

Journey School Food Community CSA Newsletter

Week 27: July 21, 2007

The food in the farm stand definitely says “Summer” but the mud in the field says “What the @#%*#@”! We traveled to southern Oregon this last week to check out a potential new home for our family. It felt so good to return to the garden which was just bursting with my favorite Summer vegetables: zucchini, green beans, even our first tomato weighing in at 2 pounds! I’m not sure what this confused weather will do to the bounty, especially if it lasts for awhile. Keep your fingers crossed!

I wanted to send the newsletter via email this week because the Time magazine article “What the world eats” <http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1626519,00.html> has fascinated us. We first found the story in the blog of a farm in Vermont that Jeff regularly reads. I’ve included Walter Jeffries description of the article, their impression of the project findings, and their own food for a week picture. While we haven’t been organized enough to present what we eat in a week, it certainly includes a lot of cheese, eggs, garden produce, oatmeal, nuts, and bread. Oh yes, and honey, sugar, syrup, jam, jelly, preserves, and ice cream!

I’ve included a recipe this week for grilled zucchini. I’ve never grilled this fine vegetable but Mother Earth News featured a Spring article about zucchini which started me yearning. The author of the article, Barbara Pleasant, states, “It was a revelation to discover that grilled squash recipes received five star ratings from most of the cooks who tried them. Of course! Grilling sweats out water, which helps to concentrate squash’s subtle flavors, plus it caramelizes sugars present in the squash or grilling sauces. Stocking my freezer with grilled rather than blanched squash is one of the best food preservation upgrades I have ever made.” Now, let’s hope for some outdoor cooking weather!

GRILLED ZUCCHINI FANS

3 tbsp. olive oil
1/4 tsp. garlic powder
4 sm. zucchini, cut into fans

Combine olive oil and garlic powder. Cut each zucchini into lengthwise slices, leaving slices attached on stem end. Fan slices out, and place on grill over medium coals; brush zucchini with olive oil mixture; cover and grill 5 minutes on each side, basting once with olive oil. Yield: 4 servings.

GRILLED ZUCCHINI

- * Zucchini
- * Grated Parmigiano
- * Bread crumbs

- * Garlic
- * Parsley
- * Olive oil

Wash, dry, and thinly slice lengthwise a number of zucchini -- 1/8-inch or so slices

Grill them for a couple of minutes, turning them once. Transfer the slices to a baking dish and lay them flat. Take a look at how many you have, and prepare a mixture made with three parts grated Parmigiano, 1 part bread crumbs, and a little minced garlic and parsley. Spread the mixture over the zucchini -- it shouldn't be too thick -- drizzle a little extra virgin olive oil over them, and roast them for a few minutes in a preheated 400 F (200 C) oven. When the oil is crackling and the crust is lightly browned they're done.

GREEK STUFFED ZUCCHINI

4 pounds medium to large zucchini
1 1/4 pounds fresh tomatoes, chopped (or use canned)
1 large onion, chopped
5 cloves garlic, chopped
1 1/2 cups olive oil
3/4 cup parsley, chopped
Sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper
3 cups cooked brown rice
1/2 cup grated cheese
2 tablespoons currants
3/4 cup ground almonds
1/4 cup pine nuts

1. Wash zucchini thoroughly and cut in half lengthwise. Then, using an instrument such as an apple corer, empty the pulp of each zucchini into a saucepan, being sure to keep outer shells intact. Add tomatoes, onion, garlic, 1 cup of oil, parsley, salt and pepper. Simmer until only a little liquid remains, then add rice and simmer until all the water has evaporated.
2. When cool, add cheese, currants, almonds, and pine nuts. Stir with a wooden spoon until well mixed. Stuff zucchini shells carefully with mixture.
3. Preheat oven to 425F. Place stuffed zucchini shells in an ovenproof container. Pour the rest of the oil over them and add salt and pepper to taste. Cook 1 hour in preheated oven.
4. May be served hot or cold.



Monday, July 09, 2007

A Week of Food

United States: The Jeffries family of Vermont

Food expenditure for one week: \$65

Favorite foods: chili, soup, pork, eggs, spaghetti

Above is a weeks worth of food. Sort of. Some of the items like the flour, rice and spices are in too great a quantity but I didn't see a good way to display them as recognizable things in the actual quantity we use in a week.

Presenting a weeks worth of food was an interesting challenge because we actually only go shopping about once every three months and buy a lot of things in bulk. There are some things we buy at a shopping trip, like one pound of fish which get eaten right away but are so small when figured weekly ($1 \text{ lb} / 10 \text{ weeks} = 1/10\text{th lb}$) that they don't show on a table spread very well - I used a few shrimp to represent the fish. Another stumbling block is that what we eat is highly seasonal. In the winter we eat hot foods to warm us including a lot of soups, stews, chili and such that we canned in the fall and early winter, cabbage, meat, potatoes, hot cocoa, hot mint tea, etc. In the summer months we eat cooler meals including a lot of fresh veggies from our gardens, foraged berries, eggs, cold mint tea, etc. In the spring and fall it is also different.

This project was inspired by the Time Magazine article "What the World Eats" which was based on the book "Hungry Planet". The article showed pictures from fifteen families in various countries around the world. Each picture show the family as well as all the foods they ate in a week and gave their weekly food budget.

The average weekly food expense was \$180 with many of them falling in the \$300 to \$500 range. The variance in budgets was extraordinary. That average is biased downward by two families that spend \$5 and \$1 per week - one of whom is in a refuge camp. Unfortunately the article did not correct for variations in local economies and buying power so the numbers should be taken with a grain of salt. It would have been interesting to have a number showing how the spending relates as a percent of income. Also, prices for things vary greatly between countries as well as between urban and rural areas. Additionally, the families they chose may or may not really be representative - the other two USA families [1, 2] eat very differently from each other and very differently than our family. Diversity is beautiful.

Still, it was a great photo essay and not meant as a scientific study. Our family had fun studying the photos in Time as well as making our own list and photo.

Our weekly food budget is \$65 for a family of five. That comes to \$1.85 per person per day or 62¢ per meal per person per day - there is some variation with a summer low of about \$50/wk and a late winter and early spring high of about \$80/wk as we get low on foods we've grown. The budget includes seed we buy to grow much of our veggies. Almost all of our meat, a big expense, as well as our eggs come from animals we raise ourselves at almost no cost since we pasture raise them. I included an allotment in our budget for winter hay for the animals. Prior to raising our own animals we ate very little meat due to the cost and health concerns with factory raised meats. We also forage for berries much of the summer, canning and freezing them for the rest of the year. Dairy is our single largest expense as we drink a lot of milk, eat quite a bit of cheese and use butter, yogurt, cottage cheese, sour cream, etc. Gotta get a cow - or goats!

One of the things that struck me from the photos was not how different the foods were but how similar they were from country to country. Looking through the photos in the article we noticed that it seemed most of the families were living in urban areas so that in and of itself may account for some of the uniformity of foods. I was also surprised at how many people bought water. The family from the Time article that was the closest to our family was the Batsuuri family of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Ironically their budget also came close to ours at \$40/week.