

# Hogtown HomeGrown™

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Inside this issue:

Notes from Quarantine: Day 11	1
What's Fresh Right Now?	2
Local and Fresh— Daikon Radish	2
Daikon Roasted with Sesame	2
Veggie Chili (no beans about it)	3
Daikon Carrot Salad	3
Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms	4

## Notes from Quarantine: Day 11

Our youngest son got married—on Friday the 13th—in the rain—in California—at the beginning of a pandemic—and we flew there and back through the world's second largest airport—with my 88 year old mother.

How's your spring going?

The wedding, despite the rain showers, was touching and fun with a number of meaningful details based on the stories of Beauty and the Beast and Disney's UP! The bride carried some family heirlooms, including an 87 year-old lace-edged handkerchief while the groom wore a Grape Soda "badge" - a symbol of continuity from UP! Stacks of books on each reception table were surrounded by rose petals and topped with a red rose in a bell glass cloche. And the food? The caterers' use of local fresh food was obvious from the very first course, a beautiful spinach strawberry salad.

After the big day, we were fortunate that the newlyweds stayed nearby. We saw them for brunch, dinner and family bowling over the next few days. But we were also watching the news while we were there. We knew the COVID-19 virus was a problem. All during our time in California we had been carefully washing our hands, using alcohol wipes and keeping Mom mostly in the hotel, except for the wedding and family gatherings.

All too soon, the party was over and we had to fly home from John Wayne International Airport through Dallas-Fort Worth. Airports and planes that were full a week ago were ghost towns and half empty. The mood was cautious to tense, with travelers just wanting to get home.

When we took Mom back to her retirement community, they took all our temperatures and told us that since we had been in airports, Mom would be in quarantine for 14 days. They would bring her meals to her. As it turns out, the next day they locked down the campus to visitors, cancelled all gatherings and now deliver meals to all their residents.

Since our return, we have been on "lockdown" venturing out for local food with curbside pickup or farm boxes that can be acquired without close contact with humans. Our abundance of caution is to protect friends and family from catching the virus, just in case we picked it up during our travels. So far so good, but we are not letting complaisance set in.

So how are you doing? How are you getting your local food these days? I will continue to order from farms and pick up fresh produce either directly at the farm or at the drive-through farm box pickup in Gainesville. Anything I need from any other store can be delivered. I will not be venturing out for quite some time. Nothing is that important or worth the risk. We are still eating fresh wonderful local food. We are fortunate that Jeff can work from home, so we are able to enjoy each other's company during the day for the first time in 34 years! A strange preview of his upcoming retirement and I like it!

I think the Beatles said it best—All you need is love!

Staying home is an act of love—

Keeping six feet of physical distance from each other is an act of love—

Leaving food and supplies for the next shopper is an act of love—

Caring about the health of people you will never know is an act of love.

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## What's Fresh Right Now?

**Bananas**

**Beets**—red, golden, long

**Bok choy**

**Broccoli**

**Brussels sprouts**

**Cabbage**—green head, napa, flathead, cone, savoy, red

**Carrots**—orange, yellow, purple, rainbow

**Celery**

**Cauliflower**

**Citrus**

**Cucumber**

**Fennel**

**Garlic**—chives

**Ginger**

**Greens**—collards, curly/tuscan/red/white russian kale, red/green mustards, spinach, escarole, summerfest, chard, rappini, endive, turnip, mizuna

**Herbs**—parsley, cilantro, curry leaf, thai basil, mint, thyme, tulsi, dill, kaffir lime, lemongrass, rosemary

**Honey**—orange blossom, gallberry, wildflower, tupelo

**Jicama**

**Kohlrabi**

**Lettuces**—spring mix, mizuna, arugula, red/green leaf, romaine, frisee, butter

**Moringa**

**Mushrooms**—shiitake, white/blue/yellow oyster, lion's mane, trumpet, dried shiitake

**Onions**—white/red green

**Peas**—sugarsnap, english, snow

**Peppers**—green/red/yellow bell, jalapeno, datil, aji dulce, bird's eye

**Pineapple**

**Radish**—red/purple globe, white/purple daikon, watermelon, black

**Rutabaga**

**Shoots and Sprouts**

**Squash**—butternut, acorn, yellow, zucchini

**Sugar Cane**

**Strawberries**

**Sweet Potatoes**—white, yam

**Tomatoes**—red/yellow plum, cluster, cherry

**Turmeric**

## Local and Fresh— Daikon Radish

When I opened my very first CSA box ever (I never ordered one before since I always shop at the farmers markets) I was dismayed to see three giant daikon radishes. The only time I had used daikon before was years ago as an hors d'oeuvres topped with hummus for a Blue Oven Kitchens' fundraiser at Café 301/24.

Well, what a revelation these three daikon were. Cooked, the sometimes sharp bite of the radish mellows and sweetens. Raw, the flavor melds well with other veggies as well as stronger herbs and spices.

Look for firm daikon with smooth skins and, if the greens are attached, fresh-looking green leaves. Store refrigerated and use greens within a day or two of harvest, for best results. A rough outer skin can easily be peeled before preparing daikon to eat, but otherwise peeling is not necessary.

## Daikon Roasted with Sesame

### INGREDIENTS

1 medium daikon radish, 8-10 inches long

1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil

1 green onion

1 teaspoon sesame seeds

Salt and rice wine vinegar, optional

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Wash daikon and peel if desired. Cut in half lengthwise, then slice into thin half-rounds.

Toss daikon slices with sesame oil and place in baking pan.

Top with green onions and sesame seeds.

Bake 20-30 minutes, until daikon is fork tender.

Cool five minutes before serving.

Add salt and vinegar before serving to taste or serve as condiments.

Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

### SERVING SUGGESTION

Serve roasted daikon on a green salad.

# Veggie Chili (no beans about it)

## INGREDIENTS

1 large onion, finely chopped  
2-3 stalks celery, finely chopped  
1 head fennel, finely chopped  
2 carrots, chopped  
1 jalapeno, roasted, peeled and chopped  
2 dried ancho chilis, seeded and chopped  
1 head green cabbage, finely chopped (best results with food processor)  
1/2 head red cabbage, chopped  
2 Tablespoons tomato paste  
1 teaspoon cumin seeds  
1 Tablespoon ground cumin  
2 Tablespoons chile powder (preferably no-salt)  
2 Tablespoons oregano  
1 Tablespoon smoked sweet paprika  
1 teaspoon epazote  
1/8 teaspoon ground chipotle  
1/8 teaspoon cayenne  
1 28 ounce can crushed tomatoes  
2 cups corn  
2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar  
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

## DIRECTIONS

In a deep sauce pan, over medium heat, combine onion, celery, fennel, carrots, jalapeno and ancho chilis with a sprinkle of salt. Stir well and cook until limp.

Stir in green and red cabbage. Cook until green cabbage is cooked through and red cabbage still has a little crunch.

Clear a space in the bottom of the pot and add tomato paste on one side and all spices and herbs on the other. Stir spices lightly until very fragrant then stir everything together.

Add crushed tomatoes and corn. Stir to completely distribute.

Cover and cook on low for 30 minutes or more.

Add vinegar, salt and pepper to taste. Stir well and cook an additional 5 minutes.

Serve hot.

Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve with cornbread or top with spaghetti and beans “Cincinnati” style.

Split a baked sweet potato and serve chili on top.

# Daikon Carrot Salad

## INGREDIENTS

8 ounces daikon  
8 ounces carrot  
1 Tablespoon peeled and grated turmeric  
2 teaspoons ground sumac  
1 teaspoon dried thyme  
2 teaspoons sesame seeds  
Zest and juice of one lemon  
1/2 teaspoon salt

## DIRECTIONS

Grate daikon and carrot into large shreds.

Mix grated veggies with turmeric, sumac, thyme, sesame seeds, lemon zest and salt.

Add lemon juice and stir well to completely distribute.

Refrigerate 1-2 hours before serving to allow flavors to blend.

Serve chilled.

Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

## VARIATION

Replace sumac, thyme and sesame seeds with premade zhatar seasoning. If zhatar has salt included, adjust the amount of additional salt, as desired.

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## Tricks and Tips

Stuffed mushrooms usually have bread crumbs or eggs to keep the filling together, but they are not necessary. Grating the carrot and zucchini helps it cook down to a uniform consistency, so it will hold together in the mushroom cap while it bakes.

A bonus to using just vegetables to stuff mushrooms is the combination of flavors that are revealed. The earthy sweetness of both the carrot and tomato brings out the rich umami of the mushrooms.

Need more umami? Try one of the topping variations!

# Stuffed Portobello Mushrooms

## INGREDIENTS PER SERVING

- 4 large portobello mushrooms, stem removed
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, shredded
- 1 zucchini, shredded
- 1 Tablespoon tomato paste
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 Tablespoon fresh oregano, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper or ground cayenne
- Olive oil, spray or drizzle

## DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place mushrooms in a small baking pan.
- In a hot skillet, sauté shallot, carrot and zucchini.
- Add tomato paste and stir well to distribute.
- Stir in water and oregano. Season to taste. Cook 1-2 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Remove from heat and cool slightly.
- Use a large spoon to stuff each mushroom with 1/4 of the vegetable mixture. Smooth the top of the stuffing with the back of the spoon. Top with olive oil as desired.
- Add enough water to cover the bottom of the baking pan to a depth of 1/4 inch.
- Bake 45 minutes until mushrooms are tender.
- Serve hot or at room temperature.

## VARIATIONS

- Top with cheese for the last 15 minutes of baking. Try comte, gruyere or swiss.
- Garnish each stuffed mushroom with sesame oil and sesame seeds before baking.
- Top each stuffed mushroom with a little marinara or salsa before baking.