

Recipe

Potato, Kale & Sausage Soup

Adapted from Half Baked Harvest

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 package Elmwood Beef Chorizo
1 yellow onion, chopped
6 cloves garlic, chopped or grated
2 teaspoons smoked paprika
1/4- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
4 potatoes chopped
6-8 cups chicken broth
juice of 1 lemon
kosher salt and black pepper
4-6 cups kale, roughly chopped
1/4 cup whole milk, heavy cream, or canned coconut milk
1/4 cup grated cheese (Manchego, sharp cheddar, or parmesan)
fresh oregano, for serving

Heat the olive oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. When the oil shimmers, add the chorizo and onions, and brown all over, about 5 to 8 minutes. Remove the sausage, slice, then add back to the Dutch oven. Add the garlic, paprika, and cayenne, and cook another 2 minutes. Stir in the potatoes, toss to coat. Add the broth and lemon juice, and season with salt and pepper. Simmer over medium heat for 15-20 minutes, just until the potatoes are fork-tender.

Remove about 1/2 cup of the potatoes from the soup and either mash by hand or puree them in a blender. Add the potatoes back to the soup along with the kale, milk, and cheese. Cook until the kale is wilted, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat.

Serve the soup topped with fresh oregano, if desired. Enjoy with crusty bread.

Find more recipes on the Elmwood Stock Farm [Pinterest](#) page.



CSA News

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Winter CSA Week 2

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Log in to your CSA account online to find a customized list, photos and descriptions for your share.

Farm Share Storage & Use Tips:

- Garlic: Leave on your countertop or in your pantry.
- Hakurei turnips: Remove the root from the greens and store them separately in plastic bags in the fridge.
- Leafy greens (arugula, baby kale, spinach, lettuce mix, etc.): Store in your fridge in perforated plastic bags.
- Potatoes: Refrigerate in a perforated plastic bag or paper bag. Keep out of light to prevent skins from greening.
- Salad radish: Remove the root from the greens and store them separately in plastic bags in the fridge.
- Sweet potatoes (Murasaki & orange): Keep on the counter or in a pantry. Murasaki sweet potatoes have deep purplish-red skin and cream-colored flesh that deepens into a golden hue. They have a nutty, earthy flavor and a starchy, fluffy center. Orange sweet potatoes have a rose or red-hued skin and deep orange flesh. Their water content is higher than that of a Murasaki, resulting in a soft center and a sweet, almost citrusy, flavor.

Microclimate

Coming home from the farmers market, my wife and I have talked many times about customer friends who are excited about the forsythia blooming, or the daffodils, or dogwoods, or redbuds—while our whatever's were still a long way off. With all the wind breaks, masonry walls, and buildings absorbing solar radiation and not for nothing all the exhaust pipes and smokestacks, the city is almost a different hardiness zone than where we are just fifteen miles out of the city. Seemingly Spring comes earlier to those of you in town, yet this phenomena has never been documented to my knowledge.

While I have heard of Facebook and have occasionally bumped into it, Ann tells me that our Elmwood CSA Facebook Group could be a good way to go about cataloguing when spring arrives this year. Some of you might keep such journals of the arrival of birds or flowers over the years. If so, I would love to see how much variation your records show over the years. We will post the signs of spring on the farm along the way. I hope you all will chime in to see if my theory is true: living in town is a different microclimate than living out in the country.

As of last week, the tulips, tucked up in the southeast corner of the house near the stone foundation and front steps, emerged a week or so ahead of the ones on the southwest corner, out in the yard. They show nothing. The buds are swelling on the dogwoods and maples, while preacher-in-the-pulpit and surprise lilies are coming on strong. More importantly, the fescue, bluegrass and white clover is notably greener, quietly emerging onto the scene like a Van Gogh landscape. We know winter is almost over when the skunks start showing up on the roads, victims of testosterone toxicity at the onset of breeding season.

The vegetable fields are a patchwork of dark green cover crops at various stages of maturity, rows of overwinter spinach and garlic braving the elements, and ghostly remnants of kales and cabbages, leaves melted in the face of old man winter.

The decision of when to till the soil and plant the spring crops is not up to us. Our rich fertile soils are never to be disturbed when wet, so when the weather pattern gives us a window of dry soil conditions, our job is to be ready when the opportunity presents itself. Seeds in hand, equipment in good working condition, and a skillful eye as to when to pull the trigger are

signals of good farming. Some fields dry out quicker than others based on slope and cropping history, cover crop maturity, and how deep the tillage must go—depending on what is being planted—dozens of microclimates if you will. Often these windows are short-lived in early spring which is why John has invested in tractors that can handle implements front and back, sometimes tilling and planting in one pass.

Some years (like 3 out of 10) we can get sugar snap peas and beets and carrots planted in February so the seeds are in place to germinate when the soil temperature tells them to. This strategy sometimes works, sometimes the ones we plant the next dry spell come on fast and catch up since the ground and air are warmer, but it just feels good to get things started. We probably gamble less than some local growers, as years of heartache and lost plantings from cold snaps that weaken the crop doesn't seem like the right thing to do these days.

For now, the ultimate in microclimate management, our high tunnels are in their prime. On a sunny day it can be fifty degrees warmer inside than out, although only a few degrees warmer at night. The thing is, the buffering power of slowly diffusing that heat overnight keeps the plants stable, not tortured by the elements, so they are ready to go the next day, plus the soil temperature is consistently warmer. Believe it or not, there are microclimates within a high tunnel.

Writing this has inspired me to keep a journal of first bird and flower sightings and hopefully memorable activities this year, something I wish I had started decades ago. Since I'm planning on being around for several more decades, no time like the present. I'm also planning on going fishing when the catalpa worms show up on the catalpa trees because that is supposed to be when the bass and bluegills are on the beds and hungry. We must have had several foggy mornings last August, given the snow we had in January. The wooly worms seem to come in every possible combination of brown and black bands so I may not worry about those, but if anybody can predict the first frost in fall, please do let me know.

In a few weeks, you can sign up for a farm tour and bring your journal(s) out to the farm and we'll compare microclimates. For now, let's start with spring flowers and the arrival of seasonal birds coming in. Maybe I'll be inclined to jump on Facebook and see what you are sharing at your home.

—Mac Stone