



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

May 23, 2006 – Issue 37

Spring 06
Week 12 of 13

This Week's Share

Artichokes, minisquash or red globe radishes
Tomatoes
Sweet potato
Blue Lake green beans
Fennel
Salad mix
Mixed summer squash
Trucker's Favorite sweet corn

Recipes in this Issue

Summer Squash Quesadillas
Radishes
Fennel, Orange, and Parsley Salad
Roasted Fennel
Linguine with Fennel and Tuna
Fennel and Potato Gratin
Caramelized Fennel
Roasted Corn



Farmer Frank grows an heirloom variety of sweet corn known as Trucker's Favorite, a highly flavorful white dent corn (i.e., characterized by a dent or crease in the kernel) that can be eaten fresh as roasting ears.

TCSA Contact

Philippe Waterinckx

Newsletter Editor

Christa Selig

www.tucsoncsa.org

It's time to renew your CSA subscription!

Summer session runs June 6 to August 29 (13 weeks): single payment of \$221 or 3 monthly payments of \$76 (not including goat cheese).

Yearly CSA subscription: \$799

More details at www.tucsoncsa.org

WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK: FENNEL, TOMATOES, SWEET CORN

WHAT IS FENNEL?

Fennel is so aromatic and was once so prized that in John Milton's seventeenth-century epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, the serpent, while tempting Eve, lures her with the promise that the Forbidden Fruit "more pleased my sense/Than smell of sweetest fennel."

Fennel has a fat white bulb (like an onion) and a feathery top of green stalks and fluffy fronds. For a hint of the flavor to come, take a sniff. Often likened in taste to licorice, fennel is in fact far more subtle with a texture similar to celery, and unlike licorice, the flavor is savory, not sweet. Raw, fennel is cool and crunchy. Cooked, fennel turns mellow and the flesh softens; it is perfect as a side dish for fish or chicken and a wonderful addition to pasta or gratins.

Fennel bulbs can be sliced and served raw in salads in various combinations with other vegetables; parboiled for pastas; caramelized and served as a side dish; braised whole; and cooked in vegetable broths, court-bouillons, and fish stocks.

Fennel is sometimes mistaken for anise (fennel does belong to the same plant family, but anise is an herb).

HOW TO TRIM AND CORE

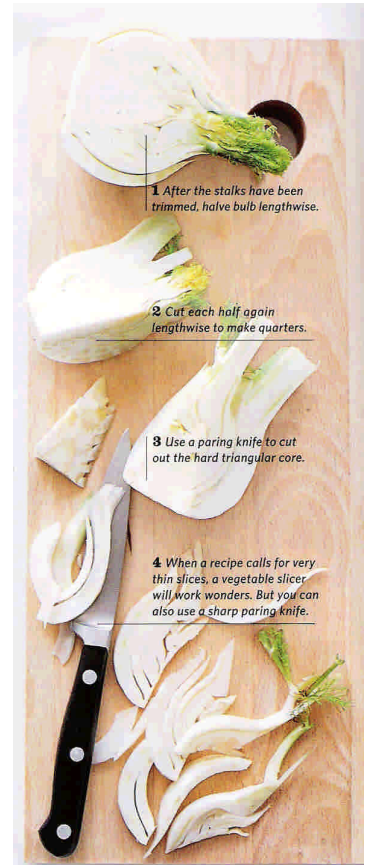
Whether served raw or cooked, fennel bulbs must be trimmed first: Cut the stalks from the top of the bulb, then remove any tough outer layers. Some recipes call for the removal of the triangular core. This can be done easily with a paring knife.

USING FRONDS AND STALKS

Fennel trimmings don't need to be thrown away. Sprinkle fronds on soups, stews, and pastas as a garnish. The stalks add flavor to stocks or roasted poultry or fish (stuff them into the cavity).

FIRST TOMATOES OF THE YEAR!

Try our very first Yellow Taxi, Cherokee Purple and Juliet tomatoes. Not many to start with, but their numbers will grow.



Fennel, Orange, and Parsley Salad

Serves 2

1 Trim one **fennel bulb**. Quarter, core, and thinly slice the bulb crosswise. **2** Using a paring knife, remove the peel and pith of 2-3 medium **oranges**. Separate oranges into segments over a large bowl to catch the juices, then add segments to bowl. **3** Add fennel, 1/3 cup **fresh parsley leaves**, 1 tablespoon slivered pitted **black olives**, ½ teaspoon olive oil, and season with **salt** and **pepper**. Gently toss and serve.

Roasted Fennel

Serves 2

1 Preheat oven to 425°. Trim 1 medium **fennel bulb**. Halve bulb lengthwise and slice lengthwise into ½-inch-thick pieces. **2** On a rimmed baking sheet, toss fennel with ½ tablespoon **olive oil** and season with **salt** and **pepper**. Roast, turning once, until browned, 25 to 30 minutes.

Linguine with Fennel and Tuna

Serves 2

1 Cook ½ pound **linguine**. Drain and return to pot; reserve ¼ cup pasta water. **2** Trim one **fennel bulb**; reserve 1/8 cup chopped fronds. Quarter, core, and thinly slice the bulb crosswise; cook in ½ tablespoon **olive oil** in a skillet over medium-high heat until golden, stirring occasionally, 10 minutes. Add to pasta along with fronds, 1-1/2 tablespoons fresh **lemon juice**, 1 tablespoon each **capers** and olive oil, and reserved pasta water. **3** Season with **salt** and **pepper**. Flake in 1 can (6 ounces) drained **solid light tuna**. Gently toss and serve.

Fennel and Potato Gratin

Serves 3

1 Preheat oven to 400°. Lightly **butter** an 8-inch square baking dish. **2** Trim one **fennel bulb**; halve and core. Slice bulb and 2 pounds **Red La Soda potatoes** very thin. **3** Add potatoes to prepared dish in three layers, alternating with two layers of interspersed fennel and potatoes. Season each layer with **salt** and **pepper**, sprinkle with 2 tablespoons grated **Asiago cheese**, and dot with ½ tablespoon butter. (Omit cheese from final layer.) **4** Pour ½ cup **heavy cream** over top. Bake until potatoes are tender when pierced with the tip of a paring knife, about 45 minutes. Sprinkle with ½ cup grated Asiago; bake until golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes.

Caramelized Fennel

Serves 2

Trim one **fennel bulb**, removing any tough outer layers. Cut the bulb in half vertically, cut out the core, and cut the bulb into very thin slices.

Heat a large sauté pan over medium heat, add 2 tablespoons **olive oil**, and when the oil is hot, add the sliced fennel. Cook, tossing or stirring occasionally, for 8 to 10 minutes, until the fennel is caramelized and tender. Season with **salt** and **pepper**. Drain off any excess oil and serve. (This dish holds well and can easily be reheated; no additional oil is necessary.) Serve with fish and with grilled meats and poultry, or use for a pizza topping.

Summer Squash Quesadillas

Jo Dwyer, Angel Valley Organic Farm, Leander, Texas
www.angelvalleyfarms.com

Sauté a smallish **yellow or red onion** in olive oil for a couple of minutes or so, then add a chopped **medium summer squash** (any variety will work) and a diced **garlic** clove. Stir uncovered until the squash begins to soften, then add ½ can drained **black beans** (or **teparty beans**, if you still have them) and ¼ cup **corn**. Heat through. Place three **flour tortillas** on a warm griddle and, using a slotted spoon, pile the cooked veggies onto one-half of each tortilla. Sprinkle veggies with shredded **cheddar cheese** or crumbled **goat cheese**, and fold the empty side of the tortilla over the top of the veggie side to form a half-moon. Cook over medium heat until starting to brown, then flip the quesadillas over and continue cooking until they're browned on the other side. Serve with picante sauce.

As an alternative, omit the black or tepary beans from the cooked vegetable and instead spread a thin layer of **refried beans** on one-half of the tortillas. Place on the griddle and pile the cooked veggies on top. Then add the cheese and cook as instructed above.

Radishes

Mariquita Farm, Watsonville, California
www.mariquita.com

Radish Option #1:

You like radishes and are delighted to throw them into salads or trim and eat as is. Special treat: slice each radish into three or four thick slices and place on a piece of fresh, great baguette or other fancy bread that's been buttered and salted. YUM.

Radish Option #2:

You and your family are not fond of raw radishes. Presto! You now have "ruby turnips" and you are welcome and encouraged to throw them into that vegetable soup or stew. Or braise them on their own, then add in their greens.

Roasted Corn

David Pendergrass, www.victoryseeds.com

Outside or in the fireplace, build a fire and allow it to turn to coals. Pile some of the coals off to the side. Put in your ears of corn, shucks and all, and cover with hot coals. Leave them in the coals for 10 to 15 minutes or until the kernels are tender.