

### SPLIT PEA SOUP WITH WINTER SQUASH AND KALE

- 2 tbsp. Olive Oil
  - 2-3 tbsp. Pancetta or Bacon, minced (if omitted, use more olive oil)
  - 1 Large Onion, minced
  - 4 cloves Garlic, minced
  - 2 cups Dried Yellow Split Peas  
(green split peas can be used, but the color won't match the squash)
  - 1 Fresh Rosemary Sprig, 4 inches long (or 1/2 tsp. dried)
  - 4 cups Chicken or Vegetable Broth
  - Salt and Pepper
  - 1/2 pound Peeled Winter Squash  
(such as Kabocha, Red Kuri, Ambercup, Buttercup or Butternut)
  - 1/2 pound Plum Tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and diced
  - 1/3 pound Kale or Chard, stems removed
1. Heat olive oil in a large pot over moderate heat. Add pancetta and sauté until it renders some of its fat, about 3 minutes. Add onion and garlic and sauté until onion is soft and sweet, about 10 minutes. Add split peas, rosemary, 4 cups broth and 4 cups water. Bring to a simmer, cover and adjust heat to maintain a simmer. Cook until split peas are completely soft, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Taste often and remove rosemary (if using fresh rosemary) when flavor is strong enough.
  2. Season soup with salt and pepper. Stir in squash and tomatoes. Stack kale leaves a few at a time and slice into ribbons about 1/4 inch wide. Stir them into the soup, cover and cook until squash and kale are tender, about 20 minutes. If soup is a little thick, thin with broth. Taste and adjust seasonings before serving.

### ZUCOTTE (BRAISED GARLICKY WINTER SQUASH)

- 3 tbsp. Butter
  - 2 tbsp. White Wine
  - 10 cloves Garlic, peeled
  - 1-1/4 pounds Butternut, Delicata, or other squash, peeled, seeded & diced
  - Salt and Fresh Ground Pepper
  - 3 tbsp. Fresh Parsley, chopped
1. Melt 1 tbsp. of the butter in a large heavy skillet over low heat. Add the wine and garlic. Cook, covered, stirring occasionally, 20 minutes. The garlic will brown slightly but should not burn.
  2. Mash the garlic with a fork. Stir in the remaining 2 tbsp. butter and the squash. Toss thoroughly to coat. Cook, covered, stirring occasionally, until the squash is tender, about 20 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste and sprinkle with the parsley.



# WHISTLING TRAIN Farmletter

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## IT'S BEEN A ROUGH WEEK.

We couldn't believe it actually snowed last week! We very rarely get snow down here in the valley, even though the hills are often dusted through the winter, but we actually had about 8 inches Monday night. It was made even more magical for the kids because we were shopping for our Christmas Tree as it started coming down. We played hide and seek in the rows of trees while Mike took care of all the arrangements. We drove past the "duck park" by the Kent library and parked to look at the colored lights while eating baby oranges. Our own winter tradition.

However, it is not our tradition to cancel harvest and CSA pickup because of snow! How does one harvest vegetables in all that snow? We were able to harvest by the weekend though, so now our CSA week starts on Saturday and ends with Wednesday. As the temperature dropped Mike went out to harvest tiny cauliflowers and fennel that wouldn't survive a drop below 28°, and it did get down to about 20° by Thursday night. Luckily the spinach bounced back, and we have lots of Brussels sprouts, leeks, cabbage, and more!

My apologies to those of you who came by Wednesday to pick up vegetables even though we were still buried in snow. I tried to get a hold of everyone Tuesday night. Remember that when weather is questionable you need to check in before coming down to the farm. I always do my best to make sure you know what's happening, but I can't always reach everyone.

As far as eggs go, the chickens are still laying reasonably well, but the ducks have stopped. All the eggs they laid last week froze, because they lay them outside at night. Egg-sicles. Now they just need a rest for winter. They'll all start laying again in the spring, at the logical time of year for making babies.

Enjoy all the frost-sweetened winter goodies! Cold temperatures help the plants turn a lot of starches into sugars, so even the leafy crops will be sweeter now. And make sure and eat the leafy tops of your Brussels sprouts! They're just like collard greens or kale.

## THIS WEEK'S MENU:

Potatoes  
Winter Squash  
Garlic  
Baby Fennel  
Brussels Sprouts  
Romanesco  
Cauliflower  
Mustard Greens  
Apples  
*Recipes on the back!*

## COMING SOON:

Brussels Sprouts  
Baby Lettuces  
Spinach  
Baby Carrots

THANKS TO EXTENSIVE SELECTIVE BREEDING IN 13TH CENTURY BELGIUM WE NOW HAVE THE PLEASURE OF SAVORING THE BRUSSELS SPROUT. THEY RESEMBLE TINY CABBAGES (AS A CHILD, I DISDAINFULLY THOUGHT OF THEM AS MARTIAN HEADS) AND ARE A FANTASTIC MUTANT OF THE CABBAGE FAMILY. HOWEVER, THE TWO DIFFER IN THEIR GROWTH HABIT.

Cabbages grow fairly low to the ground and form a single dense head in the center of a lush rosette of leaves. Once the main head is harvested, if one is patient, the plant will regrow with four or five mini cabbages at the base of the plant. This isn't a common sight because most farmers and gardeners pull up the stump once the cabbage head is harvested. This is where those Belgian gardeners of the Middle Ages began their experiment.

Brussels Sprout plants start out in life looking just like a cabbage plant. But after two or three months of growth, the main stalk begins to elongate. Instead of forming a tight head, all of those leaves instead

#### BRUSSELS SPROUTS WITH WALNUT OIL

1 *tbsp. Butter*  
1 *1/2 tbsp. Walnut Oil (or other nut oil)*  
2 *tbsp. chopped Italian Parsley*  
2 *tbsp. thinly sliced Chives or Scallions*  
1 *pound Small Brussels Sprouts*  
*Salt and Ground Black Pepper*

1. Put butter, walnut oil, parsley and chives in a serving bowl and set aside.
2. Trim Brussels sprout ends. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add sprouts and cook until just tender, about 10 minutes. Drain and return to pot over low heat. Cook briefly, shaking the pot, until any water has evaporated.
3. Transfer sprouts to the serving bowl and season well with salt and pepper. Toss until butter melts and seasonings evenly coat the sprouts.

#### SAUTÉED BRUSSELS SPROUTS

*Fresh Brussels Sprouts*  
*Olive Oil or Unsalted butter*  
*Chicken or Vegetable Stock*  
*Fresh or Dried Thyme Leaves*  
*Lemon Juice*  
*Salt and Pepper*

1. Slice the sprouts thin, about 1/8-inch thick. Heat a sauté pan, add a small amount of olive oil or unsalted butter, and sauté the sprouts for a few minutes. Add about 1/4 inch of stock to the pan and continue cooking until tender. Season with salt, pepper, thyme, and a squeeze of lemon juice. Continue to cook until you end with an emulsified liquid that just coats the sprouts.

begin to stretch out along the lengthening stalk, until at four or five months of age, the plant resembles a miniature prehistoric tree, rather than a cabbage. If one looks closely beneath each leaf, a tiny bud can be seen—this bud will become a sweet sprout. After another month or two (by now it's been nearly half a year) the three-foot stalk is crowded with tiny cabbages just begging to be nibbled on (and just like cabbages, sprouts come in purple as well as green).

At this point I have to be honest—I have hated Brussels Sprouts for as long as I can remember. In the 1970's and 80's, the only sprouts found in the supermarket were in the 10-ounce frozen cube form. They were squishy, mushy, and they tasted worse than burned cabbage. Brussels Sprouts and Squash were the only foods I remember absolutely detesting as a child.

But, things change. Several years ago as I was looking through seed catalogs, I started to wonder if I had gotten off on the wrong foot with these sprouts. Maybe if they were grown and harvested properly, I would love them as much as I learned to love kale, beets, and winter squash! So I began a quest to grow them. Sometimes Mike thinks I'm crazy—it took me three years, but I finally figured out the timing with this long-season crop. They need to be seeded in April in the greenhouse, planted outside in June or July, then they need to grow slowly. And they absolutely must NOT be harvested before winter frosts have chilled them thoroughly and slowly.

For all this cold weather actually sweetens the sprouts. And I must say, they are DELICIOUS! We have been known to make a meal of just Brussels Sprouts and rice—and Mike is a carnivore. I mean, we can each eat an entire stalk of sprouts in one meal. So, I'm a convert, and I hope you will be too.

#### BRUSSELS SPROUTS LEAVES WITH BACON

*Fresh Brussels Sprouts*  
*Diced Onion*  
*Bacon, or Pancetta, diced (or substitute capers or another salty addition)*  
*White Wine*  
*Chicken or Vegetable Stock*  
*Salt and Pepper*

1. Cut out the stems of the Brussels sprouts and separate the sprouts into leaves. Thinly slice the tightly compact centers.
2. Sauté some diced onion and pancetta or bacon in olive oil until softened. Add the sprout leaves, season with salt, and moisten with a little white wine and water or stock. Cover and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes, until just tender. Taste for seasoning, grind black pepper over, and serve.