



# FRESH FROM THE FARM

Farm Share Newsletter

Week "A": 11 of 14

*Summer Shares*

Aug 25 - 27, 2020



## WEEK #11 - JOY OF GOOD FOOD!

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Unboxing Your Offerings

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Recipes and Ideas

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Get To Know TOMATOES

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How to Keep Your Children's Immune Systems Strong This School Year - by Audrey Butler

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Out at the Farm...

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*"You don't have to cook fancy or complicated masterpieces – just good food from fresh ingredients."*

- Julia Child

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## SUMMER WEEK #11 - THE JOY OF GOOD FOOD

Not too long after Mason and I cleaned out our cupboards and started our real food journey in 2009, we were visiting family down in Arizona. My sister suggested a restaurant one day saying, "You guys are going to love this place!"

And we did so much, we're *still* talking about it over a decade later! We haven't gone back to eat there again yet, but we hope to... Our first experience eating real food outside of our kitchen was at the Queen Creek Olive Mill.

It's located on an olive tree farm where they grow and press olives. The farm was started by the Rea family in the late 1990s who longed to get out of Detroit and the automobile industry and do something closer to the land as a family.

Even though we didn't know at the time we would be going a similar direction ourselves someday, we thought it was pretty cool. Before we ate, we toured the farm, saw all the trees and discovered how little we knew about olives.

The highlight of the afternoon was definitely the food! Nearly everything served at the restaurant was grown locally and organically, sourced from farmers in the surrounding areas using the same responsible growing practices that the Rea family believed in.

As mentioned, that was our first experience eating REALLY GOOD FOOD! Seriously, I can't even begin to describe how good the food was! We ordered simple sandwiches—there was nothing fancy about the restaurant or the food—yet it tasted so fresh!! It was like something we had never eaten before!

It gave us hope in the journey we were embarking on. If real food tasted that good, we reasoned, then we were definitely on the right track. What a difference from chemically-induced cravings of so much processed foods, or the bland nutrient deficient replacements that are being pushed on us.

The food we ate that day let us fully satisfied, mind, body, and spirit, just as real food does; we were truly filled and we've never forgotten about it.

And really, every meal should be that way, don't you think. ;)

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## UNBOXING YOUR OFFERINGS THIS WEEK

*\*Signifies DANGER ZONE Veggies - those items that are in danger of rotting more quickly than other items. Store in the refrigerator immediately upon returning home and plan to eat quickly, within 3 - 5 days for best results.*

\*TURNIPS ~ Add a great zip to dishes like mashed potatoes and roasted vegetables by including turnips too. They are even tasty (and crunchy) raw. Turnips can be cut into wedges and served as crudites with dip, or sliced and added to salads. Like all "Danger Zone Veggies" be sure to cut the green tops off the turnips as soon as you get home to preserve the root for a week or more. Turnip greens can be used like any green.

\*CARROTS ~ I probably don't need to tell you much about carrots except that they are a DANGER ZONE vegetable... that is, their greens need to be removed immediately when you get home so that they don't suck the moisture out of the carrot. The greens can also be eaten, in salads, in pesto's, or they can be composted if you're not up for that ;)

CUCUMBERS ~ One of the most "sensitive" vegetables... ;) Should be stored at room temperature - not in the refrigerator. Are sensitive to temperatures below 50°F. When stored at room temperature, cucumbers thrive and last longer. Stored below 50 degrees, they're prone to developing "chilling injuries," including water-soaked areas, pitting, and accelerated decay. But if you absolutely insist on chilling your cucumbers, limit it to no more than three days and eat them as soon as possible. We also suggest keeping them towards the front of the shelf, where temperatures are warmer, and off the bottom shelf, which is usually the coldest part of the fridge. One more thing to keep in mind is that cucumbers are highly sensitive to ethylene, a natural gas that causes the certain foods to ripen (and eventually spoil) very quickly. Not only should you keep your cukes on the counter, but be sure to keep them separately from bananas, tomatoes, and melons, which are all high ethylene producers.

SUMMER SQUASH / ZUCCHINI ~ Super versatile; great shredded as a raw salad, grilled with garlic, fried with a breading coating, steamed with butter and salt, or baked/roasted, or even made into "noodles". There's not too much you can't do with summer squash and zucchini! For best results, refrigerate yellow squash and zucchini, unwashed, in a plastic bag in the vegetable drawer where it will last at least up to 7 days. If you're short on fridge space, store on your counter but it's best if used then within 2 or 3 days.

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## UNBOXING YOUR OFFERINGS THIS WEEK

**BELL PEPPERS** ~ Will last approximately 1-2 weeks in the refrigerator, but can also be frozen. For best preservation of flavor and quality, store peppers in a plastic bag in the vegetable crisper of your refrigerator. To freeze for later use, slice or chop them up, place in a single layer on a cookie sheet and freeze; then promptly place the pieces in an airtight container or heavy-duty freezer bags for future use.

**HOT PEPPERS** ~ A variety of hot peppers with different flavors and heat levels. Earlier in the year they tend to be a bit more mild than later in the summer when they start changing from green to red. To enjoy the flavor without all the heat, remove the inner seeds and veins. We recommend wearing plastic or rubber gloves whenever working with hot peppers, especially for people not accustomed to them. Once you're used to handling them, you can determine if the gloves are necessary or not. Store on the counter or in the crisper drawer of your fridge. Also, the longer the peppers sit, the more heat they seem to acquire so be aware. Also, wash hands immediately after working with peppers and avoid touching your eyes or face before doing so.

**TOMATOES** ~ We try to pick them at a variety of levels of ripeness so you don't have to eat them all immediately upon returning home. Some you may want to let sit on your counter to ripen a bit for a few days before enjoying... Perfectly ripe tomatoes should be kept at room temperature on the counter away from sunlight. Make sure they're in a single layer, not touching one another, and stem side up. Consume within a couple of days for best flavor. Overripe tomatoes that are soft to touch with very red flesh are best kept in the fridge until they can be used.

**TOMATILLOS** ~ Store tomatillos for a day or two at room temperature or for up to a week wrapped loosely in plastic in the fridge. However, you store them, leave their papery husks on until you're ready to use them. The papery husks on tomatillos are pretty, but they need to be removed before cooking. Simply lift them off and discard them, twisting them off at the stem end if they're resistant. Once their husks are removed, the tomatillos underneath may feel a bit sticky. That's okay and normal. Just rinse them clean under cool running water and pat them dry. Again, don't remove their papery husks until you're ready to use them.

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## UNBOXING YOUR OFFERINGS THIS WEEK

\*ITALIKO ROSSO DANDELION GREENS ~ A new crop for us that we're loving!! All the benefits of dandelion greens that's easier to harvest! [Read more about dandelion greens here](#). I like to include them in our salads, or anytime I'm using greens, and in our green smoothies.

\*KALE ~ For a bunch of whole leaves, it's all about avoiding excess moisture. Wrap the bunch of kale in a layer of paper towels, and store in a zip-top plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper drawer. The kale should be in great shape for a week. Enjoy raw in salads, in your green smoothies, or lightly sautéed with garlic, sea salt, and olive oil.

\*SWISS CHARD ~ Use raw leaves in salads, or sauté the leaves and finely chop the stems to combine with olive oil and garlic, and add to pasta, frittata's, scrambled eggs and stir-fries. To use, rinse under cold water. Once washed, it should be wrapped in paper towels and refrigerated for up to 4 days.

PERPETUAL SPINACH ~ Actually a variety of Swiss Chard that won't go to heat during the summer yet tastes just like spinach. Has already been rinsed and spun dry so it should last longer than other greens. High in antioxidants and vitamins A, C, E, and iron so lightly cook or enjoy raw for highest retention of nutritional value. Cook quickly until spinach turns a bright green for best flavor. Use in salads, pasta, pestos, and egg dishes as well as being a favorite for green smoothies.

GREEN BEANS ~ Store unwashed fresh beans in a reusable container or plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper. Whole beans stored this way should keep for about seven days. Freezing Green Beans: Rinse your green beans in cool water and then drain. Cut the ends of the beans off and then cut the beans to whatever length you prefer. Lightly boil green beans or nibble them raw. They are also a unique addition to salads! We're so used to having them steamed or boiled, eating the raw can be a pleasant change. ;)

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## UNBOXING YOUR OFFERINGS THIS WEEK

**SUPER GREENS MIX** ~ A heartier salad green mix with "super powers." Includes lettuces plus kale, spinach, chard, and collards. Great for salads and for smoothies! Like our other mixes, it has already been rinsed and dried so it should last longer than some of your other items so plan to use this after other more fragile veggies have already been eaten.

**BASIL** ~ The ultimate summer-time herb! Basil loves the temps toasty so it doesn't make its appearance until it's hot! Besides being delicious in Italian and Thai dishes, basil is also medicinal and helps soothe upset stomachs and anxiety. Basil-icious recipes you've got to try: [Caprese Salad](#), [Basil Pesto](#), and [Thai Basil Fried Rice](#). Also, you'll notice that its' fragrance is divine so you just might want to sit and smell it too... ;)

**OREGANO** ~ Delicious added to marinara sauces for pasta and pizza, add a few leaves to your salads for flavor and added nutrition, also delicious on any roasted or grilled meat. Fresh oregano must be used quickly. Store whole stems with leaves in a glass of water with a plastic bag loosely tented over the glass. If you know you can't use it that quickly, it's so easy to dry for later use: lay out on a baking sheet to dry, turning over once or twice until dried completely. Once dried, crumble and add to a spice jar.

**MINT** ~ Like all herbs, using fresh mint in cooking can help add flavor while giving an opportunity to reduce sodium and sugar intake. I like sipping mint water throughout the spring/summer to cool me down from the inside out, or I make mint tea by letting the mint leaves and stems steep in boiling water when I need to warm up. Mint is a fun, fresh addition to smoothies and salads. Before leaving the house, you can chew on a mint leaf to freshen your breath without having to resort to gums and breath-mints that have harmful chemicals.

**THYME** ~ A delicious herbal flavor, can be used in a number of ways. Add whole or chopped to a dish at any stage of cooking. The longer they cook, however, the more flavor they'll provide. Thyme stems are fibrous and won't break down during cooking, so if using whole thyme stems, pick them out and discard before serving. If baking with thyme, remove the small individual leaves from the stem beforehand. Store fresh thyme loosely wrapped in a damp paper towel, inside a sealed plastic bag in the refrigerator, for up to two weeks. Once removed from the stem, thyme leaves will stay fresh in a small sealed container in the refrigerator for up to three days.

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## RECIPES AND IDEAS FOR YOUR FARM SHARE

# SUPERIOR TOMATO SOUP

*Growing up I hated tomato soup. Then, a few years ago, I realized that I disliked canned tomato soup. Homemade tomato soup is something all together very different. While not quite as easy as dumping a can into a pot, this soup comes together quickly and tastes like you spent much longer preparing it.*

Makes 6 to 8 servings

### *Ingredients:*

2 Tbl olive oil, divided  
1/2 lb. leeks, sliced (or substitute green onions)  
4 garlic cloves, chopped  
4 pounds tomatoes, chopped  
3 cups chicken or vegetable broth  
1/8 tsp ground black pepper  
2 Tbl minced fresh parsley  
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1 cup pine nuts  
Zest of 1 lemon

### *Directions:*

Heat a large pot over medium-large heat. Add 1 tablespoon of the oil and stir in the leeks and garlic. Cook until the green leeks are wilted, about 5 mins. Add the tomatoes, broth, and black pepper and bring the liquid to a boil.

Reduce the heat and simmer uncovered until the skins soften and slide off all the tomatoes, about 15 minutes. Stir in the basil and Parmesan. Using an immersion blender, blend the soup until smooth.

Heat a separate small saucepan over medium heat. Swirl in the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil, and add the pine nuts, parsley and lemon zest. Toast them in the pan, stirring frequently until the pine nuts turn golden brown and release a rich, nutty fragrance, 8 to 10 minutes. Serve the soup with a few spoonful's of toasted pine nuts on top.

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**GET TO KNOW**

# TOMATOES

Chances are you're probably already very familiar with tomatoes... :) They are a staple in many cuisines, and "American" food is no exception.

But did you know that tomatoes are an "intensely nutritious plant food"?! The benefits of consuming different types of fruit and vegetable are impressive, and tomatoes are no different.

Tomatoes can help protect against cancer, maintain healthy blood pressure, and reduce blood glucose in people with diabetes. Tomatoes contain key carotenoids such as lutein and lycopene. These can protect the eye against light-induced damage.

Eat more tomatoes and gain these benefits by adding them to wraps or sandwiches, sauces, or salsas. And actually, as much as we enjoy them raw, eating them cooked or stewed can boost the availability of key nutrients. Good to know, right?!

## *Watermelon, Tomato, and Basil Salad with Onion*

*All the boldest flavors of summer in a simple dish.*

Heaping 1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion  
1/4 cup red wine vinegar  
2 heaping cups wedged tomatoes  
4 heaping cups seeded and cubed watermelon  
3 Tbl thinly sliced fresh basil

In a small bowl, soak the red onion in vinegar for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, place the tomatoes in a colander and let drain in the sink until ready to use.

Gently combine the watermelon, tomatoes, and basil in a large serving bowl. Lightly toss with the onion and vinegar, and refrigerate for a few hours before serving.

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# HOW TO KEEP YOUR CHILDREN'S IMMUNE SYSTEMS STRONG THIS SCHOOL YEAR BY AUDREY BUTLER

It's back to school time and this year will be one to go down in the history books! While the government and local school districts do all they can to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 (and any regular cold and flu viruses) by controlling the external environment, as parents one of the areas we have the most control over is our family's internal defenses.

In this newsletter, I'd like to highlight a few key ways you can use food, lifestyle, and dietary supplements to support the Immune System to lessen the severity of any illnesses that you may encounter this school year.

## **Food**

Eating a variety of highly nutritious foods and keeping sweet, processed, or fried foods to a bare minimum is the most potent way to keep the immune system at peak readiness. I like to use abundant whole food to provide my family's daily levels of vitamin and minerals, but I rely on supplements to get the doses needed for therapeutic levels. The key here is to supplement for very short periods of time (2-4 days) then stop to avoid excessive levels.

DISCLAIMER: I'll give some reference ranges in this newsletter, but it is not meant to be medical/nutritional advice for your family's specific needs. It is informational to give you a general reference.

**Limit added sugars:** A little sweet treat for your kids once-in-awhile is not going to have a big impact on their health as long as it stays in the range of 25-40 g/day (depending on their age, size, and activity level). Of course unrefined natural sugars are a bonus. The danger zone where white blood cells get sluggish and suppressed for several hours is when you splurge in the range of 75-100 g in a day.

For example, if you stop at Sonic for a rare treat and choose a small beverage or mini shake, you would probably be ok, but a medium shake or large drink puts you in the danger zone.

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# STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEMS CON'T

Sonic Limeade or soda (Sm 25 g, Med 40 g, Large 72)

Hot fudge Ice Cream Sundae 66g

Medium Banana Shake 70 g (Small is 52)

Likewise, a party where there is cake, ice cream, and soda would also leave you and your kids vulnerable.

Probiotic-rich cultured foods: A healthy intestinal tract is one of our first lines of defense where abundant friendly bacteria out-compete invaders. Cultured sauerkraut, pickles, kefir, kombucha, and more are a big help. One recent study out of Berlin found that countries that ate a lot of fermented foods had lower mortality rates from COVID-19

## **Zinc:**

Needed by every cell in the body to build protein building blocks and to transport vitamins A and D. It is also essential to our immune system and hormone production. Highest in seafood (esp. oysters), meat, and poultry.

It is also found in some nuts, seeds, and legumes but the phytic acid content of these plant foods binds the zinc so we lose about 50% of it. Soaking and sprouting helps quite a bit.

Zinc is used up quickly when children are growing. Elementary aged children need at least 5 mg/day and 8 mg for middle school. High school and adults need 9-11 mg/day.

For COVID specifically, zinc has gotten a lot of attention because it makes treatment with hydroxychloroquine more effective. But it turns out that it may be helpful on its own when used in short-term therapeutic doses for 2-7 days during illness in the range of 25-30 mg for children and 40-60 mg/day for older teens and adults. The elderly may need as much as 100-115 mg/day if they get sick.

Zinc lozenges or nasal spray may be most helpful for COVID since the virus targets the respiratory canal. Important note: When supplementing with zinc it is important to take it with food to avoid feeling nauseous and to spread the doses throughout the day.

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# STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEMS CON'T

## **Vitamin C:**

Vitamin C is a well known antioxidant and immune booster. Luckily it is found abundantly this time of year in garden fresh vegetables and fruits. Again, if I or someone in my family was actually starting to feel sick, I would want to take it in higher therapeutic doses than can be found in food (2,000 mg several times/day). I like to take it in the form of sodium ascorbate (less loose stools) mixed with some whole food forms of C and some bioflavonoids.

## **Vitamin A:**

You probably know vitamin A is essential to your eyesight and night vision, but it is also essential to your immune system and lungs. It even helps make the little hairs in your throat that help you cough up phlegm! Boys and girls (especially boys) going through puberty use a lot of vitamin A to create all those new hormones.

Although our bodies can convert carotenoids from green, yellow, and orange vegetables into the active form of vitamin A (retinol), it's not very efficient. Eating plant foods with a little oil or vitamin E helps increase the absorbability.

The best sources are from animal foods like liver, cod liver oil, grass fed milk and eggs. When fighting a viral infection, the body really burns through vitamin A, so I keep a bottle of liquid Retinol drops (Seeking Health or Klair Labs) in my cabinet so that we can really support our immune system when sick. 20,000 IU/day for kids (3 days MAX), 40,000-60,000 for adults. It doesn't taste that great so I usually have to take it in a little orange juice. Again, taking excess amounts of this vitamin for weeks or months will accumulate and cause toxicity, but short bursts during an active infection are very helpful.

## **Vitamin D:**

The magic number for adequate blood levels of vitamin D is 30  $\mu\text{m}/\text{dl}$ . COVID-19 patients with vitamin D levels that meet or exceed this range have less complications and risk of dying. The sun is the easiest way to get vitamin D (although not foolproof). 20-30 minutes of mid-morning sun is usually all you need in the summer, but consider a supplement in the winter or when actively fighting illness. Our livers can store a little, but it is usually depleted by December or January.

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# STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEMS CON'T

2,000 IU is a good amount for a daily winter supplement for adults but you really won't know how much you need without a blood test. Children need 400-1000 IU/day based on age and body weight.

Also take Vitamin K2 with your vitamin D to make sure it gets transported and absorbed.

Best food sources of vitamin D include:

- Cold water fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines, anchovies)
- Cod Liver Oil (1 tsp/day in the winter)
- Eggs yolks (especially free range)
- Butter and cream from grass-fed cows
- Lard, especially from free-range pigs
- Beef liver

Note that Vitamin D is a fat soluble vitamin, which is why it is found in fatty animal foods.

## **Lifestyle Tips for a Strong Immune System:**

- Moderate and enjoyable physical activity, preferably outdoors to get in some sunshine too, for 20 - 30 mins.
- Help defuse stressful situations with love, laughter, gratitude, deep breathing, etc.
- Get enough sleep! 9-10 hours for school-ages kids and 8 hours for adults. In fact, melatonin is known to help stimulate the thymus gland, which produces a lot of our immune systems white blood cells.

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## RASPBERRY ORANGE SMOOTHIE TO SUPPORT A STRONG IMMUNE SYSTEM

*From the kitchen of Audrey... She says it is simple yet delightful. And try it with blackberries or cherries instead for different flavors.*

# RASPBERRY ORANGE SMOOTHIE

### *Ingredients:*

- 1 cup frozen raspberries (or blackberries/cherries)
- 1 whole orange, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp stevia or monkfruit

### Optional:

- 1 banana
- 1 Tbsp lime juice

### *Directions:*

Blend all ingredients until smooth and enjoy!



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## WHAT'S HAPPENIN' OUT AT THE FARM



### **JUST DEALING WITH THE SMOKE, LIKE EVERYONE ELSE...**

We've had some spectacular sunrises and sunsets the past few days due to the fire north of Grand Junction.