



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 556 ~ September 19, 2016 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Summer 2016

Harvest list is online

Old Fashion Maine Mustard
Pickles
Chiles en Escabeche (pickled chiles)
Watermelon and Tomatillo Salad
Tempura Vegetables

Many more recipes and ideas on our website and our Facebook page.

Missing your pickup

As indicated in our [Terms of Agreement](#) (which you of course read before clicking on the “I agree” button when you subscribed, right?), you can only pick up your shares on your scheduled pickup day from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. If you don’t pick them up, you lose them. Unfortunately, we do not have the resources or capacity to set shares aside for a later pickup, nor can we afford to refund or credit unclaimed shares because we’ve already paid the farm for them. But we can and do keep bread and cheese shares for a limited time—we freeze and keep them for up to one month for you to collect on your next visit.

If you do not pick up your share, it’s not wasted. Unclaimed produce is donated to local charities.

If you know in advance that you will miss a pickup, put your subscription on delivery hold (you must do so online no later than midnight Friday prior to the week you want the hold to take effect). Or ask a friend or neighbor to pick up your share. All they need to do is give YOUR last name at the check-in table; no ID required.

How far have we come?

With our fall season on its way and many of our members back after the summer, we’d like to welcome everyone and reflect on where we are.

Twelve years ago, we started this CSA with just 15 members, on Hannes and Maria’s front porch on 7th Avenue, just a few blocks west of The Historic Y. To our surprise, we had started the CSA at a perfect time to catch the rising wave of the local food movement. In 2007, local food articles and stories featured prominently in the national media and Michael Pollan released his bestselling book, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*. *Omnivore’s Dilemma* is still considered one of the core publications of the local food movement and if you haven’t read it yet, we recommend you do. It is a wonderful and inspiring read.

The local food wave continued to rise. By 2008, we had over 500 members spread over three pickup days. The growing interest in local foods also encouraged development of more local farms, CSAs, farmer’s markets, which strengthened our local food system: our mission from the beginning! We strongly believed that a local food system must have many producers and offer choices if it is to be strong and endure. But as more local food choices became available, we got smaller. Our membership now hovers around 250 members spread over two pickup days. And we’re doing just fine.

Last week, someone asked what were the best and worst aspects of the CSA. Other than enjoying our local products, the best part is no doubt being part of the community it has created: seeing friendly, familiar faces week after week, watching children grow, sharing food stories, witnessing breakthroughs such as: “Oh, I always hated okra but now I love it!” Even more enriching is getting to know our members and realizing how incredibly kind, intelligent and generous human beings they are. It is humbling and very rewarding to be part of this community.

There really isn’t a “worst aspect of the CSA”, but there are undeniably some challenges. During our 12 years of operation, we have seen participation in our CSA spread from a small group of local food enthusiasts to a broader public. Perhaps one of the bigger challenges has been meeting the broader public’s expectations. This is where education



comes in—the role we play in explaining the differences between small local organic farms and large industrial farms that supply supermarkets, and the differences between a CSA and a supermarket or even a farmer’s market. There are many examples of such differences, and we’ll discuss them in future newsletters.

For today, let’s conclude with just one difference—a CSA reminds us of where our food comes from and the people who provide it.

Meet some of the crew at Crooked Sky Farms (from left to right): Francisco, Ana, Olga, Rogelio, Laura and Apolonia.

Old Fashion Maine Mustard Pickles

Kristin Terpening, Tucson CSA

Here's a super easy recipe for slightly spicy, very crunchy pickles from a woman I worked with at a boatyard in Maine.

1-2 heaping tablespoons sugar
1 heaping tablespoon canning salt
1 heaping tablespoon dry mustard
Apple cider vinegar - enough to fill a quart jar packed with cucumbers 2/3 full
Cold water - enough to top off the quart jar of cucumbers

Cut cukes into quarters, spears, or use small cukes. Pack into a quart size jar. Add dry ingredients. Fill jar 2/3 with cider vinegar. Then add cold water to fill the jar to the brim. Shake well, and again shake jars every once in a while for the next 24 hrs or whenever you think of it. (If you keep them somewhere easily visible, just give 'em a shake everytime you pass by.)

I also like to add at least a heaping tablespoon of chopped garlic or several individual cloves, and sometimes a red chile or two.

Since these aren't cooked or actually canned, it's best to keep them in the fridge for storage.

Chiles en Escabeche (pickled chiles)

Amy Valdes Schwemm, Tucson CSA

Fresh chiles (fleshy types with thin skins like jalapeños, serranos, and güeros/yellow hots are better than long chiles with thinner walls).

Vinegar, cider or distilled
Salt, non-iodized

Extras:

Carrot
Onion
Garlic
Mexican oregano

Cut slices of onion, garlic and carrot. Chiles can be left whole with stems, or seeded and sliced. Mix vinegar and water in equal parts, making enough to cover chiles. Put the solution in a non-reactive pot with 1 teaspoon salt for each cup of solution. Bring this brine to a boil and cook veggies for 1 to 3 minutes (more time for whole chiles, less if sliced). Do not let chiles get soft! Remove from heat and let cool. Put in jars, making sure the chiles stay submerged in brine, and refrigerate.

Watermelon and Tomatillo Salad

April Rawluszki, Tucson CSA, recipe adapted from Patismexicantable.com

4 cups watermelon, cut into bite size chunks
2 cups, about 1/2 pound tomatoes, quartered and thinly sliced
2/3 cup, about 3 ounces mild feta or queso fresco, crumbled or cut into small dice

For the vinaigrette:

1 tablespoon fresh mint leaves, about 5 to 6, chopped
1 tablespoon jalapeño or Serrano chile, or to taste (seeding optional)
2 tablespoons fresh squeezed lime juice
1 teaspoon white vinegar
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
4 tablespoons olive oil

Place the watermelon cubes and tomato slices in a large bowl. In a small bowl, add the chopped mint and jalapeño. Squeeze the fresh lime juice on top, stir in the vinegar, sprinkle the salt and mix. Add the olive oil and mix with a whisk or fork until well emulsified. Pour the vinaigrette on top of the watermelon and tomatillos, toss well and sprinkle the cheese on top.

Tempura Vegetables

Lorraine Glazar, Tucson CSA

I realize this isn't the healthiest way to eat your vegetables, but if you would like to see two teenage boys devour a basket of okra in 3 minutes and ask for more, try it!

Tempura Batter:

1 egg, beaten
1 cup ice cold water
1 cup all purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking powder.

Beat the egg until thoroughly combined, add the water and mix. Sift the flour, then sift it with the baking powder, then add to the egg/water mixture all at once. Stir, but don't make it smooth; it should have some lumps. The texture to aim for is pancake batter; the tempura batter should coat the vegetables but the excess should drip off readily.

Tempura Vegetables:

Green beans, tips and tails trimmed, you can spear two to four together with a toothpick

Okra

Sweet potato, peeled and cut into ¼ inch slices

Onion, peeled and cut into ¼ inch slices, you may also spear the rings together with a toothpick run horizontally through the slice.

Have all vegetables washed and thoroughly dried. Heat ½ inch of canola or peanut oil in a skillet until it just begins to smoke. Dip vegetables into the batter, let excess drip off, then put into hot oil. When browned on the first side, turn over. The goal is to have the vegetables crisp-cooked before the batter burns. Drain them well on a rack set over a paper towel, season with salt and pepper if you like, and pop into a warm oven—or just cook a batch at a time to be devoured by the hordes of family members who have discovered a previously latent love for vegetables.