



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 211 ~ October 19, 2009 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

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Pistachio – Roasting or Not

By now, many of you have likely developed calluses on your fingers from shelling all the pistachios we've been getting. Remember that these pistachios can be eaten raw as well as roasted (see how to roast them recipe in newsletter 208).

Many of you have asked how to remove the outer skin or hull of the pistachios. Use the thumb and forefinger of each hand to grip the ends of a pistachio and twist back and forth. The skin usually breaks right off. If not, let that pistachio sit to dry a little longer.

This week: Nat the Knife Keeps 'em Sharp

Every cook knows that trying to cut anything with a dull knife is like trying to breathe without air. Never fear, "Nat the Knife" is near!

This week on both Tuesday and Friday (Oct. 20 & 23), CSA member "Nat the Knife" (Natanya Siegel) will be in our courtyard to sharpen knives. Come prepared. Wrap your knives carefully in newspaper to avoid injury during transport. (Nat won't take knives that are not wrapped properly!) The first knife is free. Additional knives \$2-\$4, depending on size or serration.

Never a dull moment at the CSA...

Newsletter Editor

Kimi Eisele

ANOTHER WORD ON JOSH'S EGGS

Many of you were disappointed with last week's news: that we now have to ration Josh's eggs to one dozen per member and that some days we might not have any. This is a reality of supporting a non-industrial food system. Hens simply lay less in fall and winter since egg production is dependent on the amount of daylight. To compound this seasonal decrease, many hens stop laying altogether because they are molting (growing new feathers). Once molting is over in a few weeks they'll start laying again. Egg production will increase, although it won't reach summer levels.

As a small-scale farmer, Josh could increase his supply of hens to compensate for the winter low. But if he did, come spring and summer he'd have more eggs than he could sell. Josh doesn't want his operation to get too big. He is also committed to raising his hens naturally, without the use of artificial light, which would increase egg production.

One way to cope with the seasonality of natural eggs is to just eat less of them while they're in short supply. You could also consider keeping your own backyard hens. Of course, you can always supplement with eggs from the grocery store—no shortage there. But beware: large-scale egg producers often keep hens in artificial "sweatshop" environments, where the amount of light, food, antibiotics, hormones, temperature and space are strictly controlled to stimulate egg production year around. Wouldn't you rather skip the egg breakfast?

WANTED: VOLUNTEERS & DONATIONS FOR ANNUAL MESQUITE MILLING & PANCAKE BREAKFAST FUNDRAISER

Tucson CSA has close connections to Desert Harvesters, which celebrates and promotes local food security by encouraging the planting of indigenous, food-bearing plants and shade trees (such as the Velvet mesquite) in water-harvesting earthworks, and educates the public on how to harvest and process the bounty. Not only are our goals similar, but three key CSA volunteers, Sara, Lori and Amy, also work with Desert Harvesters.

Desert Harvesters is now seeking volunteers and donations for its annual Mesquite Milling Fiesta and Pancake Breakfast, which is a fundraiser for the organization. This lively outdoor event features homemade mesquite/whole-wheat pancakes made with mesquite flour from hand-picked native Velvet mesquite pods and organic wheat from Crooked Sky Farms. Three hammer mills will be on site to grind pods into flour for the public. The event will also feature live music, roving entertainers, and an ongoing raffle of local foods, crafts, teas, and gift certificates as prizes. If it rains, the event will move to the Dunbar Auditorium, just north of the garden.

The event is Saturday, Nov. 7, at the Dunbar Spring Community Garden on the northwest corner of 11th Avenue and University Boulevard. Milling is from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The breakfast is 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Volunteer opportunities/needs include: set up and break down of event; ticket sales; and pancake flippers.

Items needed include: native/homemade food items or food-related goods (to raffle); BBQ gas grills with griddles (to borrow).

To sign-up for volunteer duties or offer donations, talk to Sara, Lori, or Amy at the CSA pickup or email Amy at molera@ManoYMetate.com or hammermill@desertharvesters.org.



Calabacitas In Mole Adobo

Philippe, Tucson CSA

1 cup corn kernels
1 onion, chopped
1 summer squash, cubed
2 tomatoes, quartered
Salt to taste
1 tablespoon mole adobo (or mole pipian for a less spicy version)
1 tablespoon oil
1/4 cup Mexican oregano or cilantro, chopped

Sauté onion and mole powder in oil until onions are tender. Add remaining ingredients, except the oregano. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Mix in oregano before serving. Serve with tortillas or on a bed of rice.

Note: meat eaters can add 1/4 pound pork sausage to this dish. Just add it at with the onions and mole powder and sauté it until the meat is cooked before adding the remaining ingredients.

Balsamic Lemon Greens

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

The tart flavor of vinegar or citrus compliments the mild bitter flavor of braising greens. Greens prepared this way are a great side dish for a hearty cornbread and bean stew.

1 bag braising greens
2 teaspoons oil
1 squeeze of lemon juice
dash balsamic vinegar to taste
dash soy sauce to taste

Wash and chop greens, leaving the moisture on leaves. Heat about 2 teaspoons of oil over medium high heat. Add greens and stir well to coat. Cover and cook briefly, then add a squeeze of lemon, a few dashes of balsamic vinegar and soy sauce. Cover again and cook a few more minutes.

Low-fat Curried Vegetables

Wendy McCrady, Tucson CSA member

Curry is a tasty way to prepare many of your vegetables. Use vegetables roasted ahead of time for an easy short-cut. Thai red curry paste is sold in the Asian foods section of grocery stores.

1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoons grated ginger
2 1/2 cups water
1 teaspoon coconut extract
2 tablespoons maple syrup or 4 tablespoons brown sugar
1 1/2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
1 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
1/2 teaspoon cumin
1/2 teaspoon red curry paste
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, opt.
Vegetables (squash, radishes, eggplant.), diced
Cooking greens, roughly chopped
3 tablespoons plain soy creamer (or half and half)

2 teaspoons chopped cilantro
Cooked grain (rice, wheat berries, oat groats, etc.)

In a large non-stick skillet, sauté onion, garlic, and ginger over medium-high heat for 5 minutes. No oil is needed. Stir in the water, seasonings, and vegetables other than greens. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes until veggies are tender. Stir in the greens to cook for a few minutes. Remove from heat and stir in creamer. Serve over hot cooked grain and sprinkle with cilantro.

Caponata

Sara, Tucson CSA

There are many variations of Caponata, a traditional eggplant and tomato dish. It is often served cold as a topping for crusty bread or as a dip. This recipe is also good hot, served over pasta or a wheat berry or oat pilaf.

1 large or 2-3 small eggplant, diced
1 onion, diced
About 10 cherry tomatoes, halved
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 teaspoons crushed cumin seeds
1 teaspoon crushed coriander seeds
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

Sauté onion and spices in oil over medium heat to release fragrance. Add eggplant, cover, and cook for about 5 minutes. Reduce heat to low and stir in tomatoes and vinegar. Cover and cook until everything is tender and smooth. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot or cold.

Chile and Green Tomato Soup-new

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

2 tablespoons oil
1 onion, diced
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon ground cumin
7-10 freshly roasted green chilies
2-3 green tomatoes, diced
4 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
1 quart water
Shredded cheddar cheese and sour cream, to garnish
Salt, to taste

In a large soup pot, sauté onions, garlic and cumin over medium heat. When onions are soft, add green chilies and tomatoes. Simmer 10 minutes, stirring every minute or so. Add potatoes and water. Cook over medium heat until potatoes are done, 10 to 20 minutes. Add salt to taste. Puree soup, or leave chunky, as desired. Garnish individual bowls with cheese and sour cream.