



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

September 7-8, 2012

## Welcome Chef Chelsea!

I was born the oldest of four kids in Chicago. The city was getting rough and my folks wanted to raise their family in a healthier environment. We had family near Ashland, WI and spent many summers in Wisconsin, so it seemed to be a natural place for us to live. So, we bought a farm with 110 acres and raised beef, sheep, chickens and hogs organically. We also had a huge garden that my grandma insisted we put in and we planted all of the family fav's and then some!

My love affair with food started at the tender age of 5 when I vividly remember tasting carob (a chocolate alternative) and trying so hard to figure out what it tasted like. It mystified me! It was the first time I distinctly remember realizing that food is not always as it seems. Carob looked like chocolate but it didn't taste like it. I wanted to understand why. A few years later, I was blessed with Filipino Godparents who treated me to dishes of traditional cuisine. I loved that they lived upstairs from me and my mom would trade her traditional Mexican food for my Godmother's amazing noodle dishes. I noticed cilantro in both cuisines, which is still one of my favorite herbs.

My parents put many delicious meals on the table. Through my mother, (a beautiful woman of Mexican-Indian and Apache Indian descent), I was able to taste traditional foods of Mexico and the Southwest. I was hooked! When the other kids were eating their McDonalds I sat down to gorditas and shredded pork tacos with ensalada de nopalitos, (Cactus salad). I was never jealous of Mc-Meals. My Dad inspired me with his really good comfort foods, great meatloaf (not covered in ketchup, thank you!) and his creamy mashed potatoes, and how can I forget his famous oatmeal raisin cookies. Those cookies are perfect! To this day all of us kids still beg him for them! The man is also a genius with lasagna! He makes lasagna that is gigantic with sky-high layers of gooey cheese! It's perfect, and I tell ya, if I were Godzilla, I'd only surface for that lasagna!

My Grandma met her husband, a Chef at the same restaurant where she was a waitress, and they married and had my dad. I think my path was laid out for me even before I was born! Being in the kitchen just seemed the natural path for me to take. My family background is truly the biggest influence and source of my culinary career path. My Grandma often influenced me along the way. We would sit and watch Julia Child on PBS together, she took me to specialty grocery stores and always pulled up a chair for me when I was young and wanted to see what she was cooking. She was very good at preparing Italian and Soul foods. Growing up we had many old world dishes – pigs' feet in aspic, roast lamb at Easter, pasties, and cabbage rolls. She was an excellent baker, and made my favorite Italian Bread. She taught me to can and preserve foods. And I always had her garden to explore in.

I took that childhood inspiration to heart and continued to explore my interests in the culinary world. My first professional cooking job was at 16 and I progressed through the years from cafes, coffee roasters, bistro's and hospitality management. Eventually I became a Head Chef of a Mexican Restaurant and opened my own business where I have a food booth at a local open air farmers market and do catering. I teach cooking classes and give presentations on food related issues. I attend many demo's and food industry events to further my culinary knowledge. I also seek to promote and support locally grown and organic products and visit area family farms and ranches. I left behind my free-range chickens (in my dad's care, where he feeds them lots of kitchen scraps) and a winding trout stream in my home state of Wisconsin to recently attend Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Chicago where I am working on my goal of earning a Bachelors Degree in the Culinary Arts. I am 2 months away from graduating with top honors in the Associate Degree Program. Currently I am on my culinary externship at Harmony Valley Farm, loving the fresh veggies and making delicious lunches and snacks for the hard working farm crew. I've been laughing it up with Chef Abbey and tossing the ball for Captain Jack while grilling burgers. And of course, learning so much about the veggies we grow. Richard and Andrea are very wonderful and such an amazing source of information! I wish I could spend more time learning the ways of the farm. I'm really looking forward to seeing everyone at the farm potluck this month and getting to meet more of our great CSA members in person. I'll be running around taking care of the food, but come up and say HI!

## THIS WEEK'S BOX

**Italian Garlic:** Make lemon-garlic vinaigrette and toss with halved cherry/sungold tomatoes and diced fresh mozzarella. Garnish with chopped fresh parsley.

**Red Onions:** Cut onion in half, and slice thinly. Dice 2 tomatoes and 1 cucumber, place in a large mixing bowl with the onion. Add 3 minced garlic cloves, small handful of pitted greek olives, the zest and juice of 1 lemon, ¼ cup of olive oil, 2 TBSP of chopped fresh mint, and salt & pepper to taste. Toss gently and finish with crumbled feta cheese.

**Potatoes:** Think outside the box when it comes to mashed potatoes. Why not try wasabi mashed potatoes paired with sesame seared Ahi tuna or sun dried tomato – parmesan mashed potatoes with breaded and pan fried eggplant?

**Lemongrass:** Make lemongrass tea by bruising the white end of the lemongrass and boiling for 5 minutes in 1 quart of water. Strain, and enjoy hot or chill in your refrigerator for a refreshing cold drink. Add a little spice by using 3-4 slices of fresh ginger when boiling.

**Broccoli:** Warm up on these cool summer nights with a bowl of cheesy broccoli soup and mini sweet pepper flat bread!

**Tomatoes, Variety:** Instead of using traditional sauce for your homemade pizza, substitute fresh thin slices of our tomatoes as your base.

**Arugula or Spinach:** Sauté quickly with minced garlic, salt & pepper, and a couple shakes of malt vinegar. This is a delicious side for grilled portabella mushrooms and tofu.

**Celery:** School is back in session, and that means fun with lunch snack ideas! Instead of the usual "Ants on a log" tradition, switch it up by using almond butter and raisins.

**Sweet Corn:** The kernels off the cob are great to use in your favorite jalapeno cornbread recipe for a fun texture and fresh flavor.

**Edamame:** Use the edamame to add bright and vibrant flavor as well as color to your favorite bean salad!

**Mini-Sweet Peppers:** See this week's vegetable feature

This Week's Vegetable Box



## Mini Sweet Peppers By: Chef Chelsea Brannan

Being on the farm everyday has its perks and for me those perks came through today when I was able to go to a crate of gorgeous mini peppers, marvel at the bright colors of orange like the setting sun, vivid lemon yellow and bright chile pepper red. I reached in excited to sample one and picked a bright orange. Taking a bite of something only minutes from the field is one way to bring a little happy kitchen tear to the chefs' eye. How can something so little be so tasty and wonderful?! Crisp in texture, just like biting a fresh apple, very juicy and so full of fresh sweet flavor! It was mighty delicious and I was super happy!

In seasons past I have used them in fresh salads with mixed greens and also served them with fresh mozzarella and fresh herbs. I've pickled a few pint jars full with fresh thyme and every year I make a batch of my sweet pepper jelly. That's right sweet pepper jelly. To me, the finely diced peppers with such an array of colors make the jelly jar look like stained glass. Not to mention the jam is great on fresh biscuits, scones and also used as a glaze for grilled chicken or fish. My younger sister said my pepper jam makes a great addition to corn bread.

Harvested from mid to late summer, the fruits are best eaten fresh and although they will keep well in the refrigerator, Richard tells me using them within two weeks is your best bet. But really, once you try them, they won't linger that long in your fridge. Richard also mentioned that these little peppers freeze great, no blanching needed, and excellent on winter pizzas. I think these mini sweets would be perfect to marinate!

Peppers are native to the tropical areas of the western hemisphere and were brought back by Christopher Columbus to his homeland and the quickly found their way into Spanish cuisine. Sweet peppers are an excellent source of vitamin A and C, they are a good source of potassium and do contain vitamin B6 and folic acid.

On a fun note, every year we select about 1,600 peppers to save seeds for the next year's crop. With only about 5 seeds in every pepper, it takes quite awhile to collect 8,000 seeds! We plant the mini sweet peppers in a block in the field, segregated from any hot pepper varieties. Peppers are self-pollinating, so you would think there wouldn't be any odd crosses with other peppers if we keep them separated. Well, occasionally an insect messes with us and transfers some pollen from a pepper plant in a different part of the field. Occasionally we get some plants that are crossed with a hot variety. The crew is pretty skilled at noticing these oddities and getting them out of the field, but occasionally one gets mixed in.

I truly feel the best way for me to enjoy them is fresh, raw and uncooked. Give it a try, just pick up a mini sweet and take a bite. Savor its natural sweetness and scrumptious pepper flavor for what its true taste is. Once you've done that you can try your hand at a few recipes and have fun cooking them. I've included my sweet pepper jelly recipe which makes a small batch for you to try out and another recipe for a delicious pizza with our tasty peppers that look gorgeous. These little peppers are also great carriers to be stuffed with cheese and other fillings. No matter how you decide to eat your mini sweet peppers, enjoy them for the glorious summer taste they offer!

### Produce Plus

Sweet Red Peppers, 10 pounds for \$27  
Edamame, 10 pounds for \$42  
Roma Tomatoes, 25 pounds for \$35  
Mini-Sweet Peppers, 10 pounds for \$65

WI: Please order by 5pm Wednesday, September 12th for delivery Friday/Saturday, September 14-15th.

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Right:  
Chef  
Chelsea  
Left:  
Sweet  
Pepper  
Jelly



## Mini Sweet Pepper, Sweet Corn and Summer Squash Pizza with Goat Cheese

By: Chef Chelsea Brannan

### Pizza Dough Recipe

3 ¾ to 4 cup all purpose flour  
1 Tbsp Salt  
1 ½ cup warm water (110 to 115 F)  
2 ¼ tsp Quick rise yeast  
½ tsp sugar  
3 Tbsp olive oil

1. In a kitchen mixer bowl, combine flour and salt.
2. Measure out water in a glass measuring cup, add the yeast and sugar, stirring to combine and set aside for 5 to 10 minutes until foamy. Stir in olive oil.
3. Attach dough hook to mixer, with mixer running add water mixture to flour and keep mixing until dough forms a ball. Mix for 1 minute longer.
4. Turn out to a floured surface and knead the dough until springy and elastic, about 5 minutes. It's ok for the dough to be slightly sticky, just not dry.
5. Lightly oil a large bowl, Place ball in bowl, turn dough over to coat with oil. Cover and let rise until doubled in size, for 1 hour.
6. Dough is ready for shaping and topping.

### Pizza Toppings & Assembly

- 6 to 8 mini sweet peppers  
2 ears sweet corn, kernels removed  
2 summer squash  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
Salt and pepper  
Olive oil  
Thyme  
8 oz soft, mild goat cheese
1. Preheat oven to 500F.
  2. Meanwhile, roast peppers over gas flame or under broiler until charred all over. Place in bag to steam for 10 to 15 minutes. Remove the skins and seeds from peppers. Cut into strips.
  3. Heat 3 Tbsp olive oil in large sauté pan over medium heat. Sauté summer squash and garlic until the squash is almost tender. Season with salt and pepper, remove from heat and set aside.
  4. Divide the dough into 2 equal pieces. Lightly oil two 10 or 12 in pizza pans. Stretch one dough ball out to fit one pan at a time. Brush the top of the dough with olive oil, spread half of the veggie toppings over each pizza and finish with little pieces of cheese all over the pizza. Sprinkle with thyme and fresh cracked pepper if you would like.
  5. Bake pizzas for 10 to 12 minutes in lower oven until crust is golden brown. Remove pizza from oven, cut, serve and enjoy!

## Mini Sweet Pepper Jelly By: Chef Chelsea Brannan

Yields: 3 – 8oz jars

3 jelly jars with lids and bands  
2 ½ cups finely chopped mini sweet peppers  
Red Chile flakes, to taste  
1 ½ Tbsp low sugar pectin  
½ cup + 2 Tbsp cups cider vinegar  
1 cup sugar  
½ cup honey

1. Prepare boiling water canner. Wash jars, lids and bands in hot soapy water. Heat jars in simmering water until ready to use. Do not boil. Set lids and bands aside.
2. Combine mini sweet peppers, red chili flakes and vinegar in a large saucepan. Gradually stir in pectin. Bring mixture to a full rolling boil that cannot be stirred down over high heat, stirring constantly.
3. Add sugar and honey. Return mixture to a full rolling boil. Boil hard for 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Skim foam if necessary.
4. Ladle hot jelly into hot jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Wipe rim and center lid on jar. Screw band on until fingertip-tight.
5. Process filled jars in a boiling water canner for 10 minutes, adjusting for altitude. Remove jars and cool. Check seal after 24 hours. If they have sealed properly, the lid should not flex up and down when center is pressed.