

Storage Tips & Tricks

**Mushrooms** Normally it would be ok to store in the original container. In this case you may have some leafy greens that are wet above the mushrooms so you would want to remove them and place them in a brown paper bag. Do not store mushrooms in a zip lock bag. Mushrooms need to breathe. Wipe clean with a damp cloth before using. If rinsing, use as little water as possible, dry before preparing. They should be used within a couple of days To prolong storage clean and cook and then store. Sauté, to have them ready for a soup or stew or sauce. Asparagus- To store, place the ends in a container of water. If storing for a couple of days leave room for possible growth and check the water level each day or wrap in a damp paper towel and store in plastic. Cleaning asparagus. Run under cold water gently rubbing the stalk and the tip. You may also soak in cold water. **To ensure grit is removed**, bring a pan of water to a boil, add a little salt. Add asparagus for 2-3 minutes to release any sandy soil remove and drop into an ice bath to stop the cooking. Store asparagus for later use. Use it in salad, roast, or sauté in olive oil and serve with lemon. Or try this trending recipe: [This 5-Ingredient Asparagus Pasta Is the Perfect Easy Weeknight Meal | Kitchn \(thekitchn.com\)](#) Leafy greens- Leafy greens have been washed and they will come to you damp. They have been watered or washed or iced. You can clean them when you receive them or as you use them. Either way before they are refrigerated, they should be dry, wrapped or layered in paper towel and stored in plastic, bags, or containers. **To clean greens:** Fill a pan **with warm** water, plunge in the leafy greens, you will find that most of the grit, dirt, will just fall away. Swish the greens. Allow to sit. Gently, lift out the greens, check the bottom of the pan for grit/sand/dirt. Repeat cold water until the water is completely clear, Drain and allow to dry. Wrap in paper towel and place in a plastic bag or layer paper towel in a container, Refrigerate Use the most tender greens 1<sup>st</sup> within a couple of days. Lettuce- Foil method: Wash and use salad spinner, lay on paper towels (use layers if there are a lot), roll up paper towels and place in HEAVY DUTY foil (buy the name brand really heavy and wide), and label with name and date. the greens are easy to access when preparing a meal and already cleaned and ready to go. The heavy-duty foil is a must, and the great news is that because the foil is thick, you will be able to reuse the same piece over and over. Reuse the paper towels as they dry out too. Spinach- can be washed and dried before storing. Store spinach wrapped in paper towel or in layers of paper towel. Dried leaves can keep up to one week. Wilted Spinach Salad, Creamed Spinach, Stir Fry, Sautee with Garlic, shallots, onion as a side or as a bed under Chicken, fish, sliced steak, Mix into eggs for omelets or fill the omelet, Wilt spinach into soups, stews, sauces, Greek Spinach Feta Pie, Spanakopita, Quiche, add spinach to smoothies, add to ricotta cheese for Lasagna for Spinach Stem Recipes, take a look at Pantryfun.com Radishes and Beets- and all root vegetables. When the root vegetable comes to you with the tops attached you should cut the tops from the root and store in two separate containers. These are tender greens, use them within a few days. Roots should keep a week or more.

The garden herbs

I have planted lemon balm in flower boxes or in a pot on its own or directly into the garden. Lemon balm actually will do best with a bit of shade. I have added hyssop to a pot that has sage, oregano, thyme. Hyssop will do well in your perennial garden if you can find a space. Popcorn - Place the ear of corn into a paper lunch bag, Fold the bag closed. Set the bag in the microwave and set the time at 2.5 minutes. **DO NOT LEAVE THE ROOM.** Listen to the corn popping and if it slows, stop. Then remove the bag from the oven, **CAUTION, EVERYTHING IS HOT!** Pour popcorn into a bowl and then top with butter or olive oil, salt, herbs, your choice.

**You will often receive a bunch of cut herbs:** To keep fresh herbs: Remove dead stems and leaves, wash as needed. Snip the stems. Place stems in a container filled with water, do not submerge the leaves. Changing the water daily will help to keep the herbs fresh. They can keep up to a week on the counter. Or Cover the container with a plastic bag and refrigerate. If storing basil leave on the counter, **do not refrigerate**. Change water every day or two. Most fresh herbs will last more than a week when stored this way.

Mint Tea: Boil a cup of water and clean and tear 8-10 mint leaves and add them directly to the cup or teapot (you will need a strainer). Allow the tea to steep for 10 minutes. Steeping longer will produce stronger tea. Leaves can be removed or left in the cup. Pouring from a pot you can pour through a strainer. Add a little lemon, honey, sugar, to taste. Mint leaves can also be added to a cup of your favorite tea steeping along with your tea bag for a little more flavor.

**Home- made Vegetable Stock - If you haven’t started already, it is time to save scraps for vegetable stock. Your stock will change as we work through the season. Scraps can be frozen until you are ready to use them.**

**It is time to start keeping a stock container/bag in the freezer**

**4c vegetable scraps = 2 quarts of stock**

Veggie peels, ends, tops, roots, vegetables a little past prime.

Be sure they are not spoiled, moldy etc.

The three vegetables always found in stock are:

Onion, Celery, and carrot

Save, leeks, scallions, parsnips, asparagus ends, mushroom scraps,

Lettuce, spinach, and kale leaves and stems.

Parsley, cilantro, Later in the season, pepper, squash, eggplant, and corn cobs.

Add a bay leaf and some black peppercorns

Week 4 2023—May 15th—May 21th

Asparagus is in abundance and in full season at the moment. Freezing directions were included last week and they can be found on the website. Blanching is a part of the preparation for freezing most vegetables to ensure that they keep their color, texture, and flavor.

This week there is an addition that most of us consider a treat. Mushrooms will be in all of the shares. Mushrooms come from one of our partners. You will find either Button or Baby Bella varieties in your shares and they can be used interchangeably in most recipes. Baby Bella are often used as a meat substitute in vegan and vegetarian diets. Although nutritious, they are not protein rich so that you would need to add a protein substitute to the meal as well. Mushrooms, you will find, will pair well with some of the other produce that has been grown here on the farm.

It is still spring and leafy greens continue to fill the boxes. Lettuce anyone? I am including an alternate method of storage in the tips this week. This “foil method” was a suggestion a few years ago and our CSA members have had good results. If it hasn’t already, lettuce has to become a part of your meal plan every day, at least for two meals a day this week. Salad should be your main dish at dinner, maybe even lunch. It is a great way to lighten caloric intake. A salad for dinner will never make me feel as though I have over-eaten. Here are some ideas to help you this week. [38 Lettuce Recipes That Go Beyond Salad | Bon Appétit \(bonappetit.com\)](#)

Back out to the garden to plant Lemon Balm and Hyssop often referred to as licorice mint. Both plants are perennial, and both are members of the mint family. Hyssop does need to be planted in full sun and I have added it to pots with thyme, sage, and oregano in the past. Before the end of the season, I have often moved hyssop to a perennial bed. It is coming up everywhere in my garden from previous years. I like it more as an ornamental plant than I do as an herb. I love the pretty blue flowers at the end of the season. However, the more I read the more ideas there are for its use. Years ago, I read that it was used as an addition to braised carrots just before serving. Today I am reading that chopped hyssop can be sprinkled over roasted vegetables. Add some leaves to your mint tea, sprinkle it over a pasta dish, and it can be served with some soft cheeses. Lemon balm is great as an herb tea, and in pesto. Lemon balm can be added to a cucumber salad, and it is great for seasoning roast chicken, and even salmon. As the herb garden grows you should be pinching herbs as they mature so that the plant will fill out and continue to produce leaves not flowers and seeds.

As always Trish is available to assist you, to reach her with your questions call 908-879-7189 or [Trish@alstedefarms.com](mailto:Trish@alstedefarms.com). To reach me, send ideas and recipes to [jenn@alstedefarms.com](mailto:jenn@alstedefarms.com)

*Until next week, enjoy the freshness!*

*Jenn Borealo*



# Caramelized Onion Baby Bella Panini Melt

To make the caramelized onion + mushroom filling:

- 2 tablespoons EACH: unsalted butter AND olive oil
- 1 and 1/2 large onions (or 2 medium) sliced into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 1/4 teaspoon thyme or about 1 T fresh thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce or 1-2 T white wine
- 8 oz fresh baby Bella or button mushrooms, sliced into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 1 - 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1/4 - 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (or more to taste)
- 1 teaspoon flour or cornstarch
- 1/4 cup mushroom broth (or beef broth)
- 2 tablespoons minced parsley

To make the panini:

- 3-4 or more- 1 oz. slices provolone cheese, cut in half (or vegan provolone)
- 6-8 slices of fresh French or sour dough bread (gluten free substitute)
- Cooking spray or olive oil

To make the caramelized onion + mushroom filling:

Preheat a large skillet on medium heat. Add the butter and olive oil. When the butter is completely melted, add the onions. Let the onions cook for 10-15 minutes. Stir periodically, allowing the onions to brown but not burn. Reduce the heat to medium low and allow the onions to cook for 20 minutes longer stirring as needed. Add the thyme, and Worcestershire sauce or wine and let cook for another 2 minutes. Remove from pan. Add a Tablespoon of butter and olive oil to the pan and allow it to melt but not smoke. Add in the mushrooms. Sauté mushrooms for 10 minutes, add the garlic and cook just until it is tender. Add the onions back to the pan and, add salt and pepper to taste, red pepper flakes, and flour or cornstarch. Cook for 1 minute more. Add the broth in 1 tablespoon at a time. Wait until the onion/mushroom mixture absorbs the liquid before adding the next tablespoon. Once the 4 tablespoons are added, remove from heat, and add the parsley.

To make the panini:

To assemble the sandwich, place a halved slice of cheese on a piece of bread. Add desired amount of filling and top with another halved slice of cheese and another slice of bread. Spray one side of the sandwich with cooking spray or brush with olive oil and place that side down on the

panini press or into a heavy frying pan to grill. Spray/brush the other side and press sandwich for 3 - 4 minutes or until the preferred toast level is achieved.

Adapted from: [littlespicejar.com](http://littlespicejar.com)

# Week 4 Harvest

- Asparagus

Spinach

Lettuces

Chives

Beets

Scallions
- Leeks

Kale

Radishes

Swiss Chard

Mint

Anise & Lemon Balm Plants

*\*\*Your actual CSA share contents will be listed on the label inside of your box and may differ from this list. Your share contents are based on your individual preferences and customizations that you make on your Harvie profile, as well as changes in availability.*

## Lettuce Soup

- 1 cup chopped onions, scallions, and/or shallots
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 T olive oil
- 3/4 teaspoon ground coriander
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 1/2 cup diced (1/3 inch) peeled potato
- 4 cups vegetable broth or more as needed
- 8 cups coarsely chopped lettuce leaves including ribs (3/4 lb)
- 2 T chopped herbs to include parsley and chives

Cook onion mixture and garlic in 1 tablespoons butter and 1 T olive oil in a 4- to 5-quart heavy pot over moderately low heat, stirring, until softened, 3 to 5 minutes. Add coriander, salt, and pepper and cook, stirring, 1 minute. Stir in potato, lettuce, and broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, until potato is very tender, about 15 minutes. Purée soup in batches in a blender (use caution when blending hot liquids) and transfer to a 2- to 3-quart saucepan. Bring soup to a simmer, then whisk in remaining tablespoon butter and salt and pepper to taste. Blend in chopped herbs, serve.

Adapted from: [Bostonorganics.com](http://Bostonorganics.com)