



# Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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**Summer `08**

**WEEK 5 of 13**

Harvest list is [Online](#)

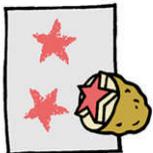
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**More recipes on our website**

## Done with potato salad?

Want something new to do with your potatoes? First try Wendy's vegan potato salad (on the back page!) But if you're still tired of spuds, you could forgo the ubiquitous summer potato salads altogether. If you can stand the heat, try grating them up and making some potato pancakes! Of course, if you're really at



your wits end, you can always make potato print art!

## SMALL BITES

**One for the road:** Nearly one-fifth, or 19 percent, of American meals are eaten in the car.

**Ag energy:** Americans consume about 400 gallons of oil a year per person – some 17 percent of total energy use – for agriculture.

## Newsletter editor

Kimi Eisele

## FLOODS OF CHANGE?



As the floodwaters in the Midwest slowly recede and communities there begin the long road to recovery, the ripple effects of the weather have reached the rest of the nation. Even here in Arizona, where we happily greet the rains, we've probably already noticed the rising costs of food.

An estimated 2 million acres of farmland in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and other key corn-belt states were inundated earlier this month. Predominantly corn and soybean fields were destroyed, which has spiked the prices of those commodities. But there's a trickle-down affect. The high cost of corn means the price of other foods—wheat, eggs, dairy, and meat—also goes up.

Like many natural disasters, this one revealed the flaws of industrial agriculture by exposing the chains of dependency in an inherently weak system. This time the flooding adds to an already precarious agricultural economy. Corn prices were already inflated because of high fuel costs, the sinking dollar, rising demand in fast-growing countries like India and China, and government-mandated ethanol production. When farmers and fields are already vulnerable, disasters like this one can simply drown them. And because our agricultural system relies so heavily on a few large farms producing a few staple crops, we all feel the aftershocks.

Since the majority of livestock in this country are corn-fed, some producers of beef, poultry, pork and even eggs, cheese and milk may be forced out of business or forced to slaughter their animals to offset the high costs of feed. As a result, experts say we're likely to see the cost of meat products rise significantly in the coming months. And because corn makes its way into almost every processed food item (from soda pop to toothpaste), it's possible that we'll see higher costs for those items as well.

Aren't we CSA members immune to all of this? It depends, of course, on where else we get our food. Most of us don't survive solely on our CSA shares.

Yet it's programs like ours and other small-scale local alternatives that might serve as models for a healthier system. Consider the sentiment of James Herring, president and CEO of Fiona Industries, a large-scale cattle company in Amarillo, Texas, who was quoted in a June 22, AP wire story as saying, "This is not sustainable. The cattle industry is going to have to get smaller."

Indeed. Many of us chose to join the CSA because we believe in smaller-scale farms, diverse crops, grass-fed livestock, and supporting a farmer close to home. Not only do we have more control over what we eat and how it is grown, but also we're less vulnerable to large-scale changes and disasters.

Let's hope that the after-effects of this summer's flooding (not to mention the continued rising costs of fuel) will help wake up others to small-scale agricultural alternatives. In the meantime, we can keep supporting local farms and spreading the word about the benefits of doing so wherever we can.

### **Fresh Refrigerator Pickles**

Wendy McCrady, Tucson CSA member

Here's an easy way to use your cucumbers. They are so tasty you'll be eating them straight from the jar. Use them on your 4th of July burgers and chop them up for the potato salad, too.

6 cups sliced cucumber, peeled if skin is tough

1 cup sliced onion

2 cups white vinegar

3 cups sugar

1 and 1/2 tablespoons salt

2 teaspoons pickling spice

1 teaspoon celery seeds

1 teaspoon mustard seed

Heat vinegar, sugar, salt, and spices, stirring until sugar dissolves. Boil about 10 minutes. Sterilize jars and lids with boiling water. Fill jars with cucumber and onion slices.

Carefully pour in vinegar mixture. Store in refrigerator.

These will keep for several months. Note: strain leftover vinegar liquid and mix with olive oil for a flavorful salad dressing.

### **Vegan Potato Salad**

Wendy McCrady, Tucson CSA member

4 large potatoes, baked or steamed whole

1 small onion, minced

Fresh refrigerator pickles (recipe above), diced

Vegan mayonnaise (Nasoya or Vegenaïse)

Prepared mustard

2 tablespoons nutritional yeast

Salt & pepper

Peel skin from potatoes while still warm. Cut in small cubes and place in a large bowl. Add onion and a generous splash of pickle juice and toss well. The warm potatoes will soften the onions just a bit to take off the sharp edge. Stir in pickles. In small bowl, mix a heaping spoonful of mayonnaise with a bit of mustard and the nutritional yeast. Toss with potatoes and season with salt & pepper to taste. Chill well and serve.

### **Briam**

Lorraine Glazar, Tucson CSA

1 small or three baby or Japanese eggplants, chopped into one-inch cubes

1 bell pepper, green or red, cored, seeded and cut into one-inch pieces (substitute roasted chile from the freezer)

1 pound potatoes, cut into one-inch cubes, peeled if needed (not generally needed for our CSA potatoes)

1 pound zucchini or other summer squash, cut into one-inch cubes

1 large red or yellow onion, cut into one-inch cubes

1 pound tomatoes, chopped, or one 15 ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained

1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1 bay leaf

1/4 cup chopped fresh oregano, or 1 and 1/2 teaspoons dried

2 tablespoons olive oil

Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Mix all the ingredients together in a large mixing bowl. Put into a large non-reactive (i.e., not metal) baking dish. Bake, uncovered, stirring occasionally, 1 1/4 hours until vegetables are very tender and a sauce forms in the pan. This is even better the next day.

### **Spicy Sesame Noodles with Vegetables**

Lorraine Glazar, Tucson CSA

1/2 pound long pasta (linguine) or Asian noodles such as udon

1 tablespoon sesame oil

2 teaspoons sugar

1/4 cup creamy peanut butter or tahini

1 tablespoon lime juice or wine vinegar

2 tablespoons soy sauce

2 teaspoons hot chili oil

1 clove minced fresh garlic

1 teaspoon minced fresh ginger

Hot pepper flakes to taste

1 regular cucumber, cut in half lengthwise, seeded or 4-6 ounces of Armenian cucumber

1-2 carrots

1 piece zucchini (about 4-6 ounces)

Cilantro for garnish

Cook the pasta as directed until it is al dente, then drain. Toss with the sesame oil. In a small bowl, combine the next seven ingredients with wire whisk or chopsticks. Whisk until smooth. Add hot pepper flakes to your preferred spiciness. Grate the cucumber, carrot and zucchini lengthwise so that you get long strands of the vegetables. Toss the pasta, sauce and vegetables together and garnish with chopped cilantro. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

### **Easy CSA Gazpacho**

Amy Schwemm, Tucson CSA

1 large Armenian cucumber

5 or more (or less!) small tomatoes

1-2 slices of onion, to taste

1 or 2 cloves garlic, to taste

1 green chile, any kind, or 1/2 bell pepper (optional)

2 tablespoons olive oil, or to taste

3 tablespoons red wine vinegar, or to taste

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Trim ends off cucumber and chop coarsely. Trim bruised spots and stem ends off tomatoes. Remove seeds and stems from green chile or bell pepper, if using. Purée the vegetables in a Vita-mix, blender, or food processor, starting with the garlic, onion, and chile. Add the tomatoes and then the cucumber. Season to taste with oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper. Chill before serving.