



# Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 256 ~ September 13, 2010 ~ Online at [www.TucsonCSA.org](http://www.TucsonCSA.org)

## Fall 2010 - Week 3 of 13

Harvest list is online

### The Back Page

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*Many more recipes on  
our online recipe archive*

### Grass-Fed Meat Shares

We are now taking deposits for grass-fed beef shares, grass-fed lamb shares and pasture-raised turkeys. All from local producers. The number of shares for each type of meat is limited.

A \$20 deposit per share is required at time of ordering. The balance is due when you pick up your meat share later in the session. Beef and lamb will be available for pickup in October. Turkeys will be available just before Thanksgiving.

We won't have pork shares available this session, but we will sell pork cuts retail style at the front desk when available.

For more info about our meat shares, go to our website and click on Products, then Grass-fed Meat Shares.

### Upcoming Events

September 25 - A Taste of Place

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum will provide you with food for the belly and some food for thought on this day tour of local farms. Learn how the San Xavier Cooperative Farm's return to traditional foods is reaping cultural as well as health benefits. Visit the Marana Farm, enjoy a lunch prepared from seasonal, local ingredients, and find out about farmer-direct Community Supported Agriculture.

\$64 members; \$69 non-members.

Meet near downtown. Transportation provided.

Registration information: call 520/883-3086 or go to [www.desertmuseum.org/sonoranstudies](http://www.desertmuseum.org/sonoranstudies)

## MAKING PRICKLY PEAR JUICE



If you haven't been out harvesting prickly pear fruit yet, you best get on it! At this very moment, the fruit is ripe for the picking. This deliciously refreshing fruit is celebrated for its vibrant magenta color, its unique flavor, and its cooling properties. Use it to make the regional favorites of prickly pear lemonade, syrup, or jelly!

There are some 12 varieties of fruiting *Opuntia*, or prickly pear cactus (*nopal* in Spanish). *Opuntia engelmannii* or Englemann's Prickly Pear is native to the Sonoran Desert, and likely to be found very near your house.

Look for prickly pear fruits, or tunas, as they're called in Spanish, that are dark red or purple in color. August and September tend to be the season here in Tucson. Using tongs, simply pluck the fruit from the nopal pad. They should come off easily. The fine hairs on the surfaces of both the fruit and the pads are called glochids—they stick and prick, so you might consider wearing gloves as well. Though the cactus is abundant, be sure to leave some fruit for the animals and some for new seed, as well.

To process, place whole fruits, glochids and all, into a blender or food processor. Blend to make a slurry. Strain the slurry through a fine mesh strainer or a colander lined with cloth. Use a spoon to press the juice from the seeds and skins. Let the strained juice settle.

Freeze prickly pear juice in ice cube trays then transfer to airtight freezer storage bags. Pour the seeds in the yard to start a new prickly pear patch.

Alternatively, you can put whole prickly pears in the freezer. To process, line a colander with a cheese cloth (or clean pillowcase) and place over a bucket or large bowl. Place frozen fruits in the colander and allow to defrost (2-5 hours). Press on fruits with a wooden spoon as they soften to push juice through.

Pay attention as you work. Prickly pear juice will stain! Wipe counters and wooden surfaces immediately after use and wear an apron or old clothes when processing the fruit.

NOTE: Prickly pear juice is very cooling. Do not consume high quantities of non-diluted raw juice as it is occasionally known to cause chills and body aches. Drinking a few glasses of lemonade is absolutely fine and will give you the cooling effect you're seeking in the dog days of August and the still-here September summer.

SOURCE: *Eat Mesquite! A Cookbook*. Forthcoming, Nov. 2010. Desert Harvesters.

The prickly pear lemonade recipe on the back page appears in the forthcoming cookbook, *Eat Mesquite!*, which will be released this November by Desert Harvesters. The cookbook contains almost 50 mesquite flour recipes, along with a handful of recipes for mesquite's best companion—prickly pear!

## **Prickly Pear Lemonade**

by Amy Schwemm

This gloriously colored refreshing drink is a Sonoran Desert delicacy. Serve it and delight the party!

Honey or agave syrup  
Cold water  
5 lemon juice ice cubes  
2-5 prickly pear ice cubes  
Ice  
Fresh mint or lemon balm (optional)

Dissolve honey, if using, in a cup of hot, but not boiling, water. Cool to room temperature. Fill a 2-quart pitcher three-quarters full of cold water. Add 5 lemon cubes and 2 to 5 prickly pear cubes, depending on your preferences. Add honey mixture or agave syrup to taste. Mix, sample, and adjust. Serve with ice and sprigs of fresh mint or lemon balm.

Variations to reduce or eliminate sweeteners: Use mesquite broth or syrup instead of honey or agave. Replace some of the lemon juice with sweet orange juice or use sour orange juice, utilizing some of the “ornamental” harvest that goes to waste! Replace some of the water with apple juice. No additional sweetening required.

Editor’s note: unless you know that your agave nectar is not made from high fructose corn syrup, it is best to stick to honey or simple syrup (made from dissolving 1 cup of sugar in 1 cup of boiling water). Also, if you don’t have frozen lemon juice, you can use frozen lemon juice concentrate instead (no need to add extra sweetener in that case).

## **Arugula Pesto 2**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Spicy arugula is a great herb for pesto. Add or substitute some basil for variety and use whatever nuts you have on hand. Serve tossed with pasta or spread on a sandwich. You can also blend a package of cream cheese into this pesto, to make an excellent dip for bread or veggies.

1 bunch Arugula  
2-3 cloves garlic  
½ cup toasted walnuts  
¼ cup olive oil  
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese (optional)  
Salt and pepper to taste

Wash and dry arugula. Pulse garlic and walnuts in food processor or blender until coarsely ground. Add the arugula (and basil if using) and olive oil, and continue to pulse to desired consistency. Add the cheese last, and then season with salt and pepper to taste.

## **Creamy Carrot Ginger Soup**

Lorraine Glazar, Tucson CSA

6 large carrots (about 1 lb)  
2 stalks celery, including leaves  
1 cup thinly sliced onion  
1/4 cup crystallized (candied) ginger, chopped  
7 cups vegetable or chicken broth  
½ cup cooked white rice  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1/2 cup half and half or vegan alternative (almond milk is nice)  
Mint or watercress for garnish (optional)

Slice carrots and celery crosswise and place in a heavy pot with onion, ginger and broth. Bring to a boil, then simmer until vegetables are very tender (about 20 minutes). Remove from heat and add rice. Season with salt and pepper and allow to cool for 15 minutes. Puree in small batches in a blender until smooth. Return to the pot and stir in half and half or your choice of a vegan alternative. Heat soup through but do not boil. Garnish and serve. Serves 8

## **Easy Spanish Rice -new**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This recipe is a great side dish but can become an easy one pot meal by adding a can of beans or crumbled bacon along with the rice. You can change the look of this dish by the way you chop the vegetables. A nice ¼ inch dice is best for serving as a side dish. Larger slices will still have time to cook through, if you want to serve this as a complete meal with some sort of protein added in.

1-2 tablespoons oil or butter  
1 cup white rice  
1 medium potato, diced  
1 carrot, diced  
½ onion, diced  
2-3 fresh or roasted green chiles, seeds removed and diced  
2-3 tomatoes, fresh or canned, diced  
½ teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon dried oregano  
Salt to taste

Heat butter or oil in a saucepan over medium high heat. Add onions, chiles and cumin and sauté for a couple minutes to release fragrance. Add the rest of the ingredients and stir to combine. Add 1 ¾ cups water and bring to a boil. Cover and reduce heat to low. Cook on low for 15 minutes, remove from heat, and allow to sit for 5 more minutes before removing lid. Taste for salt and add more if needed. Serve hot.