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### 1) In Your Box this Week

Yellow Squash

Tomatoes

Cucumbers

Sweet Peppers

Hot Peppers

Eggplant

Basil

Okra

Butternut Squash

Baby Bok Choy

Sweet Potatoes - ?

This list is subject to change depending on availability and quality of crops on harvest day. You'll find the most accurate packing list on the homepage of our [website](#).

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## 2) Farm News

- Our Fall Open House and Potluck is coming up soon – we're planning on Saturday Oct 18<sup>th</sup>, 4pm till dark. We'll be sending out an official Evite invitation soon to collect RSVPs. We'll have some live music and lots of good potluck food. Last time the food was so delicious we've been thinking about running a contest this time where everyone can vote for their favorite dishes. The barrel races at the Spring potluck were a big hit so we're scheming up some new games and kid's events including a family fun run around the farm, nothing to be sneezed at as the fields now extend fully a half mile from the farm entrance!
- The change in the weather is wonderful news – this morning we started the day in long sleeves, and still haven't removed them! The cool weather does however mean the passing of wonderful things such as melons...oh melons, we will miss you! The melon photos included here were taken a couple weeks ago by workshare Tahila Mintz.





- The farm is very much in seasonal transition. Planting new fall crops and pulling out old summer crops – these tasks occupy equal amounts of time right now. Perhaps you’ve noticed the colorful new varieties of eggplant that have started appearing in your boxes – Louisiana Long Green, Snowy, and Dancer (that’s the magenta one) – these are the first harvest of the second round of eggplants that we planted back in July. Soon we’ll also have a plethora of greens, a last round of summer squashes and then the root veggies!



- We’re getting three-phase power installed at the farm in the next couple weeks for our new well.

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### 3) Pumpkins and Winter Squash

*Elaine DiRico*

[Note: though written originally for pumpkins, both of the recipes below work well with butternut squash, or other winter squashes.]

As much as I love zucchini and the other mild and gentle summer squashes, the hardcore pumpkin and butternut squashes with their more assertive flavors are my favorites. They have come to symbolize Halloween, and are probably used more often for decoration than as a food, which is a shame. They are so easy to split in half, sprinkle with salt and pepper or perhaps honey and nutmeg and roast. As easy as opening that can of prepared pumpkin, and you get the pumpkin seeds to roast as well. Mashed and served like potatoes, or pureed in a pie or soup, the deep color is a giveaway to the abundance of beta-carotene, a powerful antioxidant. Here are a couple of other things I like to do with the puree:

#### **Pumpkin Marmalade**

(makes 6 half pint jars and this recipe halves well)

4 cups pumpkin puree

1 cup orange marmalade

1 cup honey

1 Tablespoon freshly grated ginger

1/4 cup fresh squeezed lime juice

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

In a heavy saucepan, combine all of the ingredients but the lime juice and bring slowly to a boil over medium low heat, stirring often. Remove from the heat, stir in the lime juice and either process by canning or put in a serving bowl to eat within the week.

This is wonderful with pork, and also nice to take along for a pot luck, with some good dark bread and maybe some cheddar cheese. It is also good as a ravioli filling, with a creamy Parmesan sauce. (Just use the wonton wrappers out of the freezer for the ravioli skins- much easier than all that rolling. A beaten egg painted along the edges of the dough to seal it and a quick poach in salted boiling water and you have dinner.)

The natural sweetness and depth of flavor make pumpkin a wonderful and nutritious dessert base, as we are reminded every Thanksgiving. This is a lighter change from the pie and cheesecake tradition:

#### **Pumpkin Flan**

3/4 cup sugar

1 1/2 cup pumpkin puree

1 cup evaporated milk (can be skim)

1/4 cup packed brown sugar

2 beaten eggs

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 cup raisins or other dried fruit

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg

1/4 teaspoon ground mace

Preheat the oven to 325°.

In a small, heavy saucepan, heat the sugar over medium heat, stirring often, until the sugar turns an amber brown. Pour into three 8 oz ovenproof ramekins or one large (1 qt) ovenproof pan. The sugar will harden immediately, but don't worry. It will soften when baked and stay liquid. Do not add water to the sugar, and be very careful with the hot sugar. There is a reason why pastry chefs call this stuff 'napalm.'

Meanwhile, beat the pumpkin, milk, brown sugar, eggs and salt for two or three minutes with an electric mixer, or by hand until it is beginning to feel lighter and fluffy. Mix the raisins and spices in a small bowl. Pour the pumpkin mixture equally into the ramekins, and sprinkle the spice and fruit mixture over them.

Have a kettle of water boiling. Place the ramekins in a roasting pan, and place on a rack in the middle of the preheated oven. Pour the boiling water into the roasting pan until it is halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Bake for 40- 60 minutes, depending on the size pans you are using. They are done when the center just barely jiggles when you tap the roasting pan, and when a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

Good served with whipped cream of course, but I like to put a plate over the top of the cooled custard pan, and quickly invert it, so the caramel is on top and puddling around the sides. More dried fruit, or toasted pumpkin seeds are a nice garnish.

*Elaine DiRico is a long-time CSA member and food writer in Austin. Email her with questions and recipe requests at [Elaine@dirico.com](mailto:Elaine@dirico.com)*

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#### 4) Vegetable Storage Tips

We aim to grow and package our vegetables to maintain the highest taste and nutritional quality possible. However, once they've left the farm it's up to you to keep them fresh and nutritious. There's no refrigeration at the CSA drop points so it's good to pick up your box as early as possible. Here are some additional tips on how to store this week's share:

## Fridge

- **Peppers** and **Cucumbers** should be stored in the crisper, and washed in cold water before use.
- **Summer Squash** will last 4-7 days in plastic bags in the crisper.
- **Okra** will keep for only two or three days. Refrigerate unwashed, dry okra pods in the vegetable crisper, loosely wrapped in perforated plastic bags. Wet pods will quickly mold and become slimy. When the ridges and tips of the pod start to turn dark, use it or lose it. Once it starts to darken, okra will quickly deteriorate.

## Counter

- **Basil** keeps best in a perforated bag kept at around 60°F, it will keep for 10 to 14 days. In contrast, refrigerated basil lasts only two or three days. You can also store stems in a vase in your kitchen, close at hand for cooking. As with flower bouquets, change the water in the vase every few days.
- **Eggplant** and **Winter Squash** are best kept moderately cool, no lower than 50 degrees. A cool, dry dark place is best- on the counter, in a cupboard or basket. Eggplant are delicate and do not store well, so try to use them within a few days.
- **Tomatoes** should be kept at room temperature, but can be refrigerated if very ripe. Leaving them in the paper bag will help them ripen quickly; refrigeration will cause them to lose flavor. Also, be sure to store your tomatoes away from your eggplants, or other sensitive produce such as bananas, as the tomatoes will make them ripen faster.

Checkout our [storage tips](#) on our website for a more complete guide, and of course, feel free to contact us with any questions.

## Long-term Storage

*"The time will come when winter will ask you what you were doing all summer." - Henry Clay*

[The National Center for Home Food Preservation](#) is your guide for how to can, freeze, dry, pickle or ferment just about anything.

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## 5) Recipes

Continuing on the winter squash theme, here's what I'm cooking today, with the first taste of cool, fall weather:

### **Santa Fe Stew**

*From Mollie Katzen's Vegetable Heaven*

2 T olive oil

3 C chopped onion

2 t salt

2 t cumin seeds

½ t cinnamon

4-5 T garlic, minced

2 medium Anaheim chiles and 2 medium Poblano chiles, minced (or 2 bell peppers and a 7oz can of diced green chiles)

2 T chili powder

2 C water

1 medium (2 lbs) butternut squash (I used a mix of butternut and kabocha squash), peeled, seeded and chopped (about 5 cups)

4-5 T lime juice (or to taste)

1 ½ to 3 C cooked Pinto beans (or 1-2 15 oz cans, rinsed and drained)

Heat oil in a large deep skillet or Dutch oven. Add onion, 1 t salt, cumin and cinnamon. Cook over very low heat until onion is soft (about 10 min), stirring frequently.

Stir in garlic, chiles and chili powder. Cover and cook for about 5 min over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally. Add the water, cover and cook another 15 minutes.

Stir in squash, 1t salt and lime juice. Cover and cook over low heat for 15 min longer, or until squash is perfectly tender, but not mushy.

Gently stir in the beans, cover and cook for only about 5 more min. Taste and add more lime juice if needed.

Serve hot with warm corn tortillas. Optional toppings: sour cream, toasted pumpkin or squash seeds, minced cilantro or parsley.

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### **Stir-fried Baby Bok Choy**

Baby Bok Choy (approx 1 bunch per person)

Grated fresh Ginger

2 T soy sauce

1 t sugar, or to taste

¼ t salt, or to taste

¼ cup water

A few drops sesame oil

1 1/2 T vegetable oil for stir-frying

Wash the baby bok choy and drain. Separate the stalks and leaves. Cut the stalk diagonally and cut the leaves across.

Heat wok and add oil. When oil is ready, add ginger and stir-fry briefly, for about 30 seconds, until the ginger is aromatic. Add the bok choy, adding the stalks first, and then the leaves. Stir in the soy sauce, sugar, and salt, and stir-fry on high heat for 1 minute.

Add the water, cover the wok and simmer for about 2 minutes. Stir in the sesame oil and serve.

We would love to share your recipes too! Please email your favorites to [Carolyn@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com](mailto:Carolyn@johnsonsbackyardgarden.com)

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7) Johnson's Backyard Garden Contact Information

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*Parting Shot: Intern Andrew stands with our farm truck which has faithfully done deliveries for three years; soon it will be relieved of these duties and replaced by an enclosed van devoted solely to deliveries.*