

GARLIC SCAPE AND WALNUT PESTO

Adapted from urbanfarmandkitchen.com

6-8 garlic scapes, chopped	1/2 c basil, chopped
1/3 c olive oil	1/4 c parsley, chopped
1/2 c Parmigiano-Reggiano, grated	1/2 lemon, squeezed
1/3 c walnuts, chopped	salt and pepper

1. Place scapes, walnuts, parmesan, basil and parsley in a food processor and pulse to combine.
2. Add olive oil and lemon and pulse until combined. Depending on desired consistency, you can continue to process until you have a smooth puree.
3. Add salt and pepper, pulse, taste and adjust seasoning to your liking.
4. Serve on pasta, toasted bread, pizza, or grilled vegetables.

CHICKEN CASSOULET WITH SAUSAGE AND SWISS CHARD

Adapted from skinnytaste.com	2-3 carrots, rounds or half-moons
2 bunches Swiss chard, stems thinly sliced and leaves chopped	2 stalks celery, sliced
2 Tbsp olive oil, divided	1/2 c white wine
12 oz Italian sausage	8 chicken thighs, cut into 2" chunks
1/2 c panko breadcrumbs	1 c chicken broth
2 cloves garlic, minced, divided	2 bay leaves
2 Tbsp parsley, finely chopped	1 Tbsp herbes de provence
1 yellow onion, chopped	salt and pepper to taste
	3 cans cannellini beans, drained, rinsed

1. Heat oven to 375F. In a Dutch oven, heat 1 Tbsp olive oil over medium heat. Brown sausage for 2-3 minutes. Slice into rounds; set aside. Wipe pot and spritz with olive oil.
2. Add breadcrumbs to pan and toast until golden.
3. Add 1/3 of the garlic and cook another minute, then remove from heat and transfer to a bowl. Stir in chopped parsley and set aside.
4. Add remaining 1 Tbsp olive oil to the pan. Stir in onion, saute for 2-3 minutes, then add chard stems, carrots, and celery. Cook, stirring regularly, for 8-10 minutes. Add remaining garlic and cook about a minute more.
5. Pour in the wine and scrape any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Increase heat slightly and allow most of the liquid to cook off.
6. Add the chicken, broth, bay leaves and herbs and bring to simmer; cook 5-7 minutes until liquid reduces by half. Add the chard leaves and stir until slightly wilted. Fold in beans and sausage and stir.
7. Transfer to oven and cook, uncovered, 20-25 minutes, until chicken is tender and stew thickens. Serve topped with breadcrumbs.



Summer CSA News



May 27-June 2, 2024

Week 2 of 20

Volume 21, No. 19



Green Garlic: Fresh green garlic should be kept in a bag or container in the fridge. Plan to use in any recipe that calls for garlic, or replace green onions with green garlic in other dishes. Slice the white ends all the way up into the green area, stopping when you get to the tougher flat leaf. Leaves can be used in stock making, then discard.

Leafy Greens: Store leafy greens in the fridge in a perforated plastic bag. If you chop and wash ahead of time, spin the leaves dry before putting back in the bag with a dry paper towel to absorb moisture. Refresh by plunging them in ice water 15-20 minutes.

Garlic Scapes: Store them unwashed in a loosely wrapped plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to two weeks. Chop or dice raw into salads, make pesto (a favorite!) or use anywhere garlic flavor is desired.

Carrots, Turnips, Beets, Radishes: Store in a bag, cloth, or other container in the coldest crisper bin of your fridge. If your root vegetables still have greens attached, cut them off. Keep the greens refrigerated in a closed plastic bag. The roots should last for weeks.

Microgreens: Keep greens and shoots in the fridge in their plastic clamshell compostable container. They'll keep for up to a week. Do not wash microgreens until you're ready to use them.

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Qualifiers

Green labeling in the retail food sector has become something of a competitive sport these days. Where on the continuum do the various marketing claims fit? Is it better to shop for Grass-Fed Certification, Animal Welfare Approved, Certified Naturally Grown, vegetarian fed hens, or is Organic Certification the gold standard? Whose food is greener, better for the environment, better for the farmer? These qualifiers seem to be chopping up the conversation into sound bites, rather than the all-encompassing transparent dialogue about food production and processing under the Certified Organic seal (if you don't know this one, it's the organic symbol or "seal" on the front page of this newsletter).

The marketing programs mentioned above, along with countless others, to their credit, are nudging the agricultural sustainability needle in a positive direction. Be it less harsh chemical usage, improved animal welfare standards, or decreased dependency on the GMO-laden industrial grain complex, these labels are helping convert acreage to a more sustainable system of food production.

The Certified Organic seal is owned by the USDA which administers a strict set of regulations that are overseen by the 15-member National Organic Standards Board, carried out by an Accredited Certification Agency, with third-party inspections for verification. This is a thorough and tedious process that involves verification of every input and an audit of that process. Only producers, stores or products that are certified organic can legally use the word as a descriptor. Organic certification has the weight of federal law behind it, with hefty fines for operations that fail to abide by the regulations. The regulations are openly debated by the Board with input from farmers, consumer advocacy groups, food processors, and retailers. These debates have been ongoing since their inception in 1995. Transcripts are available on the USDA website, where you can follow the conversation on how best to produce food without using toxic chemicals and maintaining the highest animal welfare standards, verification procedures for grass-fed claims and many many more topics.

Sustainably Grown: This means the farm or processor decides their product is what they consider sustainable. Who knows?

Natural: USDA allows food products to use this term for meats when nothing was added to the product after it was harvested. There is no oversight about how the produce was produced or the animal was raised with regard to antibiotics, genetically modified grains, hormones, or animal welfare issues, fertilizers, pesticides, etc.

Certified Naturally Grown is a membership organization where growers self-declare their interest to follow the USDA organic regulations, without the force of law and enforcement. On-farm verification is performed by other members of the organization.

Cage Free, Free Range, and Free Roaming are terms for laying hens that are loose in a 'house' that often contains thousands if not tens of thousands of birds that share an egg laying box with other hens but never go outside nor have space to exhibit their "chickenness," as Joel Salatin would say.

Vegetarian Fed Hens: are for laying hens that are not fed any animal, fish, or insect proteins. However, chickens are omnivores, not vegetarians.

Pastured Poultry: are layers, broilers or turkeys that have access to pasture, consuming plants and insects and scratching in the dirt for dusting. Extra care must be given during extreme weather conditions however.

Grass Fed: The American Grassfed Association has a great program to produce heart-healthy meats with no grain in the diet. The issue for cattle and sheep is when feeding grain, it changes the pH of the digestive system, therefore altering the fatty acids in the meat in a way that tends to be less healthy for us to consume. Their audits do not take into account fertilizers and pesticides to produce the hay and pasture or use of systemic parasite control compounds.

Locally Grown: For large grocery stores this generally means an eight-hour truck drive from the distribution center, not sure about the farm location. (We think locally grown means you have a relationship with the farmer that you can drive by and see their farm or engage them in conversation at the market.)

Certified Angus Beef means the animal was all or mostly black and meets a certain meat quality standard. This gives a consistency in the marketplace, but says nothing about how the animals were raised.

Hopefully you can see that many of the label claims you see appeal to customers as they make their food purchasing decisions. It seems that consumer perception of food is driving farm policy for many of these claims. The Certified Organic farmer is producing food this way because the biology speaks for itself, and the certification is strictly enforced on behalf of the consumer. Certified Organic is the gold standard of truth in food labeling. We are proud to bring it to you weekly.
— Mac Stone