



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Winter 08-09

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Cooking Demonstration: Gaga for Greens

The Amazing Sara Jones will offer one of her free cooking and tasting events in the courtyard this week. Sara is the CSA's official cook and recipe tester. Every week her creations bless the back page of this newsletter.

This demo will feature winter greens prominently! If you are challenged by your abundant greens, make sure to drop by at the demo table and ask Sara lots of questions. In the event of rain (unlikely when our newsletter went to press), the demo will be re-scheduled for another day.



Newsletter Editor

Kimi Eisele

THE SUNCHOKE: A TASTY TUBER

A sunchoke is a special root vegetable also known as a Jerusalem artichoke, though it's really nothing like an artichoke. Nor is it from Jerusalem.

A sunchoke is actually a species of sunflower native to North America. Its flowers resemble small sunflowers, and the edible roots look like ginger root.



Early explorers came upon Native Americans cultivating sunchokes in Virginia in the late 1500s. They called them Canadian or French potatoes. The tuber eventually traveled back to Europe where an Italian, thinking it tasted like an artichoke, named it "sunflower artichoke," or sunchoke for short.

For a time, people feared this tasty vegetable because of its odd shape, which reminded them of the deformed fingers of leprosy victims. Now over 200 varieties of sunchokes exist. The inulin they contain breaks down into fructose, which makes them a good potato substitute for diabetics. They are also used to make alcohol.

Sunchokes taste like a mix between a potato, sunflower seed, artichoke and water chestnut and makes a nice addition to soups, salads, sauces, and salsas. Try them in recipes calling for crunchy or nutty additions, instead of jicama, water chestnuts, or nuts. You can even deep fry slices of them!

OBAMA'S CHOICE FOR AGRICULTURE SECRETARY RAISES CONCERNS

Much to do is made about President-elect Barack Obama being the best hope for a sustainable food and agricultural future. No doubt he's the healthiest eater to enter the White House in recent decades. On the campaign trail, he not only solicited votes at local farmers' market, but also shopped at them as well. He's even read Michael Pollan.

But how dedicated will Obama be in office to making policy changes to create a once-and-for-all sustainable food system in America?

His recent pick for the country's next Secretary of Agriculture has many sustainable foodies worried. Many hoped Obama would appoint a strong supporter of family farming, sustainable food systems, and health and nutrition. But Obama's pick—former Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack—isn't exactly that. While Vilsack has been lauded for his work to prevent livestock monopolies, he has long been a proponent of genetically engineered crops, animal cloning, and factory farming. As an Iowa statesman, Vilsack has also supported industrial ethanol production, which not only requires high quantities of fossil fuel to produce, but also causes global corn and grain prices to increase, negatively impacting people in developing countries.

While several prominent environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, have endorsed Vilsack as a strong candidate, others, like the Organic Consumers Association, are strongly protesting it. (The OCA recently put out a petition to protest Vilsack's nomination: <http://www.organicconsumers.org/vilsack.cfm>). Whatever happens, we'll still have to be patient to see if Obama designs his food and agricultural policies the way we all think he should.

Turnips and Jerusalem Artichokes with Bread

Crumbs-new

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Nutty bread crumbs are excellent atop these sweet, earthy root vegetables. The artichokes will probably cook faster than the turnips, so add them about halfway through cooking.

2 or 3 turnips, cut into bite size pieces
1 large or several small Jerusalem artichokes, cut into bite size pieces
1 large handful garlicky bread crumbs
Finely chopped parsley, to garnish

Steam veggies until tender, but not mushy. Put on a plate and garnish with bread crumbs and parsley. Serve hot.

Garlicky Bread Crumbs

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

These bread crumbs will make any simple, steamed or sautéed vegetable special (it's a great way to dress up greens!). They are great sprinkled on gratins and other casseroles, too. You can make a big batch and keep some in the fridge for use later in the week.

About 3/4 cup crumbs from dried bread
1/4 cup finely chopped walnuts or pecans
3-4 cloves garlic, minced
Drizzle of olive oil
1 tablespoon butter, or more oil
Salt and pepper

In a heavy cast iron skillet, heat oil until shimmering and very hot, but not smoking. Add bread crumbs and toss well to coat in oil. Cook over medium high heat, stirring frequently until crumbs are just beginning to brown. Add butter, garlic and nuts and stir well to coat. Continue cooking, toasting nuts and crumbs, stirring continuously to avoid burning nuts or garlic. When crumbs are crunchy and golden brown, remove from heat and sprinkle with salt and pepper, to taste.

Squash and Greens in Coconut-new

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is a very simple, yet tasty recipe, with lots of room for innovation. If you like curry flavors, add more spices to the mix, sautéing them with the onions before adding the rest of the ingredients. You can also add tofu, garbanzo beans or cooked chicken for a complete meal, served over rice.

1 bunch CSA greens, cleaned and roughly chopped
About 2 cups peeled winter squash, diced small
1 inch fresh ginger, grated
1 onion, sliced thinly
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
2 teaspoons oil

1/2 can coconut milk
Red chile flakes, to taste
Soy sauce, to taste
Lime juice

In a large skillet, heat oil over medium high heat and add onion. Cook until beginning to brown. Add ginger, chile flakes and coriander and cook until fragrant. Add vegetables and coconut milk, plus about 1/4 cup of water. Bring to a low simmer and cook until squash is tender. Season to taste with soy sauce and a bit of lime juice.

Balsamic Lemon Greens

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

The tart flavor of vinegar or citrus compliments the mild bitter flavor of braising greens. Sprinkle cooked greens with a generous portion of grated parmesan to make them even tastier.

1 bag braising greens
2 teaspoons oil
1 squeeze of lemon juice
Dash balsamic vinegar to taste
Dash soy sauce to taste
Grated parmesan, to taste

Wash and chop greens, leaving the moisture on leaves. Heat about 2 teaspoons of oil over medium high heat. Add greens and stir well to coat. Cover and cook briefly, then add a squeeze of lemon, a few dashes of balsamic vinegar and soy sauce. Cover again and cook a few more minutes. Serve topped with grated cheese.

Red Acre Cabbage and Warm Spinach Salad

Adapted from Gourmet, April 2000

For balsamic vinaigrette:

1 garlic clove, minced
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 1/2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

For salad:

1/4 cup pine nuts
2 oz sliced pancetta (Italian unsmoked cured bacon), chopped
1 pound red cabbage, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
1 (5-oz) bag baby spinach, any tough stems discarded

To make the vinaigrette: Mash garlic with salt to a paste. Whisk together garlic paste, mustard, and vinegar, then add oil in a stream, whisking until emulsified. To make the salad: Toast pine nuts in a dry large heavy skillet over moderate heat, stirring frequently, until beginning to turn golden, about 2 minutes. Add pancetta and cook until browned and crisp, about 2 minutes. Add cabbage, tossing to combine, and cook, covered, until wilted and just tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Reduce heat to low and add spinach, stirring gently until it just begins to wilt. Remove pan from heat. Add vinaigrette and toss. Serve immediately.