



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Spring 2011

Harvest list is online

The Back Page

Endive Salad
Creamy Carrot Ginger Soup
Chicory au Gratin
Caramelized Fennel and Onion Pasta

Many more recipes in our online recipe archive

How Much Beef Does a CSA Need?

Based on beef share deposits after this week's pickup, we'll tell Josh how much beef to provide. So if you'd like a beef share in mid-April, please stop by the front desk this week to sign up and put down a deposit.

Choices

We often have produce items that involve a choice between two different things for a single item (until we run out of one). When we have a "choice" item, we arrange the trays from front to back (instead of side-by-side), and write "choice of" on the card for those two items. Please use extra care with these items – we sometimes run short of them because some members may accidentally take one of each.



Newsletter Editors

Kimi Eisele, Sara Jones & Paul Durham

DRINK YOUR VEGETABLES!?

After too many weeks of finding yellowing, wilting clumps of "greens" in my so-called "crisper" drawer, I decided to evolve. I noticed my dancer friend Katie was always toting around a mason jar of thick green liquid. She's strong and healthy and vibrant, so I decided to have what she was having.

I've launched my own version of a Green Drinks happy hour—just me, my CSA greens, some frozen fruit, water, and a blender.

Cellulose in plants has a complex molecular structure and is also insoluble. In order to digest the nutrients, we need good teeth, a tireless jaw, and strong stomach acids. Without properly breaking down the greens, we can experience uncomfortable indigestion from them. Therefore, the smaller we can make them, the easier it will be for us to assimilate their nutrients. As the author of *Green Smoothie Revolution*, Victoria Boutenko, writes, "...we need to chew our greens to a creamy consistency in order to get the benefits."

But my chews rarely create "creamy consistency." Voilà, le blender.

To make a green smoothie, blend any CSA greens—kale, collard greens, dandelions (though they are bitter!), spinach, or any of the Asian greens—with a banana, any other frozen fruit of your choice, some juice or water, and presto, you're greens are gone, and you are strong. The experts suggest 40% greens and 60% fruit, and to stick to that for the full benefits. You could substitute coconut water for the juice or water. My friend Katie adds hemp or chia seeds. I often add flax seed powder.

According to www.smoothie-handbook.com, drinking greens offer the following benefits: more energy, regular digestion, reduced cravings for sugary and salty processed food, fewer mood swings, weight loss, more radiant skin (due to efficient removal of toxins), increased urge/motivation to exercise (yeah!), stabilization of blood sugars, stronger and more regenerative hair and nails, and good conversation starters with friends. When someone asks, "What are you drinking?" You can smile, shrug, and say, "Oh, just collard greens."

CICHORIUM: CHICORY, ENDIVE, RADICCHIO, ESCAROLE

These vegetables are all relatives within the daisy family, and they're generally a cooler weather crop. For much of the world, that means they're available late fall. Here in the desert Southwest, we get to enjoy them in the spring. They're useful as a spring crop because of their detoxifying effects. Like a "spring cleaning" if you'll pardon the pun. They're high in Vitamin A and rich in minerals. The vegetables in the chicory family are thought to have originated in the Mediterranean. In those countries, there's a long history of both culinary and medicinal use. Traditional recipes call for using the leaves raw, preparing a broth from them or cooking them into casseroles, sauces or pastries. The lettuce-like leaves are great in salads, but are also sturdy enough for cooking. That makes these greens a great option for a wilted salad. Toss raw greens with a bit of hot bacon fat and vinegar. If you don't have bacon fat on hand, use your own favorite vinaigrette, heated to a simmer. Ingredients like nuts, dried fruit and cheese are frequently used in both raw and wilted chicory salads. While their bitter flavor is mild in comparison with some other greens, children and those sensitive to their bitter flavor may prefer these vegetables cooked. They seem to be particularly well-suited for creamy dishes such as gratins and risottos. Endive and radicchio are often grilled or used as pizza toppings as well.

Endive Salad-new

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is a great way to use fresh chicories. The key to this salad is the mint, which, along with the lemon juice, adds freshness to balance the strong flavors of the cheese and olives. If you can, use a combination of endive and radicchio for a prettier salad.

A few large handfuls chicory, washed, drained well and chopped

2-3 baby fennel bulbs, thinly sliced

1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced

Small handful of mint leaves, roughly chopped

1 handful good quality black olives, pitted and chopped

2-3 tablespoons feta cheese, crumbled

Juice from one lemon

Good drizzle of olive oil

In a large bowl, toss together greens, fennel, onion and mint. Top mixture with olives, cheese and lemon juice. Toss gently, add a large drizzle of olive oil and toss again.

Creamy Carrot Ginger Soup

Lorraine Glazar, Tucson CSA

6 large carrots (about 1 lb)

2 stalks celery, including leaves

1 cup thinly sliced onion

1/4 cup crystallized (candied) ginger, chopped

7 cups vegetable or chicken broth

1/2 cup cooked white rice

Salt and pepper to taste

1/2 cup half and half or vegan alternative (almond milk is nice)

Mint or watercress for garnish (optional)

Slice carrots and celery crosswise and place in a heavy pot with onion, ginger and broth. Bring a boil, then simmer until vegetables are very tender (about 20 minutes). Remove from heat and add rice. Season with salt and pepper and allow to cool for 15 minutes. Puree in small batches in a blender until smooth. Return to the pot and stir in half and half or your choice of a vegan alternative. Heat soup through but do not boil. Garnish and serve.

Chicory au Gratin

Philippe, Tucson CSA Adapted from Epicurean.com

This traditional Belgian dish is usually made with Belgian endive, but endive or radicchio can be used instead (they are all different incarnations of the same vegetable).

Several large handfuls chicory

2 cups soft bread, crust removed, shredded

1 cup milk

1 cup ham, cut in little squares (optional)

2 hard-boiled eggs

2/3 cup light cream

1 cup grated Swiss cheese

2 tablespoons butter

1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

Salt, pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400°. Boil salted water in a pot large enough to fit greens (or do in a few batches). Boil until wilted. Drain, cool, and cut lengthwise in strips. Place strips side-by-side in a buttered gratin dish. Put the soft bread in the milk. Mash the hard-boiled eggs with a fork. Mix together the eggs and the bread/milk mixture (add extra milk if necessary to obtain a creamy consistency). Add the ham, salt, pepper and the nutmeg. Mix well and pour over greens. Pour the cream over the greens, and sprinkle with grated cheese. Add some little cubes of butter over the dish. Bake for 15-20 minutes, then broil for 5 minutes or until lightly browned.

Caramelized Fennel and Onion Pasta

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

If you want to add protein to the dish, Italian sausage or sardines are great options to compliment the fennel. The fennel and onion mixture caramelizes in the time it takes to bring water to a boil and cook the pasta al dente.

1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced

3 small bulbs fennel, thinly sliced

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 lb. pasta, preferably penne

Zest from one lemon, plus juice of 1/2 lemon

Salt and pepper to taste

Fennel fronds, roughly chopped, to garnish

Put large pot of salted water on to boil, for pasta. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium high heat. Stir in onion and fennel and reduce heat to medium. Continue cooking, stirring occasionally. When pasta is almost cooked through, fennel mixture should be turning a nice golden brown. Drain al dente pasta, reserving 1/2 cup of pasta water. Add pasta and water to skillet with fennel mixture. Add lemon zest and juice. Stir well. Season to taste with salt and pepper and add chopped fennel fronds, for garnish.