



November 25, 2009

Greetings CSAers,

Happy Thanksgiving! We at Left Foot have several reasons to be thankful. This week we received good news on the grant front, and on the results of our annual fundraising dinner. First, we heard from the Bennett Family Foundation that they would be sending us a check for \$5,000 toward a new used truck or van. This is very welcome news as our two old trucks are less and less reliable, and we've outgrown them—we can't fit in all our produce for our Saturday farmers market in Tacoma. We have a couple of other requests out for truck funding, so we may end up with enough to get a nice used vehicle by the end of the year. Then just after this news, we received a check for \$5,000 in the mail from the Bank of America Foundation! This grant will go toward wages for the staff and crew, support that is especially needed in the lean winter months. Lastly we met our goal at the annual fundraiser to increase contributions from new donors. We received a total of \$5,052 in first-time cash donations, \$5,000 of which will be matched dollar for dollar by the Lucky Seven Foundation. These three grants will get us much closer to balancing our budget at the end of this year. Thank you Bennett Family, Bank of America and Lucky Seven!

I'm also feeling grateful for the enthusiastic support of several student helpers who joined us this fall: Caleb, Kirk, Chris, Erica, Katie, Adrianne and Perry have all been great role models and workmates for our crew, willing to jump into any task, lend support and stay on the job in all kinds of nasty weather. It's their understanding and acceptance of our mission that make us a community. Thank you!

What's in Your Box

- Beets
- Pie Pumpkin
- Leeks
- Sage or Rosemary
- Spinach and Lettuce Mix
- Potatoes



Beth's Farm News: What's Growing On

While I was personally laid up with the flu this past week, Jane, Brett and Caleb did a marvelous job of managing crews and volunteers. Amidst the not-so-pleasant weather, they harvested, cleaned, trimmed, organized and weeded.

Since this is the week for thankfulness, I sincerely thank you for participating in our winter CSA program. We are blessed to live in a region of the world where we can continue to grow produce -- though on a smaller scale than in the summer -- and eat locally through the winter. People like you are reducing fuel consumption and stimulating the local economy by purchasing food grown in your own community. For that and more, I am truly grateful to you. I hope you have a satiating week, both through the stomach and the heart!



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Recipes

Pumpkin Pie from Scratch adapted from PickYourOwn.org (these directions are a bit long and detailed, but they're very informative)

Ingredients

Start with a pie pumpkin - from a fresh 8" pie pumpkin, you will get about 3 cups of cooked, mashed pumpkin. For 3 cups of pumpkin, use the following:

- 1 cup sugar - or 3/4 cup honey (honey may make a heavier pie, though)
- 1.5 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- one half teaspoon ground ginger
- one half teaspoon salt (optional)
- 4 large eggs
- 3 cups cooked, pureed pumpkin
- 1.5 cans (12oz each) of evaporated milk

"Pie pumpkins" are smaller, sweeter, less grainy textured pumpkins than the usual jack-o-lantern types. Just like selecting any squash, look for one that is firm, no bruises or soft spots, and a good orange color.

Wash the exterior of the pumpkin in cool or warm water, no soap.

Cut the pumpkin in half. A serrated knife and a sawing motion works best - a smooth knife is more likely to slip and hurt you! Another method recommended by a CSA member is to soften it in the microwave for a few minutes before attempting to cut it.

Scoop out the seeds (save them for roasting) and scrape the insides. You want to get out that stringy, dangly stuff that coats the inside surface. I find a heavy ice cream scoop works great for this.

Cooking the pumpkin

Method 1 - Put it in a microwaveable bowl

Remove the stem, and put the pumpkin into a microwaveable. You may need to cut the pumpkin further to make it fit. The fewer the number of pieces, the easier it will to scoop out the cooked pumpkin afterwards. Put a couple of inches of water in the bowl, cover it, and put in the microwave.

Method 2 - Steam on the stovetop

You can also cook it on the stovetop; it takes about the same length of time in a steamer (20 to 30 minutes). I use a double pot steamer, but you could use an ordinary large pot with a steamer basket inside it.



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Either way, cook for 15 minutes on high, check to see if it is soft, then repeat in smaller increments of time until it is soft enough to scoop the innards out. Normally it takes 20 or 30 minutes in total.

Method 3 - Baking

You can also bake the prepared pumpkin in the oven, just like any other squash. This method takes the longest. Just put the prepared pumpkin in an ovenproof container (with a lid), add about 3 cups of water to help prevent it from drying out and pop it in an 350 F (200 C) oven. It normally takes about 45 minutes to an hour; just test it periodically by sticking it with a fork to see if it is soft.

Whether you cook the pumpkin on the stove, microwave, or even the oven, once it is cooked until it is soft, it is easy to scoop out the guts with a broad, smooth spoon, (such as a tablespoon). Use the spoon to gently lift and scoop the cooked pumpkin out of the skin. It should separate easily and in fairly large chunks, if the pumpkin is cooked enough.

If your pumpkin puree has standing, free water, you may want to let it sit for 30 minutes and then pour off any free water. That will help prevent you pie from being too watery! Beyond, that, I have not found that the water makes a difference - I wouldn't be TOO concerned about it!

Assembling the pie

To get a nice, smooth consistency, I use a Pillsbury hand blender. By blending it, you give the pie a smooth, satiny texture; rather than the rough graininess that is typical of cooked squashes. A regular blender works, too (unless you made a few frozen daiquiris and drank them first). Or a food processor or even just a hand mixer with time and patience. With the hand blender, it just takes 2 or 3 minutes!

The pumpkin is now cooked and ready for the pie recipe. Get the frozen daiquiris out and take a break!

Mix pumpkin with remaining ingredients using a hand blender or mixer. Pour into a pie crust, ready-made from the store or your favorite recipe.

I like a deep, full pie, so I fill it right up to about one quarter to one half inch from the very top. Don't be surprised if the mixture is very runny! It may start as a soupy liquid, but it will firm up nicely in the oven!

Bake at 425 F (210 C) for the first 15 minutes, then turn the temperature down to 350 F (175 C) and bake another 45 to 60 minutes, until a clean knife inserted into the center comes out clean.

Notes

- What do you do if you end up with more filling than will fit in your pie crust(s)? Easy! Of course, you can make another, smaller pie crust and fill a small pie pan... or just grease any baking dish, of a size that the extra filling will fill to a depth of about 2 inches, and pour the extra filling in.. then bake it. It will be a crustless pumpkin pie that kids especially love!



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- You may want to cover the exposed edges of the crust with strips of aluminum foil to prevent them from burning!
- You may freeze the puree or pie filling to use it later. Just use a freezer bag or other container to exclude as much air as possible. It should last a year or more in a deep freezer.
- The vast majority of people tell me this is the best pumpkin pie they've ever had. It's light and fluffy - however... if you want a heavy, more dense pie, use 3 eggs instead of 4 and 1 can of evaporated milk instead of 1.5)

Enjoy!