



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Fall 2011

Harvest list is online

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Desert Harvesters Seeks Volunteer Mesquite Bakers for Its Annual Event

The Ninth Annual Mesquite Milling and Fiesta at Dunbar/Spring Community Garden will happen on Sunday, Nov. 20. There will be public milling for people with pods to grind, but this year, no pancakes. Instead, there will be a Mesquite Bake Sale (proceeds to support Desert Harvesters) featuring many different things that can be made with mesquite. The organizers are looking for volunteers to bake goodies for the event. If you're interested, send an email to hammermill@desertharvesters.org. If you don't know what to make, consider buying a copy of the group's cookbook *Eat Mesquite!*, which features nearly 50 mesquite flour recipes. The cookbook is available on the Desert Harvester's web site: www.DesertHarvesters.org and at the CSA.

Roasted Green Chiles In Bulk!

Order Crooked Sky Farms roasted green chiles in bulk. You can order them mild, medium or spicy. They come in batches of 20 pounds (that's fresh weight – it loses 3-4 pounds after roasting). Price: \$30 pre-paid at the front desk for delivery the following week. The offer will last as long as the green chile harvest lasts (until approximately mid-October).

OKAY, OKRA!

Okay, so okra is not exactly the most glamorous vegetable. It's not sweet and crunchy like a carrot, or juicy and spicy like a green chile. It's got that gelatinous texture thing. But we've overcome our fear of that other gummy green vegetable--the prickly pear pad (or nopal) – haven't we? Okra has its own unique flavor. The texture can be dealt with. And well, it's so good for you, you might as well start celebrating it!

Okra is low in calories, rich in Vitamins A, B6, and C, as well as in thiamin, folic acid, riboflavin, calcium, zinc and dietary fiber. It's good for the gastrointestinal system and can be used to treat irritable bowels and ulcers. It can be eaten whole or sliced, steamed, sautéed or stewed. It can also be diced and ground into a powder to thicken soups and sauces.

A tropical vegetable, okra is a member of the mallow family. It was first found in Ethiopia and Sudan then made its way to the Middle East and India, where it remains a popular ingredient today. Brought to North and South America via the Atlantic slave trade, okra was a popular addition to "gumbo," the thick meat or shellfish stew, still a culinary trademark in Louisiana and throughout the Gulf Coast states.

Cook okra pods whole and quickly can cut down on the characteristic gumminess inside. Stir-frying okra or cooking it with citrus, vinegar, tomatoes or other acidic foods or cooking it for a long time in a stew also cooks away that texture.

EAT A THREE-COURSE MEAL ALONG THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER; CELEBRATE LOCAL, HERITAGE FOODS

On Sunday, October 23, you can enjoy a roving meal all along the Santa Cruz River. No, you won't be eating grasshoppers or discarded Burger King fries! You'll be eating a 3-course meal made from local and native ingredients at three distinct sites.

You'll start with appetizers at an urban Tucson farm, then move to your second dish at the Mercado San Agustin, and finish up in a historic building. The sites are about 2 miles apart, convenient for both bicycles and cars.

Presented by Lilly's Table, Mercado San Agustin, and the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance, the event will feature the public unveiling of the Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance's regional food brand. The brand logo, which reads "Santa Cruz Valley Harvest: The fresh taste of our heritage," will be placed on local and heritage food products in grocery stores, farmers markets, and restaurants to help consumers identify them.

Dinner guests will also get a tour of the Community Food Bank's newest farm, and join a book signing by Carolyn Niethammer, author of *Cooking the Wild Southwest: Delicious Recipes for Desert Plants*, and a salad-making demonstration by Tucson Village Farm and Kids Can Cook, mole tasting by Mano Y Metate, and more!

The dinner is a celebration of Food Day, a nation-wide event bringing together families, community organizers, educators, farmers, chefs, and local officials as a united front for change in our food system. Learn more about food day at www.foodday.org.

For tickets and reservations, visit: <http://www.santacruzheritage.org/FoodDay>

Tickets are also available for purchase at: the Tucson CSA and the Santa Cruz River Farmers Market (Thursdays).

Braised Escarole with Garlic and Lemon

1 head escarole, about 1 pound
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
4 garlic cloves, sliced
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
2 bay leaves
1/2 lemon, cut in thin slices
2 cups water or chicken broth
Pinch sugar
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Break off the leaves of the escarole and wash them individually, taking care to remove any soil at the base of the stems. Shake the leaves dry, stack them up, and slice the escarole crosswise into ribbons about 1 1/2-inches wide. Place a large deep skillet over medium heat and add the olive oil and butter. Toss in the garlic, red pepper flakes, bay leaves, and lemon slices; cook and stir for a couple of minutes, tossing to combine. Nestle the escarole into the pan and sauté until it begins to wilt and shrink down, about 2 minutes. Sprinkle the escarole with a pinch of sugar and season with salt and pepper. Pour in the water and cover the pan. Simmer for 20 minutes until the escarole is tender.

Okra Chilaquiles

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

I like this dish for breakfast. Served with refried beans and fried eggs, it is hearty enough for a dinner, though. It would be great covered with tomatillo *Salsa Verde* or red enchilada sauce and sour cream as well.

(Note: always process okra dry! You may wash it but make sure to dry it before chopping it, or it will get slippery).

1 bag okra, chopped and stems removed
1 or 2 roasted green chiles, peeled, seeded and diced
1/2 green bell pepper, chopped
1/2 yellow onion, chopped
6 corn tortillas, sliced into inch long pieces
2 tablespoons oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Unless you have a very large skillet, you may want to do this recipe in two batches to make sure that all the tortillas get crisp. Heat oil over medium high heat in a cast iron skillet. Add onions and sauté for a few minutes until beginning to brown, add tortillas and stir to coat with oil. Cook for about 4 minutes to allow tortillas to begin to crisp before adding the vegetables. Stir in the remaining vegetables and reduce heat to medium. Cook for a while longer, stirring occasionally, until tortillas are mostly crunchy and vegetables begin to brown. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Melon or/and Cucumber Cooler

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

If you just can't eat another melon or cucumber, remember that they are make great drinks. Perfect as is, or use as a base for cocktails or frozen into popsicles.

1 melon or cucumber (or half of each), peeled, seeded and cut into large chunks
1/4 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.

Okra with Chickpeas and Tomatoes (Egyptian recipe)

Submitted by Paula Karrer, TCSA (*adapted from Saveur Magazine*)

1 cup dried, soaked and cooked chickpeas, or 1 cup rinsed canned chickpeas
2 tablespoons olive oil
1-2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
1 share okra
1 can fire roasted tomatoes, drained and coarsely chopped (fresh tomatoes are fine; peel, core and seed them)
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
1/2 cup chicken stock
Juice of 1/2 lemon
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
Salt and pepper

Heat oil in deep skillet and sauté garlic until fragrant. Add okra and cook, stirring, a few minutes until it turns bright green. Stir in tomatoes and cumin. Cook for 1-2 minutes.

Add stock, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Cover, reduce heat to medium low, and cook until okra is soft and sauce is almost caramelized (this is what gives a delicious unique flavor)- about 35 minutes. Check occasionally to see that sauce is not sticking or burning – you may need to add small amounts additional liquid. Add chick peas and cook until heated through. Add parsley and adjust seasoning.