



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Summer `08

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More recipes on our website

More anti-gummy okra tips:

CSA members share additional tricks for dealing with okra gumminess.

The couscous technique:

Sauté chopped onion and garlic until golden. Add sliced okra and sauté several more minutes. Add water and bring to a boil. Turn off heat and add half as much couscous as you added water. Cover and let sit 5 minutes. The couscous will absorb the gumminess of the okra and make it unnoticeable. Cook with other vegetables as desired, such as corn, squash, and tomatillos or tomatoes.

The ice water technique:

Let the okra slices sit slightly submerged in a bowl of salted ice water for about 10-15 minutes. Drain in a colander and rinse.

The cornmeal technique:

If you like to fry up your okra Southern-style, you can use their natural gumminess instead of an egg base. After rinsing, slice the okra into discs (discarding the tops and tails). Toss in a Ziploc bag with coarse ground cornmeal and freshly ground pepper to coat. Pop the bag in the freezer, and use as needed. Pan-fry in a little oil until golden brown, and drain on paper towels.

Newsletter editors

Kimi Eisele & Philippe Waterinckx

"A TOMATO BY ANY OTHER NAME..."



It's summertime and that means tomatoes! Homegrown, juicy, sweet, tart "wolf peaches." That's the translation of *Lycopersicon esculentum*, which is what French botanist Tournefort first called the tomato, mistaking it for a type of poison that was once used to kill wolves.

Native to South and Central America, in the early 1500s the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortez took them back to Europe where they were planted as ornamentals. The Spanish and Italians were the first to Europeans to begin cultivating tomatoes, which were mostly likely yellow. They were named "pomi d'oro" or "yellow apples." In France they were believed to be aphrodisiacs and named "pommes d'amour" or "love apples." The Spanish called it "tomatl," which is where we get the English word we use today.

Home to the poisonous nightshade family, tomatoes were long believed to be deadly (the leaves actually are poisonous). They were also thought to cause appendicitis and stomach cancer because of their acidity.

During a brave act at the turn of the 19th century, the tomato was re-introduced to the Americas when Colonel Robert Gibbon Johnson, who offered an annual prize for the largest fruit grown, pulled something of a publicity stunt. To defy the public's "poo-poo-ing," he stood on the steps of his hometown courthouse and ate an entire bushel of tomatoes. Despite the crowd's worst fears and the dismal dirge offered by a local band, Colonel Johnson did not fall ill or dead. Rather, he woke people up to the delicious tangy treat that is the tomato.

Fruit or Vegetable?

This is an economical question. Technically the tomato is a fruit. In 1893 an importer claimed it as such in effort to avoid vegetable tariffs. A heated argument resulted. Eventually the Supreme court ruled that the tomato be classified for tariff purposes as a vegetable since it was typically prepared and served in main meals and not in desserts, as fruit.

Lucky for us we get pesticide-free, farm fresh juicy flavorful tomatoes. Anything else these days is just a flavorless disappointment, or, shall we say, a "crab apple."

Goat Cheese Freeze

Can't eat your Black Mesa Ranch goat cheese right away? Fear not. The cheese freezes well. In fact, many CSA members have reported that freezing it enhances its texture, making it smoother and creamier. Also, in the event that you forget to pick up your cheese on cheese day, it goes in the freezer anyway. We freeze all uncollected cheese logs so members can pick them up the following week.



Baba Ganoush

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This dish, which is similar to hummus, is popular even with people who generally dislike eggplant. Roasting the garlic with the eggplant makes it milder and smoother so don't be afraid to use the full quantity.

3 medium or 1 large eggplant
1/2 head garlic
2 tablespoons tahini
1 tablespoon olive oil
Juice of half of one lemon
Salt to taste

Add to taste any of the following: ground cumin, paprika, red chili, mint.

If using narrow Japanese eggplant, prick in several places with a toothpick. If using round globe eggplant, cut in half, oil cut sides and lay cut side down on baking sheet. Oil garlic, with skin on and place on baking sheet. Cook in a 350-degree oven for 30-45 minutes, until eggplant is meltingly tender. Once cooled, scrape flesh from skin using a spoon. Cut off tops of garlic and squeeze out roasted flesh. Put garlic and eggplant in blender or food processor along with other ingredients and blend until smooth. Serve with raw vegetable slices or pita bread.

Quick Okra Jambalaya

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Use leftover cooked rice for this easy recipe.

1 basket okra, cleaned and chopped
1 handful green beans, cleaned and chopped
2-3 tomatoes, cleaned and chopped
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 small sweet onion, sliced thinly
3 cloves garlic, minced

1 cup cooked kidney beans (or use leftover chicken or sausage)
2 cups cooked rice
1 tablespoon oil
1 teaspoon each of cumin, 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 green beans, tomatoes, tomato paste, 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 (or chicken or sausage) and rice. Cook, stirring frequently until rice is heated through. Add salt to taste and serve.

Minty Squash Pasta Salad

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is great hot or cold. Try using basil instead of mint and parsley for a nice change.

1 box penne or bowtie pasta
About 2 teaspoons olive oil
About 2 medium summer squash, cut into half moons
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 handful mint, chopped finely
1 handful parsley, chopped finely
Zest of two limes
Juice from one lime
2 teaspoons walnut or hazelnut oil (optional)
Salt to taste

Cook pasta until al dente and set aside. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium high heat. Add garlic and squash. Cook stirring occasionally until squash begins to brown slightly. Remove from heat. Toss together pasta, squash mixture herbs, lime zest and juice. Drizzle with nut oil and salt to taste.

Quick Okra Pickles

Lorraine Glazar, Tucson CSA

One share okra (about 10-15 pods, on the smaller side)
Three quarters cup vinegar, cider, rice or balsamic
1/2 teaspoon salt, more to taste
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes OR 1 teaspoon whole pickling spices
Good pinch of whole peppercorns
One nice clean jar that holds 8-10 ounces
Whole herbs if you have them, such as basil or dill (optional)
A few slices of peeled, vertically sliced onion (optional)

Clean the okra while leaving the pod intact. Pack into a clean jar, then add red pepper flakes, peppercorns, onions, and any whole herbs you have at hand. Boil the vinegar in a small saucepan and dissolve salt into the solution. Take off the heat and let cool for 3-5 minutes. Pour over the okra in the jar, seal with lid, and then store in the refrigerator. These make great snacks or additions to salads.

Melon Cooler

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Perfect as is, or use as a base for cocktails or frozen into popsicles.

1 medium melon, peeled, seeded and cut into large chunks
1/2 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.