



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Summer 2013

Harvest list is online

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our website**

How to roast pistachios

In a saucepan, add one teaspoon of salt to 1/4 cup of water and heat until the water comes to a boil.

Add two cups of pistachios, bring back to a boil, reduce heat to a slow boil, and stir until all the water has evaporated.

Preheat the oven to 300°.

Place the salted pistachios onto a cookie sheet in a single layer and roast in the oven for 10 to 15 minutes. Shake the tray once or twice to ensure even roasting.



Beef Shares & Turkey Deposits

Beef shares will be ready for pickup next week and we will start taking deposits for Thanksgiving turkeys the week after that.

ABOUT PISTACHIOS

The pistachio tree (*Pistacia vera*) is a desert tree that originates from Central Asia and the Middle East. It produces a fruit, the nut of which was a common food in those regions as early as 6500 B.C. The biggest producer of pistachios is Iran, and pistachios are now also cultivated around the Mediterranean Sea, in the Southwestern U.S (mainly California, Arizona and New Mexico) and in Australia.

The fruit is composed of the edible pistachio nut which is surrounded by several soft and hard layers: immediately around the nut is a thin, papery skin. Nut and skin are encased in a hard, woody shell. Around the shell is a pink green, soft leathery husk. About two or three weeks before the pistachio nut becomes ripe, the shell starts to split open inside the husks. With Turkish pistachios, which are smaller than California pistachios, the husk is kept on until they are ready to be processed. But in California, the husk is usually removed immediately to prevent it from staining the shell.

Pistachios are a good source of protein and are high in potassium, magnesium and vitamin B6. When unsalted, they are low in sodium.

Fresh, raw pistachios are delicious, but they are difficult to find because they don't last very long in their raw state. They are therefore dried and roasted after harvesting and before shipping.

Farmer Frank grows pistachio trees on his farm in Duncan and on good years we get pistachios in our shares. These are fresh, unprocessed pistachios, which are a rarity and a delicacy. But eating them can be labor intensive.

For Frank to process pistachios would require him to take them to a processing facility where the pistachios' husks are removed. The issue Frank encounters is that the pistachios one brings to the processing facility are not the pistachios one gets out, as all pistachios brought in by different growers are processed in bulk. Since Frank grows his pistachios organically, he doesn't want them to be mixed up with others.

So, what can you do with fresh pistachios? The best thing is to eat them raw. If the pistachio husks are still soft when you get them, remove the husks one at a time by puncturing each pistachio with your fingernail and then peeling away the husk.

If the husks have already hardened, it might be easier to remove them after drying or roasting the pistachios. Once dried or roasted, grab a handful of pistachios and rub them between the palms of your hands. Many husks will just crumble away. The reluctant ones may require more individual peeling with your nails.

To dry pistachios, spread them out on tray and leave them out in full sun for a couple of days, covered by a cheese cloth or screen to keep away insects.

To roast pistachios, see method in left column.

Roasted Bell Peppers Bruschetta

Philippe, Tucson CSA

4 slices of Barrio bread (or 8 slices of baguette)
1-2 garlic cloves
Olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
2 tomatoes, seeds and juice removed
2 roasted bell peppers, seeds and skins removed
Basil, finely chopped

Toast the bread slices, then gently rub one side of each slice with the clove of garlic. Drizzle that side with some olive oil. Cut the tomatoes and bell peppers in small cubes and mix them in a bowl with the basil. Scoop a soup spoon of the tomato and bell pepper mixture on each slice. Season with salt and pepper and add another drizzle of olive oil.

Miso Sesame Cucumber Salad

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is a proportion recipe: for a regular sized batch use tablespoons to measure everything. Leftover sauce can be saved in the refrigerator and used to dress noodles or stir fries.

1 CSA share cucumbers
2 parts miso
3 parts rice wine vinegar
1 part soy sauce
1 part toasted sesame oil
Freshly grated ginger, minced garlic and red chile flakes to taste
Sesame seeds as garnish

Mix sauce ingredients together. Pour enough sauce over sliced cucumbers to coat and toss well. For best flavor, let sit for at least 30 minutes before serving. Sprinkle with sesame seeds, if desired.

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 smokey flavor.

1 pound dried 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 soaking water and add enough fresh water to cover beans. Add the bacon, onion, and garlic and 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.

When the beans are tender, season them with salt to taste and chili powder. Then let the beans sit and absorb the flavors for awhile.

Squash and Grain Fritters

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

2 cups grated summer squash
About 1 to 1 1/2 cups cold cooked grains, preferably quinoa or white rice
1/2 small sweet onion, sliced thinly
1 egg
1 tablespoon flour
Salt and pepper to taste

Drain squash in a colander for 30 minutes. After draining squeeze excess moisture from squash, then mix with grains and onion. Beat egg and pour over vegetables, mix together, then sprinkle with flour and salt and pepper. Mix again, adding more flour if mixture seems very loose. Heat a large skillet over medium heat and add about 1 tablespoon of oil. Drop large spoonfuls of squash mixture onto the skillet and use spoon to spread or flatten mixture. Cover fritter and cook until golden brown underneath, about 4 minutes. Flip gently and cover again, cooking another 4 minutes until browned on second side. Remove fritters to a paper towel to drain, and repeat with remaining batter.

Basil Walnut Pesto

Philippe Waterinckx, Tucson CSA

1 bag CSA basil, woody stems removed
2 cloves garlic
2 tablespoons oil
1 handful walnuts
1/4 cup Parmesan or Romano cheese, grated
1 teaspoon salt

Using a food processor, blend all ingredients until you obtain a textured paste (slightly granular). Serve on top of pasta, sautéed summer squash, acorn or spaghetti squash, or use as a spread for sandwiches.