



The Tuv Ha'aretz CSA at the Forest Hills Jewish Center

September 4, 2012 | 17 Elul, 5772

TUV HASHAVUA — BEST OF THE WEEK

See this newsletter online: groups.yahoo.com/group/TuvForAllFHJC – in "Files > 2012 Season"

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

THIS WEEK:

Rita Ash
Aaron Bodzin
Sara Paige

FOOD BANK DELIVERY:

Than Hansen

NEXT WEEK:

David Greenbaum
Jennifer Jacobson
Kazumi Ferguson

FOOD BANK DELIVERY:

Laurie Rubel



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Due to the holidays, four regular Tuesday pick-ups are moved to other days in their weeks:

9/20 Thursday
9/24 Monday
10/4 Thursday
10/11 Thursday

D.I.Y. or D.I. Why? by Sara of diaryofamidwesternhousewife.com

Canning, and preserving vegetables in general, has been sort of an obsession of mine since my husband and I made the decision to buy a full share from a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) a few years ago. We do our best to eat everything that we receive, but some weeks I find that we have a lot of produce left over. In fact, during our first season as participants in the CSA, I ended up throwing a lot of food (and, as a result, money) away because we just didn't eat it in time. So, my goal after that first season was to use or preserve everything we in our weekly CSA box, and throw nothing away. As a result, I've spent many a morning in my kitchen, blanching and shocking my leftover veggies to prepare them for freezing and happily, our chest freezer is rapidly filling up with a stockpile of produce for us to tap into during the off-season.

Last September, I decided that I would give canning tomatoes a shot. Freezing tomatoes is a quick and easy option and it certainly helps prolong the life of your produce, but canned tomatoes can be stored for much longer (like, years) and I have found that they taste fresher than frozen tomatoes.

Now, canning is a long process that requires time, attention, and patience. You have to prep the vegetables by cutting or peeling them. In some cases, you have to go through a second step of cooking them down. You have to sterilize the jars, lids, and rings you'll use to store the vegetables. Then, you have to put the prepared produce into the jars and process them in a canner. And when you think you're finished, the jars have to sit and cool for 12 to 24 hours, to ensure they've sealed properly.

From the 45 pounds or so of whole tomatoes that we purchased, we ended up with a yield of 6 quarts. From start to finish, this canning process took about a day. A lot of that time was spent waiting – the jars spent about 18 hours cooling – but there was a lot of hands-on time, too. As I said earlier, canning is a time-intensive and labor-intensive process.

So, why did we decide to devote all of this time and money to preserving tomatoes ourselves? We can go to any grocery store and buy tomato sauce for cheap, can't we?

I did some research by going to my local store and purchasing a can of store brand "all natural" tomato sauce. The 29-ounce can I bought cost \$1.24. The sauce that we made and canned comes out to about \$3.33 a quart, making our sauce \$2.09 more expensive per quart than the store brand. So, looking at things from strictly a cost perspective, it would make more sense for a frugal family to save their time and money and just head to the market and purchase tomato sauce there.

But, in my opinion anyway, cost and convenience aren't the only factors to consider when purchasing food. The store-bought sauce ingredient list looks innocuous enough, but upon further examination, the sodium content in the sauce amounts to a whopping 280mg, which is 12% of your daily value... and that's in just 1/4 cup of sauce. Our ingredient list? Tomatoes and water. There's no unnecessary sodium, no additives or preservatives. The sauce we made is better for us than the stuff from the store.

Our family likes to support local growers. Our tomato sauce was made from tomatoes grown at a local family farm. There's value in knowing where your food comes from, especially during times like these when there are stories almost daily about food recalls and people getting sick and dying from food-borne illnesses. Also, if you look at this from an environmental perspective, the tomatoes used in our sauce traveled less than 100 miles to get to us, which limits carbon emissions.

I also believe strongly that there is value in making food preparation a family affair. Kids should know how the food that they eat is made. They should know the work that goes in to it. Our 2-year-old son took a real interest in watching us can tomatoes. He helped us sort the tomatoes, handed them to us to be quartered, and then asked a zillion questions about what we were doing throughout the entire process. It was a fun learning experience for him and when we use our sauce, it'll be cool to see his reaction when we remind him that he helped us make it.

The things that I mention here can't necessarily be quantified with a price but when you take them all together, it makes more sense for my family to take the time and go through this process ourselves rather than opt for what's cheaper and more convenient.

Sara lives with her husband and two adorable children, and blogs: diaryofamidwesternhousewife.com. This article is adapted and extracted from a guest post at chicago.frugalisticmom.com

THIS WEEK'S BOX:

Green Beans
Sungold Cherry
Tomatoes
Red Beets
Red Tomatoes
Acorn Squash
Garlic

FRUIT SHARE:

Apples:
Gala (Red / Yellow)
Gravenstein (Green)

HERB SHARE:

Rosemary
Sage

Roasted Potatoes & Cherry Tomatoes

Eric, eatlikenoone.com

Unpeeled red skin potatoes (cut into bite sized pieces)
Whole cherry tomatoes
Olive oil
Chopped garlic (I used about 3 cloves)
Chopped basil
Kosher salt

Combine all the ingredients in your favorite baking dish. I suggest you line it with parchment paper, which makes clean up so much easier. Tomatoes contain a lot of sugar, so they can stick to your pans something fierce. Make sure to mix well when you add your seasonings, so that they are evenly distributed.

Bake in a 375 degree oven for about 45-60 minutes, or until the potatoes are nice and soft. I just poke one with a fork to see if it's tender enough.

FEATURED RECIPES:

Acorn Squash and Honey Pies *marthastewart.com / Serves 4 x 5-inch pies*

3 small acorn squash, (about 3 pounds)
1 tsp salt
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
3/4 tsp ground ginger
4 large eggs, plus one large egg yolk
1/2 cup plus 1 tbsp milk
3/4 cup honey
Cornmeal Pie Dough (see below)
All-purpose flour, for dusting
Vegetable-oil cooking spray

Cut squash in half lengthwise; remove seeds. Set a steamer rack inside a large pot with 2 inches of simmering water, and steam squash until tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Scrape flesh from the shells of the cooled squash, and puree in the large bowl of a food processor until smooth. Add salt, cinnamon, and ginger. Add eggs, 1/2 cup milk, and honey. Pulse until combined.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out one disk of dough 1/8 inch thick. Drape over pie pan, trimming edges to fit rim of pan. Create decorative edge as desired. Repeat with remaining dough and other pans. Mix egg yolk and remaining milk; brush over surface of dough.

Heat oven to 425 degrees. Divide filling among pie crusts. Transfer pies to lower rack in oven, and bake for 10 minutes. Lower oven temperature to 350 degrees, and bake until filling is barely set, 25 to 30 minutes more; it will continue to cook as it cools. If crusts get too dark before the custard is done, make a tent with aluminum foil around crust. Transfer pies to wire rack to cool. Serve cold or at room temperature.



Cornmeal Pie Dough

1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup yellow cornmeal, preferably stoneground
1/2 cup sugar
1 tsp salt
8 tbsp (1 stick) unsalted butter, chilled and cut into small pieces
2 large egg yolks

In large bowl, mix together flour, cornmeal, sugar, and salt. Using your fingers, mix in butter until crumbly. In a small bowl, combine egg yolks and 3 tablespoons ice water. Add egg-yolk mixture to flour mixture. Using a fork, mix quickly and lightly. Knead dough lightly in bowl until dough holds together; add up to 1 tablespoon ice water if dry. Divide dough into four equal balls. Press each ball into a disk; wrap in plastic. Chill until firm, about 30 minutes.

TUV HA'ARETZ at the Forest Hills Jewish Center

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