



Tomatoes, A Labor of Love—thoughts on how we value food

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• 1st Jalapeño of the Season!

The heat of summer embodied in a special fruit! Jalapeños will get hotter and hotter as they absorb more of the sun's energy throughout the season, so these first peeps will be a bit milder. But each pepper is their own person, so always give it a little taste and check.

• 1st Tomatillos of the Season!

We're super excited to welcome these beautiful little lanterns back! The first fruits are always so low on the plant that the harvest position reminds me of looking for a sock under the bed, but they are worth it! Enjoy 😊

• **Fresh Shallots**— Shallots are a cross between onions and garlic, which is what gives them both their incredible potent flavor and their growth habit which looks exactly like an onion if it were trying to clove out like a garlic. Add into any sauté to caramelize, or mince up raw & muddle into balsamic vinegar, oil & salt for a crazy tasty salad dressing.

• Tomatoes

• Cilantro

• Broccoli / Broccolini

• Lacinato Kale

• Bunched Carrots

• Zucchini

• Cucumbers

• Willamette Sweet Onions

• Boysenberries

• Nicola Potatoes

• Head Lettuce

Hello veggie lovers, hope you've been enjoying the sunshine this week! Our solanaceous crops have been soaking it up, which is why the first jalapeños & tomatillos are making their seasonal debuts. This week on the farm was the first of many in the tomato tornado. Although we grow hundreds of crops, we grow more tomatoes than anything, & they require a lot of work.

Because soil born diseases are so common in many of the tasty varieties that we grow, we also grow disease-resistant tomatoes as rootstock. Around 3 weeks old, we take the seedlings and graft the tasty varieties onto the hardy rootstock, and place the plants into our own grafting chamber that keeps temperature and humidity just right so the tomatoes can heal over their graft union. After that, we up-pot each plant by hand into propagation media we mix ourselves from compost we made on farm. We prep soil and lay down drip irrigation and transplant each tomato by hand, and then ensues the weeks and weeks of pruning, suckering, and trellising to tame the vines.

By the time we actually get to harvest, so many hours have gone into each plant. We weave through the hot jungles, now made even hotter by the masks we wear, shoving years of experience into each glance as we decide which fruits are ready to be picked today and which will wait for tomorrow.

As we spend longer and longer days engaged in harvest, I find myself reflecting a lot on how we value food and labor. At market, I feel how high organic prices limit who can purchase food, and yet on farm, I see how much work goes into this labor of love and can't fathom charging less. As we all push sixty hour weeks during heat season, trying to catch the sun's energy as the plants bundle it up for us into fruits, I can't help but think about why it is there is an agricultural exemption to getting paid overtime.

Agricultural workers and domestic workers have always been left out of labor laws, leaving them with the fewest rights and the littlest pay. This was done intentionally, as at the time, recently "freed" slaves primarily filled these roles. In Oregon, these roles are currently filled by predominately first & second generation immigrants from Mexico and Guatemala, and the exemption has remained in place, continuing a system that does not value the people who labor for food, regardless of if you work on a small organic farm or a big conventional one. In any other job, you would get paid overtime, but in agriculture, we are still left behind, getting paid less for incredibly difficult work. It's bigger than simply raising the minimum wage as small organic farms struggle to get by & big federal systems loom above.

Why is it that we still operate under such a system? How can we pay farmers and farmworkers more while keeping food equitably priced? Why is it we haven't been asking these questions all along? I find I cannot look at tomatoes the same anymore, despite how grateful I still am to have them back in season. There are lessons to be learned in every bite, but after all, what do we nourish our bodies & minds for if not to transform the world.

—with love, your vegucator, LB markets@gatheringtogetherfarm.com

We'd love to see what you're doing with your CSA box! Tag us on social media @gatheringtogetherfarm!

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SALSA VERDE

@MYLATINATABLE



“Salsa verde can be prepared in many different ways. It can be made with roasted or raw tomatoes, and it can be combined with many different types of herbs. It can also be very thin or a little bit thicker. Whatever method of preparation you choose, tomatillos – or green tomatoes – are the star. Another reason that I love this salsa verde recipe is because I learned how to make it alongside my sister. Even though this is a very easy recipe to master, I am so grateful for the time that we were able to spend, laughing and cooking together. That is definitely one of the reasons that this is my favorite salsa.” –

Charbel Barker, @mylatinatable

<https://www.mylatinatable.com/authentic-mexican-salsa-verde/>

INGREDIENTS

- 5 **Tomatillos**
- 1/4 - 1/2 bunch fresh **Cilantro** finely chopped
- 2 Cloves of Garlic
- 1/4 **Onion**
- **Jalapenos** 1-3 depending on how spicy you want it
- Salt to taste
- Olive Oil

DIRECTIONS

1. Slowly sauté the tomatillos, the onion, and the jalapenos in a preheated frying pan with some olive oil for 5 minutes.
2. After 5 minutes, add the garlic cloves and continue cooking until the tomatillos are slightly browned.
3. Remove from the heat and blend the ingredients with the cilantro and salt in a blender.
4. If you want a thinner consistency, add a small amount of water.

CREAMY EGG TOAST WITH CARMELIZED SHALLOT



Adapted from <https://thefeedfeed.com/thepetitebeet/egg-and-caramelized-shalot-toast>

INGREDIENTS

- 1 slice sourdough bread (or whatever bread you have), toasted
- Oil
- 1 **Shalot**, thinly sliced
- 2-3 eggs, whisked
- **Cilantro**
- Chili garlic oil

On Eggs: Cooking eggs low & slow has been a game changer for my cooking. When scrambling eggs, stir constantly, removing from the heat once just set, and you'll get some of the creamiest eggs with the richest flavor you've ever had. —LB

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat a drizzle of oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the shallots and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook until caramelized, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat, set shallots aside on plate
2. Add more oil to the pan if needed. Pour in eggs and cook on low heat, agitating constantly with a rubber spatula. Cook just until set, about 2-3 minutes, softer than you're used to but not liquid.
3. Layer shallots, egg & cilantro on toast. Drizzle with chili garlic oil.

FRESH PICO DE GALLO



INGREDIENTS & DIRECTIONS

Mix together in a bowl diced **Tomatoes**, diced **Onions**, **Cilantro**, salt, lime juice, & **Jalapeño**. Taste as you go and figure out the ratio that you like. I love to have lots of onion in mine, and minced garlic to give it a savory warmth. Raw **shallots** would be a great addition too!

>MACHACA CON HUEVOS

The photo above is from <https://www.mylatinatable.com/mexican-style-machaca-eggs-great-breakfast-burritos/>. The complete recipe mixes the base ingredients for pico de gallo with shredded beef, and then has you pour eggs over to make it into a scramble, which you can serve wrapped up into little burritos or with beans on the side. Yum!