

TUV HASHAVUA

TUV
HA'ARETZ
CSA 2015

BEST OF THE WEEK



MANY THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS !

6/30 [Week #6 – B]

5-8pm Pick-up

Ariella Nelson

Gayla Jacobson

Hye-Kyung Neal

1pm Truck Unloading

Valeria Vavassori-Chen

Joanna Gallai

Mary Beth Bentaha

8pm Unclaimed Shares

Lenny Fuchs

7/7 [Week #7 – A]

5-8pm Pick-up

Stella Xu

Manisha Shah-Balargon

Ariela Fryman

1pm Truck Unloading

Laurie Duke

Jessica Keane

Babitha Dhuler

8pm Unclaimed Shares

**Volunteer needed
– please contact
coordinator by
email:**

IWARCH@GMAIL.COM

TUV HA'ARETZ CSA at the
Forest Hills Jewish Center
106-06 Queens Blvd.
Forest Hills, NY 11375
tuv@fhjc.org

- **Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA:**
foresthilstuvcsa.com
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- **Golden Earthworm Farm:**
goldenearthworm.com
- **FHJC:** www.fhjc.org
- **Hazon:** www.hazon.org

Food Memories: The Meaning of Mangoes

Dianne Jacob, luckypeach.com

Editors' Note: Some of the most powerful articles we've run have been written by CSA members about food and how it can elicit strong memories of family, friends, and events. If you have memories you'd like to share – either as a comment or as an article – please send them in for publication to Judy Trupin: TRUPINJET@GMAIL.COM. Articles on other subjects and ideas are also welcome!

In the 1960s, when I was a kid, the only tropical fruits in Vancouver supermarkets were bananas, pineapples, and coconuts. My immigrant dad bought them all, but longed for the bright yellow mangoes he had grown up with in Shanghai.

He'd tried growing his own Asian produce in our cold and rainy climate, with small successes. The melons and chilies didn't take, Chinese chives did. On snowy winter mornings, I ventured into our backyard to pick them for scrambled eggs. In summer my dad peeled long, pale-green stalks of celtuce and left them in the fridge, bobbing in ice water, for a snack that was sweet like tender lettuce and juicy like celery, without the stringiness. But there was no mango anywhere.

My parents came to Canada in 1949, refugees escaping the coming Communist revolution, which didn't look kindly upon foreigners or the bourgeoisie. Born in Shanghai to Iraqi Jews who had moved there from India, they'd lived a privileged life, with servants, parties, and Paris fashions. They were married in 1947, and Mao's army advanced a couple years later. My parents got out fast, on the USS General W. H. Gordon, bound for North America. They managed to bring an entire household with them, including bolts of fabric, furniture, clothing, and a silver Art Deco tea set decorated with bamboo leaves.

They were surrounded by their stuff, but not by their family. Every day in Vancouver, my parents grieved for their past. One of Dad's brothers and his wife had settled in an apartment nearby. The rest of the family—their mothers and thirteen siblings—emigrated to California, New York, London, and Israel.

My parents balanced their new life while clinging to the old one. On weekend mornings, they wore floor-length brocade dressing gowns with Chinese slippers. They used chopsticks and ate on their twenty-four-piece phoenix- and dragon-patterned dinnerware. My mother made sticky rice wrapped and tied in lotus leaves (*zong zi*), star anise-scented broth with vermicelli noodles and shiitake mushrooms, and sautéed tofu puffs (*da woo*, in the Shanghai dialect) with soybean and mung bean sprouts.

While they liked Vancouver's Chinatown, my parents could not communicate with the people there, who hailed from South China and mostly spoke Cantonese. Mom and Dad knew only the Shanghai dialect, a different language. The foods were different, too. Longing for the *da ping* flatbread she loved, my mom contented herself with *you tiao*, Chinese crullers she could find locally. Once a month we went to the Marco Polo, a fancy restaurant in Chinatown, for dinner, and ordered dishes my parents had never eaten in Shanghai—like crab with garlic and black bean sauce, and sweet and sour spareribs. On those evenings, we were just another white family in a Chinese restaurant.

And just as they were not the right kind of Chinese, neither were my parents the right kind of Jews. At that time, Vancouver's community of around seven thousand Jews was mostly Eastern European, with their own customs, dialects,

and foods like brisket and gefilte fish, unknown to my parents. The other Jews spoke English and Yiddish, while my parents peppered their English with words in Arabic and Shanghai dialect. At the synagogues, the prayers were different, too. Life was never going to be like it was in Shanghai.

One day when I was eight or nine years old, my dad and his brother burst in the front door with a wooden crate hoisted above their shoulders. They had convinced the owner of a produce store in Chinatown to import a box of mangoes at great expense—the sweet, soft Philippine variety (aka Carabao, Manila Super, Champagne, or Honey mango), the sweetest mango in the world. My younger sister and I followed my dad and uncle as they carried the crate to the basement, long overcoats flapping. They pried off the wooden top with a crowbar, and then dug through flurries of crinkly foreign newsprint, checking each fruit for ripeness or damage. My sister and I craned our necks and tiptoed closer, but dad told us to stand back.

“Don’t touch these,” he told us sternly, holding up a pale yellow fruit he had unwrapped to inspect. “The mangoes will ripen, and only I can check to see when they are ready. If I find out you’ve handled them, you’ll get it.”

My sister and I waited for this miracle of ripening fruit. Every day, we opened the door to the basement, turning the squeaky brass knob quietly to avoid my father’s wrath. We sniffed the scented air, dazzled by the increasingly fragrant cloud of tropical musk. We crept down the stairs and inched up to the box in the dark, fearful of arousing suspicion by turning on the lights. I dug through the paper, picking up a mango to admire its smooth, shiny skin. It might have been solid gold, for all we knew. I inhaled its scent, trying to anticipate its taste and texture. I was stuck on the literalness of it, too young to understand what this taste memory would mean to my parents.

After a week of anticipation, dad called my aunt and uncle to say that enough mangoes were ripe. My mother covered the dining room table with sheets of newspaper. As soon as our relatives arrived, we all sat down. My father came in with armfuls of the fruit and spread them on the table. Kidney-shaped, wrinkled, and some dotted with black spots, the mangos filled the room with a scent that drove us all mad with desire.

While my sister and I watched, my parents and aunt and uncle sliced the mangoes on either side of the pits, exposing their golden-orange flesh and handing halves to my sister and me. We dipped in with our teaspoons and ate the silky fruits one after another, the flesh like a tangy, honeyed pineapple. Following my elders, I sucked the buttery meat from around the pits, wasting nothing. My parents allowed my sister and me to eat as many as we wanted.

Finally, we all leaned back contentedly, covered with sticky juice. Life was not full of perfect moments when I was a child, but this was one of them, eating blazing yellow fruit against the backdrop of gray and overcast Vancouver.



Dianne Jacob is the author of the multiple award-winning book, Will Write for Food: The Complete Guide to Writing Cookbooks, Blogs, Reviews, Memoir, and More. She started her blog (diannej.com) in 2009 as a way to update her book, which features an extensive chapter on food blogging.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX??

Red Beets, Carrots, Radicchio, Kohlrabi, Scallions, Zucchini FRUIT: Blueberries, Rhubarb

UKRANIAN-STYLE VEGETARIAN BORSCHT

Sarah | gidgeflibbit.blogspot.com | Serves 4-8

- 3 medium to large beets (or 6 small to medium)
- 2 tsp vegetable oil
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 large zucchini, coarsely cubed or grated
- 3 stalks celery, coarsely chopped
- 3 medium carrots, coarsely chopped
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup canned diced tomato and liquid
- ½ small head cabbage.
- 1 15 oz. can large lima beans (aka butter beans), rinsed and drained

Seasonings and Garnishes (add to taste):

- 1/3 cup white vinegar
- 2 tsp salt
- freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- ½ tsp Tabasco
- scallions, thinly sliced
- sour cream, or vegan sour cream substitute
- fresh dill, chopped

Preheat oven to 350F. Trim stalks and taproot from beets. Wash the beets and wrap in aluminum foil. Bake about 1 hour, until beets are tender and skin separates easily from the beet. Let cool. Chop or grate beets coarsely.

In a large pot, heat vegetable oil. Saute garlic, onion, carrots, zucchini, and celery until onions are just translucent. Add the beets and sauté another minute or so.

Add vegetable broth, water, and tomato. While mixture heats to a boil, slice the cabbage into ½ inch wide strips and add to pot. Simmer covered for 45 - 60 minutes, until everything is tender. Just before the soup is done, add the lima beans.

Add seasonings, to taste. (The vinegar is really what makes this soup.) Serve garnished with sour cream and fresh dill.

DRIVERS WANTED!

We need volunteers for some unclaimed shares delivery slots:

- 07/07 (A-week)
- 09/01 (A-week)
- 10/27 (A-week)

If you have access to a car, please email me directly with the date(s) you can help.

IWARCH@GMAIL.COM

Even if you have already volunteered, you can still take one of these shifts. Thank you!