



Salad Mix
Gold Beets
Red Beets
Carrots
Red Cabbage
Candy Onions
Red Onions
Italian Parsley
Sage
Fingerling Potatoes
Rutabaga
Purple Top Turnips
White Turnips
Scarlet Turnips
Black Spanish Winter Radish
Parsnips
Butternut Winter Squash

Shared Passions

Our first morning in Italy, having spent the night with Nico and Sylvana, the farm family who hosted us in the small town of Morello about one hour from Turin drove us to their farm. This had already been our first surprise among much that was unexpected about this journey: our host lived on the third floor of an apartment house, and drove a kilometer through the alleys of Morello to the land his family farmed.

There we met the entire extended family and toured the farm, but I soon got separated from the group with Nico's father, Antonio, the gardener of the family. Like all of the other gardens we saw, either in town or in the countryside, this one was blessed with a small greenhouse (maybe 20 x 30 feet). When we arrived, they had had only a light frost, and many of the warm weather crops were still growing, albeit slowly, outdoors.; Piedmonte sits on the same latitude (more or less) as Spring Grove, and the shortening days did not provide much more than maintenance on tropical plants like tomatoes and peppers. Indoors, Antonio had an entire second garden, tall crops in the center, shorter beans and parsley along the outer edge. Inside of the greenhouse, Antonio and I shared the names for the different crops, and although I spoke not a stitch of Italian beyond *buon giorno* and *gratzi*, and Antonio spoke not a word of English (Nico's sister described his dialect of Italian as "not translatable"), we enthused over the size of his sage leaves (to be wrapped around foods and eaten), the ripe everbearing strawberries, and the beans in the greenhouse he had just begun to pick, the wine he had just pressed, the experimental pears and quinces and bamboo

along the fencelines—that's where the rest of the group finally found us, and informed us that we were now running late to get to the bus that would take us to the Terra Madre. At dinner with the entire family two nights later, we were proud to sit next to each other.

All of the farmstays for Terra Madre—nearly 1,000—were organized by Coldretti, the regional agriculture association. Nothing like the conservative, agri-business focused Farm Bureau, nor as spread out as organizations like Practical Farmers of Iowa and the Land Stewardship Project, Coldretti had a dense membership base in the countryside, and works hard to promote sustainable agriculture in the region. On our fourth night in Italy, the Coldretti association in Cuneo hosted a dinner for all of the farmstay families and their guests in the basement of a school in Carmagnola.

The food was outstanding, served course by course to what must have been at least two hundred people. The food was fantastic, featuring a course of cured meats, raw minced meat, veal, cheese, and many more—we thought it would never stop! After dinner, the man who donated the cheese sang several songs ("He donates the cheese, he gets to sing," somebody noted.), we continued drinking wine and sharing laughs, and we finished the meal with *limoncella*, a regional lemon liqueur.

That night, we were treated to a tour of the countryside by the headlights of the car. After dinner, Nico and his brother, Guido, drove us down winding country roads—well-paved, but only as wide as our driveway—at incredible speeds to visit the pump that formed the basis of the area's flood irrigation system. Ditches diverted the water to area farms, with sluice gates to send the water one way or the other; a typical corn crop would be watered three times during the course of the summer. Then it was off to a peppermint field, acres of the herb creating a heady scent. Area farmers frequently distill their own peppermint for sale as an essential oil. While parked sideways in the road, headlights aimed over the field and the four of us discussing peppermint cultivation in broken English, the milk truck made its way down the road, and we had to pull the car off the road before heading on to the sweet pepper tunnels farmed by Nico's friend and finally home.

The next afternoon, after the Terra Madre ended, Nico took us with several other North American farmers to visit Longo Paolo's thriving small vegetable farm. With about fifteen greenhouses for crop production, a soil-blocking machine for transplant production (like ours, and very rare in the U.S.), and an enthusiastic young farmer, Kim and I were in heaven, looking everything over and under; when Longo showed us his homemade garlic planter, the other farmers were confused about how it worked—but when Kim hopped on to show them, Longo said, (in Italian), "You should come work on my farm!" When we returned the next day to take photos, Longo gave us a small photo album of the farm.

No matter where we went in Italy, we had only to pull out our own small photo album to explain the we were farmers to feel the bond of people who work the land. At every turn we were presented with samples of produce, photos, and seeds to bring home. In Italy, we have read, there is an irrevocable connection to the land; after all, people have been farming there with a relatively continuous tradition for thousands of years. It was beautiful to be a part of that.

Comings and Goings: Chris traveled to Spring Valley, Wisconsin, for a board meeting of the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services last weekend. The Saturday previous, Katie, who worked with us all summer, left for her home in New Ulm, leaving only the family living on the farm for now.

Weather: Mild and gray, and slightly wet. The combination of clouds and warmth has really sped along the greens in greenhouse, resulting in growth a little more lush than we consider to be ideal.

Activities on the Farm: Kim prepped and seeded more salad beds in the heated greenhouse as an experiment; we expect to harvest from these in January or February. Inspired by a farm in Italy, we seeded spinach and mâche in soil blocks to follow some of the salad crops we are currently harvesting.

The next box may include: Kale, Celeriac, Spinach, and much, much more...

Next Winter Box: December 2 (then the 16th)

The Farm Kitchen

Skinny **Fingerling Potatoes** have a full potato flavor, and make a fun alternative to regular spuds. They are especially good roasted whole “in their jackets”, or cut into rounds for pan-frying. Unfortunately, many of our fingerlings have a green end as a result of exposure to the light while they were still in the hill out in the field; you can just cut this off before or after cooking.

Rutabagas are larger than turnips, with a purple top and a yellow bottom. The Rutabaga’s reputation is a mystery to us. With a texture as smooth as a new potato and a delightfully earthy flavor and golden color, why are rutabagas so unloved? The smooth-skinned, purple-topped rutabaga was developed from crossbreeding a cabbage and a turnip; its original improvement and promotion was the work of Swiss botanist Caspar Bauhin in the early 1600’s—hence the rutabaga’s frequent appellation as a “Swede” or “Swedish turnip.” Delicious mashed with potatoes, particularly when seasoned with rosemary.

In a moment of marketing hyperbole, one farmer I worked for (we’ll let him remain anonymous here) referred to long, white **Parsnips** as “the banana of the north.” They are sweet and delicious, especially when pan-fried to lightly caramelize the surface. I once spent hours trying to get a good parsnip chip, but had trouble with consistent thickness and getting the right temperature for the oil. But if you’re feeling adventurous, you might give them a try.

Root Vegetable Hash

1 pound fingerling potatoes, cut into 1 inch pieces
1 pound parsnips, cut into 1/2 inch pieces
1 med. rutabaga, , cut into 1/2 inch pieces
1 pound carrot, cut into 1/2 inch pieces
2 tablespoons olive oil
3 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 cup sweet onion, diced small
2 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
Preheat oven to 400. Spray large rimmed baking sheet with oil spray. Toss potatoes, parsnips, rutabaga, and carrots with the oil. Spread on to baking sheet in a single layer. Salt and pepper. Roast vegetables until tender, stirring and turning throughout the cooking, about 45 minutes. Stir in garlic: roast 5 minutes longer. Remove from oven mix in onion, pine nuts, and parsley. Salt and pepper if needed.

This week’s box includes a **Medley of Turnips**, including scarlet, white, and the standard purple top.

Yellow **Candy Onions** look a lot like your standard onion, but have a sweeter, milder flavor. You can use them as a regular onion, but they are especially suited to use as a raw addition to salads and sandwiches.

Italian Parsley and **Sage** should provide a nice addition to your Thanksgiving feast, although we aren’t presenting a recipe for them this week. If your recipe calls for dried, use

about twice as much fresh.

Butternut Winter Squash have a small seed cavity at the end opposite the stem, and typically have a long neck, although they come in a variety of shapes. In the area around Turin, we frequently saw a butternut-type squash with a neck about thirty inches long, and bright red flesh—a little too large for a CSA box! With a wetter flesh than the other squashes, butternuts are well-suited to squash soups.

Butternut Squash puree with Orange and Ginger

1 butternut squash, cut in half lengthwise, seeded
3 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon frozen orange juice, thawed
1 tablespoon honey
1 tablespoon minced ginger
1 teaspoon orange zest
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
Preheat oven 375. Spray large baking sheet with nonstick spray. Place squash, cut side down, on the baking sheet. Bake until squash is tender, about 45 minutes. Cool. Scoop out squash and place in processor. Puree until smooth. Transfer squash puree to bowl. Combine butter, orange juice, honey, ginger, and orange peel in a heavy small saucepan. Boil until mixture is reduced to 1/4 cup, stir mixture into squash puree. Mix in spices, and season with salt and pepper.

Both **Gold Beets** and **Red Beets** make an appearance in this weeks box. The gold beets are sweeter than the red, and have less of the earthy flavor associated with red beets. Try baking them together, then slicing and combining for a beautiful presentation

Waldorf Salad on a Bed of Greens

A Thanksgiving tradition at Rock Spring Farm.
1 cup mayonnaise
1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
1 teaspoon lemon juice
6 Granny Smith apples, cored and cut into 1/2 inch pieces
1 cup chopped celeriac, or celery
1 medium winter radish, chopped
3/4 cup dried cranberries
1/2 cup finely chopped red onion
1 cup pecans, toasted, chopped
Salad mix, or fresh spinach
Mix mayonnaise, lemon peel and lemon juice in bowl to blend. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Refrigerate 15 minutes. Toss apples, celeriac, radishes, cranberries, and red onion in large bowl. Add lemon mayonnaise, and toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate. When ready to serve, stir in pecans and spoon on top of plated-up salad.

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