

### **In your box this week**

Viking Purple Potatoes, Tomatoes, Garlic OR Broccoli, Cucumbers, Thyme, Strawberries, Salad OR Romaine Hearts

**What I'd do with the box** from Chef Andrew Cohen:

Hmmm, purple-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.

Another technique I use is to cut it into small pieces and toss it into a pre-heated, oiled pan to brown up a bit. Pour in some water and let it steam away, repeating this until the cauliflower is just getting tender. Then I usually toss in some left-over grains(this is usually a combo of bulgur, rice, quinoa, spelt...), something green and leafy, onions, garlic, left-over black beans

or lentils, and finish cooking it. Seasoning of choice for me on this mess is usually cumin, coriander, and oregano. And garlic. I use this instead of bread under my poached eggs for breakfast. Or alone, with some cheese melted on top. This same pan cooking method is good alone or you can sprinkle a little cheese and some bread crumbs tossed a little oil on top and can throw it in a hot oven or under a broiler to melt/brown the topping for a side dish.

Cauliflower soup- saute some onions til very soft, add in cauliflower, brown just a little and cook with a little stock or water just until tender. Puree in a blender with just enough liquid to get the mass to move and puree smooth.

To complete the soup, add warm stock to the puree to thin to desired texture, then heat just until hot. Don't "cook" the soup any more or it will lose it's nice flavor and start to get that stink and taste flat. Season with nutmeg and sherry or some of the above mentioned spices. For thicker soup, use a cooked potato as thickener- steam or boil a potato on the side, peel it while hot, and rice it into the soup. If you lack a ricer, cut up the spud into small bits and add to the blender just before the cauliflower is finished pureeing. Do not puree the potato for long or it will get starchy and make your soup heavy tasting.

On with purple- For the potatoes, I'd roast them(cut into 1/4s, tossed in oil, and covered. Roast at 450F 30 min.s, uncover, and finish 15 min.s or until properly crisped) or simmer/steam them. Cut up into bite size pieces, and saute with some herbs. Top with cheddar cheese and some chopped cooked thick-sliced bacon, and thin sliced green onions, cover the pan just long enough to melt the cheese and serve. Or, skip the cheese and bacon and go with some sauteed mushrooms. Buttons will work, summer chanterelles come to mind, some reconstituted craterellus (a.k.a.Trompes de la morte, or black trumpets) sauteed in butter would also go well with Purple Vikings.

Hmmm- cucumbers. A cold salad with noodles and cucumbers sounds appealing to me at the moment. Cold soba noodles with cucumber crescents dressed with Japanese style dressing.

Modify the amazu dressing (discussed in a past post) with a little roasted sesame seed oil or even peanut butter for a creamier texture. Toss lightly with noodle and cucumbers, and garnish with sesame seeds. To expand this- add shreds of carrot, ribbons of romaine lettuce, blanched broccoli, chopped bits of candied ginger, cold poached shrimp, maybe some shiitake mushroom, garnish with cilantro or basil shreds if using the peanut butter dressing. You could even spike the dressing with a touch of chili. Good for hot nights. Go Scandinavian; cucumbers and noodles with a cool dill and yogurt dressing(if you have aquavit, you add a dash to the dressing), dressed up with some cold-smoked salmon. Mediterranean? Wheat noodles, cucumber, olives, feta bits, lemon yogurt dressing with mint or oregano... Make it a light dinner with shrimp, left over lemon chicken/tofu, left over grilled lamb. You probably get the idea by now.

Cucumbers, tomatoes, and garlic all in one box? That says gazpacho- the famous cold Spanish soup from Andalusia. Apparently, the word from which "gazpacho" is derived is Arabic for "soaked bread", and many versions use bread as a thickener. Many use green bell peppers as well, but I am not a huge fan of them so I'd leave them out of this. Finely mince a cucumber, half an onion, a clove or two of garlic(although this garlic will not have the germ, or green sprout, if you do use garlic that contains this, always remove it. It tastes harsh and can cause grief to the stomach such as bloating.), and keep the ingredients separated. Seed and dice a couple of tomatoes. In a blender, puree all the garlic, 2/3rds the tomato, half the onion, and half the cucumber. Taste, add salt and pepper to taste and add a little red wine or sherry vinegar to brighten the flavors. Add a small amount of fruity olive oil to give the puree a smooth feel. Don't blend too much or the soup will start to cook from the heat of the machine. Cover well and chill in the freezer or refrigerator just to cool down. Add the rest of the minced and diced things at service and garnish with some seasoned(garlic and/or herbs)cROUTONS. Some folks add ice cubes to their gazpacho to cool it, and I have even seen a recipe where ice was

added to the blender to cool things down. For my tastes, it just thins things out too much. Some folks like their gazpacho chunkier(almost a salsa fresca), and some puree almost all of it, so experiment and see what you like for your self.

### **Tomato Upick Days** at Mariquita Farm

Three August Thursdays and one Saturday we'll open up Mariquita Farm in Hollister for tomato upicking. 50 cents a pound, current csa members get their first 5 pounds free. Attendance is free to all. No dogs, please. Kids are welcome, of course! Thursday times = 8am - 1:30pm and Saturday's time is from 9am to 4pm.

More Information

### **Tomato Liquor- Not the kind you think!** By Chef Andrew Cohen

editors note: Chef Andrew is writing recipes up for us more often than not and we LOVE it! He wrote the below 'article' about tomato liquor, and Andy and I liked it so much, we decided it could be this week's 'article'. Yes, Andy G. also likes an occasional week off. He also writes every other week for the Santa Cruz Sentinel food section (look on page three or four....) And he's on KUSP every Thursday and Friday at 7:49am and again at 5pm for exactly 90 seconds. Below: chef Andrew talks TOMATOES:

I call this a "liquor" because it seems almost a distillation of tomato flavor. This has so many uses- I use it to boost flavor in dishes with lesser quality tomatoes, as a sauce on pasta, as a clear soup base, reduced down it can be used as a glaze. It can be used to sweeten a dish, or can substitute for tomatoes in a way. I used it in a ratatouille like dish when the first eggplant and summer squash appeared at market and I didn't want to wait for tomato season. Making this also gives the perfect opportunity to make Tomato Oil, another fun way to work tomato flavor into, or to boost the tomato flavor of a dish. Because the tomatoes are roasted the oil will pick up a

smokey, roasted flavor that is really appealing.

This is best made using a larger quantity of tomatoes. If you try to do it with less than 5# you will probably burn the tomatoes and the liquor will evaporate faster than you can retrieve it. 10# to 15# of tomatoes is about right. The amount of liquor may seem a lot at first, but it freezes really well and can also(should) be reduced down. When making this, make sure you use a non-reactive pan that is at least 3" deep to avoid spillage. Nice, ripe tomatoes, or even over-ripe and splitting, tomatoes are best for this endeavor.

### **Andrew's Tomato "Liquor" Instructions**

Pre-heat oven to 450F.

In a pan(roasting pan, Pyrex cake rectangle, etc) at least 3" deep place cleaned tomatoes so they are close, but not packed in. They can be stacked, but air should be able to circulate. Poke tomatoes with a knife tip or fork, just once or twice if the tomatoes have really tight skin. Put pan in oven and cook until tomatoes begin to give off liquid. If this seems to be happening at a snails pace, turn up the heat, but stand by and don't burn the tomatoes. As the liquid fills the pan, pour off the liquid into a receptacle such as a steel bowl or glass measuring cup(large volume). You might want to do this over a baking sheet until you get the hang of doing this without spilling. You can also use a ladle until the very end when you want all of the liquid out of the pan.

Keep pouring off the liquor until the tomatoes have given off all their liquid.

Now it is time to make the tomato oil if you wish. If not, skip this and dispose of your tomato pulp.

Return tomatoes to the oven and cook until most of the liquid remaining has evaporated and the tomato pulp is starting to color and give off a roasted aroma. Pull the pan from the oven and pour at least a 1/2 liter of olive oil over the pulp. Lower the heat in the oven to "warm" and allow

the oil to steep for 2 hours. You do not want the oil to cook(no bubbling), just to stay warm and to infuse with the tomato flavor. Taste the oil, it should have a distinct tomato flavor- if not, allow some more time(1 hour). At this point, pour the oil through a fine mesh strainer lined into a non-reactive vessel. Allow to cool and settle overnight, then decant again. I usually run it through the strainer lined with an old clean piece of cloth such as an old napkin, and just before the oil with liquid still in it pours out I stop. Put the oil into a bottle that can be capped tightly and store in the refrigerator. As the level of oil decreases, pour the oil into a smaller bottle to keep the volume of air in the bottle to a minimum to prevent oxidation.

I have used the oil on salads, drizzled on grilled slices of bread with sauteed arugula, on cold shrimp salads. It also features in a dish I do with seared halibut dusted with toasted ground cumin. I drizzle cumin and tomato oils around the fish and garnish with a little salsa. The oil works as a real quick pasta sauce, too.

Now, back to the tomato "liquor"- Pour the liquor through a fine meshed sieve into another non-reactive vessel, the line the sieve with a clean cloth or some paper towels and strain again. The liquor is now ready to be used. It can be frozen as is, but I always reduce a quantity of it as well. This saves time as I use the reduced glaze for sauce, as a sweetener, or a booster in a dish that needs more tomato or that could use a touch of acid to bring flavors into line. I have used the unreduced liquor as a cold soup base. I rubbed soup bowls with a garlic clove, added some chopped tomato and cooked shrimp, basil shreds, and the liquor. A little salt and pepper and a spoon of sour cream and had a quick tour du fridge starter on a hot evening. To make a soup with more depth, saute some carrot, celery, onion, and a little garlic with some herbs, and add the tomato liquor and simmer over very low heat to extract the vegetable flavors. Strain and use the liquor as above.

The liquor freezes well, and I do not recommend storing it in the refrigerator for any length of time longer than a couple days. The flavor drops

off with exposure to air and the liquor is prone to rapid spoilage.

## Recipes

a bit of cucumber lore:

The fruit of this plant is harvested in the immature stage, 50 to 70 days after planting. As a crop, they rank 12th in cash value among all vegetables grown in the United States. In the United States, each person consumes more than four pounds of them each year. It is just as popular in northern and eastern European cookery as in Mediterranean countries. Stuffed ones are popular in Poland. Columbus brought the first ones to the New World, planting them in Haiti in 1494. There are reddish brown, green, long, egg shaped, smooth and rough skinned varieties.

### Israeli Salad

Some of your subscribers may want to know about the Israeli Salad. It's a great way to use up little bits of vegetables and herbs.

I put in mine, carrots, cukes, tomatoes, radishes, green onions. Any vegetable that does not need to be cooked. I don't like raw squash but you could add that. The trick is to cut in small uniform pieces. Toss with 2 T good olive oil, fresh lemon, salt, pepper, cut up parsley. I make this salad towards the end of the Co-op week It is the summer version of soup to use up vegetables. Very simple and easy. This is a very popular salad eaten all over Israel, and at every meal, even breakfast! -Lisa R.

Thyme:

### POTATO AND GARLIC SOUP WITH HERBS

Here is our adaptation of aigo bouido, the restorative Provençal garlic soup. Simmering the garlic tames its bite. A green salad and crusty bread round out the meal.

2 tablespoons olive oil (preferably extra-virgin)  
1 cup chopped onion

4 cups canned low-salt chicken broth or

vegetable broth  
2 pounds russet potatoes, peeled, cut into 1/2-inch pieces  
6 large garlic cloves, peeled  
1 bay leaf  
1/4 cup minced chives or green onions  
2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme or 3/4 teaspoon dried

Heat olive oil in heavy large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion, sauté until golden, about 10 minutes. Add broth, potatoes, garlic and bay leaf; bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover and simmer until potatoes are very tender, about 20 minutes. Cool slightly. Discard bay leaf. Coarsely puree soup in blender 1 cup at a time, about 20 seconds per batch (do not overprocess). Return soup to same saucepan. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Simmer until heated through. Ladle soup into bowls. Sprinkle with chives and thyme and serve.

Serves 4. Bon Appétit May 1995

Where are all the recipes? Andrew wrote quite a bit above, and there isn't much that's especially challenging, so I think I'll take my kids to the beach and give you below my link to some recipe websites for more thorough searching. See you next week. -Julia

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