



What's in your Box this week:

Box A: peaches, 2-lb of tomatoes, personal watermelon (seeds), 6 ears of corn, 24-oz bottle grape cider

Box B: 4 ears of corn, 6-8 peaches, cabbage, jalapeno peppers, 2 bell peppers, Roma tomatoes, surprise item from the farm (possibly personal seedless watermelon)

Box C: cherry or grape tomatoes, black eggplants, 1-pint candied jalapeno peppers or jalapeno rings, butternut squash, 4 ears of corn, personal watermelon (seeds), cabbage, acorn squash

Fruit Box: 1 personal watermelon, 2 quarts of peaches, 24-oz bottle grape cider

Hello everyone!

Good gracious that was a CRAZY-HOT week last week wasn't it? I have to tell you that I went to the farm last Tuesday and just so you know, when it is NINETY NINE degrees outside, and you're in a barn, the fans DO NOT HELP AT ALL.... ☺

I just so admire the Lee's hard work. I got there at 11am, I think, and stayed until 2 or so, and was soooo glad to get back in my nice, air-conditioned car....but think about it.....that group was out in the fields early in the morning and THEN packed the boxes until 7pm or 8 and THEN got up early the next day to bring it to Raleigh AND pick/pack for the Thursday deliveries. WHEW!

Anyway, I have forwarded lots of emails to them thanking them for their hard work..they do know you appreciate all they do and I hope YOU know that your suggestions are always welcome. Sometimes we all get bogged down in the "heat of the moment" (no pun intended) and it's good to get feedback every once in a while. On that note, I've taken a few minutes to address some of the comments from the survey on the attached sheet....feel free to read and/or comment at your leisure.

"You are such an awesome team of people I can't give you enough praise!!"

Personally, I feel like each box is packed with *love*, I can just feel it!"

Peace,
Robin N, in Raleigh

Courtney

Eating healthy is no easy task. You have to put aside time and money to eat healthy whole foods. When given the choice of buying a one-dollar double-stack burger at a fast-food restaurant and eating immediately, versus shopping for buns, meat and condiments- plus cooking the meal- it can seem more logical to go with the already-prepared-dollar-double-stack burger. The benefits of eating whole foods are endless: you get more variety, nutrients, vitamins and better taste, while reducing your intake of sugar, sodium, chemicals, questionable ingredients and often, calories. Though it is important to save money when we can, we shouldn't be too timid to spend money and time on our health, which often directly relates to diet. Bottom line: when whole foods have so much power over our health, it only seems right that we make eating them a priority.

One Curious Eater,

Kate Hosey, Produce Box Intern

from the fields...

Marshall says the rain last week "helped the small crops comin' on" that were recently set in the fields. Be on the lookout for cucumbers, eggplant and squashes in the boxes, in the coming weeks.

Kids Did you get Box A or C? Try this idea from Farmer Marshall: save seeds from watermelon; rinse and lay on paper towels to dry. When seeds are dry, place in freezer bag, seal, label and date, then store in your freezer. Next spring, after the last threat of frost, plant your seeds and watch them grow! You might grow your own watermelons!

Storing Peaches:

Peaches should be soft to the touch but not mushy. Don't squeeze peaches; they bruise easily. Place firm peaches on the counter at room temperature and they will ripen within a few days. Promptly refrigerate ripe peaches, and eat them within a week of purchase. To peel a peach, dip it into boiling water for 30 seconds, then in cold water. The peel should slide off easily. To keep sliced peaches from darkening, add lemon juice or ascorbic acid.

Freezing Peaches:

When freezing, peaches should be ripe and soft but not mushy. Wash peaches thoroughly in cold water (ice water is preferable for keeping the fruit firm). Peel and slice a small amount at a time, mixing about 1 teaspoon ascorbic acid (available at grocery and drug stores - is not harmful and will not affect the taste of the fruit) with 1 cup sugar, then sprinkle over sliced peaches. Pack in air tight containers or jars (suitable for freezing), and fill to 3/4 full, then freeze.

This refreshing soup was contributed by Eileen M, in Apex. Thanks, Eileen! © (Box C)

Mexican Butternut Squash Soup

Ingredients

2 tsp olive oil
2 c. peeled cubed butternut squash
2 c. chopped onions
1 c. chopped red bell pepper
1 c. chopped celery
1 tsp dried oregano
1 tsp chili powder
1 (4.5 oz) can chopped green chili peppers
4 c. canned vegetable broth
1 can (15.5 oz) white hominy or whole-kernel corn, drained
¼ c. fresh lime juice
1 Tbsp minced fresh cilantro

Directions

1. Heat oil; add squash and next 6 ingredients. Sauté 3 minutes
2. Add veggie broth and hominy and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 35 mins or till veggies are tender
3. Remove from heat and stir in lime juice and cilantro.

Yield: 4 servings

Note: may substitute water for veggie broth to reduce sodium intake.



“Hey Courtney, we had lots of fun doing a taste test with the Sprite and striped Korean melons. My boys agreed that they preferred the Sprite!”

Heather B, in Raleigh

Apple Couscous Acorn Squash Recipe

Ingredients:

4 acorn squash, halved and seeded
1 cup apple juice
1 cup couscous
1/4 cup prunes, pitted and chopped
1/4 cup dried cranberries
1/4 cup dried apple, chopped
1/4 cup apple juice concentrate, thawed
1/4 teaspoon cardamom, ground
1 Tablespoon maple syrup
1/4 cup pecans, toasted and chopped, optional

Preparation:

Steam acorn squash halves about 15 minutes, until tender. Let drain, then place in a large roasting pan, cavity side up. Preheat oven to 350 F.

While squash is steaming, bring apple juice to a boil in a small saucepan. Remove from heat and stir in couscous. Cover and let sit for 15 minutes to absorb the juice.

Stir prunes, cranberries, apples, apple juice concentrate, cardamom, and maple syrup into the couscous.

Divide fruit couscous evenly between the steamed acorn squash halves. Bake for 20 minutes. Sprinkle with pecans, if desired, before serving.

Yield: 8 servings

Want more great ideas, quick tips and recipes? Then check out these blogs:

Meals with the McRackans by member Jessica McRackan

<http://jessica.mcrackan.com>

Get Fresh Eat Local NC by Area Manager Laurie Rosenfeld

<http://getfreshheatlocalnc.blogspot.com>

Jalapeno Guacamole Chicken

Ingredients

2 jalapeno peppers
2 chicken breasts
4 slices cheddar cheese
1 avocado
1 tomato
1 teaspoon garlic
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon cilantro
1 tablespoon taco seasoning
salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

Slice the chicken breasts in half, length-wise; season with taco seasoning.

Prepare the guacamole by peeling and mashing the avocado. Chop 1 jalapeno pepper and the tomato; add to the avocado mash. Add cilantro, garlic, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Mix well.

Heat a frying pan on high heat. Add seasoned chicken breasts and sear, about 1-2 minutes per side. Reduce heat to medium and cook until chicken is no longer pink in the middle, about 5-6 minutes each.

Slice remaining jalapeno pepper into rings and cover chicken breasts. Top jalapeno peppers with cheddar cheese. Cover pan and heat until cheese is melted. Serve and enjoy!

Yield: 4 servings

Note: Seeding peppers will reduce their heat.

Quick tip: Easily remove an avocado pit by sharply striking pit with the cutting edge of a chef knife, slightly imbedding the knife blade. Twist the knife right or left and remove pit.

★★★★★★★★★★

“Winter” squash, like butternut and acorn, will last up to a month in a cool (50 to 55 degrees F.) dark cellar or storage area, but only about two weeks in the refrigerator. Dry hot air will cause loss of moisture, resulting in a shorter shelf life. Squash with a bit of the stem still intact will help slow down moisture loss. Ideally, only cut or cooked squash should be refrigerated. Before freezing, acorn and butternut squash must be cooked. Roast squash and remove the pulp from the skin. You can leave it in chunks or mash it. Place in airtight containers and freeze ten to twelve months at 0 degrees F.

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Here are a few thoughts (out of over 700 responses) from the THE MEMBER SURVEY QUESTION last month: “anything we need to know NOW and/or any comments or suggestions for next season?”

COMMENT	RESPONSE
I do like the "more in 1 box" option for one of the boxes. Rather than getting so many different things, sometimes I'd prefer to get a lot of just 2 or 3 things I will use on a weekly basis with no problems (like potatoes, corn, zucchini, cucumbers, blueberries, etc)	We'll be able to offer more than three boxes next year. So we'll be able to do this as well as a box with more variety and less of each.
I love everything about produce box! such a good concept, wonderful items and great variety!!! i have told so many folks about this company and have not been less than 100% pleased every week. would love to see cheese sometime :-)	Cheese coming back in the fall once it cools off a little bit. I did find a neat little “pouch” that is insulated that I think we can use next season in the heat to keep the cheese cool and/or the fresh salsa.
I really love the mystery box/farmers choice option and would love for it to be the standard box rather than A. I would think it would allow the farmer to have more freedom. If a customer isn't logging in and selecting a speciic box, why not let the farmer make the choice for them. Just a suggestion!	FANTASTIC IDEA!!!! Maybe we can do a SURPRISE BOX every week next season. That would help the farms, too , since sometimes they have a surplus of items or even just a few of a particular item, then they wouldn't have to “commit” to a specific veggie, you'd get what they had.
This is my first year with The Produce Box. I absolutely LOVE it! We were not big into veggies before. Now I find myself finding new recipes and eating different veggies than we ate before!	Thanks so much!
I love my fruits and veggies..just had a few bad corns and one yellow broccoli	Lesson learned: leave the broccoli out of the box , set it on top so it can get “air” .
Wonderful! I truly enjoy receiving the boxes and always have fun trying different recipes to use the produce. I appreciate the recipes included and have used many of them. Thank you to all of you who put in lots of time and energy to bring this produce to our doors. I know it must be a monumental task!!! We appreciate it!	As always, a BIG THANK YOU to all of our Neighborhood Coordinators, they ALSO work in the 100+ degree heat to bring you your fresh, local veggies quickly and efficiently. Thanks Ladies!
Could you have the option to sub something in your box? If there's a piece in the box that my family really doesn't like, I could ask for a different item in it's place.	Not sure if we'll do this or maybe a "customized" box option.....we'll try some things out this fall.
got a cantaloupe in my fruit box & it was terrific. I haven't see cantaloupes offered & I've wondered about the reason	Really bad year for cantaloupe, last year was FANTASTIC, though. Sorry!
Have been pleased thus far with service. A major interest for my wife and I is organic produce. We love the idea of buying locally raised/grown produce that is conviently brought to our door, but we would rather have organic produce and would be willing to pay a little extra for that option.	We'll offer an organic box next year as often as possible. Box O, probably. ☺
We often have more than we can eat, but I have thoroughly enjoyed our Produce Box experience, tell others about how positive it has been, and plan to participate again next year!	I'm so glad!

sometimes the quantity in the box is a bit disappointing, ex like receiving only one squash or one zucchini, that would not feed a family of four like i thought the box was suppose too.	We'll work with a few more medium-sized farms next year, so that will help with supply
It might be worth investing in styrofoam coolers instead of the cardboard boxes since the heat has taken such a toll on the produce this year.	We're looking into new boxes or insulation for next year. Also, cooling the barn completely at the farm.

We're having so much fun with our box!	
I love this . I really enjoy getting my box. I am single so I would not make the effort to get the produce from the farmers market. It helps me to eat healthy. Keep up the good work.	
Thank you for providing this service! It has been good for me to learn to cook with a variety of vegetables. I like it when you provide ideas about how to use different items.	
I have greatly enjoyed my experience with the Produce Box and have assumed that a few worms or blemishes come with the territory of purchasing straight from the source with minimal pesticide intervention. I understand that trying to keep local and pesticide free means I can't expect items to look like they do at the Harris Teeter. :-)	
I've only recently been receiving boxes and so far it's great!	
What are chances of finding a source for mushrooms? They go so well with sauteed zuchini(sp) and summer squash. Tomatoes seem to take a long time to ripen. The Sprite melon was a wonderful surprise	We're working on it. NCCU did a big push and distributed spores a few years ago, but many who received them couldn't find a "market" and quit. Now, of course, we have the market, and not many suppliers. If you know of any, let me know!

Once again, thanks so much for your input and comments. It's funny that many of your ideas are things that we have been thinking about as well! We had many responses to this last question and it was so much fun to read all the positive, enthusiastic comments. Whenever I'm a little tired, and it's been a long day, I'll read a few to perk me up. And you can be sure I've sent many along to Marshall and our other farm partners.

We are diligently searching for new local produce suppliers as well as local vendors with neat products, so if you see/hear of anything interesting, let us know!

Feel free to email me with other questions/comments, and I'll try to include the others in the next newsletters or respond personally.

Take care and have a great week,

Courtney