



# Prairie Harvest News

*tips & info for CSA subscribers*

A program of **THE WALLACE CENTERS OF IOWA**

*Enriching Community through Sustainable Food and Civility Initiatives*

Hello! The CSA season is here! As the chef of the Gathering Table restaurant I'm excited to be able to send you some of my favorite recipes and tips using the delicious vegetables that will be in the boxes. The recipes I'll be passing along to you are some of my own along with some of my favorites from other chefs. One suggestion: If you have never worked with some of the vegetables in your box, take a little taste of it raw. This will give you an idea of the flavor and may spark a culinary idea. There are so many flavors and directions you can go with food. Have fun experimenting and testing out new things!

I want to pass on some cooking techniques and terms that I'll be using in the CSA recipes, as well as some suggested basic kitchen staples. Also, I have listed some vegetable cookbooks that I find resourceful and a few recipe websites. I'm also here as a culinary resource to all of you. Please feel free to email or call me with any questions, comments, or recipes you may have. One of the greatest joys about the culinary world is you never stop learning. Let's all share recipes, tips, and any information.

Happy Cooking!!!  
Chef Katie  
katieporter@wallace.org

## **BASIC CULINARY TERMS**

**Chiffonade** — A cooking technique in which herbs or leafy green vegetables are cut into long, thin strips. This is generally accomplished by stacking leaves, rolling them tightly, and then cutting across the rolled leaves with a sharp knife, producing fine ribbons. If the stem is undesired, it may be removed before chiffonade.

**Dice** — To cut into cubes.  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch cube = large dice  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  inch cube = medium dice  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch cube = small dice

**Mince** — To chop into very small pieces, smaller than a small dice.

**Grate** — The process of transforming solid, firm food items into small pieces by rubbing the item against a grating instrument. I like using a microplane.

**Blanch** — To boil vegetables in salted water to cook and enhance the color, then stopping the cooking process by plunging vegetables in an ice bath. Make sure to use a big pot with lots of water so it stays boiling during the whole process. The water should taste like the ocean. Blanching vegetables is used to loosen peels from vegetables, fruits, and nuts and to prepare vegetables for freezing.

**Roux** (ru) — A mixture of flour and fat that, after being slowly cooked over low heat, is used to thicken mixtures such as soups and sauces.

*Do you have something to say about the CSA program? Email your comments, recipes, or tips to Ann Taylor at [anntaylor@wallace.org](mailto:anntaylor@wallace.org). Comments may be edited. Thanks!*

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## COOKING TECHNIQUES

**Braise** —(1) A technique that requires searing meat in oil or other fat and then cooking slowly in liquid. The effect of braising is to tenderize the meat. (2) To cook vegetables slowly in a small amount of liquid without preliminary browning.

**Broil** — To cook food directly under the heat source.

**Sauté** — To cook food quickly in a small amount of oil in a skillet or frying pan over direct heat. The French word sauter means to jump, referring to the action of tossing small pieces of food in a sauté pan.

**Stir Fry** — To quickly cook foods over high or medium-high heat in a lightly oiled skillet or wok, stirring or tossing constantly, until desired or specified doneness.

**Roast** — To cook by dry heat, usually in an oven.

**Stew** — To cook foods slowly in a specified amount of liquid in a covered pot or pan.

**Grill** — To cook on a grill or cooking equipment in which the heat source (gas, charcoal, hardwood or electric) is located beneath the rack on which the food is placed; it is generally not enclosed, although it can be covered.

**Sear** — Sealing in a meat's juices by cooking it quickly under very high heat.

**Reduce** — To cook liquids down so that some of the water evaporates, creating a thicker sauce.

**Deglaze** — To add liquid, such as wine or stock, to a pan in which foods have been fried or roasted in order to dissolve the caramelized juices stuck to the bottom of the pan.

**Blind Bake** — A technique for baking an unfilled pastry or tart shell; the shaped dough is weighted down with dry beans or pie weights, then baked completely before being filled.

## CULINARY STAPLES

Sea Salt

A good Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Balsamic Vinegar

White Wine Vinegar

Apple Cider Vinegar

Real Maple Syrup

Honey

Fresh Ginger

Tamari or Soy Sauce

Coconut Milk

*It's not necessary, but I like using a good Chili Paste.*

*Sambal or Siracha are both available at most Hy-Vees and Fareways.*

## COOKBOOKS AND RECIPE SITES

*These cookbooks are not only filled with great recipes, but also are full of vegetable "biographies," storage tips, preparations, and basic general use.*

- Vegetables from Amaranth to Zucchini  
*by Elizabeth Schneider*
- From Asparagus to Zucchini: A Guide to Farm-Fresh, Seasonal Produce  
*by Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition*
- Chez Panisse Vegetables  
*by Alice Waters*

[www.simplyrecipes.com](http://www.simplyrecipes.com)

<http://cookeatshare.com>

[www.epicurious.com](http://www.epicurious.com)

[www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com)

[www.cooks.com](http://www.cooks.com)

[www.delish.com/food/best-of-food-blogs](http://www.delish.com/food/best-of-food-blogs)

*A fun site that has many different food blogs.*

*Food blogs are resourceful and entertaining!*

<http://myvegetableblog.wordpress.com/>

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