

Table of Contents:

- 1) In your box this week
- 2) Donkey Milk
- 3) Upick Tomatoes on Sept 16th
- 4) Organic Cotton Two Small Farms T-Shirts!
- 5) Photos and What to eat first
- 6) Recipes
- 7) Veggie Notes
- 8) Unsubscribe
- 9) Two Small Farms Contact Information

This Week's Newsletter as a pdf: (click on August 30th)
<http://www.twosmallfarms.com/Newsletters.pdf/newsletter.index.html>

1) In your box this week: Leeks, Strawberries, Romaine Lettuce, A Brassica (either cauliflower or romanesco), Tomatoes plus one spicy pepper, Basil OR Parsley, Mystery

This week's vegetable list: I try to have it updated by Monday night, sometimes by Mon. am:
<http://www.twosmallfarms.com/CSAinfo/thisweekslist.html>

Keep everything BUT the tomatoes in the fridge: tomatoes get mushy and don't need to be refrigerated. If they get nicked/cut eat them up within a day.

2) Prima Donkey

Some men reach middle age and react by spending lots of money on sports cars and trophy wives. Not me. For my forty seventh birthday, I stayed with my wife and bought myself a pregnant donkey. A perfect mid-life crisis car like the Porsche 911 Turbo sells for one hundred twenty two thousand, nine hundred dollars M.S.R.P, but my donkey only cost me one hundred and fifty dollars. By my calculation I saved myself one hundred twenty two thousand, seven hundred and fifty dollars, plus a whole lot of alimony, but people still question my judgement. "What's the donkey good for?" they ask.

I raise livestock for meat, so I have to stay grounded and practical, but I have my sentimental side too, and I tell my sceptics that I want a pet I'm not going to eat. My donkey is five years old. Her name is Prima. If she's unhappy with me because I haven't groomed her thoroughly enough, or taken her on a walk recently, or given her some grass hay the second she honked, then she'll turn

her back on me and refuse to let me pet her. Since she can be a prima donna it's hard not to call her "Prima donkey". A well cared for donkey can live to be forty five years old, which means that if I treat myself as well as I treat her I could enjoy an asinine friendship until I'm eighty seven years old.

Don Miguel dropped by my house the other evening to buy one of my goats to eat weeds in his back yard and give milk.. Don Miguel is a Michoacano country boy of the old school and he's made his living in Mexico and in the States as a cook. He took one look at Prima and told me he's got a great recipe for burro meat that's marinated with chile, then sun dried. He also said that there's no better cheese on earth than the queso fresco his mother makes back on his home ranch with leche de burra. My donkey's safe from the stew pot, but I was curious about the milk. Primavera is due to foal in a month or so. I check her teats every day for any evidence that she's bagging up so that the delivery doesn't catch me unprepared. I went on line for info.

It turns out that donkey milk has been touted for its medicinal properties since Hippocrates. Cleopatra kept a stable of three hundred milking donkeys and bathed in their milk to keep her skin lustrous and her complexion perfect. A lactating donkey mare only gives about a quart and a half of milk per milking so a person would have to drain a large herd of asses just to provide enough liquid to immerse even a slender queen in a modest sized tub. What a donkey mare lacks in productive capacity she makes up for in quality; donkey milk is high in unsaturated fatty acids, sugars, and vitamins A, B1, B2, B6, C, D, and E. These nutritive qualities are what make donkey milk such an effective therapy for aging skin. Cleopatra was on to something. Reportedly no other animal's milk is as close in its chemical makeup to a woman's breast milk as a donkey mare's is.

Outside of rural hideaways like Don Miguel's mother's ranch in the mountains of Michoacan modern people have largely forgotten about the virtues of donkey milk but I read that in the late 19th century in Paris, France, there was a clinic, the Hôpital des Enfants Assistés, where motherless babies were given milk from a she-ass in lieu of suckling from a wet nurse. Actually they did suckle from an equine wet nurse; the nurses at the institution would actually hold the infant under the belly of the donkey mare and let it drink straight from the tap. Donkey milk was also lauded as a luxury drink to be appreciated for its own sake. It was "a la mode" for the tony Parisian set of that time to have donkey milk delivered to their doorstep. Forget bottles; a peasant would drive a herd of donkeys up to the house and milk the mares to order. The French have always had more of a flair than us for celebrating fine food. Can you imagine a herd of milking donkeys being herded through the streets of Pacific Heights in San Francisco, then corraled in a knot out in front of Danielle Steele's home and braying to be milked? What a piquant "Slow Food moment" that would be!

For those of you who may be tempted to try donkey milk be aware that it can be difficult to come by. The Hindustan Times reported last month that there's a fellow by the name of Allimuthu who sells fresh squeezed donkey milk by the side of the Turaiyur-Athur road in the province of Perambalur. If you're not driving the blue highways of southern India there's always the world

wide web. A woman in Belgium milks five hundred donkey mares at the Asinerie du Pays des Collines. In France donkey milk is available from the Asinerie de Feillet, and of course, in Mexico, there's Don Miguel's mother's donkey.

It looks like most American consumers are going to have to wait, but if I do the work, I could be enjoying the health benefits of fresh donkey milk as soon as my mare starts lactating. True, with only one mare to milk I won't be able to actually bathe my whole aging body in donkey milk but I could stand in the pail and see how high the milk rises. You'll be able to tell if I do this; I'll be the old guy driving a donkey down the slow lane while my aging peers race past in their cherry red Porsche Turbos. I'll get even. The wind will muss up their comb-overs while I....., well, I'll be as sexy as Cleopatra from the ankles down.

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A photo of Prima with Andy and Clara the Cat:

<http://www.mariquita.com/images/photogallery/primacat.JPG>

Prima looking at the photographer:

<http://www.mariquita.com/images/photogallery/prima1.JPG>

3) The Next Confirmed Tomato Upick is Saturday, September 16th, at Mariquita Farm from 9am to 3pm. We will have a potluck lunch that day for those that want to eat together and sample each others food. Those that just want to pick tomatoes: no problem. Many came out this last Saturday and had a great time and picked lots of tomatoes.

Come earlier for cooler picking conditions. T-shirts will be available at the Upick. Also: a possible upick on Sept. 9th as well: check the following weblink:

<http://www.mariquita.com/events/Events.upcoming.html>

4) Two Small Farms T-shirts! 100% organic cotton. \$12.95 each (this includes tax but not shipping). We can ship via USPS or sell at events. We're not able to deliver with CSA boxes, the details to too many, sorry about that! For photos and more details:

<http://www.twosmallfarms.com/Gifts/T-shirts-TSF.html>

5) A few photos

romanesco: (cook it like cauliflower)

<http://www.mariquita.com/images/photogallery/broccoliromanesco.jpg>

parsley:

<http://www.mariquita.com/images/photogallery/parsley.jpg>

basil:

<http://www.mariquita.com/images/photogallery/basilgeno.jpg>

leeks:

<http://www.mariquita.com/images/photogallery/leekslarge.JPG>

Photo Gallery:

<http://www.mariquita.com/images/photogallery/index.html>

6) Recipes from Julia

“Cauliflower is nothing but a cabbage with a college education.” -Mark Twain

Breakfast Tomatoes

Broil halved or sliced tomatoes under the broiler (sprinkle with garlic and olive oil if you like) until they are pleasantly browned. Serve with eggs or just eat on a piece of toast. Season with S and P to your liking. A great way to get a vegetable serving into your first meal of the day.

Adapted from Ismail Merchant, "Indian Cuisine"

Tomato Braised Cauliflower

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

1 head cauliflower (@ 2.5 lbs)

3 Tbs extra virgin olive oil

1 cup diced onions

4 garlic cloves, 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

SAUTEED-BRAISED CAULIFLOWER

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.

Soft Polenta with Leeks

3 tablespoons butter
3 large leeks (white and pale green parts only), thinly sliced
2 1/4 cups (or more) water
2 cups canned chicken broth
1 bay leaf
1 cup polenta*

1/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

*Sold at Italian markets, natural foods stores and some supermarkets. If unavailable, substitute 1 cup regular yellow cornmeal, and cook leek-cornmeal mixture for about 15 minutes rather than 35 minutes.

Melt 2 tablespoons butter in heavy large saucepan over medium heat. Add leeks; stir to coat. Cover and cook until leeks soften, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes. Add 2 1/4 cups water, broth and bay leaf. Bring to boil. Gradually whisk in polenta. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook until mixture is thick and creamy, stirring often and thinning with more water if necessary, about 35 minutes.

Remove pan from heat. Discard bay leaf. Stir in remaining 1 tablespoon butter and Parmesan cheese. Season polenta to taste with salt and pepper. Divide polenta among plates.

Serves 4.

VEGETABLE AND LEEK SOUP

1 cup finely chopped white and pale green part of leek, washed well
1 garlic clove, minced
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 pound spinach, cauliflower, broccoli, snow peas, turnips, fava beans, green beans, etc. (pick one)
1 1/4 cups chicken broth
1/3 cup sour cream

In a saucepan cook the leek and the garlic in the butter over moderately low heat, stirring, until the leek is softened, add the chosen vegetable, the broth, and 1/2 cup water, and simmer the mixture,

covered, until the vegetable is tender. Puree two thirds of the mixture in a blender until it is very smooth, stir the puree into the mixture remaining in the pan, and whisk in the sour cream and salt and pepper to taste. Cook the soup over moderately low heat until it is heated through, but do not let it boil.

Tahini Dressing from Salad by Amy Nathan

1/2 Cup safflower oil
1/2 pound soft tofu
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
generous 1/4 cup tahini (julia says: use toasted for a richer flavor)
1 garlic clove, minced
1 scallion, chopped
2 Tablespoons tamari (soy sauce)
3/8 cup water
1/2 teaspoon salt

Combine all ingredients in a blender or food processor. (Julia says: I like to use my immersion blender in a tall jar). Adjust the thickness to your liking by adding water. This stores well if covered.

CLASSIC RED TABLE SALSA

From Cook's illustrated website

Makes about 5 cups

If you cannot find chipotle peppers (dried, smoked jalapeños), you can substitute any minced, fresh chile pepper of your choice.

3 large, very ripe tomatoes (about 2 pounds), diced small
1/2 cup tomato juice
1 small chipotle pepper, minced (about 2 tablespoons)
1 medium red onion, diced small
1 medium garlic clove, minced
1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves
1/2 cup juice from 4 medium limes
Salt

Mix all ingredients, including salt to taste, in medium bowl. Cover and refrigerate to blend flavors, at least 1 hour or up to 5 days.

Julia's Red Late Summer Salsa

4 pounds red ripe tomatoes, small dice

2-6 jalapeño or other hot chiles, small dice (can grill them first, amount depends on how hot you want the salsa)

1 medium onion, small dice

2 garlic cloves, minced

1 bunch cilantro, chopped

juice from 6 limes or small lemons

salt

Mix and eat. Make adaptations as your kitchen availability suggests: leave out the cilantro, try Italian parsley, not traditional but the green is nice if you don't have cilantro. Any kind of lemon or lime can work, or you can even leave that out. Only use fresh citrus fruits, no bottled lemon juice. Salt to taste. Some like black pepper in their salsa too. You can also add chopped mango, or peach, or avocado, or corn..... the variations are endless.

Tomates Concassées

This is the French term for chopped, seeded, and peeled tomatoes, I think. Andy likes to make a fresh pasta sauce this time of year and call it "Tomates Concassées" because he read about it in a book years ago. He basically makes a 'salsa' but with the Italian red sauce ingredients, all raw but the onions and garlic and of course the noodles. (sorry, Roxanne.) I've seen him make it many times, below is my approximation:

3 pounds ripe tomatoes, any color

1 pound onions

3 garlic cloves

some olive oil

1 bunch of basil

juice from one large or two small lemons

salt and pepper to taste

1. Bring a saucepan of water to boil. Rinse the tomatoes, and make a 1-3 inch shallow slit in the bottom of each one. Lower the tomatoes, 2 or 3 at a time, depending on their size, into the boiling saucepan of water. They should only bathe for *5* seconds, no longer. Remove to a plate, rinse in cool water if you like. When all the tomatoes are done, remove peels and seeds, and roughly chop.

(I personally admit to skipping the final cool rinse and fully admit to skipping the seed removal, no one has complained about my own sauce yet.)

2. Peel and chop onions and garlic. Saute the onions in a little oil over a medium heat in a wide largish soup pan for a few minutes, then add the garlic. Take care not to burn either. Remove from heat when both are soft and won't be raw and crunchy in the sauce.

3. Wash and chop basil, then mix it with the cooled onion mixture, and the tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. (Andy is very liberal with the pepper....)

Toss with just cooked noodles, and eat.

Strawberries:

<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/strawberries.html>

Tomato Recipes:

<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/tomatoes.html>

Leeks:

<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/leeks.html>

Lettuce:

<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/lettuce.html>

Cauliflower:

<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/cauliflower.html>

Basil:

<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/basil.html>

Parsley:

<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/parsley.html>

Summer Squash:

<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/summer%20squash.html>

recipe index:

<http://www.mariquita.com/recipes/index.html>

7) Veggie Notes

From High Ground: Flowers, Leeks, Strawberries, Cauliflower/Romanesco, Lettuce

From Mariquita: Tomatoes, Mystery, Basil, Parsley, Peppers

To see a picture of the 2 farm families:

<http://www.mariquita.com/images/photogallery/twosmallfarmers.hg.jpg>

8) Unsubscribe/Subscribe From/To This Newsletter

<http://www.mariquita.com/news/newsletter.signup.html>

9) Two Small Farms Contact Information

Two Small Farms

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