



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 334 ~ April 16, 2012 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Spring 2012

Harvest list is online

The Back Page

Arugula and Grapefruit Salad
Beet, Nopalito and Citrus Salad
Pickled Beets
Stuffed Artichoke
Citrus Sorbet

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



Beet Hummus Recipe

As the weather warms up, here is a favorite and refreshing way to fix beets: beets hummus! With its tantalizing red color, this dip is a feast for the eyes as well as for the palate.

1/2 pound beets (about 4 medium sized beets), scrubbed clean, cooked, peeled, and cubed
2 tablespoon tahini sesame seed paste
5 tablespoons lemon juice
1 small clove garlic, chopped
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon lemon zest (zest from approx. 2 lemons)
Generous pinch of sea salt or Kosher salt
Fresh ground pepper to taste

Place all ingredients in a food processor (or blender) and pulse until smooth. Taste and adjust seasonings and ingredients as desired.

Chill and store in the refrigerator for up to 3 days or freeze for longer storage.

Eat with Barrio Bread, pita chips, or with sliced cucumber or celery, or on a crostini with goat cheese and shaved mint.

Makes 2 cups.

WHAT MAKES BARRIO BREAD SO SPECIAL? By Don Guerra, our baker

Barrio Bread is leavened with a sourdough starter (Levain) that contains natural yeasts. This local airborne yeast creates the enzymes needed to predigest the starches and proteins of the grain. The fermentation process creates carbon dioxide, which becomes trapped in tiny pockets of dough, resulting in a natural rising of the bread. Natural leavening works to create the complex structure and flavors of Barrio Bread.

Breaks Down Gluten

The longer fermentation/rising time breaks the proteins (gluten) down into amino acids, making it more easily digested. This is why some people who have a gluten sensitivity can tolerate sourdough wheat breads.

Better Nutrition

Like all other fermentation processes, the bacteria present in the sourdough starter eat the starch and sugars present in the grain. This results in a lower carbohydrate content of the bread, which is helpful for keeping blood sugar levels regulated. It also increases the vitamin and mineral content of the grain.

Natural Preservative

The lactic acid in the bread creates a mild tang and predigests the grain for you. The acetic acid produced during the sourdough process helps the bread to store longer and inhibits the growth of molds. You will rarely see mold on Barrio Bread, but of course, it won't be around for too long anyway!

Neutralizes Phytic Acid

The bacteria present in the sourdough culture/levain help to activate phytase, an enzyme that breaks down an anti-nutrient present in grains, beans, and seeds called phytic acid. This acid is known to strip your body of vitamins and minerals and can be hard on your digestion.

Essentially, the levain process creates a healthier, more delicious and longer lasting loaf of bread!

NOPALITOS, THE VERY EDIBLE PRICKLY PEAR PADS

We're lucky to get our nopalitos already de-spined at the farm, so they are practically ready to eat. Nopal means cactus in Spanish and Nopales is a term for "cactus stem". The term Nopalitos refers to the pads once they are cut up and prepared for eating. A true local springtime vegetable, they have a unique flavor of their own which many describe as a cross between green beans and asparagus.

Nopalitos can be eaten grilled, stir-fried or boiled. Over-cooking may give them a slightly "slimy" texture you may want to avoid. Frequently nopalitos are added to scrambled eggs, or as a vegetable in soups, chilies or a filling in a tortilla.

One of our favorite ways to eat them is grilled. Using a knife, make diagonal incisions on both surfaces, coat them with olive oil and a bit of salt, and throw on the grill until tender and slightly browned (about 5 minutes per side). Then slice into strips and toss with a squeeze of lime. They can be eaten warm or cold.

Arugula and Grapefruit Salad

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Another recipe inspired by one of our farm visits, peppery arugula and sweet/sour grapefruit go perfect together in this simple recipe. The hardest part of this recipe is segmenting the grapefruit. To do this, just peel the grapefruit with a knife, cutting away the peel as well as the pith. Remove the individual segments by cutting between segments in a V-shape towards the center of the fruit.

1 bunch arugula, washed and dried (chop roughly if using large leaves)
1 grapefruit, cut into segments
1 small handful thinly sliced onion
2 teaspoons olive oil
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
Salt and freshly ground pepper
Chopped pecans or walnuts
Crumbled feta or blue cheese

In a small saucepan heat oil, vinegar and grapefruit over medium high heat. Stir for a few minutes until grapefruit has released some juice. Season mixture with salt and pepper. Pour over arugula, tossing to coat. Garnish with nuts and cheese. Serve immediately.

Beet, Nopalito and Citrus Salad

Philippe, Tucson CSA

1 large or 2 small beets
1 nopalito pad (despined)
2 grapefruit or oranges, peeled and diced
Juice of 1 grapefruit or orange
1 small onion, chopped
1/4 cup cilantro or parsley, chopped
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon ground coriander
1 dash vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

Steam or boil the beets until tender (approximately 30 minutes). Peel and dice. Steam or boil the nopalito pad for 10-15 minutes. Dice. Mix with other ingredients. Cool and serve as side dish or with tortilla chips.

Pickled Beets

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

1 bunch beet roots
2 cups vinegar
1 cup water
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon total of all selected spices, to taste.
(Spice flavor develops more over time)

Spice suggestions (use whole spices, not ground):

Coriander, Allspice, Cardamom, Cloves, Mustard Seeds, Cinnamon Sticks.

Prepare beets by roasting or boiling. Peel beets and cut or dice in preferred serving sizes. Bring water, vinegar, salt and sugar to boil until the sugar is dissolved. Add spices and reduce heat. Simmer to let spices develop flavor and steep. (Approx. 15 minutes.) Place beets in a glass jar and cover with vinegar mixture. Store in refrigerator. Will keep for two to three months. Pickled beets can also be canned and stored in the pantry if canning is in your skill repertoire. Any vinegar mixture left over when the beets are gone can be used as a base for marinades or dressings.

Stuffed Artichoke

Philippe, Tucson CSA

1 artichoke
1 small onion
2 garlic cloves
Oil, vinegar, salt, pepper, herbs

With a sharp knife, remove the top third of the artichoke as well as the stem. With scissors, cut the remaining sharp tips off the leaves. Using your thumbs, separate the leaves as much as you can. Don't hesitate to apply force – artichokes are tough babes! Peel an onion, cut it in half, and slice it into 1/3" thick strips. Peel two cloves of garlic and cut them into 4 to 6 slices each. Insert the garlic slices and ends of the onion strips among the leaves. Pack in as many as you can! Place artichoke in a small saucepan. Fill the pan with water halfway up the height of the artichoke. Pour 1/4 cup oil and 1/4 cup vinegar over the top of the artichoke. Sprinkle the artichoke with salt, pepper, and thyme, Italian herbs, or Herbes de Provence (or any seasoning of your choice). Cover, bring to a boil, and simmer for 1 to 1-1/2 hours. Serve hot, warm or cold, by itself or with a garlic-butter dip.

Citrus Sorbet

Paul Durham, Tucson CSA

1 quart citrus juice (approx. 4 grapefruit or 8 oranges)
1 rounded tablespoon zest, finely grated (option: increase the amount of zest for more citrusy flavor and tartness)
1/2 cup agave nectar or simple syrup (or adjust according to your taste or the sweetness or tartness of your fruit)
1/4 cup vodka (optional)

Simmer zests in agave nectar for a couple minutes and let it sit. Juice citrus and add juice to nectar. Add vodka. (The vodka is only partly there for flavor. The main reason is to prevent the sorbet from freezing into a hard ice.) Refrigerate until cold. Stir thoroughly, then pour into an ice cream maker and freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions. If you do not have an ice cream maker, pour into a 9-inch square metal baking pan, then cover and freeze, stirring occasionally, until partially frozen, about 4 hours. In a food processor with knife blade attached, process sorbet until smooth but still frozen. Transfer to a container and freeze until firm.