



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT TUCSON CSA

A MOUNTAIN OF WINTER SQUASH

by Sara Jones

By my estimates most members, even if they have been selecting modest-sized winter squash, have taken home about 25-30 pounds of squash so far this fall. Part of the reason we are getting so much squash in our shares has to do with our hot September and October. Both farms had some losses to their first couple of rounds of winter plantings, as heat and wind scorched the delicate baby plants. Frank at Crooked Sky Farms has been sending us some of the heirloom squash that he usually sells at market to make up for the missing cool-weather veggies we might otherwise be getting. Farmer Frank also admits that it was just one of those years when he couldn't resist all the different beauties in the seed catalog! So what does one do with so much squash? Admire them, for starters. There is no big rush to use the bigger varieties right away. If you keep them in a cool, dry place and check underneath and around them once in a while to keep an eye out for any decay, they can last for months. When you are feeling up to the task, the large ones can be baked whole until tender. If you feel like you have the knife skills to tackle a hard, round object you could cut them in half or in wedges to fit in an instant pot or steamer. Once cooked, you can easily cut them in half to remove the seeds, then scrape out the cooked flesh.

Okay, so you've transformed a 15-pound pumpkin into a few quarts of cooked pumpkin meat. Now what? The options are endless. Starting with sweets, pumpkin pie and pumpkin bread can use substantial amounts of puree, but recipes like pumpkin flan, cheesecake, and even caramels are all over the internet. Use the traditional spices or sub in others, like ginger and cardamom, for a different take. On the savory side, soups are an obvious choice. Heirloom squash are so flavorful that making them can be as simple as thinning out a puree with broth, cream or coconut to make a lovely bisque. Some of the squash varieties we get are starchier and less watery, perfect for using in place of or in addition to potatoes in dishes like gnocchi, shepherd's pie, dinner rolls or curries. The puree can also be spiced up with roasted garlic or spices, then used as a filling for ravioli, enchiladas or empanadas.

Cooked squash puree keeps well in the freezer. One helpful hint we have heard from members is to freeze it in one-cup portions so you can take out exactly what you need for a recipe. Pumpkin is also a great dog food supplement and you can add small scoops to your dog's food or bake it into dog biscuits. Lastly, pumpkin is a great addition to a DIY face mask, and you can easily make your own by mixing a drizzle of honey and a dollop of yogurt into a cup of puree for an at-home spa night!



ASK A VOLUNTEER

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE WAY TO COOK WINTER SQUASH?

by Sara Jones

One of our favorite parts about working at the CSA is swapping recipes with members and fellow volunteers. This year we've had less opportunities for casual conversations, so here's a peek into what volunteers have been doing with their abundance of winter squash!

Dmitri and Marina, Tuesday Unloading Volunteers: We always roast squash whole in the oven. It's so much easier than trying to cut it up. Roast it at 350°F 'til a knife goes in easily, and the skin will slip off once it cools. We mash them up with herbs, like mashed potatoes, or make a Three Sisters stew with beans, corn, and roasted chiles!

Melissa, Wednesday Distribution Volunteer: I just put my big one in the oven, finally - it smells great. I am looking online at recipes for a Thai Pumpkin Soup from zenbelly.com and a Pumpkin Cheese Stuffed Pasta Bolognese Bake from halfbakedharvest.com. I haven't made either recipe yet, but these women are tried and true for solid and unique recipes.

Howard, Tuesday Distribution Volunteer: My last pumpkin was halved and seeds removed. One half was baked and pureed then made into a sheet of pumpkin squares (basically pumpkin pie with oat crust). The other half went into a spicy curry with sweet potatoes and carrots.



CSA SEASONAL RECIPES

WINTER SQUASH GNOCCHI

- 1 ¼ cups cooked winter squash, passed through a ricer or mashed well but not pureed
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 eggs
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 2 ½ cups flour, start with 2 cups and add more as needed to bind

Using a wooden spoon, combine all of the ingredients except the flour and mix well. Add 2 scant cups of flour and gently incorporate. Add just enough additional flour to be able to form mixture together into a ball. It will be sticky, but if you keep your hands covered with flour it should not be too sticky to work with. If you want, you can test the dough by dropping a 1 inch ball into boiling water. If the dumpling falls apart, add flour, a few tablespoons at a time, until the test dumpling holds together.

Coat hands in flour and grab a tennis-ball-size chunk of dough. On a well-floured cutting board, shape dough into an approximately 6-inch log. Cut the log in half lengthwise, then cut each half lengthwise again to make four small logs. Sprinkle with flour and roll each piece to smooth out edges. Line pieces up and use a large knife to cut into one-inch pieces. Toss onto a floured baking sheet and repeat with remaining dough.

To use: Cook gnocchi in well-salted boiling water for about three minutes, until they float to the top. Drain. Heat a few tablespoons of butter in a skillet over medium high and add dumplings. Stir to coat with butter and cook until they begin to brown. Remove from skillet and sprinkle with parmesan cheese.



SAVE THE DATE

DECEMBER 17 -
JANUARY 1

Tucson CSA's annual winter break.

There will not be pickups during this time, and there is no need to put your account on hold. We'll see you in 2021!

JANUARY 5 & 6

First Tucson CSA pickups of 2021

JANUARY 9

Food Justice Book Club Meeting (Virtual)

JANUARY 28

Virtual CSA Cooking Demo (Tentative)



HOLIDAY POP-UP

THE WILD STAMEN + SONORAN SOAPS AND SUNDRIES

by Shelby Thompson and Raven Bolas

Our last holiday pop-up of the year will be hosted by Raven Bolas of The Wild Stamen and Sonoran Soaps and Sundries. Visit her table when you come to pick up your CSA share this week!

Beautiful botanicals two ways - The Wild Stamen with crepe paper flowers that last a lifetime and Sonoran Soaps and Sundries with desert plant distillations and body care. Let the plants uplift your heart this winter season.

Sonoran Soaps and Sundries offers handmade soaps, salves, hydrosols and remedies based on plant infusions from our 1/4-acre organic garden. We grow lavender, calendula, comfrey, roses and more. Prices range from \$5 soaps to \$12 hydrosols. Our products are natural and beautifully carry the essence of the desert.

The Wild Stamen will have paper flower 'seed' packets, which include all the materials you will need to craft your own beautiful flowers (minus glue). Your choice of purple bearded iris, red poppies, and delicate cosmos. Each packet makes 3 flowers and is \$12 each or 3 for \$30. There will also be beautiful holiday wreaths crafted onto hand-woven willow and cholla branches featuring roses, daffodils, and native Sonoran wildflowers.



WE'RE READING

*How Native American Tribes
Saved A Giant, Ancient
Squash From Oblivion*
by Rebecca Williams
(NPR.org)



WE'RE LISTENING TO

*Food Sovereignty:
A Growing Movement*
(All My Relations podcast)



WE'RE WATCHING

Gather
(gather.film)



ON SOCIAL

*We're regularly posting
new recipe videos to our
YouTube channel! You can
find us by searching "Tucson
CSA" on YouTube*



THANK YOU

by Shelby Thompson

This year more than ever, it feels like an immense honor to help bridge the gap between our local farmers and the Tucson community.

We are incredibly thankful that you've trusted us to help feed you and your families this year. That you continued to support us and our farmers when it would have been so much easier to have had your produce delivered from a chain grocer.

I don't know another group of people that would show up within a specific 30-minute time slot to pick up their food each week - but when we asked, Tucson CSA members did it with a smile. Throughout the year you gifted us wine, donated to CS-Aid to help make produce subscriptions affordable for others, advocated for Farmer Frank with the City of Phoenix, and brought us so much joy when we saw you every week. You are wonderful and we are so lucky to call you our community.

In addition to making us feel happy and fulfilled during this scary and unpredictable year, you supported our farmers and producers in incredible ways. Your CSA subscriptions helped provide extra financial support to **Crooked Sky Farms** and **Sleeping Frog Farms**, so much so that we're able to give both farms a bonus payment this year. When **Fiore di Capra** and **Thrive and Grow Farms'** farmers' market sales dropped in March, Tucson

CSA members bought extra goat cheese and sprouts that helped them to make up for the lost sales. With your continued support over the last year and a half, **Desert Pearl Mushrooms** has blossomed from a tiny bedroom grow-op into a startup that produces a variety of fresh and dried mushrooms. With every pickup you've made, every meal you've cooked, and every bite you've taken, you've helped to strengthen southern Arizona's local food system.

The Tucson CSA community has gone to great lengths to feed our people and support our farmers in 2020 - for that, we are proud. We also know that there's so much more work to do be done to end food apartheid, to create good wages and working conditions for all farmers and farm laborers, and to make our local food spaces welcoming and accessible. With that in mind, onward to 2021!

PUMPKIN DOG BISCUITS

- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup pumpkin puree
- 1 cup sourdough discard
- 1/4 cup peanut butter
- 2 tablespoon coconut oil, melted
- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 cup rolled oats

Preheat the oven to 325°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Add the eggs, pumpkin puree, sourdough discard, peanut butter, and coconut oil to a medium-sized mixing bowl and whisk all of the ingredients together. Use a mixing spoon or spatula to stir in the flour and oats. Knead the dough a few times until everything comes together and there are no dry bits left.

Roll the dough out until it's 1/4-inch thick. Use cookie cutters to cut out the dough and place the shapes two inches apart on the prepared baking sheet. Bake for 30-40 minutes, until the biscuits are golden-brown and crunchy. Feed to very good (& bad) dogs.

SQUASH SOUP

- 2 pounds of squash or pumpkin (any kind), peeled and cut into chunks
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 apples, peeled and diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 1 can coconut milk
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Heat oil or butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion, carrots, and apple to the pot and sauté until the onions are translucent, about 10-15 minutes. Add the squash, cinnamon, salt, and broth and bring the soup to a simmer. Cook for about 20 minutes, until the squash is tender, then stir in the coconut milk. Using an immersion blender or regular blender, puree the soup until it is silky smooth. Taste for seasonings and adjust as needed.

Shelby's serving recommendation: Serve with grilled cheese made with Barrio Bread and Fiore di Capra goat cheese.