



What's Cooking?

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Six Reasons to Love Home Grown Organics

By Jan Napier

Isn't this a fantastic time of year to be in the kitchen playing with summer's bountiful harvest? I get most of my produce from locally owned business Home Grown Organics and have been a happy customer for a number of months now. Besides the obvious health benefits, here's why I love it so much.

It's simple and convenient. Set up an account by phone or online (www.hgof.ns.ca), choose a Wednesday evening (Halifax only) or Saturday morning delivery, pick your food box size, let them know any food preferences, and you are on your way to receiving a weekly home delivery of fresh produce.

It's fun to be surprised. I'm excited with anticipation as I pull off the cover of my weekly food box. Often there's a unique gourmet item that I wouldn't even find in the grocery store like purple sweet peppers, purple string beans or multi-coloured carrots, and always a spectacular range of colours. A recent box included: grapes, apples, watermelon, carrots, garlic, leaf lettuce, mushrooms, red potatoes, red cabbage, beets, summer squash, cucumber, red tomatoes, and lovely orange cherry tomatoes.

It saves time. I like having someone else make some of my grocery shopping choices for me based on what's fresh, in season, and available locally. Sure there may be a few items that I still need to pick up, especially fruit because we eat lots of it, but mostly I have a perfect variety and more than enough.

Superior Quality. My experience has been that the quality of the product is often better than what I'm used to from the grocery store. Everything seems to be at the height of freshness and it's all organic! Since I'm getting produce for a week I plan my menus to use the more perishable items early on, and anything left at the end of the week goes into the soup pot.

Savings. I get the double sized box and all things considered, I have roughly calculated that there are



definitely some savings compared to buying the same elsewhere.

So let's get cooking. This is a recipe that I have used many times because I'm crazy for veggies and this incorporates a whole lot of them. Use your imagination and substitute other ingredients like leeks or fennel and play with fresh herbs. It's perfect for this time of year and will feed a crowd or, if you are happy with leftovers, it will

satisfy your veggie cravings throughout the week.

Ten Vegetable Bake (Makes 20 cups)

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 large red or white onions, coarsely chopped
- 3 jalapeno peppers, seeded and finely chopped (optional)
- 4 sweet peppers (2 green and 2 yellow) cut into one inch strips
- 3 celery stalks, thickly sliced
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 2 tbsp paprika
- 2 tsp each of salt, freshly ground pepper, dried leaf oregano and basil
- 28 oz can diced tomatoes
- 1 medium eggplant, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
- 1 large turnip or parsnip, chopped coarsely
- 2 zucchini, chopped coarsely
- 4 carrots, peeled and sliced 1/2 inch thick
- 3 potatoes cut into 1 inch cubes
- 1 lb green or yellow beans, trimmed
- Chopped basil, parsley or coriander for garnish (optional)

Heat oil in heavy saucepan and sauté onions until soft. Add peppers and celery, lower heat, and stir in sugar and seasonings. Add tomatoes with juice and simmer uncovered over medium to low heat, stirring often while preparing other ingredients. Add the rest of the vegetables and divide between two large pans. Cover and bake at 350°C for one hour or until done. Stir partway through. Serve hot or at room temperature. Meatless dinner option: Add chickpeas and top with lots of grated cheese.