

Box Contents:

1 Orchid Watermelon
1 Orange Honeydew
½ lb Black Eyed Peas
¾ lb Green Beans
1½ lbs Early Girl and
Red Slicers
1 lb Mixed Peppers

Field Notes: We are enjoying a great run of green beans at the cost of fall dry beans and our first year almond orchard at our home ranch, which the deer are showing a marked preference for. Our deer exclusion fence gets tighter every year, but as the hills are now very dry the deer are very hungry. As other local crops like wheat and processing tomatoes are harvested and almond orchards are dried off in preparation for harvest, our sixty acres of vegetables nestled into the hills become irresistible. The rest of our 220 acres are along Cache Creek, so those populations have all the riparian forage. The crop they most prefer is the sweet peppers, which are close to the house this

year. Our dog Smudge has adopted the peppers into his range and is doing a good job of protecting them. He goes out with Trini at sunset to close the chicken coops and again with me between ten and midnight to shut down irrigation pumps. He's always asleep by my truck when I go out before sunrise, but he seems plenty tired all morning for me to imagine a night of adventures for him.

Early Girl Tomatoes are available in a 20 lb case for \$30.00. Please place your order by Sunday evening for the following week. Great for fresh eating, canning or freezing

Box Notes: The black-eyed peas need to be shelled from their pods. It's easiest to tear the pod at its midpoint and peel pods apart. The beans are much sweeter fresh than dried. These fresh shelling beans are not just for boiling! You can steam or sauté these black-eyed peas – because they are not dried, they cook very quickly. Fresh shelling beans do not store well, so use them this week and keep them refrigerated. Fresh Black Eyed Peas are delicious sautéed with sweet peppers or steamed lightly and thrown into a tomato (pasta or potato) salad. The pepper harvest is in peak and we have more Gypsy and pimento types for you this week. Our peppers have been doing well, and the colors and sweetness really come through. Green beans, again! Raw, steamed plain, or served with tuna confit (see recipe below), the green beans are sweet and delicious. We're still picking melons by the bins! The Orchid watermelon is the juicy, orange-fleshed variety. The orange honeydew is very sweet and makes wonderful additions to your fruit salads. You have an "extra" melon again – better you than the wholesalers. Enjoy the bounty!

Tomato, Watermelon, and Ricotta Salata Salad from *The Tomato Festival Cookbook* by Lawrence Davis-Hollander

¼ cup sherry vinegar

1 shallot, peeled and minced

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

1 pound watermelon, seedless, or seeds removed

1 pound (about 3 large) vine-ripened tomatoes

10 ounces ricotta salata

1 bulb fennel, thinly sliced

8 mint leaves

- 1.) To make the vinaigrette, whisk together the vinegar, shallot, and mustard in a small bowl, slowly adding the oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- 2.) To make the salad, peel the watermelon, and slice into wedges about 1/8 inch thick. Slice the tomatoes and the ricotta salata into wedges. (If your piece of cheese is small, shave it with the vegetable peeler.)
- 3.) To serve, layer slices of melon, tomato, ricotta salata, and fennel (if available) on each of four salad plates, spiraling upward until you have built small towers about 3 inches high. Drizzle with the vinaigrette.
- 4.) Just before you serve the salads, cut the mint leaves into thin strips and sprinkle them evenly over the salads.

Tuna Confit with Green Beans and Shell Beans from *Chez Panisse Café Cookbook* by Alice Waters

Salt
1 pound tuna steak, cut 1 ½ inch thick
Thyme branches
Garlic cloves, crushed, but not peeled
Fennel Seeds
Dried chili pepper pods
Peppercorns

3 cups extra-virgin olive oil
1 pound (unshelled) fresh shell beans
1 pound green beans
1 medium shallot, diced fine
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
Pepper
1 cup Aioli (garlic mayonnaise)

Salt the tuna generously and put it in a deep bowl with the thyme, garlic, fennel seeds, chili pods, and peppercorns. Use your own intuition for amounts of these ingredients. Cover with 3 cups of olive oil and refrigerate for several hours, preferably overnight.

To cook, transfer everything to a heavy-bottomed nonreactive pot and heat slowly over medium heat. When the oil is warm, lower the heat and continue cooking for 12-15 minutes, turning the fish over occasionally for even heating. Probe the tuna with a paring knife to check for doneness-it should still be slightly pink at the center. Remove the tuna from the oil and cool, reserving the oil. It is now ready to eat or can be refrigerated in the oil and stored up to 5 days.

Remove the shell beans from their pods and simmer the beans in enough water to cover by 1 inch. Add a little salt, a thyme branch, and a splash of olive oil, and cook until tender, about 30 minutes. Let the beans cool in their cooking liquid. The shell beans can be cooked several hours in advance and kept at room temperature. Top and tail the green beans and parboil in rapidly boiling salted water for 2 minutes. Drain and spread on a baking sheet to cool.

Make vinaigrette in a small bowl with the diced shallot, red wine vinegar, and ½ teaspoon salt. Whisk in ½ cup of the confit oil and add freshly ground black pepper. Taste and add more salt and vinegar, if necessary.

Drain the shell beans and toss with the green beans in the vinaigrette. Arrange on a platter with the tuna, broken into pieces, over the top. Serve with aioli alongside, or thin the sauce with a little water and drizzle it over everything.

Warm Pasta Salad with Peppers, Tomatoes, and Purple Basil from *The Greens Cookbook* by Deborah Madison with Edward Espe Brown

12 ounces cherry tomatoes, quartered
3 tablespoons shallots, finely diced
½ cup Nicoise or Gaeta olives, pits removed
2 narrow strips lemon peel, slivered to fine threads
Lemon juice or red wine vinegar, to taste
chopped herbs: marjoram, thyme, lemon thyme, parsley, basil, etc.

2-3 tablespoons small capers, rinsed
1 ½ cups mixed peppers, thinly sliced
6 tablespoons virgin olive oil
8 to 12 ounces dry pasta shapes
Salt and Pepper
4 Tbsp. Parmesan Reggiano, freshly ½ cup finely grated
Small, whole purple basil leaves, for garnish

Combine the tomatoes, herbs, capers, shallots, peppers, olives, olive oil, and lemon peel in a large bowl. Season with salt and some freshly ground black pepper, stir, and let stand while you cook the pasta.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add a tablespoon of salt. Add the pasta and give it a stir so the pieces do not clump together on the bottom of the pot. Cook until it is al dente; then drain it in a colander and shake off the extra water. Add the hot pasta to the vegetables and herbs, and gently fold everything together with a rubber spatula. Season with additional salt, if needed, and lemon juice or vinegar to taste. Just before serving, garnish with the cheese and basil leaves. Serve hot, warm, or at room temperature.

Serves four to six.