



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 306 ~ September 19, 2011 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Summer 2011

Harvest list is online

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**Many more recipes in
our online recipe archive**

Chickens are here!

Many members have asked about Josh's pasture-raised chickens. They have finally arrived. These whole fryers come frozen, weigh between 3.5 and 5.5 pounds, and cost \$4.50 a pound.

Dinner with Janos

Enjoy fresh local produce from the Food Bank's Marana farm prepared by Tucson's own chef, Janos Wilder.

Sunday, Sept. 25, La Paloma Resort

Tickets are \$75/person. Proceeds will benefit the Marana Heritage Farm's Youth Apprentice Program. To purchase tickets call (520) 622-0525 ext. 469 or visit

www.communityfoodbank.org

Roasted Green Chiles In Bulk!

Order Crooked Sky Farms roasted green chiles in bulk.

They are the same as Hatch chiles. You can order them mild, medium or spicy. They come in batches of 20 pounds (that's 20 pounds fresh weight – it loses 3-4 pounds after roasting).

Price: \$30 pre-paid at the front desk for delivery the following week.

The offer will last as long as there are enough green chiles in the field (until approximately mid-October).

MAKING PRICKLY PEAR JUICE



If you haven't been out harvesting prickly pear fruit yet, you best get on it! At this very moment, the fruit is ripe for the picking. This deliciously refreshing fruit is celebrated for its vibrant magenta color, its unique flavor, and its cooling properties. Use it to make the regional favorites of prickly pear lemonade, syrup, or jelly!

There are some 12 varieties of fruiting *Opuntia*, or prickly pear cactus (*nopal* in Spanish). *Opuntia engelmannii* or Englemann's Prickly Pear is native to the Sonoran Desert, and likely to be found very near your house.

Look for prickly pear fruits, or tunas, as they're called in Spanish, that are dark red or purple in color. August and September tend to be the season here in Tucson. Using tongs, simply pluck the fruit from the nopal pad. They should come off easily. The fine hairs on the surfaces of both the fruit and the pads are called glochids—they stick and prick, so you might consider wearing gloves as well. Though the cactus is abundant, be sure to leave some fruit for the animals and some for new seed, as well.

To process, place whole fruits, glochids and all, into a blender or food processor. Blend to make a slurry. Strain the slurry through a fine mesh strainer or a colander lined with cloth. Use a spoon to press the juice from the seeds and skins. Let the strained juice settle.

Freeze prickly pear juice in ice cube trays then transfer to airtight freezer storage bags. Pour the seeds in the yard to start a new prickly pear patch.

Alternatively, you can put whole prickly pears in the freezer. To process frozen prickly pears, line a colander with a cheese cloth (or clean pillowcase) and place over a bucket or large bowl. Place frozen fruits in the colander and allow to defrost (2-5 hours). Press on fruits with a wooden spoon as they soften to push juice through.

Pay attention as you work. Prickly pear juice will stain! Wipe counters and wooden surfaces immediately after use and wear an apron or old clothes.

NOTE: Prickly pear juice is very cooling. Do not consume large quantities of non-diluted raw juice as it is occasionally known to cause chills and body aches. Drinking a few glasses of lemonade is absolutely fine and will give you the cooling effect you're seeking in the dog days of August and the still-here September summer.

SOURCE: *Eat Mesquite! A Cookbook* by Desert Harvesters. (We have this book for sale at the CSA. \$20)

There's a prickly pear lemonade recipe on the CSA website. Go to the homepage, www.tucsoncsa.org, click on "Recipes", type "prickly pear" in the search box and click the search button. Try substituting club soda or sparkling water for noncarbonated water for a nice variation.

Smoky Summer Ranch Beans

Heidi DeCosmo, Tucson CSA

Let the crockpot do all the work. For vegetarian beans, omit the bacon and add some chipotle powder for the smoky flavor.

1 pound dried pinto beans
4 strips bacon, cooked and chopped
1 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 tablespoon chili powder
Sea salt to taste

Place the beans on the baking sheet to sort and remove small stones, lumps of dirt, and defective beans. Rinse the beans several times. Place beans in crockpot and cover with 8 cups of water. Soak overnight **without** heat. In the morning, drain beans and cover with 8 cups fresh water. Add the bacon, onion, and garlic. Heat the crockpot on HIGH for 2-1/2 hours. The beans should always be covered with water, so if needed, add more hot water to cover, especially if you want more bean broth. Check the beans periodically, as they may need as much as 2 more hours to become tender. (A crock pot on low setting will produce tender beans while you are away at work for up to 8 hours.) When the beans are tender, season them with salt to taste and chili powder. Then let the beans sit and absorb the flavors for a while.

Green Chile Pork

Lisa Anderson, Tucson CSA -adapted from "Lower Valley Carnitas" recipe in The Border Cookbook

A few chopped tomatillos added with the cooking liquid make a tangy addition to the dish, if they are available.

4 teaspoons ground cumin
4 teaspoons oregano
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
3-5 lbs. pork Boston butt (shoulder butt), cut into 2-inch cubes
Olive oil to sear pork and sauté onions
4 cloves garlic, minced or crushed
1 onion, chopped in large pieces
4-6 roasted green chiles, peeled and seeded
1-2 bay leaves
1 cup chicken broth or other liquid
3-4 tomatillos, husked, rinsed and chopped (optional)

Optional serving suggestions

Tortillas
Fresh chopped cilantro
Chopped radishes
Lime wedges

Stir together the cumin, oregano, salt, and pepper. In a large bowl, stir the spice mixture into the meat chunks. You may need to do this in 2 batches, and it's fine to let the meat sit for a bit at this point while you prepare the onion, garlic, and chiles. In a large pot or Dutch oven, warm the oil over medium-high heat, add the pork and sear it quickly. Again,

this may need to be done in 2 batches. Remove meat from pan, set aside, and use pan to sauté the onions and garlic until starting to be translucent. Return the meat to the pan with a small amount (a cup or less?) of chicken broth, along with the chiles, bay leaves and tomatillos, if using. Cover and cook for 2-4 hours in a 325-degree oven or on the stovetop, stirring every 30-40 minutes or so. Near the end of cooking, remove lid, if needed, to boil off any excess liquid. Shred the meat by pulling apart with 2 forks. Serve with tortillas, fresh chopped cilantro, chopped radishes, and lime wedges.

Chocolate Zucchini Cake

(Note: you may use any summer squash in place of zucchini.)

2 cups all purpose flour
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup butter, softened
3/4 cup brown sugar
3 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups zucchini, shredded
1 cup chocolate chips
1 cup walnuts

Preheat the oven to 360°F. Grease and flour muffin tin. In a large bowl, whisk together the **flour**, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Combine the **sugar and butter**, and beat until fluffy. Add in the vanilla extract, then the eggs, one at a time, mixing thoroughly between each addition. **Spoon** in flour, mix well, then add zucchini, chocolate chips and walnuts. Drop batter into prepared tin, filling each cup about 3/4 full. Bake about 20 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean.

Tomatillo Avocado Sauce

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is a salsa bar standby and is a great taco condiment. This also makes a great dressing for any type of salad. Dress cooked pork, chicken or beans with the sauce, or use to cover enchiladas.

1/2 pound tomatillos, husked, rinsed
2-3 roasted green chiles, seeded and peeled
1/2 to 1 jalapeno (optional)
1 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves
1/4 cup (firmly packed) fresh cilantro leaves
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice (optional)
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 whole ripe avocado, diced
2 tablespoons sour cream or plain yogurt (optional)
Salt, to taste

Roast tomatillos under the broiler until charred. Place all ingredients in a food processor or blender and puree until smooth. Add salt and additional lime juice to taste.