



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 398 ~ July 22, 2013 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Summer 2013

Harvest list is online

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Many more recipes on our website

Last week to order Josh's pasture- raised lamb shares

Lamb shares will be available for
pickup starting July 30th.

A \$20 deposit per share reserves
your share.

A lamb share typically weighs 8-9
pounds, cost \$70-\$80 (comes down to
approx. \$9 per pound) and
includes chops, ground meat, ribs,
shanks and a roast.

CSA account tips

Delivery holds: if you know you
will NOT be able to pick up your
share on any given week, remember
to place your subscription on hold
(via your online CSA account)
before midnight Friday of the week
before. That way you will not be
charged for that pickup.

Changing your subscription: you
can add or remove shares from your
subscription (via your online CSA
account) as long as you keep 1
produce share or 1 bread share.
Note that you can only change your
subscription between the day after
your pickup and midnight Friday.

For more info on how to manage
your subscription, go to our
homepage and check out the tabs
under Help: Manage Account

OKRA

Okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*) is a flowering plant
in the mallow family and is related to the hibiscus.

It came to the New World with the slave trade. The
word "okra" derives from a Ghanaian language and
in various Bantu languages it is called kingombo.

While understandably popular in the Southeastern

U.S., it also happens to grow well in our desert climate. Besides green okra, Farmer Frank also grows a red heirloom variety known as Texas Hill Country Red. It is drought-tolerant and an excellent pickling variety, but it can also be sliced and eaten raw in salads. It turns green when cooked.



PREPARING: Wash the okra in cold water and dry thoroughly. If you plan to cook them whole, no further preparation is necessary. Keeping the okra whole prevents the mucilage from oozing out. If you plan to use them sliced, slice off the stem end, and cut the okra crosswise into short segments.

RAW: Thinly slice crosswise and add to a bowl of salad greens with your favorite dressing. Or combine with your favorite chopped vegetables such as tomatoes, sweet onions, avocado, cashews and cucumbers.

PICKLING: Thinly slice okra and marinate for two or three days in a dressing of olive oil, apple cider vinegar, fresh lime juice, finely diced red or green chiles, and seasonings. Use as a condiment.

SAUTÉING: Slice okra and sauté until tender in oil along with onions, garlic, and ginger. Season to taste.

BRAISING: Okra can be combined in a stew or "gumbo" along with your favorite vegetables, legumes or grains, onions, and tomatoes. Season with spices and cook covered on top of the stove until the legumes or grains are cooked through.

GRILLING: Make a dressing with oil, salt, pepper and spices. Gently mix it with whole okra until all pods are coated. Throw on a hot grill until browned, about 2-4 minutes per side.

COOKING IT WITH A STARCHY FOOD: Slice okra and cook it with couscous or rice.

If you dislike okra's gumminess, here are a few strategies:

1. Always process the okra in a totally dry environment: the pods must be completely dry before processing, as must be your cutting knife if you elect to cut the pods.
2. Grill it, pickle it, or cook it with a starchy food (see above).
3. Use whole okra. Just trim off the end without puncturing the pods. If your recipe calls for cut okra, pre-process the okra by spreading the cut okra on a plate covered with a paper towel. Microwave for 2 to 3 minutes. Then cook according to your recipe.
4. Okra doesn't need much cooking, unless you're making a stew. Avoid overcooking it, and only stir it very gently during cooking (rough handling releases the gumminess).
5. Cook the hell out of it, until it disintegrates. Only works with stewed or braised dishes.

Brilliant Blanched Okra

Kristin Van Fleet, Tucson CSA

While the CSA crew was discussing preparation methods for okra, Kristin mentioned her favorite way of fixing it. We all tried it and it was an instant hit! We think this the most brilliant idea yet! And yes it's as simple as blanching the (sometimes dreaded) vegetable and salting it liberally. Served immediately while still warm, it is reminiscent of the edamame you eat at Japanese restaurants. A great snack!

Okra (not trimmed!)
Salt

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add okra. Cook for 2-3 minutes. The okra will have a vibrant green color when it is done. Remove from water before tips start to split! Drain, and while okra is still warm, toss with some salt. Serve immediately.

Okra with Chickpeas and Tomatoes (Egyptian recipe)

Submitted by Paula Karrer, Tucson CSA (*adapted from Saveur Magazine*)

1 cup dried, soaked and cooked chickpeas, or 1 cup rinsed
canned chickpeas
2 tbsp olive oil
1-2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
12 okra pods
1 can fire roasted tomatoes, drained and coarsely chopped
(fresh tomatoes are certainly fine! (peel, core and seed them)
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
1/2 cup chicken stock
Juice of 1/2 lemon
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley or cilantro
Salt and pepper

Heat oil in deep skillet and sauté garlic until fragrant. Add okra and cook, stirring, a few minutes until it turns bright green. Stir in tomatoes and cumin. Cook for 1-2 minutes. Add stock, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Cover, reduce heat to medium low, and cook until okra is soft and sauce is almost caramelized (this is what gives a delicious unique flavor)-about 35 minutes. Check occasionally to see that sauce is not sticking or burning – you may need to add small amounts additional liquid. Add chick peas and cook until heated through. Add parsley or cilantro and adjust seasoning.

Tomatillo Escabeche

Sara, Tucson CSA

Escabeche is delicious as a side for tacos, or served on or alongside sandwiches or burgers.

2 medium bell peppers
3 chiles
1 share tomatillos, husks removed and rinsed
6 whole cloves garlic
1/2 onion

Brine:

4 cups rice wine vinegar
2 cups water
1/4 cup sugar
1 tablespoon salt
Coriander, fennel, thyme, oregano, allspice or any other combination of herbs and spices that you like.

Prepare veggies for brine by removing stems and roughly chopping into large chunks. Pack into glass jars. Bring brine solution to a boil and cook, simmering, for 10-12 minutes. Pour over vegetables, covering completely, and cool. Put lids on jars and refrigerate. Let sit for one week before using, for best taste. Will keep in refrigerator for several weeks.

Fresh Chiles Lunch Pockets

Inspired by Marit Alanen, Tucson CSA Member

The mild fresh chiles in this week's share make excellent packages for a variety of fillings. Simply cut off the stem end and scrape away the white ribbing inside the pepper. Stuff with something simple like cheddar cheese or leftover rice. Eat cold, as a refreshing, less heavy version of the typical chile relleno. This makes a quick and easy snack or light lunch.

To Roasting (or not to roast) Green Chiles

Green chiles are usually roasted before using in recipes. The reason for this is that the skin of green chiles is thicker than the skin of sweet peppers and it can also have a slight bitter flavor. Fresh chiles, including their skin, are certainly edible, though. Fresh chiles can be used in place of or alongside bell peppers in most dishes (just take the heat factor into account, of course!). If you find that the texture of fresh chiles in your dishes bothers you, try a smaller dice, or use the chiles in long simmering sauces. If you prefer to roast your chiles, it is quite simple. On a hot grill, under a broiler or on a gas stovetop, chiles are easy to char to a blister. Rotate chiles as they cook to ensure that they are well charred all over. Once charred, place chiles in a paper bag to steam, which will separate the skin from the flesh. The skin should slip away easily, along with the stem end and seeds.

Mashed Potatoes with Dill and Chiles

Philippe, Tucson CSA

Mashed potatoes with a tantalizing Southwestern touch. The dill adds a freshness that nicely complements the spice of the chiles.

6 potatoes, or 3 potatoes and 3 sweet potatoes (no need to peel)
1 onion
4 cloves garlic
2-4 roasted chiles, peeled and seeded
1 bunch dill
Salt and pepper
1/2 stick of butter

Boil or steam potatoes, sweet potatoes, onion and garlic until tender. Place in food processor with chiles, salt, pepper and butter. Blend until smooth.