



# TWO SMALL FARMS

## Community Supported Agriculture

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### Soup Lines, from Andy Griffin at Mariquita

Soup's on! We've had our first rainstorms of the season, it's getting cold outside, and even when we enjoy full sun at mid day there's a blue note to the shadows; perfect soup weather! Since we're harvesting kale and winter squash I might make a minestrone for my supper tonight.

Minestrone is a "big soup," which I find ironic, since the name comes down to us from the Latin minus, meaning "minor" or "less." To the Roman mind servants were "minors" because they were "less than," or subordinate to, their "majors," or masters. Eventually, this sense of minus morphed into the verb *ministrare*, meaning "to serve food or drink."

*Minestra* meant "that which is served," which in turn came to mean "soup" in modern Italian. A "minister" still serves, even in English. Hardcore Libertarians might not be comfortable with this etymology but by one way of thinking an "Administration" is, or once was, supposed to serve food. "Ad" is a Latin prefix meaning "to," or "toward." "Ex" is a prefix that means "out of," or "away from." In the interests of consistency linguistically conservative administrations which don't want to fund soup lines for the poor might consider rebranding themselves as "Exministrations." With the addition of the augmentive suffix "one" regular *minestra* turns into minestrone, or "big soup." Augmentive suffix are added to root words when a writer wishes to express greater size or intensity. The augmentive suffix "one" is the opposite of the diminutive suffix "ina." For example, Italian food savant Marcella Hazan has a recipe for a "little soup," *Minestrina Tricolore*, in her *Essentials of Classic Italian Cooking*.

Italians draw a distinction between a number of different preparations we would all call "soup," from aquacotta (cooked water), brood (broth), minestra, and zuppa to minestrone. What makes a soup "big" is its heartiness and list of ingredients. Marcella's *Minestrina Tricolore* has potatoes plus minced carrots, celery, and onion measured out by tablespoons. Her *Minestrone alla Romagnola*, by contrast, has a whole garden in it; there's pound of zucchini, cup-sized scoops of potatoes, carrots, onions, celery, green beans, and chopped cabbage, plus canned cannellini beans. (We're just beginning our own cannellini bean harvest. Some of you will get them this week.) Lorenza De'Medici writes in her

*Tuscany: The Beautiful Cookbook* that their traditional minestrone di cavolo, or "big cabbage soup" is so substantial farm workers take it with them to the fields to eat cold. Marcella Hazan says of one Piedmontese minestrone she features in her book that it is "monumentally dense."

Minestrone soup is such a "big" soup that no single recipe could ever hope to contain it but it is usually taken to be a vegetable soup thickened with pasta or rice, often made with water as a base instead of a meaty stock, and with plenty of beans or chick peas to give the dish "body." The ingredients change with the seasons. Winter minestrone might have chunks of winter squash, carrot, dried beans, and ribbons of

kale if that's what's coming out of the garden, available cheaply in the market, or stored in the pantry. Summer minestrone might have tomatoes, zucchini, spinach and be flavored with basil. In his monumental cookbook and history of food, *A Mediterranean Feast*, Clifford Wright says of minestrone that it is not so much a recipe as an elemental dish and the quintessential meal of *cucina povera*. *Cucina* means "kitchen" in Italian and *povera* means "poor," but *cucina povera* does not mean "poor cooking." Instead, *cucina povera* implies a humble and thrifty cuisine that takes the limitations as inspiration to craft meals that are rich in flavor. Minestrone that are made from clear water and vegetables instead of being built up from more expensive meat broths are an example of *cucina povera* in action. I'm told that in Italy minestrone is often served poured over a slice of stale bread that's been rubbed with garlic and olive oil. That sounds like a good use for bread

that would otherwise spoil, but we're not going to do it at our house. With a teenage son in the house any bread we have doesn't get a chance to get stale. I'd feel pretty silly hiding the bread or buying extra so that it could get dried out in order for me to "economize" and use the stale loaf by moistening it with broth.

### Nature's Deadline, from Steve Pedersen at High Ground

I always do my best work when I'm under deadline. And while we do have to get our weekly harvest and deliveries done to ensure that your boxes arrive on time, these deadlines are so regular that I don't really think of them as such. During the long, drawn-out days of summer the weeks tend to blend

## This Week

**Lacinato Kale** MF

**Italian Parsley** MF

**Carola Potatoes** HG

**Red Butter or Red Leaf  
Lettuce** HG

**Fresh Cannelini Shelling  
Beans OR Tomatoes** MF

**Carnival or Acorn or Delicata  
Winter Squash** MF

**Mei Quin Choy OR Celery** HG

**Mystery** HG

**Flowers: Mixed Bouquet** TF

together and it can be difficult to prioritize the numerous tasks in front of me. Coming into fall, however, nature has a way of forcing my hand.

The first serious rainfall of the year is a deadline with real consequences. If it is the first in a series of storms, here with our heavy clay and silt soil, it can be the last opportunity to work the ground with the tractor potentially for months. This means that our strawberry beds need to be listed up, gypsum needs to be spread, and most of the cover crops need to be planted before this first rain. It can also be the last opportunity to get ground ready for winter plantings of leeks, garlic, fava beans, and other overwinter crops. It also means that I have to get things organized around the farm. The tractor shed needs to be cleaned out so that I can fit all of the tractors in. The cover crop seed, fertilizer, and gypsum needs to be stowed away.

With this big deadline looming, we kicked into high gear during the last few weeks. The farm has been a flurry of activity, and somehow we squeezed it all in among the regular harvest and delivery schedule. Old crops were disced in, cover crops were planted, new crop beds were prepared.

For the first real rainfall of the season, the storm over the weekend was about perfect. We got a little under a half inch of steady but light rainfall here, which was enough to bring up our cover crops, but should still allow us to get in with the tractor to finish laying drip lines in our new strawberry beds and to do some last minute cultivating and planting. When we're well prepared, and nature gives us a soft start to the winter, we can feel the satisfaction of a deadline well met.

### Tuscan Peasant Minestrone, from Chef Jonathan Miller

½ lb cannellini beans (dried or fresh, not canned)	3 qt water
1 ham shank, smoked	salt
1/3 cup olive oil	1 red onion, diced
2 celery ribs, diced	2 garlic cloves, chopped
2 carrots, diced	12 parsley sprigs, chopped
1 small head cabbage, green	1 small bunch kale, chopped
1 potato, diced	2 tomatoes, diced
2-4 summer squash, diced	parsley
parmesan	bread

If your beans are dried, soak them overnight. Drain (or shell the fresh beans) and combine with the water and the ham shank. Bring the water to boil and add some salt (not too much, maybe just a couple teaspoons). Simmer, covered, until the beans are fully cooked, about 30 minutes for freshly shelled beans, an hour for dried. Pull out the shank and pull the meat from the bones.

Meanwhile, in a large pot heat the olive oil and cook the onion, celery, garlic, carrot, and parsley, covered, until the veggies are soft, about 15 minutes. Stir occasionally. Add the cabbage, kale, potato, tomatoes, and summer squash and cook another 30 minutes, covered, or until the kale is cooked to your liking. Stir regularly.

Strain the beans, reserving the liquid. Mash about half the beans with a hand masher and add them to the vegetables. Continue cooking the vegetables another 30 minutes over low heat, stirring frequently. Keep covered. The veggies will be thick, but don't worry. Add 2 quarts of the bean broth to the vegetables with the reserved meat and stir gently. Add the

remaining whole beans and check for salt. Cook an additional 5 minutes to bring the flavors together.

Serve with chopped parsley, bread, parmesan, and plenty of olive oil drizzled on top.

### Squash Stew with Cauliflower and Tomatoes, from Chef Jonathan Miller

2 onions, chopped	2 garlic cloves, chopped
2 tsp. cumin, ground	2 TBL dry oregano, toasted
2 TBL chili powder	2 lb hard squash, peeled and diced
8 oz mushrooms, cut into bite sized pieces	1 head cauliflower, cut into florets
3 TBL sesame seeds, toasted	small handful of almonds, toasted
2 lb tomatoes, crushed or pureed	1 cup frozen peas
small handful cilantro, chopped	

Heat some olive oil in a large saucepan or soup pot. Add the onions and sauté until they have softened, about 8-10 minutes. Add the garlic, cumin, oregano, and the chili powder and cook another couple minutes. Add the squash, mushrooms, some salt, and 3 cups of water or vegetable stock. Bring to a boil, cover, lower heat and simmer slowly until the squash is tender, about 20 minutes. Stir regularly so the mixture doesn't char on the bottom of the pot. Run almonds and sesame seeds in a food processor for a few seconds to finely chop them, then add to the stew with the cauliflower and tomatoes. Cook until the cauliflower is done to your liking, at least another 7 minutes. Add peas and cilantro, taste for seasoning, adding more salt or chili powder if you like, and serve warm.

### Weekly Stock, from Chef Jonathan Miller

peels and seeds from one or several winter squash	1 carrot from last week's box, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped	outer leaves from cauliflower, chopped
stems from the kale, chopped	4 parsley sprigs
2-4 bay leaves	

Put all the ingredients in a large pot with 7 cups of cold water. Simmer for 25 minutes. Strain and use or freeze.

### Julia's Fast Minestrone

Sauté alliums (onions/garlic) in soup pot or dutch oven. Add 1-2 boxes organic broth of choice. Add parmesan rinds (I keep them in my freezer for just this important soup role). Add chopped tomatoes fresh or canned, cooked beans fresh or canned. Add freshly chopped herbs such as thyme, parsley, oregano, savory. Cook altogether for 10-40 minutes. This soup is very forgiving! Then add cleaned chopped greens such as kale and or chard. Serve with a drizzle of olive oil (optional), chopped fresh parsley (optional), and freshly grated parmesan cheese (optional). Why are they all optional? You know, some days you just need to serve the soup and move on with your day!

*From Mariquita Farm: tomatoes, winter squash, kale, parsley, shelling beans. From High Ground Organics: lettuce, potatoes, mei quin choy, celery, mystery. From Thomas Farm: flowers.*