

I recently, for the first time in my life, signed up to receive locally-grown organic farmers market vegetables every other week. The first week, I received, among other things, a bunch of sweet potatoes. The second week, again among other things, a load of turnips. Although I've had sweet potatoes before I'd never actually cooked them myself. And turnips? I don't think I'd ever actually eaten one before in any way, shape or form. And I cannot remember EVER purchasing sweet potatoes or turnips at a grocery store. ("I got a hankering for some turnips!" That'll get you up off the couch.) And although I've been learning to cook over the past few years, sweet potatoes and turnips were another country for me.

I knew what I was getting into when I signed up for farmers market vegetables. You get what the earth produces in its season. I can hear Mother Earth telling me, "You get what you get and you're gonna' like it!" (I actually don't think she cares whether or not I like it though.)

So I decide to make a sweet potato and kale soup and I found a recipe for a potato (not sweet potato) and kale soup and decided to substitute the sweet potatoes for the regular potatoes.

I peel and cube the sweet potatoes and throw them in a pot of boiling water. How long to cook? I check a cookbook that I have and it says, "For best results, leave unpeeled sweet potatoes whole. If [peeled] and cut into chunks before cooking, they tend to become waterlogged (Deborah Madison, *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone*, p428)."

Oh, well....then, into a pot of vegetable broth, herbs and lots of kale, I add the waterlogged sweet potatoes, substituted for regular potatoes, and begin making the soup. How long to cook? I check my cookbook and it says, "Sweet potatoes don't have enough starch to behave the same way regular potatoes do, so they're not really interchangeable with potatoes unless you use some of both (Ibid,p428)"

Seriously? Yes, but what if those sweet potatoes are waterlogged? Will it work then? This is turning out to be a small-scale disaster.

Now for the turnips! Prior to last week, if you asked me to pick up some turnips at the store, I would have headed directly for the frozen food section or possibly even the bread aisle; but to look for low-fat, gluten-free turnips.

When I see actual turnips they look like beets, which I do like, so I'm hopeful. I decide to make a turnip au gratin loaded up with gruyere cheese. Anything loaded up with that cheese has to be good and the turnip au gratin did not disappoint. It was yummy and quickly gone.

As for the soup with the incorrectly substituted waterlogged sweet potatoes – best soup I have ever tasted...and Tammy agreed. Proving two wrongs do make a right! Yes, the soup was mild and pleasantly sweet.

Well, Thanksgiving is upon us. Many of us will be cooking this week yet likely for far fewer people. Perhaps the holiday meal might feel a bit like any other meal, maybe with a few extras.

2020 is winding down. I likely won't get any argument, or feel the need to explain myself to say that this year has been not a small-scale but a full-on disaster.

Yet despite the disaster and some less than desirable ingredients, life can still taste sweet. All these wrongs can still turn out all right.

There are reasons for hope. There are reasons to be grateful. There are reasons that life can still be sweet.

Some vaccines look promising....

A dysfunctional president will be limited to one term...(fingers crossed)

We still have dogs and cats to keep us company...and they've loved spending so much time with us.

We've learned some new technology

We get to see each other on zoom

We are blessed with beloved members who continue to make UUMAN special

We had a wonderful service auction

This is just the tip of the iceberg....

Now take some time to type in the chat the things that give you hope, the things for which you are grateful, the things that make life sweet this year.