

Ajo CSA Week 7

Planned Harvest: Yellow Onions, Purple Mustard, Kale, Red Turnips, Turnip Greens, Butternut Squash, Green Chiles (roasted), Farmer's Choice

Red turnips

Red turnips are a colorful variety of a regular turnip, which is another edible and cultivated species in the genus *Brassica*. Some sources state that turnips are one of the oldest vegetables cultivated by man, and that evidence of turnip cultivation dates back at least 4000 years. The lowly turnip is not very popular in America, but it's an important food in most of the rest of the non-tropical world, even if some gastronomical snobs consider it a food only for poor people and livestock. Although its ancestor is no longer known, turnips were apparently first developed in central Europe from some species of wild *Brassica*. Turnips were introduced to North America in the late 1500s.

Nutrition: Turnip roots (well, to be strictly correct botanically, the "root" is not a root at all, but rather the swollen stem of the plant) are mostly high in vitamin C. On the other hand, turnip greens are a good source of vitamin A, folate, vitamin C, vitamin K and calcium. Turnip greens are also high in lutein (8.4mg/100g), one of the carotenoids found in green leafy vegetables and employed by organisms as an antioxidant and for blue light absorption.

Usage: Both turnip roots and turnip greens are edible. I suggest that you separate the leaves from the bulbs when you bring them home, and store them separately – they will keep longer that way. Fresh young turnip roots are excellent sliced and served raw like kohlrabi or radishes – they have a slightly hot flavor like a mild radish. Use the larger roots boiled and mashed like potatoes, or cooked in stews or soups. Turnip greens resemble mustard greens in flavor. Any bitter taste of the larger leaves can be reduced by pouring off the water from the initial boiling and replacing it with fresh water. Turnip greens are popular in the American South; they are cooked like spinach, sometimes with the roots chopped up and mixed in with the greens. They are also very good served with vinegar or Tabasco sauce, or with butter and salt and pepper, but be careful not to overcook them. Turnip greens can also be used in stir fries – add at the very last minute. In much of Asia and the Middle East, turnips are pickled. The Japanese carve raw turnips into intricate flower shapes. The Chinese sun dry turnips or preserve turnip strips in soy sauce.

(Sources: http://www.floridata.com/ref/b/bras_rap_rap.cfm;
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turnip>)

Ami wanted to share 2 recipes that she finds give very good results every time: "The first is just greens with pinto beans and garlic, very simple and easy to put on a tortilla. The other is a Moroccan potato casserole, and making the cilantro/parsley/lemon/garlic sauce is the only time-consuming part of the recipe, but it's worth it since it is delicious," she says.

Quelites (Greens with Pinto Beans)

"Originally the Pueblo Indians of the Southwest made this dish with wild greens. More contemporary recipes call for spinach or chard instead. The dark greens look very appealing with the pink beans, and the more garlicky you make it, the better."

1 pound spinach or Swiss Chard
1.5 tablespoons olive oil
2 or 3 cloves garlic, minced
3 scallions, white and green parts, finely chopped
1-1.5 cups cooked or canned pinto beans
1 tsp chili powder

salt and freshly ground black pepper

Stem and wash the greens and coarsely chop the leaves. If you're using chard, trim away the thicker midribs from the leaves and thinly slice them. Steam with a very small amount of water in a large, tightly covered soup pot until wilted. The spinach will be done as soon as it wilts, but the chard needs to steam a bit longer. It will be done when it turns a deep green. Drain the greens and finely chop them.

Heat the oil in a large skillet. Add the garlic and sauté over low heat until it just begins to turn golden. Add the scallions and sauté just until they soften a bit. Stir in the greens, beans and seasonings. Cook, covered, over low heat for 5 minutes, or just until everything is heated through.

(From: "Great American Vegetarian – Traditional and Regional Recipes for the Enlightened Cook," by Nava Atlas.)

Moroccan Potato Casserole

(makes 8 servings) *"This aromatic one-pot meal is a sensory ticket to Morocco."*

6 cloves garlic, peeled
2 teaspoons salt
2 teaspoons ground paprika
½ teaspoon ground cumin
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
¾ cup chopped fresh cilantro
¾ cup chopped parsley
6 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
1.5 pounds red potatoes, scrubbed and sliced ½ inch thick
4 ribs celery, cut into 2 inch pieces
3 large red or green bell peppers, seeded, ribs removed, and cut into strips
4 large tomatoes, cut into eighths

Place the garlic, ½ teaspoon of the salt, paprika, cumin and cayenne pepper in a food processor or blender. Process to form a paste. Add the cilantro and parsley and pulse a few times. Add 3 tablespoons of the oil, all the vinegar, lemon juice, and ½ teaspoon of the remaining salt. Blend well.

Combine the potatoes, celery, bell peppers and the remaining 1 teaspoon salt in a large bowl. Add the sauce to the bowl and toss to coat the vegetables. Spread the potato mixture in an even layer in a large, shallow baking dish. Scatter the tomatoes over the top. Drizzle the remaining 3 tablespoons oil over top of the tomatoes.

Tightly cover the pan with foil. Bake for 35 minutes. Remove the foil and bake for another 20-30 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.

(From "The Ethnic Vegetarian – Traditional and Modern Recipes from Africa, America and the Caribbean" by Angele Shelf Medearis)

See you on Friday at 6, and buon appetito!
Nina