



## ONIONS

Here is one vegetable that can make you cry, yet maintains a strong presence in numerous cuisines around the globe and most kitchens— onion. Although the exact origin of onions is unknown, it is believed to be one of the earliest cultivated crops.

Throughout history, there are several references to how onions were used as food as well as medicine.

Quick online research indicated that onions were used in Egyptian burials, celebrated as medicine in Europe, early Roman Empire, and ancient India, and are found in the earliest written cookbooks. It is taboo in some Indian cultures to eat onion in any form as it is believed to cause an imbalance of mental temperament. Regardless of myths and beliefs surrounding it, there are endless recipes that begin with onions.

Yellow onion, a bit on the sweeter side, is popular in European cuisine; Red onion with its sharp and pungent taste is popular in Asian cuisine; and White onion which has a milder flavor, is common in Mexican cuisine.



Despite India's 'love-hate' relationship with onions, it is an essential ingredient in most curries and sauces. Just like potatoes and tomatoes, onions are the 'must-have' vegetable in my mom's kitchen. Basically, everything Indian she cooks starts with chopped onions (I will get more into that next week). Farmers in Northwestern India are accustomed to a simple lunch that includes a Roti (wheat flour flatbread), Achaar (week 11 NL), and a small red onion. My dad recalls that as being the most satisfying meal in the middle of a hot day. I remember in 1998 when an unusually hot summer and late monsoon caused a severe shortage of onions in India and the price of onions became a hot political issue. Apparently, that remains the case and is a good indication how much Onion is appreciated in Indian cuisine.

We have been including onions in your harvest box for the past few weeks and hopefully you've had some fun with them. You can store whole onions in a cool, dark, and well-ventilated area to prolong their life. I will talk more about onions and tomatoes and curry sauces next week.

Until then, Stay Safe Stay Healthy!

Ruby

*PS: I had written this newsletter for week 14, which we ended up missing because of fires and smoke. We had planned to add Onions to your harvest box that week.*

*Also, Inder and his wife Rupinder welcomed their baby boy Arjan Nagra last week.*

## WHAT'S IN THE BOX

- \*Italian Basil
- \*Rainbow Chard
- \*Grapes
- \*Pear
- \*Green Bell Pepper
- \*Serrano Pepper
- \*Yellow Potatoes
- \*Salad Mix
- \*Cherry Mix Tomato

## RECIPE

## Basil, Walnut, Sweet Onion Pesto

Reference: [onions-usa.org](http://onions-usa.org)

## Ingredients:

- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium white or yellow onion, chopped (1 cup)
- 1 ½ cups packed fresh basil leaves
- ¼ cup chopped raw walnuts
- 5 tablespoons shredded parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt, or to taste

Heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil in a medium skillet over medium-high. Add the onion and cook for 5 to 7 minutes, until lightly browned and softened. Set aside to cool.

Add the basil and the cooled onions to a small food processor. Pulse 4 to 5 times until finely chopped. Add the walnuts, cheese, lemon juice, remaining 3 tablespoons of olive oil, and salt. Puree 30 to 45 seconds, until all ingredients are combined and the walnuts and cheese make the pesto almost creamy in appearance. Add more salt if desired. Serve right away or refrigerate for up to 2 days.

Note: If you enjoy the zesty bite of raw sweet onions, you can make this pesto without sautéing the onions first. Simply add all the ingredients to the food processor.