



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Fall 2011

Harvest list is online

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The cushaw squash

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PUMPKIN, PSHAW! TRY CUSHAW

The Cushaw squash is a large heirloom winter squash, identified by its curved neck and green and gray or tan stripes. It is believed to have been domesticated in Mesoamerica sometime between 7000 and 3000 B.C.

The cushaw squash, *Cucurbita mixta*, also known as cushaw pumpkin, is commonly used in the southeastern U.S. In Tennessee, cushaw butter is a popular spread, and in Appalachia many use cushaws instead of pumpkin in pies.

Because it is adapted to warm and dry climates, it is also grown in the desert southwest by native peoples, especially the Akimiel O'odham and Tohono O'odham, where it is especially prized when immature and harvested in spring as a summer squash. The plant may be popular here not only because of its ability to survive in our Southwest heat but also because of its resistance to the squash vine borer, which can easily kill other organically grown squashes.

Did you know that most commercial pumpkin products are made not with traditional pumpkins, but with cushaw squash? The cushaw's light-yellow flesh is mild and sweet and used in both savory and sweet dishes.

Perhaps you'll try a cushaw pie, too! See the delicious cushaw pie and cushaw flan recipes on the back page. You can of course also use cushaws in recipes calling for Jack o' Lantern pumpkins or pie pumpkins.

If you don't feel like using your cushaw squash right away, don't worry. It will keep for a couple of months if stored in a cool, dry place.

BLAST OFF YOUR SEASONAL SALADS WITH ARUGULA, AKA "ROCKET"

Finally, the day has arrived! After our long and hot southern Arizona summer we are getting the first greens of the fall season! And what better greens to start with than the zesty arugula!



Arugula, a spicy little leaf, packs a punch. Also known as rocket, roquette, rucola, it is native to the Mediterranean and used widely in Italian cuisine. The ancient Romans grew arugula (*Eruca sativa*) for both its leaves and its seeds, which were used to flavor oils. The seed was also used in aphrodisiac elixirs, according to the Cambridge World History of Food. Today, Italians use it in pizzas, added just before or after baking to keep it from "sogging." An alcoholic drink called rucolino

made from arugula is served as a digestive on the island of Ischia, off the coast of Naples. Even the flowers of this leafy green are edible!

Rich in vitamin C and potassium, arugula has a peppery flavor, which can sometimes be quite strong, so it is often added to milder greens in salads. It can also be eaten "wilted," quickly sautéed with olive oil, and sprinkled with a few scrapings of Parmesan cheese, and smattering of pine nuts! Try substituting arugula for basil and walnuts for pine nuts to make a pesto with a twist!

Verdolagas and Red Potatoes

Adapted from recipetips.com

1 pound red potatoes, cut in chunks
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, chopped
1 cup (or more) verdolagas, chopped
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 tablespoons lemon zest (optional)
salt and pepper to taste

Heat olive oil over medium heat in heavy skillet large enough to hold potatoes in a single layer. Add potatoes and rosemary, salt and pepper lightly and cook without stirring for about 5 minutes, until bottoms begin to brown. Stir enough to turn potatoes, reduce heat to medium-low and cover. Cook until tender (easily pierced with a sharp knife) stirring once or twice, 10 to 15 minutes.

Toss cooked potatoes with lemon juice and mix in verdolagas. Sprinkle on lemon zest, if using, and serve warm or room temperature.

Cushaw Squash (or Pumpkin) Flan

Adapted from Gourmet Sleuth.com

1/4 cup and 2 tablespoons sugar
2 cups sweetened condensed milk
2 cups cushaw squash (or pumpkin) puree
1/2 cup half-and-half
2 eggs
2 egg yolks
1/2 teaspoon brandy flavoring
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
pecan halves, toasted

Sprinkle sugar into a one-quart flan pan; place pan over medium heat. Using oven mitts, caramelize sugar by shaking pan occasionally until sugar melts and turns light brown; cool. (Sugar may crack as it cools.)

Process condensed milk and next 8 ingredients in a blender or food processor until smooth, stopping to scrape down sides. Pour over caramelized sugar in flan pan.

Place flan pan in a large shallow pan. Pour hot water into large pan to a depth of 1 inch or 1/2 way up the side of the flan pan.

Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes or until a knife inserted in center comes out clean.

Remove the flan pan from water; cool on a wire rack 25 minutes. Cover and chill 8 hours.

Loosen edges of flan with a spatula, and invert onto a serving plate. Dip tops of pecan halves in caramel mixture left in pan; arrange, coated side up, around edge of flan.

Cushaw Squash (or Pumpkin) Pie

1 1/4 cups cushaw or pumpkin puree
1/2 cup maple syrup or honey
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
3 eggs, lightly beaten
1 tablespoon flour
1 cup evaporated milk, undiluted
2 tablespoons water
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
9-inch pie crust, unbaked

PREPARATION OF PUMPKIN:

Use a fork to poke many holes in the flesh of the pumpkin. Place halves with skin side up on a plate. Cover with wax paper or an upturned bowl. Microwave on high for 14-20 minutes, depending on your microwave and the size of the pumpkin. Check after 14 minutes and if skin is soft, turn over for the last bit. It's done when the inside is very soft. Skin will be brown and easy to puncture. Remove pumpkin flesh with a spoon and discard skin. Puree the pumpkin and measure enough for the pie. Alternatively, you can mash the pumpkin and mix the other ingredients and then puree the whole pie mixture at the end before pouring into the crust. (I did this because I don't have a mixer so I pureed and mixed in one step in the blender, does not need much time.)

PREPARATION OF PIE FILLING:

Preheat oven to 425.
In mixing bowl, combine pumpkin, sugar, maple syrup, salt, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and flour.
Add eggs; mix well.
Add evaporated milk, water and vanilla; mix well. (Puree now if you haven't already.)
Pour pumpkin pie mixture into a nine-inch pastry crust.
Bake at 425 for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 and bake pumpkin pie for about 35 minutes longer, until filling is set. Insert toothpick (or chopstick) in center; if it comes out clean, it's done.
Let cool for a while. Filling will settle down somewhat.

Arugula Pesto

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Spicy arugula is a great herb for pesto. Serve tossed with pasta or spread on a sandwich.

1 bunch Arugula
2-3 cloves garlic
1/2 cup toasted walnuts
1/4 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 olive oil, and continue to pulse to desired consistency. Add the cheese last, and then season with salt and pepper to taste.