



FRESH FORK MARKET

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Small CSA Contents:

1 whole canteloupe
Either 1 pint mixed color cherry tomatoes or approx 1.5 lbs heirloom tomatoes
2 ct zucchini/squash
1-2 ct eggplant
1 bulb garlic
1 large candy onion
2 oz basil
1 bunch curly kale
Approx 1.5 lbs slicing tomatoes
1 lb bulk Italian sausage (ground)
1 pint blackberries or approx 1.5 lbs peaches

Large Add-Ons

1 small yellow watermelon
1 lb yellow wax beans or green filet beans
1 lb grassfed ground beef
1 head lettuce
1 bunch radishes
1-2 cucumbers depending on size

Vegetarian Subs

In place of Italian sausage
1 lb wax beans or green filet beans
Approx 1.5 lbs peaches
1 lb whole wheat linguini

Vegan

Small contents plus vegetarian items, minus linguini
Linguini if you want it (I know most of my vegans like the pasta)
Tofu or Luna Burgers or Yellow Watermelon

Ratatouille

There are countless ratatouille recipes. The most common flaw I see in many recipes is that the final product has two possible issues: 1) it tastes like zucchini, squash, eggplant, and tomato (the individual components); or 2) it is watery.

To solve both of these problems, there are a few important tricks. First, pre-roast your vegetables. This will make it so they are all done perfectly. Second, cut the acid in the final product by adding some honey. This helps blend the individual flavors and provide a very smooth taste.

Start your ratatouille by preparing your vegetables. Start with the eggplant. It

takes the longest. Cut the eggplant into approximately 1/2 inch cubes. Some people skin their eggplant first. I tend not to. I like the color and texture of the skin. Toss your eggplant lightly with olive oil and salt. Place on a cookie sheet lined with foil or parchment paper (to make easy cleanup). Roast at 400 degrees, uncovered, until it starts to dry out some and get golden in color.

Once the eggplant is in the oven, prep the squash or zucchini. They are interchangeable. Cut the ends off then dice your zucchini or squash. I like bigger pieces because they hold up better and take less time to cut. I usually quarter the zucchini lengthwise then cut across in half inch sections. Toss with olive oil, salt, and roast as well. Add to the oven with the eggplant. They should finish about the same time. I tend to like the zucchini/squash a little firmer, so this is perfect.

While the eggplant and zucchini/squash are roasting, prep your tomatoes. Some folks like to remove the skins first. Depending on how much of a hurry I am in, I may leave them. To remove the skins, start by taking the core out around the top with a pairing knife. Then score the other side of the tomato with an X. Get a pot of water up to a rolling boil and drop the tomatoes in for about 30 to 60 seconds, depending on ripeness (more ripe takes less time). Prepare an ice bath in a large bowl with water and ice. Remove the tomatoes from the boiling water and "shock" in the ice bath. Let them cool for a minute or two in the ice bath, remove from the ice bath, and peel the skins off with your fingers.

Next, empty the water and you can probably use the same pan to make the ratatouille. A stockpot tends to work well. It is easier to stir in and less splatter. Heat the pan up, add some olive oil, and brown generous amounts of onion in the oil. Add your chopped garlic and brown quickly as well. By now, the eggplant and squash are likely ready. Remove them from the oven and scrape them into the pan. Continue to brown them briefly with the onions and garlic. Add oil as needed but not too much.

The final step is to chop your tomatoes coarsely and add them to the pan. Stir regularly to prevent sticking and to let the veggies start to take on one character. Taste periodically and add salt as needed. Salt is your friend. Finally, add a few tablespoons of honey, depending on the acid of the tomatoes, to take the edge off and make a very "united" dish.

Serve the dish warm as an entree or side dish. I tend to serve ratatouille with fattier meals to help cut through the fat. Try using ratatouille as a "condiment" on mac and cheese or a grilled cheese sandwich. The color and flavors go perfectly together.

Note: My recipe doesn't include any quantities of each ingredient. There is no set rule. I tend to try to have approximately equal parts or a little more zucchini and squash just because I like those vegetables a lot and their colors. This recipe also scales very well. I've had success with batches up to 40 quarts at a time with no problem (yeah, it was a big event).

Variation: Try serving your warm ratatouille in a bowl lined with raw kale. This will make a nice combination of flavors. You may also wilt the kale and mix in or add the kale when you add the tomatoes for a healthy change.

Frozen Basil

There are lots of herbs this time of year, and now is the time to preserve the for winter. Basil can be tricky, though. It goes dark quickly, especially if you try to freeze or dry it. Here are a couple ways to freeze fresh basil for later use. First prepare your basil. Wash it and take the leaves off of the stem.

Next, measure out the amount you would typically use in a recipe and put in a freezer container (plastic container or Ziploc). Fill with enough water to completely cover the leaves. Freeze like a giant ice cube. When you go to make sauce, drop the entire cube in with the tomatoes.

Another option is to chop and coat with olive oil. Use just enough oil to coat the leaves. Store in pre-portioned amounts.