

## SICILIAN MEATBALL SOUP WITH CABBAGE

adapted from [theroastedroot.net](http://theroastedroot.net)

### Meatballs:

2 lb ground beef or turkey  
2 eggs lightly beaten  
2 Tbsp raisins (optional)  
1 tsp garlic powder  
1/2 c all-purpose flour  
1/2 c grated parmesan (optional)  
1/2 tsp salt  
1 tsp dried oregano  
1/2 tsp paprika

### Soup:

1 Tbsp avocado oil  
1 yellow onion, diced  
2 large carrots, chopped  
2 stalks celery, chopped  
4 cloves minced garlic  
1 qt chicken, beef, or vegetable broth  
1 28-oz can crushed tomatoes  
1/2 c red wine (optional)  
1 tsp oregano  
1/4 tsp paprika  
1 bay leaf  
2 tsp salt, or to taste  
1/2 head cabbage, core removed, sliced  
1 zucchini squash, chopped

1. Add meatball ingredients to large bowl. Stir until combined.
2. Form balls out of the meat mixture.
3. Heat skillet over medium-high and add 1-2 Tbsp cooking oil. Once skillet is hot, add meatballs and brown on 2 sides for 2-3 minutes each.
4. Add onion, carrots, and celery to stock pot with 1 Tbsp avocado oil and heat over medium-high heat. Cook 5-8 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Transfer meatballs to the pot. Add remaining ingredients except for zucchini and cabbage and stir. Cover pot and bring soup to a full boil.
6. Once boiling, add zucchini and cabbage. Stir, then cover. Simmer 30-40 minutes.

## CHICKPEA AND COLLARD GREENS SOUP

Adapted from [thiswifecooks.com](http://thiswifecooks.com)

1 Tbsp olive oil  
1/3 c yellow onion, chopped  
1/2 c celery, chopped  
1/4 c carrot, chopped  
1 Tbsp garlic, minced  
2 tsp caraway seeds  
1/4 tsp ground black pepper  
4 c chicken broth  
2 c collard greens, stems removed, chopped  
15 oz chickpeas, rinsed, drained  
Parmesan cheese, shredded, optional  
Red pepper flakes, optional

1. Heat large pot over medium-high and add olive oil. When oil is hot add onion, celery, and carrots. Cook 2 minutes until slightly softened. Add garlic, caraway seeds, and black pepper; cook another 30 seconds.
2. Stir in broth, collard greens, and chickpeas. Bring to a boil then reduce to low heat. Cover and simmer 10 minutes until greens are tender.
3. Sprinkle with Parmesan and/or red pepper flakes if desired. Serve hot.



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

**Cabbage:** With great storage capacity, cabbage should be kept dry and unwashed in the vegetable bin of the fridge. If outer leaves lose firmness, remove. Once cut, wrap in a sealed plastic bag and continue to refrigerate; cabbage should keep several weeks more.

**Sweet Potato:** Store at room temperature. Refrigeration will cause them to harden and blacken when cooked. Check weekly and use any that may soften, most will keep for weeks or months.

**Jarred Items:** It's the best time of year to include Elmwood's organic Diced Tomatoes, Marinara, BBQ or Salsa in your seasonal recipes—think chili, lasagna, soups, or what about as a pizza topping?

## All in the Realm of Continual Improvement

Often our customers ask us what we do all winter on the farm. Well, one of the tenets of organic farming is continual improvement. As we close out the season, it seems natural to look back and see how far we have come. Given the myriad factors we juggle to provide wholesome foods to you, we are taking a look at various critical points in our operations to evaluate how our systems are working. It will be time to get 2025 up and running sooner than later.

First and foremost, given the wild weather patterns that seem to be cropping up more frequently, we will evaluate our resiliency to such extremes. We are asking ourself questions like: should there always be a reserve field on the high ground that can be planted sooner after extended wet periods, or use more plastic mulches? Should we use more hay/straw mulches to conserve moisture in dry spells, or more transplants that can be mudded in when planters cannot operate? Do we have sufficient irrigation capacity, and can we employ it quickly when needed? Should we invest in more high tunnels or greenhouses? These questions are hard to score, but we are able to sense some areas of vulnerability, identify some priorities, and with your financial support, invest in stabilizing your food supply.

We have been blessed with outstanding people to help us in our quest to provide good foods to good people. You may have met some of them at the farmer's market, in the farm store, or delivering to your home, and there are still many others are busy in the fields or working behind the scenes. The local colleges and universities are a great resource of young people looking to expand their horizons, and seek us out to get connected with local food systems. We feel a bit like their professors, we share many experiences with them, watch them learn and mature, then send them off into the world. Many have gone on to do great work: some are actually farming on their own, while others have moved into academia or non-profit social change work. As we hire these young people, we also must ratchet up our ability to manage such talent. Between production and harvest data collection systems, marketing and sales records, meat inventory management, and developing new educational and marketing programs, there is plenty to do in the realm of continual improvement.

Harvest and post-harvest washing and cooling systems are in a constant state of continual improvement, as we and our employees implement new ideas. As we are beginning to outgrow our packing shed and cooler systems, we are looking at the need for ever increasing efficiencies. During this winter "meeting season," we will

quiz our friends from other states and regions on how their sheds are set up, and whether the expensive equipment options work as they say, or whether should we design a home built model. We have extensive hourly labor charts to help us track all of this, and ferret out weak links, but it will still be somewhat of a judgement call. Spending time with our farmer friends not only gives us good ideas, it re-charges our batteries and helps us realize just how important this work is, and we make no excuses for wanting it to be less taxing in the long run.

Continual improvements in the biological systems are evident around the farm, based on previous decision making, and taking the long view. The soil organic matter is greater than it used to be. This and related soil characteristics, have the unique ability to hold moisture in dry weather, while allowing for better drainage in wet weather. We have greatly reduced our need for off-farm crop production inputs like organic fertilizers or pest control tools with the crop rotation plan being followed. This being said, we are continually evaluating which cover crops to use, what type of tillage or cultivation equipment to use, and when.

We also seek to improve our customer service along the way. Based on feedback from this past year, we will look at each pick-up location, schedules, and route efficiencies. We are open to new pick-up locations, if a critical mass of shareholders makes it worth our while. We will be available for speaking opportunities you may be familiar with, as a way to educate people about the benefits of eating organic foods, the most important form of continual improvement.

So, this winter we will be crunching numbers on spreadsheets, visiting with friends at conferences, and sitting by the fire making judgement calls. We will also be harvesting produce from the high tunnel, and from the fields with crops under row covers (both are examples of continual improvement decisions of years past). It will take a little while to figure out what to do next, but with your support, we have reason to believe things are getting better every year. We hope you have enjoyed the many wonderful offerings in your shares this season and the tidbits of information from this newsletter. We are proud to be part of your personal commitment to continual improvement through eating wholesome organic foods.