

DELICATA SQUASH AND SAUSAGE GRATIN

Adapted from kalynskitchen.com

3 delicata squash	1 lb pork or turkey sausage, hot or mild
3 Tbsp olive oil, divided	1 medium onion, chopped
2 tsp Italian herb blend, divided	1 large bell pepper, chopped
salt and pepper	2 c grated mozzarella

1. Preheat oven to 400F. Cut ends off squash and cut in half lengthwise. Scoop out seeds and discard. Cut remaining squash into 1-inch pieces.
2. Toss squash pieces in bowl and toss with 1 Tbsp olive oil, 1 tsp herb blend, salt and pepper. Put squash pieces on a greased baking sheet.
3. Roast squash 25 minutes or until softened but not completely cooked.
4. Heat 1 Tbsp olive oil in a large pan over medium-high heat. Cook sausage until browned, breaking apart as it cooks.
5. Remove sausage to a bowl, add a little more olive oil to pan, and cook onion and bell pepper over medium-high heat until cooked and starting to brown.
6. Add remaining herbs and cook 1 minute more. Add the sausage back into the pan until everything is heated through.
7. Remove squash cubes from oven, leaving oven on. Grease a 10x12 casserole dish. Put squash in the bottom of the casserole dish, then top it with the sausage, onion, and pepper mixture. Sprinkle with grated cheese.
8. Bake uncovered 20-25 minutes or until cheese is completely melted and nicely browned. Serve hot.

MOROCCAN CARROT & CHICKPEA SALAD

Adapted from georgieeats.co.uk

1 kg carrots, washed
1 can chickpeas, drained, rinsed
15 g fresh parsley, finely chopped
2 green onions, finely sliced
1 Tbsp poppy seeds

Dressing:
1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
juice of 1 lemon
4 Tbsp olive oil
2 tsp maple syrup
2 tsp cumin seeds
salt and pepper

1. Coarsely grate carrots with largest holes on a box grater.
2. Transfer grated carrot into a large bowl and combine with chickpeas, parley, poppy seeds and green onions. Add salt and pepper to taste and mix.
3. Whisk together the Dijon mustard, lemon juice, olive oil, maple syrup, cumin seeds, and salt and pepper.
4. Pour dressing over carrot mixture, stirring well to combine. Chill and marinate at least 20 minutes before serving.



Summer CSA News



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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.

Peppers and Okra: Wrap unwashed in a paper towel to absorb any moisture, and keep in the veggie drawer of your refrigerator.

Celery: Recut the ends and stand up in a jar of water in the fridge. It should keep for up to two weeks.

Fall Squash (delicata and spaghetti): Delicata is small and oblong with yellow and green coloring and delicate, edible skin. The flesh of spaghetti squash forms spaghetti-like strands when cooked. Spaghetti stores longer than delicata, but keep them all in a cool, dry, dark place around 50 degrees.

Sweet Corn: Plan to eat your corn soon after you receive it. As time elapses after harvest, the sugars turn into starches, and the corn loses its sweetness. To store, refrigerate sweet corn as soon as possible. Keep husks on.

Cucurbits

Members of the squash family, called cucurbits, range from big to small, soft to hard, and almost every color of the rainbow. Like members of any family, each has its own quirks. They are all pretty wimpy when it comes to cold temperatures, high winds, and pestilence, but since they are so good, we grow lots.

Generally, we consider the squashes to be in one of two groups: soft or hard, which equates with summer or winter varieties. We start planting the summer varieties, yellow squash, zucchini, and cucumbers, in May, as soon as we can after all fear of frost is past. We look at the long range forecast the first of May, and sometimes we gamble a bit and go out early. But when the ground is relatively cold, and the nights get close to frosty, they are not happy, so we usually just wait a week or so, and then go with it. Since the seeds are fairly large, we can sow them directly, either into bare ground, or sometimes through the rows of black plastic as it warms the soil a bit. Sometimes we sow the seeds in the greenhouse to have small plants that would be a couple of weeks ahead of direct seeded plants, but since they grow fast, if rainy weather sets in, they can get too big in just a few days, and then have to be planted by hand, or composted. The trick for late-summer-to-fall, or hard squash (spaghetti, acorn, butternut, and honeynut), is planting them in time to reach full maturity before short days and cold nights start shutting them down. Pumpkin planting depends on how big they get and when you are selling them.

The summer varieties grow relatively erect, like small bushes, while the winter varieties and cucumbers are vine-like in nature. When we grow them without a mulch, we can straddle the rows with tractor mounted cultivation equipment to control weeds. When the big leaves of the bushy types brush up against and break from the equipment, we have to stop tilling between the rows. Any additional weeding will be done by hand. The leaves of the viney types are generally smaller and lower to the ground, but when the stems start “running” out away from the plant, we must too stop tilling them as well. Plants perform best with trickle irrigation under a mulch, so bare ground plants may need to be irrigated by the traveler sprinkler that walks across the field watering many rows in one swath.

One trait all cucurbit varieties share is they have male and female flowers, and the flowers are only open one day. If a bee does not carry the pollen of the male flower to fertilize the female flower, no fruit will develop. For this reason, our beekeeping partner establishes colonies of hives adjacent to the squash and fields. The male

flowers are atop a thin stem, while the female flowers are supported by a shorter thicker stem that is actually immature fruit. When harvesting squash blossoms to eat, if you only grab males, it should not reduce harvest yields, but you should still leave a few regardless.

The leaves and stems of most of these varieties have rough protrusions that are scratchy while harvesting, but also seem to repel chewing insects. But the sucking insects can extend their proboscis past these structures and suck the juice from the succulent plants. Cucurbits were the last crop for us to certify organic many years ago during the transition, because of the insect pressure this family of plants attract. The spotted and striped cucumber beetles are rather small, but they tend to vector diseases into the plants, causing that familiar afternoon wilting, and ultimately, the death of the plant. We have partnered with UK researchers in the past in evaluating row covers that physically exclude the various pests, but foster healthy plant growth. In that system, we actually install a small hive of bumblebees under the netting to pollinate the crop.

We have learned a lot about growing squash and melons, but they continue to challenge. We can promise you they are not genetically modified, like you might find in the grocery store. Nor are they raised with systemic insecticides that magically kill insects all season long with one simple application at planting time. We can also promise you will get lots of culinary pleasure from the variety of colors, shapes, and textures the cucurbit family has to offer. - Mac

LAST CHANCE to join us for a farm tour this season!

**Our last scheduled public tour is
Saturday, September 14, 2024 9am-11am
and focuses on turkeys!**

**The organic, pasture-raised turkeys have personalities like no other and are Mac's favorite farm animals.
Come out and see for yourself.**

Register online at <https://elmwoodstockfarm.com/farmtours/>