



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 447 ~ July 21, 2014 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Summer 2014

Harvest list is online

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Many more recipes on our website

CSA account tips: Delivery Holds

Use your online CSA account to place your subscription on Delivery Hold. Holds must be placed by midnight Friday if the hold is for the following week. Holds for dates beyond the following week can be placed at any time.

Up to 3 separate holds can be in place at any time.

Holds put your entire subscription on hold. If you want to place one share on hold but keep another, just remove it from your subscription (and remember to re-add it later)

RED OKRA

Besides green okra, Farmer Frank also grows an 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 will turn green when cooked.



ARMENIAN CUCUMBERS

Use them as you would a regular cucumber. You don't have to peel them. One characteristic of Armenian cucumbers is that they stay crisp even when they become soft.

OKRA



Okra, along with watermelon, came to the New World in association with the slave trade. While understandably popular in the Southeastern U.S., it also grows well in our desert climate. It also makes beautiful and tall ornamental plants with hibiscus-like flowers.

During the summer, okra is usually prepared fresh, often stewed with

tomatoes and onions, or dipped in batter and fried like a fritter, or, of course, added to gumbos. For winter use it can be pickled, or sliced and dried like fruit. The seeds can be roasted and ground to make a coffee substitute.

Many people dislike okra for its gooeyness, but cooked over high heat with enough room for it to brown instead of stew, okra loses the juices that cause the gooey texture. For crisp okra, fry, stir-fry or grill it. For soft, moist okra, stew it.

STORING: Store fresh okra in the refrigerator and use within a day or two. Beyond that it begins to lose its freshness, flavor, and nutrients.

PREPARING: Wash the okra in cold water and dry completely. If you plan to cook them whole, no further preparation is necessary. Keeping the okra whole reduces geeryness. If you plan to use them sliced, slice off the stem end, and cut the okra crosswise into 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.

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.

SAUTEEING: 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 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.

SOUPMAKING: Add okra to your favorite vegetable soup ingredients and enjoy its ability to thicken the soup naturally. Purée if desired or enjoy the soup with the texture of bite-sized vegetables.

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.

BLANCHING: Throw whole okra in boiling water and cook for 1-2 minutes. Drain, sprinkle with sea salt and eat.

Melon and/or Cucumber Cooler

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

If you just can't eat another melon, remember that they make great drinks—they're perfect as is, used as a base for cocktails or frozen into popsicles.

1 melon or cucumber (or half of each), peeled, seeded and cut into large chunks
1/4 cup sugar or honey (optional)
1/4 cup lime juice
Juice from one knob grated ginger
1 bottle sparkling mineral water

Puree all ingredients, except mineral water, in a blender or food processor. Put in a large pitcher with ice cubes and add mineral water. Stir gently and serve.

Quick Okra Jambalaya

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Not super authentic, but delicious and easy. Use leftover cooked rice for this easy recipe. You can add corn, squash or green beans to bulk up on the vegetables.

1 basket okra, cleaned and chopped
2-3 tomatoes, cleaned and chopped
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 small sweet onion, sliced thinly
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 can kidney beans, drained (or use leftover cooked chicken or sausage)
2 1/2 cups cooked rice
1 tablespoon oil
1 teaspoon each of red chili, paprika, black pepper, oregano and thyme
Salt to taste

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium high heat, add okra and onions. Sauté for about 5 minutes then add tomato paste, stirring until paste darkens a bit. Add tomatoes, garlic and spices. Stir well, cover and reduce heat to medium. Cook for about 7 minutes, adding water if necessary to keep vegetables from sticking. Add beans (and/or chicken or sausage) and rice. Cook, stirring frequently until rice is heated through. Add salt to taste and serve.

Cucumbers and Melon Pico de Gallo Style

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

1 cucumber, seeds and skin removed
1/2 medium size melon
Juice of 2 limes
Cayenne pepper to taste
Salt

Dress the cucumber and fruit with lime juice, cayenne and salt. Serve immediately.

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 new 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!)
Sea salt

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add okra. Cook for 1-2 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 sea salt. Serve immediately.

Cocido

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This soup is traditionally prepared with soup bones or short ribs, but it is also good as a vegetarian dish. It is served with whole chunks of corn on the cob, which really helps to infuse the broth with flavor. Use a large squash, if you have one; its flesh will get tender and tasty. Serve with warm tortillas and lime wedges.

About 1/2 pound soup bones, short ribs or chuck roast, if desired
2 small onions, chopped into large pieces
3 carrots, chopped into large pieces
4 to 5 potatoes, chopped into large pieces
1/2 of a large squash or 1 medium squash, chopped into large pieces
2 to 3 ears of corn, husks and silk removed and broken into pieces
1 can garbanzo beans, drained
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon oregano
1 teaspoon cumin
Red pepper flakes, to taste
Salt to taste

If using meat, bring 2 quarts water to a boil in a large pot, add meat and boil 1 minute. Skim foam that rises to top. Add bay leaves and reduce heat to a simmer. Cook for about 1 1/2 hours. Add vegetables, beans and seasonings, adding more water if necessary to cover all the ingredients. Cook on low for an additional hour. If making vegetarian cocido briefly sauté all ingredients with 1 tablespoon oil. Add 1 quart vegetarian broth and 1 quart water. Bring to a simmer. Cook 1 hour, adding salt about half way through cooking. Add additional salt at the end, if needed. Serve in large bowls, ensuring that everyone has at least one chunk of corn on the cob.