

CSA Package Contents:

1 whole pasture raised chicken
 1 lb carrots
 1 lb brussel sprouts (removed from stalk)
 2 lbs beets
 1/2 lb mixed organic greens
 1 dozen pasture raised eggs
 2 lbs organic black turtle beans
 1 smoked pork hock
 1 lb roasted butternut squash and cracked black pepper linguini

Carrots and tops



I always like to have customers who are both summer and winter subscribers because they get to taste both summer and winter carrots.

The first noticeable difference is the look of the carrots. Our summer carrots come with tops and are generally brighter in color. The summer carrot looks great, but has a slightly bitter taste.

In the fall and early winter, carrots aren't dug until the tops are dead and the ground is nearly frozen. Why? One, why dig them until they are sold? Second, they keep better in the ground. They still soak up some moisture and nutrients since they are still alive. Finally, carrots, like all produce, create extra sugars to protect from freezing. Sugar freezes at a lower temperature than water. So the late season carrots are sweeter.

These carrots might not be as pretty as carrots in August and September, but their flavor is unrivaled.

As for next summer, keep in mind that the tops are usable. When carrots were first cultivated, it was for the tops, not the root. The tops are tasty and aromatic. They can be chopped up and used like parsley. Depending on the variety, they can have a bitter taste. This usually means a high concentration of potassium. They are rich in chlorophyll and trace minerals as well as Vitamin K, which is not in the carrot itself. The flavor is distinctive, and may not suit everyone, and some people may have an allergic reaction (mild upset stomach). If

you do not tolerate carrots well, then you might want to avoid the greens. Otherwise, go for it.

Ham Hocks

Ham hocks are the basically the shin of the hog. As you can imagine, there is less meat on this part of the leg, so using the hock takes a little more creativity. The bone with its meat is perfect for soups or for cooking with beans. These hocks are smoked, so they add a wonderful smokiness to bean dishes. Commonly served with white beans, they are delicious with black beans as well. There are plenty of recipes of beans with hocks on the web, but be sure to check our blog for a super ham hock and cabbage gumbo.

Ham Hocks and Cabbage

I know many of you are still wondering what to do with the several heads of cabbage you have received this summer. I can't get past just braised cabbage, but no one believes me (until they eat it at my house).

So if braised cabbage isn't for you, use up that old cabbage to make some cabbage and ham hock soup. you don't have the cabbage, you can use the brussel sprouts but I think that would be a waste of such a delicious veggie.

Start by wilting some onions, celery, and carrots in a stockpot. I use bacon grease to stay with the smoked pork theme. Add the ham hock, whole, and just start to crisp up some of the fat on the outside of the hock. Be careful not to dry it out. The meat is already cooked.

Add the head of cabbage, chopped coarsely. Add three to five cloves of garlic and cook until the cabbage starts to wilt some. Add more bacon grease or butter if needed. Add salt and pepper to taste. Don't be afraid to oversalt because you are going to add water and dilute everything down (2-3 teaspoon estimate).

Remove the ham hock and in a separate pot cook the hock in about 6 cups of water, uncovered, at a simmer to low boil. Cook for about 2-3 hours and add water if needed (if too much boils off). You are cooking it until the meat falls from the bone. You are essentially making a pork stock.

Add the cabbage mixture to the water and ham hock and a few bay leaves. Cook for about another half hour until the cabbage is of your desired tenderness. Season with salt, pepper, and in my case, chili powder, and serve.

Other variations I have seen include using winter squash to add some more flesh and texture to the soup. If you do use winter squash, you can do it two ways: (1) peel and cube it and roast it first until slightly tender, then add to the soup at the same time as the cabbage; or (2) cook the peeled and cubed winter squash with the cabbage and pork hock, just don't cook the hock first. Do it all in one pot.

Beet Recipes

Back in June, we had a beet workshop at the Grovewood Tavern. There are over a half dozen beet recipes at freshforkmarket.com. Just search "beets." Be sure to check the "older entries."

Roasted Beets and Carrots

Adapted from Jamie Oliver. Carrots and beets are particularly good when roasted as it brings out their natural sugars. The best advice I can give you is about flavoring them. A few smashed garlic cloves, a woody herb like rosemary, thyme, sage or bay, and a splash of vinegar, or squeezed lemon or orange juice, can accentuate their natural flavor.

Ingredients

- 1 lb carrots, cleaned
- 1 lb beets, approx same size
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 bulb garlic, broken apart, 1/2 the cloves smashed, 1/2 left whole
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 orange, juiced
- Rosemary and thyme, fresh if available
- 5 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

Directions

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Put the carrots into a large pot and the beets into another, and add enough water to cover them. Season with salt and bring to a boil. Cook for 15 to 20 minutes until just tender, then drain and place in separate bowls. Peel the beets, and cut any larger carrots and beets in half or into quarters. Smaller ones can stay whole.

Now add the flavorings while the vegetables are still hot. Toss the carrots with half the smashed garlic and a glug of olive oil, then lightly season. Add the orange juice and the thyme leaves and toss again. Mix the beets with the rest of the garlic, the rosemary, balsamic vinegar and salt and pepper. You can now put the vegetables either into separate ovenproof dishes, or together on a large roasting pan with the carrots in 1 half of the pan and the beets in the other. Place in the middle of the preheated oven and roast for around 1/2 hour or until golden and tender to the fork. Serve hot.

Black Bean (and hock) Meal

Soak a half to one lb beans for 8 hrs. In a stockpot or dutch oven, add ham hock, 1 to 2 onions, coarsely chopped, and about 8 cups water. Drain beans and add. Cook for about an hour at slow boil. Add coarsely chopped cabbage, a few lbs of peeled and chopped potatoes, and a lb of carrots. Add about 3 tsp salt and some pepper to taste. Cook about another half hour until potatoes and beans are tender. Remove bone and pull meat from bone. Serve stew hot.