



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Winter 2010 - Week 2 of 11

Harvest list is online

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Cushaw Squash

Winter Break Coming Soon!

Remember that there will be no pickups during the last two weeks in December, that is on Tuesdays December 21 and 28, and on Wednesdays December 22 and 29.

That's when Farmer Frank and the Crooked Sky Farms crew all take a well-deserved annual break.

So that means that there are only two more pickup weeks before Christmas and the new year – this week and next week. The first pickup days of the new year will be Tuesday and Wednesday, January 4 and 5.

Seeing colors lately? See "Why are these navel oranges green?" on the back page.

Newsletter editor

Philippe Waterinckx and Kimi Eisele

SO MANY SQUASH, SO LITTLE TIME!

This week, we may have a choice among pumpkins, cushaw squash and spaghetti squash.

We rarely get cushaw more than once a year. Some of you may get it this week. If you've had enough of pumpkin pie for the season, try a cushaw squash pie instead! Both can be used the same way. Cushaw squash is a large heirloom winter squash, identified by its curved neck and green and gray or tan stripes. Its flesh is yellow, fibrous, and slightly sweet, which means it can be used for both sweet and savory dishes. It is both a cold hardy and a heat tolerant squash.

Spaghetti squash is a fun alternative to typical squashes because of its unique texture. It is similar to other squash when raw, but when cooked, its flesh separates into thick strings like noodles, hence its name. Spaghetti squash can be baked, boiled, steamed, or microwaved. It is perhaps most famous for being served in place of real spaghetti, topped with marinara sauce and Parmesan cheese! Like any winter squash, its seeds can also be roasted, salted and enjoyed as a snack. Spaghetti squash is rich in folic acid, potassium and beta carotene and is a very low-calorie food. (~42 calories per cup). Traditional spaghetti squash has a pale yellow or ivory-colored skin. In the 1990s, an orange spaghetti squash called "Orangetti" was developed. The Orangetti variety is sweeter and richer in beta carotene.

Both cushaw and spaghetti squash can be cooked the following ways (see also winter squash recipes in our online recipe archives):

Bake: Cut in half and remove seeds. Place cut sides down in a baking dish or cookie sheet. You can also bake squash whole: pierce the whole shell several times with a large fork and place in a baking dish. Cook in a preheated oven at 375° F until the flesh is tender (40-60 minutes, depending on the size).

Boil: Heat a large pot of water. Peel cushaw squash and cut into small pieces, removing seeds as you go. Cook until tender, then drain. Spaghetti squash can be cooked whole, unpeeled. Place in boiling water and cook for 20 to 30 minutes, depending on its size. Remove when a fork goes easily into the flesh.

Microwave: Cut squash in half lengthwise and remove seeds. Place cut sides up in a microwave dish with 1/4 cup water. Cover with plastic wrap (but the plastic wrap shouldn't contact the squash) and cook on high for 10 to 12 minutes or longer, depending on size of squash.

VOLUNTEERS: THE PEDAL POWER OF THE TUCSON CSA

The Tucson CSA is a true grassroots organization. For six years, the CSA has been staffed by volunteers who donated their time each week. (We call them volunteers, but they do receive a produce share for their labors.) There are about 20 of them, and we can't thank them enough for all they do. The friendly faces you see at the CSA, at the produce line, at the front desk and at the bread line are but some of the volunteers who help make this happen. There are also those you don't usually see: they unload the truck when it arrives, set up for each pickup day, do the cooking demos and special events, help with the newsletters, help out on orientation day and keep the storeroom clean and organized. Sadly, one of them, Wendy, left us at the end of last session because she moved out of town. Wendy: thank you for your dependability, your dedication, the extra-mile you never hesitated to run for us all, and your extraordinary organization skills. We'll try to keep it all together without you.

Easiest Greens in Tortillas

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

One of the simplest ways to prepare greens – a quick meal that will be ready in a matter of minutes. These tortillas stuffed with greens make an excellent breakfast as well as a lunch or dinner. For spice, an Asian chile paste tastes best, but you can use salsa to spice the greens too. And if you don't like spice, just drizzle the greens with a bit of balsamic vinegar instead. This recipe is great with any greens, except perhaps the strongly bitter ones like dandelion. If you are using a tough green, such as kale or collards, just remove the stems and chop the leaves into thin slivers. It will still take only a minute or two to wilt them.

2 large handfuls of greens, cleaned and roughly chopped
1-2 cloves garlic, minced
2 teaspoons oil
Chile paste (Sriracha is excellent), to taste
Mild, fresh cheese, if desired
4 corn tortillas, warmed

In a large skillet, over high heat, cook greens and garlic in oil, until wilted. Sprinkle with water, if necessary, to prevent sticking. Drizzle greens with chile sauce and toss to coat. Top corn tortillas with greens and sprinkle with cheese if using.

'Bruised' Raw Curried Kale (or Collard) Salad

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

You can use any type of kale or collards in this recipe. Salting and bruising the greens is a technique that will give the raw greens a 'cooked' taste and texture. The greens should be finely sliced for best results. To do this, trim the thick stems off of the leaves, lay several leaves on top of each other and roll up tight like a cigar. Use a sharp knife to cut the roll into thin slivers. Sprinkle the cut greens with salt and use your hands to rub the salt into the leaves, squeezing to release some of their juices.

1 bunch kale or collards, sliced fine
1 carrot, grated
1 cup cooked or sprouted grains
1 cup cooked or sprouted lentils
½ cup sunflower or pumpkin seeds
½ bunch l'ittoi onions, chopped
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons orange juice
1 tablespoon oil
2 teaspoons curry powder
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon salt, for bruising greens, then add to taste to the finished salad

Mix salted, bruised greens with the carrot and turnip and set aside. In a food processor or blender, puree onion, vinegar, oil and spices. Pour spice mixture over vegetables and toss to coat. Add grains and lentils, toss, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Let sit at least one hour, then garnish with seeds and serve.

Easy Spaghetti Squash

Maggie Newman, Tucson CSA

Microwave spaghetti squash until it is soft and can be easily removed from shell. Using forks, toss with 1 or 2 tablespoons of olive oil until strands are mostly unclumped. While squash is still warm, add goat cheese, salt and pepper to taste, and toss until cheese gets creamy and blends into squash.

Sweet Potato (or Pumpkin) Biscuits

Lorraine Glazar, Tucson CSA, from Cooking Light, Jan/Feb07

If you ever get frustrated looking for new pumpkin recipes, search for sweet potato recipes instead, and vice versa. They are pretty much interchangeable. You may need to drain your pureed pumpkin for an hour or two to get it to the right consistency.

2 cups all purpose flour (about 9 ounces)
1 tablespoon sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
5 tablespoons chilled unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
1 cup pureed cooked sweet potatoes or pumpkin, cooled
1/3 cup fat-free milk
Cooking spray

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Lightly spoon flour into a measuring cup, level with a knife. Combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in a bowl. Cut in butter with a pastry blender or two knives until mixture resembles coarse meal. Combine sweet potato and milk in a small bowl, add potato mixture to flour, stirring just until moist. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface, knead lightly five times. Roll dough to a ¼-inch thickness, cut with a two-inch biscuit cutter into 10 biscuits. Place biscuits on a baking sheet sprayed with cooking spray. Gather remaining dough and repeat the rolling and cutting. Place the biscuits on prepared baking sheet, discarding any remaining dough not sufficient to make more ¼-inch thick biscuits. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove from baking sheet and cool five minutes on a wire rack. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Why are these navel oranges green?

The color of citrus fruit is often dependent on ambient temperature. For example, many varieties of oranges are naturally green in a tropical environment, even when ripe. They only acquire their bright orange color when subjected to cold temperatures, which happens when they are grown in cooler climates. If left on the tree long enough, oranges will turn green again once the temperatures go up.

Oranges you buy at the store are usually gassed with ethylene gas to make them turn the orange color we expect.

As the weather at the farm gets cooler, the oranges will become more and more orange...naturally. So, remember that your navel oranges are ripe despite their sometimes green appearance. Their taste is not dependant on their color.