



"The beet is the most intense of vegetables. The radish, admittedly, is more feverish, but the fire of the radish is a cold fire, the fire of discontent not of passion...Beets are deadly serious."

~Tom Robbins, from *Jitterbug Perfume*~

A short history of the beet

Beets evolved from a wild seabed, which was native to the coastlines from India to Britain. The Romans were the first to start cultivating beets, cooking them with honey and wine. The medicinal properties of beets were at first more important than the taste of them. They were eaten to treat ailments such as fevers, constipation, and wounds.

Beetroots at first were long and skinny and did not become round like modern beets until the 16th century. Beets then became popular in Europe in the 18th century and many dishes like borscht began being passed down through generations.

Beets then grew even more in popularity in the Victorian times, as its bright color was used to spruce up salads and soups. IT was also used as a sweetening agent in cakes and puddings. If you have never made beet brownies, you should try it – it is delicious!

Don't forget to eat the beet greens!!!! They are similar to chard.

This week's CSA share contains:

- Spinach
- Assorted summer squash
- Tomatillos
- Hot Pepper
- Lettuce
- Merlin Beets
- Bell Pepper
- Onions
- Italian Basil
- Easter Egg Radishes



Here is a recipe that incorporates summer squash, spinach, and basil from this weeks' CSA share!

Spinach Basil Pesto Mac and Cheese

Total Time: 40 mins.

Servings: 3-4



Ingredients

1 and ½ cups spinach leaves	¾ cup basil leaves
½ cup toasted pine nuts	½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
4 cloves garlic, peeled and quartered	¾ tsp. salt
½ tsp. black pepper	1 Tbsp. lemon juice
½ cup olive oil	1 lb. dry elbow pasta
½ cup butter	½ cup all-purpose flour
3 cups milk	2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
1 summer squash, diced	

Preparation

Spinach Basil Pesto

Blend all ingredients in a food processor until nearly smooth. Add more oil to make it smoother.

Pesto Mac and Cheese

1. Bring salted water to a boil. Add pasta and summer squash and cook according to package directions. Drain and set aside.
2. In a saucepan over medium heat, melt butter. Add flour, salt and pepper. Whisk for 2 minutes, until bubbly and thick. Gradually whisk in 3 cups of milk. Continue stirring until thickened, 2-3 minutes.
3. Remove from heat and add cheddar, stirring until melted. Stir in cooked pasta.
4. Stir in pesto (start with 2 Tbsp., adding more if you wish). Season with salt and pepper.