

In your box this week: San Marzano Tomatoes, Hungarian Wax Peppers, Carrots, Cauliflower, Watermelon Radishes, Bok Choy, Fennel, Lettuce, either Thyme or Marjoram, Mystery.

Preliminary Vegetable Notes:

Everything but the tomatoes should be stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

The watermelon radishes get their name from their pinkish/red interior. These are milder than small red radishes, and they are crunchy and delicious. Even if you don't care for 'regular' spicy radishes, these might be a hit. Try them grated with a dressing of rice vinegar and sesame oil and salt and pepper. These can also be cooked like you would a turnip. You can remove the radish greens and use as you would other cooking greens, like swiss chard, etc.

We have three different varieties of cauliflower this week - your standard white; "cheddar", which is a light color of orange; and purple. All can be used as you would the standard white, although the purple has a stronger cabbagey flavor. These are not freaks of nature, or humans, no food coloring has been added! The cauliflower was crossed with red cabbage to yield the purple cauliflower.

The Hungarian Wax peppers are somewhat spicy, about like a jalapeno.

Fennel is a versatile vegetable can be used in many places celery would. Cooking it reduces the anise flavor that many associate with fennel. I like it chopped and cooked at the beginning of making spaghetti sauce. It's also great sauteed on its own with a bit of garlic or onion and used as a pizza or toast topping. - julia

To eat first: Strawberries, within a day. To eat second (within five days): peppers, cauliflower, radishes and their greens, herbs, lettuce, bok choy, fennel. To eat third (within 10 days): carrots.

An Italian Hero by Andy

Once Toto realized how expensive dry cleaning service is here in the United States he just threw his stale undershorts in the trash and bought brand new pairs at the department store. He was fifty years old. For every day of his half century on this planet, no matter what the circumstances, Toto had always had a solicitous mother, grand mother, wife, maid, sister, or daughter on hand to cater to his needs. But that was back in rural Sicily. Having to do his own laundry himself was out of the question. And all of a sudden the poor fellow found himself alone in a furnished apartment in Watsonville with a pile of dirty clothes. Who could have foreseen that farm life would be so tough in California?

2. Greg and I got to know Toto's friend Ulysses first. Ulysses was Sicilian too. He had a company called Mezzogiorno Vegetable, that operated out of the Hunt's Point Terminal Market down in the Bronx. Ulysses imported specialty produce from all over the world and sold it to upscale markets in New York City. We grew chicories like radicchio and escarole on our farm, and sent hundreds of boxes a week on overnight jet flights into the Big Apple. Ulysses liked the way I got our harvest crew to produce a consistent, high quality pack, and he liked our farm's prices. But mostly, looking back on it now, I think Ulysses liked Greg.

Ulysses would call Greg from New York as his workday wound down at dawn in the Hunt's Point Market, raving in Sicilian inflected Italian and broken English. Greg would wake up to the ringing in the middle of our night, get a sense of what Ulysses wanted and scratch it out on paper. In our own foggy, grey dawn hours later on the west coast we'd interpret the order as best we could, and get it to the airport in time for a flight into J.F.K. When there were hassles, like there always are, Greg would hash it out with Ulysses. Maybe it's because Greg is a watered down Italian, or maybe it's because Greg is comfortable with high levels of chaos and ambiguity, but Ulysses came to trust us.

One night Ulysses called with a proposition. He was making a lot of money on cluster tomatoes, the kind where five or six perfectly red, ripe, firm, tomatoes make it to the consumer still joined at the stems like giant grapes. He was asking a hundred dollars per carton and they were selling like Girl Scout cookies. The quality of the tomatoes he was receiving was very high but the supplier, Ulysses's friend and business associate Salvatore, or "Toto" for short, was

having difficulties meeting the demand.

Toto's farm was near the seashore in Sicily. All the rules and quotas and fees and inspections and taxes imposed by the European Economic Community were distracting Toto from his mission and sapping his entrepreneurial spirit. Wouldn't it be better, Ulysses asked, if Toto taught Greg and I how to grow these tomatoes in precisely the correct Sicilian manner? Then we could pack these perfect tomatoes into Toto's boxes, labeled as "Prodotto d'Italia, and ship them into New York with no one the wiser, splitting the profits between ourselves without ever having to cut Europe's bureaucratic, red tapeworms in on the deal.

So tickets were purchased, planes were boarded, and there was much anticipation on the farm. The Italians were coming! For all the business we'd done with Ulysses he still only existed as a voice on the telephone. Julia prepared a meal in our home to welcome Ulysses and Salvatore and I bought an Italian/English dictionary. It turned out that Toto didn't speak Italian; he spoke Sicilian, but Toto's utter ignorance of English was a blessing. We'd hardly sat down to eat before one of my boorish American guests made an inappropriate comment about the Mafia. Ulysses broke the awkward silence with an emphatic pronouncement. "Mafia doesn't exist," he declared, as Toto looked on with a puzzled expression. "What people call Mafia is just good business."

We got down to business.

Salvatore would go back to Sicily and return with the right kind of tomato seeds. Julia and I had gotten married just a few months before and she'd moved in with me, leaving her apartment in town empty, so Toto could stay there when he got back. He'd remain in Watsonville throughout the entire tomato season, directing every step of production from planting to harvest. I would serve as intermediary between Salvatore and the crew to assure that all the work was performed to exacting Sicilian specifications. Ulysses would market the crop. We figured out the number of tomatoes to plant, we agreed on which kinds of fertilizers to buy, and we estimated the labor and shipping costs; we just forgot to plan laundry and meals.

There was a washer and dryer in Julia's apartment. Toto worked with us during the day in the fields directing me and the "Mexicani" in the proper care and maintenance of tomatoes and in the evenings he

waited in the apartment for Julia to come over and wash his underwear. Perhaps because of my faulty language skills I'd neglected to inform Salvatore that Julia was a recent U.C.S.C. Women's Studies graduate with a full-time teaching job, or discuss the full-blown implications of feminism with him. But it was meal time that proved to be almost beyond translation.

Going with Toto for a visit to the food store was a discouraging portent of hard days ahead. Watsonville's supermarkets are well stocked by North Korean standards but Albertson's had everything wrong. The eggplants were bloated, dull, and flaccid, not firm and glossy like those found in Sicily. The artichokes were huge, but overgrown, not the tender, young teardrop shaped buds that are so delightful eaten whole back in Sicily. And the fish fillets on display appeared to be leaking embalming fluid, not glistening like the silvery fresh piles of sardines in Palermo's old Vuccaria marketplace.

Taking Toto out to eat wasn't easy, either. Greg took Toto to an "Italian" restaurant but, naturally, the food was dismissed as a regrettable insult to all that is Latin. But Watsonville has lots of good Mexican restaurants. A dish of beef fajitas at Jalisco's on Main Street, for example, may not be as memorable as a fish taco on the waterfront in Loreto while quiet waves lap at the sand, but it's serviceable. Our stumpy Sicilian said that if he ever ate Mexican food again it would be after he'd died and gone to Hell. And Toto only politely pecked at his rice at Miyuki where we sat, surrounded by Watsonville's Japanese rose growers out for a night on the town with their wives. The fish was fresh, but sushi was alien to Toto's peasant sensibilities. It was beginning to look like we'd be sending a skinny Toto back to Italy.

The tomato field where we were farming was at the confluence of the San Benito and the Pajaro rivers, near the little town of San Juan Bautista. In the old Spanish days you could have heard church bells tolling the people to prayer from the Mission across the valley. One summer morning when my stomach alarm was ringing for lunchtime I considered taking Toto into San Juan for a sandwich. A best case scenario was that Salvatore would find the little, backwater town of San Juan with its old red tiled adobe buildings basking in the sun a pleasant approximation of a Mediterranean village. At the worst Toto would see the San Juan Mission as a busted down cowshed compared to the renaissance cathedrals of Italy, but I was getting deaf to Salvatore's complaints about America, anyway.

There was a chicken clucking on the sidewalk in front of the San Juan Bakery when I parked the truck, and the fragrance of fresh baked bread in the air. We entered. Along the wall to the right were shelves stacked with fresh baked breads. Toto smiled at the sight of the golden loaves, and he beamed with delight as the deli case came into view. At last, there was food he could appreciate. Maybe we weren't back home in Italy but we were getting closer. Sure, there were the inevitable indiscretions like American "cheese", and baloney of dubious provenance, but there were cheeses and salumi in that refrigerator display case that might even have been imported.

Toto became animated. He zipped back to the wall of bread and, after a focused inspection, he selected a long ciabatta. He would show us what a real sandwich was. Like Caesar claiming Gaul Toto masterfully waved an index finger to indicate which particular dry cured salami the girl behind the counter should start slicing. I gathered from what little Sicilian I'd learned that Toto wished her to slice the loaf he had selected lengthwise. Then, she was to pluck enough bread from the crust of the bottom slice to create the long narrow cavity in the loaf that would hold the of cheeses and meats. For her part, the clerk pointed with a plump, pink sausage finger at the menu board hanging behind her. "I can only make these sandwiches, Mister."

"Non, non, non." If he had wanted one of the sandwiches outlined on the menu board Salvatore would have asked, but he had in mind something special, something with a balanced blend of meats and cheeses and no, no, no, no shredded iceberg lettuce. Toto tried his best again to make his desires explicit to the clerk. She looked on, slack-jawed with disinterest, as Toto cajoled and gesticulated.

"Look, Mister. I can make you an Italian Hero," and she reached for a sweet French roll.

"Non, non, non!" Toto cried out with emphasis. His face was getting red. Things were beginning to feel awkward.

"Come on, Toto," I said. "We're not in Sicily any longer. Let the girl make her sandwich."

Salvatore couldn't understand English but he could recognize imbecilic respect for regulation and commitment to mediocrity. He tried one last time to articulate his vision for the perfect sandwich. With one hand he held the ciabatta out towards the clerk, and with the other hand he mimicked sawing the loaf

in half lengthwise. The clerk reluctantly reached for the bread. She cut the ciabatta lengthwise.

Toto leaned forward and clawed at the air with his right hand to indicate how the bottom half of the loaf should be hollowed out to accommodate the cured meats. The clerk looked right at him and then, rubber paddle in hand, and she reached for an industrial tub of mayonnaise with a rubber paddle.

"Non, non, non!" Salvatore screamed. This was too much. He vaulted over the counter into the deli work space and seized the bread knife from clerk. Her indifference was gone now. She was wide eyed with terror. Toto brandished the salami. The clerk backed out of the deli booth and scuttled for the security of the cash register. The cashier looked on with alarm. Toto flipped a switch on the slicer.

"You can't do that!" the deli girl gasped. "Insurance says you can't do that!"

Toto sliced salami and fanned the pieces out the length of the loaf like he was dealing cards. The deli girl could be squalling in Mongolian for all he cared. He inspected a mortadella and found it satisfactory.

"I don't think that little freak understands a word of English," the deli girl clucked to the cashier. Toto cut an onion into rings. The girls rolled their eyes in distress. Toto sliced cheeses. The pink tomatoes were beneath contempt but Toto rummaged around behind the counter and found an adequate virgin olive oil and a tolerable red wine vinegar. The clerks watched helplessly as Salvatore dressed the sandwich lightly with an impromptu vinaigrette.

Toto wrapped the sandwich tightly and held it out proudly like a sword. He knew that the best chef isn't the fellow with the most exclusive ingredients from around the world, but the man who can make a palatable meal out of what's available, even in the most impoverished circumstances. And considering that he was 7500 kilometers from Sicily he'd done well. He was looking forward to sharing this sandwich with us. He advanced on the counter.

The deli clerk was mortified. "I wouldn't even know what to charge," she spluttered. Toto reached into his wallet, pulled out a hundred dollar bill, and let it flutter to the counter like an autumn leaf. He strode out, the sandwich cradled in his arm like a shotgun. We enjoyed our picnic on the plaza in front of the old Mission while the bell tolled twelve. Salvatore pronounced the repast magnificent.

The sandwich turned out to be more satisfactory than the joint Sicilian/Californian tomato program. I loved the tomatoes but Toto pronounced them insipid. The problem, he said, was irremediable. Our farm wasn't close enough to the ocean. His tomatoes, next to the Mediterranean, absorbed sea salt from the air and were naturally more flavorful. It wasn't that I was too stupid to learn how to grow the best tomatoes, we were just cursed to be in California.

Toto went back to Sicily and we all breathed a sigh of relief. But with all that I've told you I don't mean to imply that Salvatore was only a wealthy, bigoted, provincial, sexist, ethnocentric peasant. Underneath a gruff husk he had a generous soul. A week after he returned to Sicily we received a care package from Palermo. Toto had sent us a note of thanks for all that we had done and a box of seeds; the correct artichokes, the right zucchinis, the appropriate fennels, and the most voluptuous eggplants. I planted it all and found a ready market. I'm still planting the varieties that Toto turned me on to. San Marzano tomatoes, anyone?

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Benefit Dinner at Desiree on Oct. 13th in SF for Louisiana Farmers

Chef Andrew Cohen's Recipes:

Andrew's Tomato Soup

The marjoram (and of course cream) make this soup world class, and very easy. Impress someone today, or make a batch and freeze it for the winter.

10# Tomatoes
1 Onion, chopped
2 ribs celery or 1 sm. Head fennel, chopped
2 T fresh chopped marjoram
1 head garlic, peeled and chopped
1 pint cream
S & P to taste

Peel and seed 10 # tomatoes. (C.A. says one easy way is to cut from stem to tip with small sharp knife then core using melon baller.) Saute onion, fennel or celery, and the marjoram for a couple/few minutes til starting to soften. Add garlic. Chop tomatoes and toss in, cooking until softened. Add 1 pint cream. Season with S & P. Use immersion blender (or regular blender in batches) to blend. Careful blending hot soup!

Enjoy.

Yummy Pasta or chicken sauce: similar to above but 1-2 pounds tomatoes, 1/2 pint cream and a grating of nutmeg. Can be reduced to a nice consistency for pasta or chicken. Tarragon is a nice addition.

An Andrew C. Carrot Recipe:

1 Bunch Carrots; In butter saute 1T. minced shallot, and 1t. each of curry and cinnamon powders to soften shallot and "bloom" the spices(they should become fragrant), add carrots cut into coins and saute briefly to color them. Add water to cover by an inch, put the top on the pan and cook til carrots are done to your taste- al dente or soft. Remove carrots from pan and cook liquid down to form a glaze. Add carrots back to pan to coat with sauce, sprinkle with salt and white pepper if you have it, and serve.

Make a vinaigrette with cider vinegar, brown sugar, thyme and bay. Bring it to a boil and pour it on thinly sliced carrot coins. Allow to wilt a little and then chill. Serve as a "pickle" or as a salad component. With, say, red leaf lettuce and cubes of Bacon avocado.

And some general sushi bar salad dressing ideas from him:

1/4C rice vinegar
1/4C water
1/8C sugar
(this is your basic sunomono dressing. sort of...) add a couple drops of soy sauce and 1/4t toasted sesame oil, and 1/4C neutral flavored oil such as grapeseed or canola, and blend.
Toss cubes of avocado and some cooked, chilled shrimp with the dressing, and mound over shredded red leaf lettuce. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and daikon sprouts(kaiware).
Take the basic "sunomono" dressing and add 2T of light miso and blend with a little OJ for a nice dressing to go with cold poached chicken(add ginger to the poaching liquid)and avo salad.
Heat the basic dressing and add peanut butter(1T) and 1/2t sesame oil to it. Heating makes it easier to incorporate the peanut butter.
This makes a sort of "Bon-Bon" chicken

dressing that is excellent with shrimp and avo...

Chef Andrew's Fennel Ideas:

Here's something I like to have around the house. I use it as a snack on toasts, or I top entrees with it. I call it Fennel Jam or Fennel Marmalade, depending on how big the pieces are when it's done. For this dish, you want to cook it in pan that will hold the vegetables close, so they will stew. I prefer a medium sized "chefs pan"- the one with the bowl shape- as this allows for a smaller cooking area as the jam cooks down

1 large fennel bulb halved, cored, and sliced or chopped 1/8-1/4"

1 small onion halved through the stem and sliced 1/8"

1 or 2 cloves of garlic, peeled and minced

1/2 T fennel fronds, minced

2 t toasted fennel seed powder(toast the seeds in a dry skillet until they give off a pleasant licorice aroma and grind using a coffee mill or mortar and pestle. This powder is useful for many dishes such as fish, pork, scallops, a pinch in pasta sauce)

S&P

Stock, white wine, or water to come just below the top of the vegetables

1 oz. of pastis(Pernod, Ricard, anisette) optional
olive oil

Heat oil in pan over medium-high. When hot but not smoking, add onions and stir to coat. Reduce heat to medium and cook to caramelize the onions. Add garlic and cook until you smell the garlic. Add the fennel and toss well. Add the pastis if you are using it, S&P, and the fennel powder. Cook for a minute or two, tossing all the while. Put a top on the pan and cook for five minutes or so, being careful only to color the fennel, not burn it.

When the fennel has some golden color, add enough liquid (stock, wine, water or a combination) to come just below the top of the vegetables. Turn down the heat to a simmer, cover, and cook until everything is soft and "jam"-like. Remove the lid and turn up the heat a little. Cook to add a little more color and

reduce any liquid to a syrup. Add the fennel tops and mix in. Taste and adjust the seasonings.

Sometimes I add a little sugar or a little vinegar such as a white balsamic to adjust the taste. This "jam" keeps well in the refrigerator for 5 days. I use this on toasts as I said, but I like to use it on entrees as well. Use the fennel powder on fish such as halibut, or on pork chops or chicken breasts. Use the fennel jam as a topping as is or thin it out with a little stock for a sauce. Using tapenade as a rub for fish or a meat or mushrooms, sear the item then top with the fennel. The tang of the olives and capers go well with the smoothness and the mild sweetness of the fennel.

A salad that is both beautiful to look at and tastes good is watermelon radish and greens with a light sesame-amazu dressing.

2 oz unseasoned rice vinegar

2 oz water

1-2 T sugar (to your taste)

1 t toasted sesame oil

Juice from 1/2" of ginger (grate the ginger on a fine grater and squeeze)

S&P

Neutral flavored oil such as grapeseed or canola- roughly 2 oz

In a bowl add the vinegar, water, sugar and sesame oil and whisk like mad to put the sugar into suspension (it should disappear). Add the ginger juice a bit at a time and taste. You don't want heat, just ginger flavor. Add S&P to taste. Whisk in the oil in a steady stream to emulsify. This will look incomplete as there is not enough oil to fully emulsify the dressing (this is called a "slack" dressing in some kitchens), but there should just be enough oil to help the dressing cling to the salad and to give a smooth mouth feel.

The salad is made by lightly peeling the watermelon radish and, if you have a mandolin, using the medium blade to shred it. If you don't have the mandolin or fixed blade slicer, slice the radish into 1/8" slices, stack these and slice again into slivers. If you must use a grater, do so carefully and check to see if the radish is

"bleeding" and the colors running together. Set these in a non-reactive bowl and dress with a little of the dressing. Assemble the greens- I like young mizuna, young arugula(as long as it's not too "hot"), various cresses, mache, and micro-greens or sprouts. Toss in a bowl with some dressing, just enough to coat, and mound on a plate or bowl. Scatter radish strips over. Garnish with black and white sesame seeds and a pinch of Maldon salt (an English salt with large flat flakes that has a clean, light taste.). The emeralds and the pale pinks are striking on the plate, and the flavors go so well. This can be enhanced with thin slices of kumquat, and further still with cooked shrimp. If you have a jar of sushi ginger (gari) in the 'fridge, use some of the liquid from the gari to marinate the shrimp. This is stunning to look at and better to eat.

Sweet Hot Pepper Thing.

This is another "jam" that resulted from a tour du fridge when I had the grill going. I grilled the peppers and still had some the next day. This resulted:

1/2 a medium brown onion, peeled and diced
4 or 5 medium sweet peppers, grilled, peeled and seeded.
3-4 Hungarian peppers (how hot do you like it?), as above
2-3 medium sized garlic cloves, peeled and minced
4 San Marzano tomatoes, halved through the stem and seeded
S&P
Oil

Cut the peppers into smallish bits, around 1/4"-1/2". Cut the tomatoes into 1/4" cubes. Over medium heat, saute the onions in the oil until soft. Add the peppers and the garlic, season with S&P, tossing to mix. Reduce the heat and cook over low heat to meld the flavors. Add the tomatoes and cook to render the tomatoes and produce the "jam" like consistency. Taste for seasonings. A little bit of vinegar such as sherry or red wine may be just the thing to bring the flavors into focus. This is one of those things I

keep in a jar in the refrigerator for any reason. On eggs, a sandwich, rice, a piece of fish.

Bok Choy and shiitakes.

Cut the leaves from the stalks of the bok choy, and chop the stalks and sliver the leaves. Stem and quarter shiitakes, chop a clove or three of garlic, and grate and squeeze 1 1/2" of ginger for juice. Have some hoisin sauce handy along with some stock or water. In oil, saute the mushrooms until tender and fragrant, add a little ginger juice and a shot of white wine if you have sitting around. Add a little more oil and saute the stalks over medium-high heat, add the ginger and the garlic, toss a couple times, add the leaves and toss. Add in a little liquid to help steam the leaves. Just as they are done, add a spoonful or two of the hoisin sauce, and a little water to make a sauce. Sprinkle with pepper and taste. It shouldn't need salt (the hoisin should do it), but if it does, this is the time. Serve it hot.

Recipes from Zelda:

COLD HUNAN NOODLES WITH SESAME, FENNEL AND BOK CHOY, from *Still Life With Menu*, Molly Katzen

2 to 3 stalks celery
5 to 6 stalks bok choy
5 to 6 fresh scallions
1 small fennel bulb
12 ounces thin noodles (egg or buckwheat)
1 cups sesame seeds or cashews (or combination) lightly ground in a blender
2 TBS chinese, or dark, sesame oil

2TBS peanut oil
1 to 3 medium sized cloves garlic, minced
1/2 tsp. Ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp. Ground cumin
2 to 3 tsp. Minced fresh ginger
1/4 cup rice (or white wine) vinegar
2 TBS soy sauce
1/2 tsp. Salt
Fresh ground black pepper, to taste
Slice celery on diagonal into thin strips. Remove

the leaves from bok choy and set a side. Cut the bok choy stems into pieces slightly larger than the celery strips, and combine with the celery. Slice the bok choy leaves into strips and place in a separate bowl. Slice scallions and fennel into thin strips. Group the scallions with the bok choy leaves.

Steam the celery, bok choy stems and fennel together until almost tender. Then add the bok leaves and scallions and steam for several more minutes, or until everything is just tender and bright green. Rinse immediately in very cold water and set aside in a colander to drain.

Cook the noodles in plenty of boiling water until just tender. Be very careful not to overcook).

Drain and rinse thoroughly under cold water, separating the noodles gently with your hands as you rinse them so they don't clump together.

Drain thoroughly after rinsing.

Transfer the noodles to a large bowl. Sprinkle with ground sesame seeds/cashews and drizzle with oils. Mix well . Add remaining ingredients, taking special care to sprinkle in the ground spices. Mix gently but well. Serve cold or at room temperature.

SHITAKE BOK CHOY SOUP WITH NOODLES, *Gourmet*, February 1999

Editors' note: The original recipe calls for Chinese wheat noodles, but we also like this soup made with somen (Japanese thin wheat noodles) or soba (Japanese buckwheat noodles).

1/2 lb. bok choy

1/2 lb. fresh shiitake mushrooms

6 scallions

8 g. katsuobushi (dried bonito flakes; about 2/3 cup) (I've used chicken or vegetable broth instead)

6 oz. thin Asian wheat or buckwheat noodles

Cut bok choy crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick slices. Discard stems from mushrooms and cut caps into thin slices. Cut scallions diagonally into thin slices. In a 5- to 6-quart kettle bring 6 cups water to a boil with katsuobushi and boil 1 minute. Pour stock through a fine sieve into a large bowl and discard katsuobushi. Return stock to kettle and add bok choy, mushrooms, and noodles. Simmer soup, uncovered, until noodles are tender, 2 to 5 minutes, depending on

type of noodle. Season soup with salt and pepper and stir in scallions.

Carrot tip: If the texture of cooked carrots doesn't work for you, try grating them into soup/stew etc.

BRAISED CARROTS WITH ORANGE AND LIME BUTTER

The Yellow Farmhouse Cookbook by C. Kimball

8-10 medium carrots (about 1 pound), peeled, cut in half lengthwise and then into 2-inch lengths

1 teaspoon orange zest

juice of 1 lime (or 1 lemon)

1/4 cup white wine

1/2 cup chicken stock or water

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1/2 teaspoon salt

black pepper to taste

Put all ingredients into a large non-reactive skillet and bring to a simmer. Cover and simmer until carrot pieces are tender, about 25 minutes. Remove cover, increase heat to medium-high, and stir constantly for a few minutes or until carrots are coated with a thin glaze.

ROASTED CAULIFLOWER, from Chef Andrew Cohen, frequent guest writer to the newsletter

Purple is the color of a haze or royalty. Whether the cauliflower is white or purple, the favorite recipe for flavor and simplicity here is to roast it. Cut it into bite size chunks (around 1 1/2") and lob it into a bowl. Drizzle with good olive oil or a neutral flavored oil and toss. Sprinkle with coarse salt and fresh ground pepper and put into a pre-heated 450F oven. I actually allow the cauliflower to marinate up to an hour. I like to squeeze lemon or orange juice on it. Try cinnamon, or curry, or cumin- all would be excellent, as would a little garlic. To avoid burning the bits of garlic, vigorously rub the inside of the bowl with a peeled clove of garlic, then add some oil, then the cauliflower. Cook

uncovered for a half hour or so, turning once so the cauliflower browns evenly. It is done when it still has a little crunch to it. Roasting is the best way to preserve the beautiful color of the purple variety. I have had some that got an even deeper shade as it cooked, and some has become a lovely lilac shade. Either way, it really looks great on the plate, and flavor is wonderful. Not your stinky old boiled cafeteria cauliflower.

TOMATO BRAISED CAULIFLOWER

This is an excellent side dish, but it also makes a great sauce for pasta, or when topped with shave Pecorino Romano Cheese, a delicious appetizer.

1 head cauliflower
3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 cup diced onions
4 cloves garlic, crushed
2 fresh or dried bay leaves
1 tsp. crushed red pepper
Salt
2 cups cored, peeled and seeded, tomatoes or one 16 oz can Italian plum tomatoes, drained and seeded.

Pull off the cauliflower leaves and cut out the core. Break the cauliflower head into florets no larger than 1.5". In a large casserole, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onions and garlic and cook, stirring until wilted, about 4 minutes. Add the cauliflower, bay leaves, and peperoncino and season lightly with salt. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile, crush the tomatoes by hand. Add the tomatoes to the cauliflower and cook, covered, until the cauliflower is very tender and most of the liquid has been absorbed, about another 30 minutes. Check the cauliflower after 20 minutes. There should be just enough liquid to lightly coat it. If there is more, finish cooking the cauliflower uncovered. Season with salt and serve hot.

FUSILLI WITH OLIVES AND CAULIFLOWER, From Lorenza's Pasta, Lorenza De' Medici, submitted by CSA member Stephanie Wigton

Salt
1 pound fusilli (looks like small corkscrews)
1 pound cauliflower, broken into bite sized florets with the stalks sliced
1/2 c. extra virgin olive oil
4 garlic cloves, chopped
1/2 c. pitted black Greek olives
4 tbsp capers in brine, rinsed
4 anchovy fillets in olive oil
2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf Italian parsley

Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil. Add the salt, fusilli and cauliflower florets and stalks and cook until the pasta is al dente and the cauliflower is tender.

Meanwhile, heat half the oil in a large frying pan. Add the garlic and fry, stirring often, for about 3 minutes until translucent. Add the olives, capers, anchovies, the rest of the oil and parsley and continue cooking, stirring for 2 more minutes until the anchovies break down and dissolve.

Drain the pasta and add to the pan with about 1/2 c. of the cooking water. Cook, stirring, for a couple of minutes until all the flavours blend. Transfer to a warmed shallow serving dish and serve immediately.

Stephanie comments: "I sprinkled freshly shaved parmesan cheese on top and with some ground pepper it was simply delicious!"

SAUTEED-BRAISED CAULIFLOWER from the *Victory Garden Cookbook*, Marian Morash

Slice or dice cauliflower, or cut into 1/4-1/2-inch flowerets. Melt a combination of butter and oil (or either one) and toss cauliflower in it until coated. Cover pan, reduce heat to low, and cook for 3-5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Sprinkle with herbs and additional butter, if desired, and serve. *With Garlic & Oil*: Add a garlic clove when tossing the cauliflower in oil.

With Tomatoes: To larger flowerets, add your favorite tomato sauce or peeled, seeded and chopped tomatoes combined with fresh herbs such as basil. Cover and simmer as above until

flowerets are barely tender.

In Vinegar: Saute in oil with garlic, add some red or white wine vinegar, then cover and cook until cauliflower is tender.

With Peppers: Toss the cauliflower in butter or oil with strips of red and green pepper. Cover, and cook until tender.

With Olives: Add black olives or large green olives stuffed with pimiento.

With Cream: Toss cauliflower in butter and coat with heavy cream. Cover pan and cook until cauliflower is tender. Uncover, and reduce cream so it just coats the cauliflower. Sprinkle with lemon juice; season with salt and pepper.

With Nuts: Saute cauliflower in butter, cover pan, and braise until barely tender. Uncover, add toasted almonds, walnuts, or pistachio nuts, saute over high heat for 1 minute.

With Capers or Anchovies: After sauteing in butter or oil, toss in capers or anchovies and cook for 1 minute before serving.

Fennel, Tomato and Feta Salad, *Gourmet*,
April 2002

2 medium fennel bulbs
4 plum tomatoes, seeded and thinly sliced lengthwise
2 teaspoons drained bottled capers
1/3 cup crumbled feta (1 1/2 oz)
1/2 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
1 to 1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (to taste)
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Trim fennel stalks flush with bulb and discard stalks. Quarter bulbs lengthwise, then cut lengthwise into paper-thin slices (with mandoline or other adjustable-blade slicer, if available). Toss fennel with remaining ingredients in a large bowl. **Cooks' note:** Salad can be made 1 hour ahead. Makes 6 servings.

FENNEL MASHED POTATOES, *Gourmet*,
November 1998

2 1/2 pounds boiling potatoes
1 1/2 pounds fennel bulbs including fronds (sometimes called anise; about 2 medium)
1 cup whole milk
2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

Peel and quarter potatoes. In a kettle cover potatoes with salted cold water by 2 inches and simmer until very tender, about 30 minutes. While potatoes are simmering, trim fennel stalks flush with bulbs, reserving fronds and discarding stalks. Halve bulb and discard core. Cut bulbs into 1/4-inch-thick slices. Chop reserved fronds and in a large saucepan poach sliced fennel and three fourths fronds in milk at a bare simmer, covered, until very tender, about 30 minutes. Drain potatoes in a colander and transfer to a large bowl.

In a blender purée fennel mixture until smooth (use caution when blending hot liquids). Add fennel purée to potatoes and mash with a potato masher. Season potatoes with salt and pepper. Potatoes may be made 1 day ahead and chilled, covered. Reheat potatoes, covered, in a 350°F. oven about 30 minutes. Serve potatoes drizzled with oil and sprinkled with remaining fennel fronds.

Serves 6.

FENNEL AND RADISH SALAD, from *More Vegetables Please*, Janet Fletcher

Slice a fennel bulb paper thin, toss with some sliced radishes, some minced chives or sliced red onion, and a mustard vinaigrette. Goes well with cold pork sandwiches.

FENNEL AND CHEESE FOR DESSERT,
from *Victory Garden Cookbook* by M. Morash

Fennel bulbs
One excellent cheese, such as gorgonzola or a creamy goat cheese
cruet of good-quality olive oil
salt and pepper

Wash and trim fennel bulbs. If small, cut in

half; quarter larger ones. Serve with wedges of cheese and pass the oil, salt, and pepper.

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SHORTCUT CAESAR SALAD, from SF

Chronicle

1/4 cup mayonnaise

2 TBSP extra virgin olive oil

1 TBSP fresh lemon juice

1 1/2 tsp fish sauce, or more to taste

1 small garlic clove, minced to a paste

freshly ground black pepper

1 pound romaine, in bite-size pieces

3 TBSP freshly grated Parmesan cheese

croutons

Put the mayonnaise in a small bowl and slowly whisk in the olive oil, lemon juice, fish sauce and garlic. Add several grinds of black pepper. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

Toss the romaine with enough of the dressing to coat the leaves nicely. Add the Parmesan and croutons and toss again. Serve immediately.

Old School New England Fish dressing from my late Grandma Carter's kitchen, from CSA member Matt Wall

1/4 cup tartar sauce or mayonnaise (to taste)

1TBS fresh thyme

1TBS scallions

1 tsp capers

1 tsp parsley (if Tartar sauce doesn't have parsley, or if using mayo) dash of pepper

Finely mince thyme, scallions, parsley, mash in diced capers, whisk everything together in tartar or mayo. Three grinds of the pepper mill if you want pepper. Chill, then serve on (or as a side dressing to) poached white fish (cod is traditional; Grandma was from Cape Cod) or with fishcakes, usually w/ lemon wedges, always with sprigs of parsley as a garnish and new potatoes (w/ fresh dill butter if in season) as the side. Serves 2

Two Small Farms