

BROWN BUTTER ACORN SQUASH PASTA

adapted from ambitiouskitchen.com pinch of nutmeg
1 medium acorn squash, halved, insides scooped out 1/2 c raw hazelnuts, chopped
1/2 c milk 1/4 c salted butter
1 Tbsp maple syrup 12 oz spaghetti
1/4 tsp cinnamon 1/2 tsp garlic powder
salt and pepper to taste

1. Preheat oven to 400°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place squash halves flesh side down and roast 50-60 minutes until very fork tender. Let cool a few minutes before scooping out the flesh.
2. While squash cooks, place large skillet over medium-low heat. Add hazelnuts, toasting 2-3 minutes until golden. Remove and set aside.
3. Add squash flesh to blender and add milk, maple syrup, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Blend until smooth, adding more milk if necessary. Set aside.
4. Add butter to pan used for hazelnuts over medium heat. Stir constantly as butter melts and foams, removing pan from heat when butter begins to brown and give off a nutty aroma.
5. Cook pasta according to package instructions. Drain, add to skillet with brown butter, and stir. Add acorn squash sauce and garlic powder; stir again until creamy. Season with salt and pepper. Serve.

CHILI LIME SWEET POTATO AND CHICKEN SKILLET

Adapted from sweetpeasandsaffron.com

1 lb chicken breast, in 1-in cubes 2 Tbsp chili powder
1 Tbsp olive oil 2 tsp ground cumin
salt and pepper 1/4 tsp salt
4 c sweet potato in 1/2-in cubes 1 c chicken broth
2 bell peppers in 1/2-in pieces 1 Tbsp lime zest
1 red onion, diced 1 can black beans, drained

1. In a large pan, heat 1 Tbsp olive oil over medium heat. Add chicken and cook 8-10 minutes until cooked through. Set chicken aside.
2. Add sweet potato, peppers, onion, chili powder, cumin, salt, chicken broth, and lime zest. Cover and simmer 15-20 mins, stirring 2-3 times, until sweet potatoes are soft and cooked through. If pan becomes dry, add more broth.
3. Add black beans and cooked chicken breast for approx. 2 minutes.
4. Serve as desired: with shredded cheddar cheese, cilantro, lime wedges, greek yogurt, avocado, and/or tortilla chips.



Summer CSA News



Sept 30-Oct 6, 2024

FINAL WEEK

Week 20 of 20

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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 as needed by plunging them in ice water 15-20 minutes.

Beans: Store unwashed beans in a perforated plastic bag in the veggie bin of your fridge for up to 1 week. Rejuvenate limp beans by soaking them in ice water for 30 minutes.

Fall Squash: Store all fall squash in a cool, dry, dark place at around 50-70 degrees. They get sweeter in storage as the starch converts to sugar. Once cut, wrap in plastic and refrigerate for up to a week.

Apples: Store apples in a bag in your refrigerator. Keep in mind that apples are prone to absorb the odors of the produce around them, so don't place them close to onions or potatoes.

Fall CSA begins next week!

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<https://elmwoodstockfarm.com/csa/about-csa/>

Turkey Tales

Turkey's rich history is well deserved, considering how majestic they are. As they began to be industrialized, someone mistook cautious curiosity for stupidity and labeled them as dumb, but nothing could be further from the truth. It's too bad the quest to produce cheap food in this country has tarnished turkeys' reputation. Rearing these birds at Elmwood Stock Farm is not only rewarding, but a joy.

A young turkey is called a poult, and they are very fragile when very young. We have modified the old tobacco barn stripping room into a brooding facility, holding big plywood boxes with lids that can be temperature adjusted. The poults must be kept at 95° for a couple of weeks, then gradually the temperature can be backed off until the ambient temperature is suitable. They graduate to the 'nursery', which is an open pen in the room where they can run and fly a bit and learn that they are birds. As they become juveniles, we move them to the outdoor shade house enclosures with an electric netting fence around them to keep predators out but allow them plenty of space to run, jump, and fly a bit as they please.

Turkeys are quite gregarious and very social. When they are young, some will literally fall asleep while standing and plop down, while others run around bobbing and weaving as if challenged to run the gauntlet. Once outdoors, they seem to be constantly moving, chasing bugs, inspecting the feeder, hopping up and down on the roosts. It is quite comical to see foot-tall males with their tails flared and wings flexed, strutting around as if to say "I'm bad!" It's hilarious when one finds a grasshopper, too big for one gulp, and it flees to eat in peace, but 10 or 15 others see him and form a train of turkeys weaving through the group, trying to get a bite. Maybe that is what the baby was practicing for in the brooder.

Our groups communicate amongst themselves, much like a flock of wild turkeys does. If one notices something that may bring danger to the flock, she (usually a she) will squawk sharply, and immediately every bird will raise its head and stand stone still. In effect, their collective eyes cover every angle away from the flock, trying to find the problem. If nothing happens, they go about their way, albeit a bit cautiously, for a few minutes while a few tend to keep an eye out. They are very polite about speaking when spoken to. If you approach the pen and gobble-gobble at them, they will gobble-gobble back in unison. You can't feel too proud of yourself for it, though, because they respond to post drivers and certain ringtones too. Older males have that deep guttural thump, much like an elephant, that is hardly audible, but very penetrating once you become aware of it. The most enjoyable sound is when we open the netting to move the flock: they scatter out through the field in search of unsuspecting insects, making a combination cooing/chirping sound, that sounds like singing, almost yodeling.

We keep a breeding flock of the Heritage turkeys, which are barely-domesticated cousins of the wild turkeys. We have mostly Narragansetts, with a few White Royal Palms in the flock. All Thanksgiving turkeys used to look like these, but they fell from favor as breeding programs developed the large-breasted types. The Heritage breeds became so rare that there were just a few hundred breeding females in the country. The American Livestock Breeds Conservancy started maintaining them on small farms, almost like zoo animals. We said that as long as you let us eat them, we will raise lots of them. We started with about 12 the first year, now we have several hundred. The best are held back as breeders. They are seasonal egg layers, so we gather the eggs from mid-March through June, incubate them, and carry them to the brooder in the 'turkey transporter' which is actually a bushel gourd. We like to have about 30 hens and 5-6 toms. The sleeker shape and darker, richer meat is not for everyone, so we also raise Broad-Breasted turkeys which have full, plump, white meat breasts many are accustomed to. This type of bird cannot mate naturally, so we purchase poults from a hatchery in Ohio.

Raising each breed of turkey on pasture has its challenges, but the quality of the meat is worth the effort. We move the enclosures several times weekly, giving the birds fresh insects and tender plant leaves to round out their grain-based diet. Kinda like the kale and carrots we eat may seem like a small portion of our daily intake, but we know it makes a tremendous difference in our health. The relatively yellow fat we see in the birds is an indicator of the beta-carotene they got from eating green plant material, which is good for us as well. Being organic, the grains are non-GMO and raised without the use of synthetic fertilizers or pesticides.

Harvesting the birds can be quite exhilarating since they fly! We construct a funnel with gates up to the trailer and gently herd them into the pen. Some get excited and fly past us, but we have learned how to keep them calm. Once in the trailer they look around peacefully and prepare for the ride. Our processor treats the birds with care, knowing we've waited on them hand and foot since they hatched. The USDA inspector watches the process, verifying the health of each bird.

The price you pay for one of these beauties is calculated based on the amount of feed they eat and how much time it has taken us to care for them. Processing alone is more than what the supermarkets charge for a bird, but those guys are using them as loss leaders to get folks in the door to buy canned yams and marshmallows, boxed stuffing, and the gooey cranberry whatever-it-is from a can.

Turkeys became the symbol of Thanksgiving for good reason; they nurtured early settlers through some rough winters. We are proud to raise them on Bluegrass pastures in a way that respects their heritage. Whichever breed you choose for your table, you can eat in peace knowing just how much respect was given them.
-Mac Stone