



“ If cooking central to human identity, biology, and culture, I stands to reason that the decline of cooking in our time would have serious effects for modern life, and so it has”
- Michael Pollan, Cooked

News from the Farm

We had a wonderful week on the farm with lots of help and lots of big fall weeding tasks completed! The warm weather brought bumper crops of cucumbers, tomatoes and zucchini and the peppers are starting to redden which is earlier than ever. Our canning tomatoes are also coming in strong. We will post an update with expected u-pick times in the coming weeks. Our shitake mushrooms also reacted to last week's 40 degree night and thinking it was fall had a flush. We included them in the fullshare boxes and expect to have the in later fall boxes at least once.

This is a very good time to take on pickling and small preservation projects. We have large amounts of cucumbers that can be ordered for pickling (most are larger but do well for chips) but you have plenty in your box for some small projects as well!

In other important news we go over an inch of rain in the Wednesday night storms. This was very important for the fall crops. We are still irrigating since the last 2 months have brought about 8 inches less rain than we would have liked.

Seems like summer is zooming by. It is Kat's sister's wedding this weekend at the farm so we are working on getting ready for that as well as preparing for the farmers market, Friday night pizza. Kat goes back to teaching part-time in 2 weeks as well and she is in her last trimester of pregnancy which means we are adjusting physical work a bit and starting to prepare more for the arrival of our third baby!

Have a delicious week - Kat, Tony, Riley, and Ted

In Your Box

- Zucchini and/or summer squash
- Cucumbers – smooth, slicing and “English”/Asian varieties.
- Tomatoes – heirlooms and beefsteaks.
- Cherry tomatoes – red, orange, pink and more!
- Green, purple, or red peppers
- Carrots
- Onions
- Rainbow Swiss Chard
- Shitake mushrooms (fulls only)

Next Week's Best Guess:

tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, eggplant, salsa packs with tomatillos, peppers, snap beans, lettuce, carrots, apples

Pizzas of the week – Midsummer Nightshade: Roasted eggplant, peppers, tomatoes and basil with or without pork sausage; Summer greens goddess- a three herb and kale pesto sauce topped with blue cheese and zucchini and sausage; 5 veggie: zucchini, tomatoes, peppers, onion, garlic.

Kat's Kitchen

Summer frittata! The recipe below is based on swiss chard. You can add a few cups of other vegetables that in our opinion only add to the goodness. To disguise things more grate veggies like carrots and zucchini and dice tomatoes; to highlight the veggies cut into rounds. Ingredients- 1 bunch swiss chard, 4 Tbs olive oil, 1 small onion thinly sliced, salt and fresh ground pepper, 6 large eggs, 4 cloves of garlic chopped finely, ¼ cup grated hard cheese like parmesan (but feta and some softer cheeses also work), pinch of cayenne. Preheat oven to 350, cut char stems into ¼ inch slices and coarsely chop leave. In a large frying pan sauté onion in 2 tbs of oil, add chard stems and sauté for 4 minutes, at chopped leave and cook until wilted about 2 minutes. In a large bowl beat together eggs, cheese and garlic and then season with salt, peppers and cayenne. Drain chard/onion moisture so it is not too soupy, transfer to a oven proof frying pan, add remaining oil and egg and cook a few minutes until eggs start to set. Transfer to the oven to bake for 7-10 minutes. The more egg and other veggies you add the longer it will need to bake. Our large baking pans cooked in 45 minutes but contained 1.5 dozen eggs!

Cucumbers a few tips and recipes! Most cucumber recipes are for marinated salads. We have given these lots of attention this year and we eat them nightly with tomatoes. Cucumbers can also be cooked or added to cooked dishes at the end to add a crisp texture, as in stir fry dishes. We do love them grilled as well. Here is a nice example of how they can be cooked themselves.

Baked Cucumbers in Cream – 1.5 Tabs red wine vinegar, 1 tsp salt, ¼ tsp sugar or honey, 4-5 cucumbers peeled, halved lengthwise, seeds removed, cut into 1 inch slices, 2 Tbs buter, 1 scallion or ¼ onion chopped, 1 cup cream (coconut milk can be used too), 3 tbs chopped herbs like basil or mint, salt and black pepper to taste. Preheat the oven to 375. Mix vinegar, salt, sugar and add cucumbers. Set aside to marinate for 20-30 minutes. Drain slices and add to a shallow baking dish. Pour melted butter and onion over them and bake stirring occasionally for about 45 minutes. While cooking heat cream in small pot until it comes to a light bowl and reduce until it becomes ½ cup (about 20 minutes) add herbs and steep for 2-3 minutes. Pour cream over cooked cucumbers.

Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation by Michael Pollan

A book review by Kat Becker

Cooked follows many of Micheal Pollan's "foodie" books that illuminate ideas that range from issues surrounding health and industrial food production, to the intersections of food and human culture. In *Cooked* Pollan is not introducing new themes as he did in *Omnivore's Dilemma* but rather takes on a basic two part thesis – 1) people would be healthier if they cooked more, and 2) our culture, communities, land and bodies would flourish more if we were in touch with the basic techniques for transforming meats, milk, vegetables and grains into our foods rather than leaving it in the hand of multinational corporations.

Pollan implies and supports quite well, the idea that we have been taught overtime that cooking is too hard, time consuming, and dangerous for regular folk, thus taking away our own control of our meals, family time, community gathering, health and much more. In essence giving more control to a narrow number of food companies is not in our collective or individual interest. His answer, as with most of his writing, is that we need to learn back skills, but more importantly that doing so is really not too big of a deal.

The book is organized thematically around sections that look at smoke and liquid to transform meats, fermentation of grains and vegetables and dairy. Each section takes a journalistic and pop-historical/anthropological look at traditional food preparation that has been central to development, sustenance and health in human cultures across the world. He follows gurus or people who possess skill and fame in each section looking at North Carolina Barbeque, "bread monks" who avoid both yeast and refined flour, fermentation teachers, beer makers, and the many ordinary people who are enthralled by the ideas. He also takes the practices seriously trialing all sorts of techniques at a smaller scale in his own kitchen. He critiques corporate food as it is related to health and culture but does not give it the type of attention it is given in *Omnivore's Dilemma*. It is a central component to his thesis but most of the book is more about commonality of traditional food cultures globally, than anything else.

As a farmer, baker, omnivore and eater I appreciated this book on many levels. I generally dislike Pollan's writing style which is often repetitive but aside for the stylistic annoyances his stories and ideas are extremely compelling. At times I did ask myself if it was just that he was reinforcing and adding to larger ideas that I already had, or in fact if it was the ideas that were most interesting. I am guessing it is a combination of the two.

I have to say that at this time of year, peak of production, *Cooked* hits home more than it might in winter. The sections on fermented vegetables, grain and meat are clearly influencing my daily practices, conversations and ideas. I think this book appeals to a diverse audience but is even more compelling for those of us who do cook. It also makes things like fermented pickles, whole wheat bread baking, whole pig (or part of an animal) grilling seem like second nature rather than obscure trends. Indeed his ideas that many of these preparation methods are tied to who we are as a culture and as individuals, and thus, once practiced seem like second nature, seems realistic to me. I think many practical things can be implemented from his book and associated critique but I do not think the transition to cooking is as simple as he makes it seem. I personally have time to invest in food and value cooking but many people, even if they give up their 2 hours a day of Facebook time, do not. Also eating whole wheat bread, fermented pickles and smoked meats can be tasty but also a difficult transition for people who have eaten food based around a lot of salt, fats, and sugar over time.

I recommend *Cooked* wholeheartedly but do not think a hard cover version needs to adorn everyone's personal bookshelf. The resource list on all the practical techniques discussed in the book is perhaps its best long term asset as well! The ideas are interesting, his stories are compelling, but for me what comes down to in the end is how I can literally make new food from the ideas contained in the book