



# *Tucson Community Supported Agriculture*

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## Spring '13

Harvest list is online

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Many more recipes on our website

### Goat cheese shares from Black Mesa Ranch starting May 7 & 8

You can add a goat cheese share to your subscription via your CSA account by clicking on *Change Subscription* in the green Summary box.

Cheese shares are delivered every other week. The cost for a 6-week subscription (3 deliveries) is \$21, which is \$7.00 per cheese log. If you buy them individually (no subscription), the cost is \$7.50 per log and our supply of cheese logs for individual sale is unpredictable.

You can add or remove cheese shares from your subscription at any time during your CSA membership (but remember that you can only edit your subscription from the day after your pickup day through midnight Friday).

### Directions to the farm

The drive from Tucson to the farm takes just under 2 hours.

- Take I-10 to Phoenix
- In Phoenix, take exit to I-17 N/US 60 W (signs for Flagstaff/I-10 West Truck Route)
- Take exit 197 for 19th Ave.
- Turn left on 19th Ave., go under the freeway, then left again onto the access road (do not get back on the eastbound freeway)
- Turn right on S. 16th Ave. You will see fields to your right.
- Park your car on the street and walk to and through the farm's entrance.

## **ARTICHOKE ROAST AT CROOKED SKY FARMS – SUNDAY MAY 5**

Come celebrate the artichoke season at Crooked Sky farms' artichoke roast day. Chef Jeremy Peterson will demo how to cook these beauties. Farm tours will be given, similar to those on CSA member day.

Starts at 4:00 pm. Cost is \$5/person. Free for children under 3.

Bring your sunscreen, hat, a bottle of water, and come have some fun!

Please RSVP to [lori@crookedskyfarms.com](mailto:lori@crookedskyfarms.com).

For directions, see left column.

## **NOPALES (PRICKLY PEAR PADS)**

We are incredibly lucky that Crooked Sky Farms de-spines their nopales for us, for that is the most labor intensive and "prickly" part of their preparation.

Nopal is the Spanish word for the prickly pear cactus (Opuntia). There are two food crops derived from the prickly pear cactus. One are the "nopales", or prickly pear pads, harvested in spring, and the other are the "tunas", or the prickly pear fruit, which are harvested in late summer. The term nopalitos usually refers to the prickly pear pads once they are prepared for eating.

The prickly pear cactus is most likely a native to Mexico. It has been noted that they were grown and eaten as a vegetable in Central Mexico since before the Spanish arrived. The Spanish explorers took the plant back to Spain and the plant spread throughout North Africa with the Moors. The plant is currently grown throughout Mexico as well as parts of the United States, around the Mediterranean and in many arid and semi-arid regions of the world.

### **How to harvest nopales yourself**

Nopales leaf pads are harvested in spring. Select new thin pads no longer than 8 inches. Make sure to wear heavy gloves to harvest the pads. The pad will snap off easily or you can use a knife to sever the stem. Beware of both large spines and fine hair-like spines (glochids) so be sure to keep your hands protected. To prepare the pads, remove the spines and the "eyes" with a vegetable peeler or a small paring knife. Rinse the pads well with cool water and peel or trim off any blemished or discolored areas. Once trimmed, you can store nopales in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.

### **How to prepare nopales**

Nopales taste like a cross between green beans and asparagus with a hint of tartness. They can be grilled, stir-fried or boiled. They can be cut in strips before or after cooking. Over-cooking may give them a slightly "slimy" texture you may want to avoid. Cooked nopales are often added to scrambled eggs, or as a vegetable in soups, salsas, chilies or as a filling in a tortilla.

The best preparation we have tried is to grill them whole over hot coals or a barbecue until tender and slightly browned on both sides (see picture). Then slice into strips and toss with a squeeze of lime, a pinch of salt and a drizzle of olive oil. They are delicious!



## **Grilled Nopalitos and Green Onion Tacos**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Grilled cactus pads tend to be less 'gummy' than boiled or steamed cactus. If you are squeamish about the gummy factor, then this is the way to go. Plus, the slight burn on the green onions and cactus makes the dish more complex and delicious. These grilled Nopales are also great in burritos and sandwiches, too.

1 bunch green onions  
2-4 cactus pads  
1 tablespoon oil  
1 tablespoon balsamic or red wine vinegar  
1 teaspoon ground oregano  
1 teaspoon chile flakes  
Salt and pepper to taste  
6 corn tortillas  
Goat cheese or other mild white cheese

Mix together oil, vinegar, chile, oregano and salt and pepper. Rub mixture over onions and cactus and let marinate while grill heats. When grill is hot, place pads and green onions over an area with medium high heat. After three minutes remove onions and flip cactus pads. Cook pads until beginning to brown and lightly charred around edges. Remove from grill and slice into long strips. Serve wrapped in tortilla with green onions and cheese.



## **Three Bean Salad with Nopalitos**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This salad is a take on the traditional canned three-bean salad. The different colors and sizes add interest, but you can use just one type of bean for convenience.

2 nopal pads, grilled or broiled and cut into bite size pieces  
1 cup cooked white beans  
1 cup cooked kidney beans  
1 cup cooked black beans  
1/2 bunch green onion, chopped  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 tablespoon oil  
1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar  
2 teaspoons lemon juice  
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients and stir well to mix. Let salad sit for at least one hour before serving.

## **Stewed Spring Veggies**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

3-5 baby artichokes, trimmed and quartered lengthwise  
1 medium squash, chopped  
2-3 new potatoes, chopped  
1 sweet onion, diced  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
1 large can (28 ounce) chopped tomatoes  
1 teaspoon thyme  
1 teaspoon oregano or marjoram  
Drizzle balsamic vinegar  
Salt and pepper to taste

To trim artichokes, cut stems from base, remove tough outer leaves and trim off top 1/2 inch of vegetable. Cut each choke into quarters and place in water until ready to use. Prepare other veggies and combine all ingredients together in a large soup pot. Bring to a slow simmer and cook over medium low heat for about 35 minutes until all ingredients are tender. Drizzle with vinegar and add salt and pepper to taste. Serve over rice or pasta or polenta.

## **Citrus Seltzer**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is an incredibly refreshing drink in the summer heat. If you don't have the ingredients to make it now, squeeze and freeze your grapefruit for a treat later on.

1 part grapefruit or orange juice  
1 part sparkling water  
Agave nectar, to taste

Stir together juice and agave nectar, about 2 teaspoons per cup of juice for grapefruit, less for orange juice. Add sparkling water and taste for sweetness, adding more nectar if desired.

## **Beet and Walnut Dip**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is a great dip or spread for bread or pita. Use half carrots/half beets if you like. Top with fresh herbs and chopped olives, if desired.  
1 bunch beets, roasted, peeled and roughly chopped  
3 cloves garlic  
1 cup walnuts  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1/4 cup plain yogurt or sour cream  
Salt to taste

Process garlic and walnuts in a food processor or blender until finely ground. Add beets and olive oil and process until smooth. In a medium bowl, combine beet mixture with yogurt or sour cream. Salt to taste. Store in refrigerator covered with a layer of oil for up to one week.