use both. You could also leave out the bacon completely if you're vegetarian (or anti-bacon, which I won't even dignify) and sub in a couple extra tablespoons of olive oil, but again, I love bacon for breakfast, so I can never honestly recommend leaving it out.

Takes 40 minutes

Yields 2-4 servings

¼ -pound thick-cut bacon
1 cup diced (peeled and seeded) butternut squash
1 cup diced russet potatoes, peeled
½ onion, peeled and diced
1 bell pepper, seeded and diced
1 jalapeno, seeded and diced
1-2 tablespoons olive oil, as needed if needed
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Cook bacon in a large heavy skillet (preferably cast-iron) over medium heat until crisp. Remove from pan, dice and place on a paper towel to remove some of the grease. Reserve bacon grease in pan and keep pan hot.

Add butternut squash, potatoes and peppers. Amp up temperature to medium-high. Leave veggies for two or three minutes before stirring so that high temperature allows the exterior to crisp. The key to hash is a moderately high temperature and not too much fiddling (fiddling will make the potatoes and squash mushy). Cook over medium-high heat for a total of twenty-five minutes, until the potatoes and squash are fork tender and crispy. Season with salt and pepper as you go and add oil if the pan gets dry. Cook longer if necessary. You want the veggies to be cooked through. Add bacon back in and stir once or twice to incorporate.

Top with a fried egg or two.

Kale, Sausage & Potato Soup

Adapted from [Wit & Delight](#)

Difficulty Level: Easy

I know only half of you got kale this week so feel free to leave out the kale if you want (or cave and buy a bunch for a couple of bucks at the co-op—though I hate making you buy veggies). You can also add a can of cannellini beans to make it even more hearty OR (since I apparently love giving you options), you can leave out the chicken broth (okay maybe still like 1 cup for simmering purposes) and make a delicious skillet dinner instead of a soup.

Takes 40 minutes

Serves 6

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 pound ground pork sausage
2 cloves garlic, minced
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
2 pounds peeled potatoes, cubed
6 cups chicken broth
½ bunch kale, torn into bite-size pieces
½ cup heavy cream or half & half
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Coat the bottom of a heavy Dutch oven or stock pot with olive oil. Heat the oil over medium heat, then add the sausage, garlic and red pepper flakes. Brown the sausage until it forms a nice brown crust. Add the potatoes and give it a big stir. Cover the sausage and potatoes with chicken broth and bring to a simmer until the potatoes are done but not falling apart, about twenty minutes. Add the cream and torn kale. Stir until kale turns bright green. Season with salt and pepper.

Warm Red Cabbage Salad

Adapted from [101 Cookbooks](#)

Difficulty Level: Medium

101 Cookbooks, the blog I found the next two recipes on, is incredible, but also a little outside my comfort zone. The ingredients they use aren't too intimidating separately but somehow put together, it seems like too much or too weird or too something, but then, I do as instructed (with a couple little tweaks to better fit our weekly vegetables) and bam, perfection. This cabbage salad was that moment for me. There is no way I ever thought slightly caramelized sunflower seeds and raisins and feta could transform one of my least favorite vegetables to eat. But oh, does it ever transform the often overlooked red cabbage. Trust the weirdness of these ingredients. It's amazing!

Takes 20 minutes

Makes 6-8 cups worth (a meal for 2 or a side for up to 8)

½ cup sunflower seeds	1 pound cabbage, about ½ a head, core removed, cut into thin ribbons
1 teaspoon natural cane sugar (or brown sugar)	½ teaspoon dried rosemary
Kosher salt, to taste	½ cup golden raisins
2 tablespoons olive oil	1½ tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 onion, diced	¾ cup feta cheese, crumbled
1 large garlic clove, minced	

Roast sunflower seeds in a dry skillet over medium heat until golden brown. Sprinkle on sugar and a couple pinches of salt. Stir until the sugar melts and begins to coat the seeds. Remove from heat but keep in the pan to help sugar melt further without burning it. Transfer to a plate.

Heat oil in a large skillet (or stock pot). Add onion and cook for 2 or 3 minutes over medium heat with a couple pinches of salt. Add garlic and cabbage along with a couple more pinches of salt. Stir and cook for maybe 3 minutes. Only the cabbage just begins to soften throughout. You do not want it to be fully cooked!

Remove pan from heat. Add the rosemary, raisins and vinegar and stir to combine. Once the mixture is warm but not hot, add the sunflower seeds and feta. You want a warm salad but not a hot salad that will melt the feta. Season with more salt to your preferences.

Cauliflower & Chickpea Salad

Adapted from [101 Cookbooks](#)

Difficulty Level: Medium

This cauliflower salad uses raw cauliflower. Raw! Yeah, I know! It honestly kind of revolutionized the way I'll be eating cauliflower in the future. To achieve delicious results, you will break your head into tiny florets, literally cutting the florets off the stem as high as possible so that you end up with little florets about the size of a dime in diameter. Not only are they adorable, the taste delicious when combined with this rich, creamy dressing!

Takes 20-30 minutes plus 15 minute resting time

Makes a lot, easily a meal for 4-6 or a potluck-sized portion for sharing

4-6 cups cauliflower, cut/broken into tiny florets
¼ cup diced leek, white and green parts only
1 can chickpeas
8 ounces button mushrooms, quartered or diced
(so it's about the same size as the cauliflower florets)
¼ cup sunflower seeds
½-1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

Dressing:

1 cup Greek yogurt
5 tablespoons peanut oil
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons sherry vinegar
2 tablespoons honey
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 ½ tablespoons Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Combine the cauliflower, leeks, chickpeas, mushrooms, sunflower seeds and initial ½ teaspoon of red pepper flakes in a large (and I mean large) bowl.

Combine all dressing ingredients together in a small bowl. Add pepper to taste and more salt if needed.

Pour dressing over salad and combine well. Let stand for at least 15 minutes before eating and toss occasionally to make sure the soupiness at the bottom gets incorporated. This salad should be very wet, kind of like coleslaw, and (also like coleslaw) the salad can keep in your fridge for a few days and will only get better with age.

Taste and season before eating. Add more red pepper flakes if desired (I, of course, did!)