



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture Newsletter

August 8, 2006 – Issue 48

Summer 06
Week 10 of 13

This Week's Share

Choice of melon
Trucker's Delight white corn
Garlic
Armenian cucumber
Spaghetti squash
Roasted green chiles
Jalapeños
Yellow Hot chiles

Recipes in this Issue

Soft Taco with Roasted Green
Chile and Goat Cheese
Green Chile Omelet
Smoked Jalapeños
Candied Jalapeños
Jalapeño Poppers

**Also on the back: Today's
melons**



Traditionally, Farmer Frank has started planting his fall crops on August 7. This year is no exception, despite the lack of rains. This week he will be planting arugula (our favorite, above), mustard greens, kale, lettuce, and turnips.

TCSA Organizer

Philippe Waterinckx

Newsletter Editor

Christa Selig

We welcome your comments, suggestions, and your questions.

www.tucsoncsa.org

What am I going to do with all those Jalapeños?!

Your newsletter editor can hardly believe that she, of all people, is writing a column to encourage any of you jalapeño-fearers out there that jalapeños are not as intimidating as you might make them out to be. I was raised in a rural, homogenously German community in the Midwest, in the seventies, before the incursion of Taco Bell and the influx of Mexican food, on a purely spiceless meat-and-potatoes diet. Jalapeños did not find their way onto our dinner plates. (During my parents' first visit to Tucson, I had to convince them that bell peppers were *not* spicy.) Later, I studied for a semester in England, where Indian food was prevalent. I loved the smell and the taste of it, but my palate could not get accustomed to the heat. I told myself that with time, I would grow used to it. I didn't. After 12 years in Tucson, however, I can tell you that I have grown to *welcome* the first chile harvest in August. "Chiles," writes Huntley Dent in his classic *The Feast of Santa Fe* (Fireside, 1993) are "the soul of the sauce." Indeed they are! They don't just add macho heat—in moderate amounts, they impart a fresh piquancy and flavor to summer foods that make them truly our own, here in the Southwest, a flavor that can only be imitated elsewhere with less-than-freshly picked chiles.

The true Jalapeño originated in Mexico and was named for the town of Jalapa in the state of Veracruz. In Mexico, however, only the pickled form is called Jalapeño; the fresh green pod is known as *cuaraesmeño* (Lenten chile). A short, plump version is called *chile gordo* (fat chile) in the coastal area of Mexico. When fully ripened and smoked (*humado*), it becomes a *chipotle*, except in Oaxaca, where it is a *chile huachiñango*. Seeded chiles are called *capones*.

Jalapeños range from hot to very hot (2,500 to 8,000 on the Scoville heat scale), but not as hot as habañeros or Thai chiles (300,000 or more). By comparison, our roasted chile peppers rate 1,000 to 1,500. **If you want less heat, remove the seeds and membranes, where the spicy capsaicin oil is confined, using rubber gloves or a teaspoon to protect your skin from absorbing it.**

Chile or Chili?

According to Jean Andrews in *Peppers: The Domesticated Capsicums* (University of Texas Press, 1995), Columbus found that the Arawak Indians in the West Indies called the much-used plant *axí*, which became *ají* in Spanish (pronounced ah-hée). When the Spanish conquistadors arrived in Mexico, they heard the *ají* being called *chilli*, a Nahuatl word (the language of the Aztecs, the dominant group at the time of the Conquest, 1519-1521). Dr. Francisco Hernández, physician and historian to King Felipe II of Spain and the first European to collect plants systematically in America, rendered *chilli* as *chile* during his visit to Mexico from 1570-1577. *Chile* subsequently became anglicized as *chili*. So from the Hispanic viewpoint, the correct word is *chile*, pluralized to *chiles*. In Anglo usage, which historically came later, it is *chili* and the plural is *chilies*.

But in answer to our original question: what am I going to do with all those Jalapeños?! Philippe makes the excellent suggestion of **flavoring dishes with ¼ local Jalapeño instead of using imported commercial black pepper**. Even the Frontier Co-op organic black peppercorns that you can purchase in bulk from local grocery stores are imported from India and Indonesia. Jalapeños freeze easily—just slice in quarters, remove the seeds, and store in plastic bags in the freezer.

Soft Taco with Roasted Green Chile and Goat Cheese

2 roasted green chiles, skinned, seeded*, and cut into strips
1 large tortilla
Fresh goat cheese
Chopped cilantro

Place the tortilla in a dry skillet over medium heat. As soon as the bottom is warm, flip it over. Put the chile on top, crumble the cheese over it, and add the cilantro. (You can add salsa, too, if you like.) When the cheese starts to soften, slide the tortilla on to a plate, then fold it in half. Press down, wrap in a napkin, sit down, and enjoy! Sliced **cucumbers** and **cold freshly pressed apple cider (available from the CSA)** make refreshing accompaniments.

Variation: Mash the chile flesh with 1 clove of chopped **garlic** to make a simple relish (*chile verde*) and spread it on the tortilla instead of using chile strips. This is one of twelve “feasts in simplicity” suggested by Huntley Dent in *The Feast of Santa Fe*.

**Never ever rinse chiles in water to remove the seeds! Doing so removes the oils, which hold much of the chile’s flavor. Rinsing with water partially explains why commercially processed chiles are never as flavorful as fresh.*

Green Chile Omelet

Green chile, cheese and eggs have a natural affinity. Goat cheese isn’t just a stylish conceit either here or in the taco recipe above: it was once a very common cheese, for goat thrives more cheaply and easily than does a cow.

2 roasted green chiles, skinned, seeded, and cut into strips
Fresh goat cheese
2 eggs
Salt and pepper
1 tablespoon butter

Season the eggs with salt and pepper and whisk them in a bowl with a fork. Melt the butter in a 7-inch nonstick skillet, then wait a good 5 seconds after its foaming has stopped. Swirl the slightly browned butter around to coat the pan, then add the eggs. Let them sit over high heat for 10 seconds to begin to cook, then swirl. When the eggs are set but still soft on top, add the chile and some crumbled goat cheese. Fold omelet over and roll or slide off onto plate.

Smoked Jalapeños

Anne Kmann, TCSA member

Jalapeños are great smoked as well. I usually grill or smoke my dinner and then use the coals to smoke 2 pounds of Jalapeños. They are great to store this way and are ready-made chipotles. It takes no more work than just laying them on the already-warm grill!

Candied Jalapeños

Gourmetsleuth.com

3 jalapeño peppers
1 cup granulated sugar
2 cups water

Cut the pepper lengthwise into four strips, cleaning out white pith and seeds.

Combine the sugar and water. Heat to make a simple syrup. Cook the jalapeño strips in the simple syrup for a few minutes, then strain the syrup and let the strips cool for a few minutes. Repeat the cooking process three or four times, reusing the syrup, or until the strips are nicely candied.

Jalapeño Poppers

6 jalapeños
1/2 cup grated sharp Cheddar cheese
1 tablespoon cream cheese
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1 large egg
1/3 cup unflavored dry breadcrumbs
1 pinch salt

Note: cheddar and cream cheese can be substituted by goat cheese

Preheat oven to 325 F. Lightly oil baking sheet and set aside. Remove contents from jalapeños. If too difficult, cut them in half lengthwise and remove seeds and membranes. Place on oiled baking sheet.

Mix together the Cheddar and cream cheese and stuff the jalapeños with the mixture.

In a bowl, beat the egg until frothy. In another bowl, stir together breadcrumbs and salt. Roll each jalapeño in egg, then in breadcrumbs.

Place on a baking sheet. Bake until tender and browned, for about 30 minutes. Serve warm, with sour cream for dipping.

About Our Melons This Week ...

Golden Honeydew

A brilliant gold melon with mint-white flesh that has exceptional flavor and sweetness. The golden color tells you it’s ripe.



Canary

A large, baseball-shaped and colorful Spanish melon that has a bright yellow outer skin with a pale green to white inner flesh. This melon has a slightly sweet flavor provided by the aromatic flesh. This melon is also referred to as a Juan Canary melon.

