



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Summer 2020

Harvest lists are online.

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Find many more recipes on our website.

Now Taking Orders for Chicken Shares

We're partnering with Top Knot Farms to offer chicken shares. Top Knot Farms is a small family-owned poultry farm in Benson, AZ that raises birds on pasture.

Each share will consist of two pasture-raised chickens, one whole and one butchered, and will cost approximately \$50. To pre-order your chicken share, please put down a \$20 deposit with the CSA Shop volunteer.

It's Chile Season!

It wouldn't be August at the CSA without the smell of roasted green chiles. Starting this week, Farmer Frank will be sending them, roasted and fresh, for our produce shares. Although we don't yet know what their heat levels will be, please let one of our volunteers know if you prefer mild chiles and we'll do our best to accommodate your request.

From Nopal to Nopalitos: How to Cook with Nopales

By Carolyn Niethammer on *Savor the Southwest*

Every year, for thousands of years, people living in the Sonoran Desert could count on prickly pear producing succulent delicious new pads this time of year. The native varieties of *Opuntia* have lots of thorns and it must have been a chore to clean them when all you had was a sharp-edged stone for a tool. Carolyn here today, recalling that one of the reasons that Tucson was named a UNESCO City of Gastronomy is that modern Sonoran Desert dwellers eat some of the same foods people ate here



when they were just small family groups drifting through the area, long before there were even villages. That's quite a testament to the staying power of these local foods.

Today, most of us who like to pick and eat prickly pear use the *Ficus indica* variety that grows taller and without big thorns on the young pads. It is native to areas further south, but it can survive here in gardens. Although the big thorns are absent, there are, however, tiny stickers called glochids, and they can be dangerous so you should wear rubber gloves when working with the pads. The glochids look like small hairs but they do have barbs on the end. You don't want them in your finger or your tongue! I tend to just scrape the sides of the pad with a serrated steak knife, then cut off the edge as in [this] picture. The edge has so many thorns [that] it is not worthwhile to try to clean it, so just trim it off.

Once you have the cleaned pads, you'll need to cut them up into strips or small squares and cook them. Now you have turned your nopal into nopalitos. You can do this in oil in a frying pan, or follow the Rick Bayless method and oil them, place on a cookie sheet and bake until olive green. The cooking shrivels them and dries up the gummy sap that is so healthful but that some people find objectionable.

You can put the cooked nopalitos into a taco, combined with meat or alone. Or, if you are introducing them to people who might be wary, include them as a new ingredient in some familiar food. In a previous post we gave a recipe for [nopalitos and pineapple salsa](#) which is a great side dish. It comes from *The Prickly Pear Cookbook*.

Another super easy familiar dish is this apple and carrot salad, with, of course, nopalitos. It is adapted from [Cooking the Wild Southwest: Delicious Recipes for Desert Plants](#), a compilation of information on how to gather and cook 23 delicious and easily gathered desert plants.

Visit <https://savorthesouthwest.blog> for more local food history, recipe ideas, and more!

RECIPES

Three Bean Salad with Nopalitos

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This salad is a take on the traditional canned three bean salad with the diced nopales taking the place of green beans. The different colors and sizes add interest, but you can use just one type of bean for convenience.

2 nopal pads, grilled or broiled and cut into bite size pieces
1 cup cooked white beans
1 cup cooked kidney beans
1 cup cooked black beans
½ medium onion, diced
½ bell pepper, diced
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon oil
2 teaspoons apple cider or rice wine vinegar
2 teaspoons lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients and stir well to mix. Let salad sit for at least one hour before serving.

Summer Squash Griddle Cakes

Heidi DeCosmo, Tucson CSA

2 cups unpeeled, shredded zucchini (2 medium), excess moisture squeezed out once shredded
½ cup finely chopped onion
1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon parsley
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 egg, slightly beaten
¼ cup milk
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
Vegetable oil for frying

Combine the shredded squash, onion, Old Bay seasoning, salt, pepper, parsley, and baking powder, and let the mixture rest for 15 minutes. In a small bowl, beat together the egg, milk, and flour. Pour over zucchini and mix: the result should be the consistency of pancake batter. Add a little more milk or flour if the batter seems too runny or too stiff. Pour ¼-inch of oil in the bottom of a heavy skillet and heat over medium-high heat. Drop the batter by the tablespoon into the hot oil and fry until the cakes are golden on each side. Drain on paper towels and serve.

Green Chile Polenta

Andrew Gardner, Tucson CSA

4 cups of water
2 tablespoons olive oil or butter
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup polenta (also called coarse corn meal or corn grits)
Roasted green chiles, to taste; skins, seeds, and stems removed; chopped.

Place everything together in a pot and bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly to avoid burning or lumps. After the contents boils, reduce the heat and stir constantly for five minutes. Cover and set aside to let the corn finish cooking and absorbing the water, about 20 minutes. Three serving suggestions: (1) Eat it exactly as it is now, served with the rest of your meal; (2) scoop into a mold like a cake pan and chill overnight; then slice and pan fry in butter (This isn't a particularly healthy option, but it is delicious); (3) add to scrambled eggs or tofu.

Potato Tacos Dorados

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

These are really nice garnished with shredded cabbage or lettuce, slices of cucumber and onion. Use roasted chiles to spice them up. Making the folded tacos is a kind of delicate operation and it can take a few trial tacos to really get the temperature right and the hang of it. Be patient and don't be frustrated if your first couple end up a bit ugly – they'll still taste fine.

About 1 ½ cups cooked potatoes, lightly mashed
½ teaspoon ground cumin
2 cloves garlic, minced
Salt and pepper to taste
2-4 roasted chiles, peeled, seeded and diced
About 8 corn tortillas
2-4 tablespoons vegetable oil
Salsa and garnish for tacos

Mix together potatoes, chiles, cumin, garlic and salt and pepper. In a heavy skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of oil over medium heat. Place one tortilla into oil and flip after one or two seconds (this makes the tortilla pliable enough to fold in half without breaking). Place 1 heaping tablespoon of potato mixture on the half of the tortilla closest to you. Using a fork or tongs, gently fold the other half over the filling, towards you. Press the tortilla closed for a few seconds to seal, then move the taco to one side to make room for more tacos. Repeat with remaining tortillas. Add more oil as needed to keep skillet covered in a thin layer. Flip tacos when beginning to brown on bottom side. When cooked on both sides, place on an old newspaper to drain.