



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

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Carrots & People: What Really Matters?

By Andrea Yoder

Waste...it's hard to face, for some, yet in my day to day work it is inevitable. Yes, I'm the one scrounging through the bin of vegetable waste and trimmings on the wash line trying to save every last vegetable with thoughts like these rolling through my mind: **Why are there so many carrots being discarded? These look just fine! This crew is being too picky....**and then I pick them up and realize the crew is doing just fine. The vegetable may look fine on one side, but was discarded because maybe it had a split, a small bad spot, was shaped funny, maybe slightly discolored, too short, too fat... the list goes on. Throughout the year, but especially during fall/winter root crop season, my days are filled with tracking inventories—**How many bins of carrots do we have? How many more do we estimate we'll be able to harvest? Where will we store them? How many do we need to reserve for CSA boxes? Who will buy the extras? Do we have enough or do we need more?** Along with tracking inventories, I do a lot of forecasting, anticipating what we'll need for CSA boxes, reading the minds of our buyers to anticipate the items and quantities they might buy between October and the end of December. Of course, in the midst of inventories, forecasting, packing CSA and wholesale boxes, I'm tracking yields. **This lot of carrots is only yielding 500# per bin instead of the usual 650#....why is that? Wet harvest day and we brought in a lot of mud? Too many forked carrots that have to be discarded? Too many splits?**

*(See our **blog** for the rest of Andrea's article)*

What's In The Box?

YELLOW ONIONS: It shouldn't be hard to find a use for these this week. Add them to your stuffing or use them for the base of the **Vegetarian Cabbage Soup** mentioned in this week's [Cooking with the Box](#) feature.

PORCELAIN GARLIC: Roast these heads of garlic and add them to mashed potatoes or use them to make **Mushroom and Roasted Garlic Gravy** featured at [Food52.com](#)

COVINGTON SWEET POTATOES: Bake and mash them to make sweet potato pie or **Ginger-Coconut Sweet Potatoes** recommended in this week's [Cooking with the Box](#) feature. Store sweet potatoes on your countertop or in a cool, dry location. Do not refrigerate them.

ORANGE & PURPLE/RED CARROTS: This week's box contains 2 pounds of carrots. Read this week's blog for more info about carrots and check out the recipes in this week's newsletter. Don't peel the purple carrots or you'll peel off all the color!

BUTTERNUT SQUASH: Have you ever made Squash Chips? There's a recipe at [Food52.com](#). The link is in this week's [Cooking with the Box](#) feature.

SUGAR DUMPLING SQUASH: This is the small yellow and green squash in this week's box. Check out our vegetable feature in the October 27-28 newsletter or on our blog. You'll find recipes and instructions for how to save and toast the seeds.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS: There are 1.25 pounds of Brussels sprouts in your box this week. Using a paring knife, trim a little bit off the bottom of the sprout and remove any outer leaves that might have spots on them.

TAT SOI: This is the dark green leafy, bunched vegetable in this week's box. Trim off the lower 2 inches of the stems and discard. Carefully wash the stems and the leaves in a sink of fresh, cold water before using.

BEAUTY HEART RADISH: This root vegetable has a white exterior with green around the stem end and sometimes has some pink blushing on the surface as well. You'll know this vegetable when you cut it open to reveal a bright pink interior. While it's not necessary to peel this radish, some of the radish "bite" is in the skin. If you find the flavor to be a little strong for your liking, try peeling it.

GREEN SAVOY CABBAGE: Use this to make cabbage soup. There's a recipe link to a simple recipe in this week's [Cooking with the Box](#) feature.

CELERIAC: This is the round, gnarly looking root vegetable in this week's box. To use it, first cut it into quarters. Use a paring knife to trim away the outer skin. The dense, white portion inside is entirely usable and may be eaten both raw and cooked.

PARSNIPS: These parsnips were just recently harvested and have a sweet, fresh taste. Use them to make the recipe for **Lentil Shepard's Pie with Parsnip & Potato Mash** featured in this week's newsletter/blog.

Cooking With This Week's Box!

This week's box is another full and bountiful box filled with a wide variety of colors and vegetables. As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday next week, we realize we have a lot to be thankful for this year. While this year's growing season had its ups and downs, our fall harvest has been bountiful and this week we're sharing some of that bounty with you and your families!

From a culinary perspective, Thanksgiving is a fun time of year for cooking.

*(See our **blog** for the rest of this article & Chef Andrea's suggestions for utilizing every item in your box including recipe links!)*

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Featured Vegetable: Carrots

As we move into the heart of winter, carrots become an important staple food for Midwesterners who eat a diet based on local foods. Carrots are packed with important nutrients, specifically beta carotene which is an important antioxidant and vitamin for our bodies. It's important for vision, immunity and a whole host of other health benefits. Because they are a staple vegetable, we try to include carrots in as many summer and fall boxes as possible. Carrots aren't always an easy crop to grow. The varieties selected for winter storage are planted in the summer when growing conditions can be hot and dry. It takes an observant farmer to get enough moisture to the seed so it can germinate. Once they are up, it's a battle against weeds to keep the crop clean and make sure they have enough nutrients to produce a healthy plant and a tasty carrot! This year we grew several different colors of carrots. In the last box we included red carrots. This week your bag includes purple carrots and we hope to send some of our new white carrots before the end of the season.

(See our **blog** for the rest of this vegetable feature article)

Lentil Shepherd's Pie with Parsnip and Potato Mash

Yield: 6-8 servings

2 ½ pounds russet potatoes, peeled and quartered	Salt, to taste	2-3 cloves garlic, minced	1 ½ cups brown or green lentils, dry
6 medium parsnips, peeled and roughly chopped	Freshly ground black pepper, to taste	2 large carrots, medium diced	1 cup vegetable broth or water
1 cup milk (dairy or non-dairy option of your choice)	4 Tbsp olive oil, divided	2 ribs celery, medium diced (may substitute celeriac)	1 tsp dried rosemary
	1 large onion, diced	6 oz baby bella, cremini, or button mushrooms, sliced	¼ tsp dried thyme

1. Place potatoes and parsnips in a large pot and submerge in cold water (there should be at least 1 inch of water over the vegetables). Salt water well. Bring to a boil and then reduce to a simmer and allow potatoes and parsnips to cook for approximately 25-35 minutes, or until both vegetables are very fork tender. Drain, return the vegetables to the pot and add ½ cup milk, 2 Tbsp olive oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Mash well with a potato masher. If you need more milk, add the remaining ½ cup. Set the mashed potatoes and parsnips aside.
2. While potatoes are cooking, bring 1 ½ cups lentils and 3 cups water to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until lentils have absorbed all liquid, and are soft (about 30 or 35 minutes). Set lentils aside.
3. Heat 2 Tbsp olive oil in a large saute pan over medium. Add onions and garlic and cook until onions are translucent and golden (10 minutes or so). Add the carrots and celery and cook till both vegetables are tender (another 8 minutes). Add the cremini mushrooms and cook for another 3 minutes before adding the lentils, the rosemary, the thyme, and ½ cup vegetable broth. Simmer the mixture, stirring well to incorporate flavors. Add more liquid as needed: you don't want there to be too much broth or liquid in the bottom of the pan, because you'll get a runny shepherd's pie, but you do want it to be quite moist. When everything is warm and well mixed, season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large casserole dish, pour the lentils into the bottom and then evenly spread the vegetable mixture on top. Spread the mashed potatoes delicately and evenly over. Bake for 20 minutes, or until potatoes are browning. Sprinkle with extra rosemary, if desired, and serve.

Recipe featured on *Food52.com*.

Sticky, Spicy, Sweet Roasted Carrots and Chickpeas with Date Vinaigrette

Yield: 4 servings

Date Vinaigrette:	Finely grated lemon zest plus 2 Tbsp lemon juice, from 1 small lemon	Carrots:	1—15 oz can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
5 Medjool dates, pitted and chopped into small pieces	Salt, to taste	1 ½ pounds carrots, cut into even pieces (¼ inch thick coins or cut lengthwise)	1 tsp cumin seed, crushed
1 small garlic clove, roughly chopped	½ cup extra-virgin olive oil	1 tsp Aleppo pepper (may substitute ½ tsp cayenne and ¼ tsp sweet paprika)	1 tsp coriander seed, crushed
¼ cup sherry vinegar, plus additional to taste	2 to 4 Tbsp warm water		Salt, to taste
			Coarsely chopped dill or cilantro, for serving

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Next make the vinaigrette. Combine the dates, garlic, sherry vinegar, lemon zest, lemon juice, and a pinch of salt, stirring a few times to ensure the dates and garlic are fully submerged. Do this step in the blender jar if using a standard blender, or a glass measuring cup or other suitable container if using a stick blender. Let macerate for 20 to 30 minutes while prepping the carrots and other ingredients.
2. After 20-30 minutes, add the extra-virgin olive oil and the warm water (starting with 2 Tbsp) to the macerated dates and garlic in the blender jar. Blend until the vinaigrette is smooth, adding a few more teaspoons of warm water at a time to thin the vinaigrette. You're looking for a slightly thick vinaigrette, but one that can still be drizzled or poured. Add salt and sherry vinegar, to taste. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl, combine the carrots & chickpeas with ¼ cup of the date vinaigrette, Aleppo pepper, cumin seed, coriander seed, and a few large pinches of salt. Toss to combine and ensure everything is evenly coated. It may seem like too much vinaigrette, but it'll reduce down and coat the carrots and chickpeas—so don't skip!
4. Spread the carrot mixture on a sheet pan or baking dish lined with parchment that's large enough to fit them in a single, even layer. Roast until the carrots and chickpeas are golden and the carrots are fork-tender, stirring 4 to 5 times to ensure even roasting and to avoid the vinaigrette from burning in open areas of the pan (but don't be too concerned—it's why you're using parchment!). The roasting time will depend on the size of the carrots—anywhere from 25 minutes to 45+ minutes. If the carrots are browning too quickly but aren't tender, lower the oven to 375°F and continue roasting until tender.
5. Scatter the dill or cilantro over the carrots and chickpeas, and adjust seasoning to taste. Serve warm, making sure to drizzle more of the vinaigrette over the carrots and chickpeas before serving.

This recipe was featured at *Food52.com*. The author of the recipe recommends using any leftover Date Vinaigrette to drizzle on greens or roasted Brussels sprouts!