



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Summer 2012

Harvest list is online

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**Many more recipes in
our online recipe archive**

Low Sugar Prickly Pear Jelly

(makes about six 8-oz jars)

4 cups prickly pear juice (requires
around four pounds of fruit)

1/2 cup lemon juice

3 cups sugar

1 package low sugar pectin

Gather the fruit with metal tongs
and place in a metal bucket or
bowl. Scrub using tongs and a stiff
brush, and cut in half.

Place the fruit in a large saucepan
or stock pot and heat. If the fruit is
very dry, you may add 1/4 to 1/2
cup water; in my experience this is
seldom necessary.

Strain through two sheets of
cheesecloth placed in a colander.
Gather up the corners of the
cheesecloth and give the pulp a
careful squeeze with the tongs to
extract as much juice as you can.

Pour four cups of the prickly pear
juice into a pot and add a half cup
of lemon juice. Mix a quarter cup
of the sugar and a box of low/no
sugar pectin and add to the
juice. Bring the mixture to a full
boil. Add the remaining sugar and
bring back to a full boil. Boil for one
minute, stirring constantly.

Pour into six 8 oz jars. Leaving 1/2
inch headroom. Wipe rims, tighten
lids finger-tight, and process in a
boiling water bath for ten minutes.

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.

There are several methods to process tunas. Here is just one.

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 frozen prickly pears, 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.

NOTE: Prickly pear juice is very cooling. Do not consume large 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* by Desert Harvesters. (We have this book for sale at the CSA. \$20)

There's also a prickly pear lemonade recipe in the *Eat Mesquite!* cookbook. The cookbook contains almost 50 mesquite flour recipes, along with a handful of recipes for mesquite's best companion—prickly pear!

Stewed Summer Vegetables

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Use any combination of summer vegetables for this recipe. Squash, eggplant, okra and green beans all stew very nicely. Okra is particularly delicious prepared this way. Leave the pods whole but trim away the stem end.

About 3 cups mixed, chopped summer vegetables
1 tablespoon oil
1 medium yellow onion, sliced thinly
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 can chopped tomatoes
1 teaspoon oregano
1 teaspoon basil
1 teaspoon thyme
1/4 cup chopped green or black olives or capers (optional)
Drizzle of balsamic vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

In a medium-size pot, sauté onion and garlic in oil until fragrant. Add vegetables and stir to coat. Add tomatoes, herbs and olives and/or capers, plus 1.5 cups of water. Stir well and cover, cooking over medium-low heat for about 35 minutes, until all ingredients are tender. Drizzle with vinegar and add salt and pepper to taste. Serve over pasta, rice or polenta.

Curried Okra Stir-Fry

Heidi DeCosmo, Tucson CSA

Indian spices are a perfect way to season okra!

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
1 teaspoon minced ginger
1 tablespoon finely chopped jalapeno
2 tablespoons curry powder
1 pound fresh okra, whole, trimmed leaving tops intact
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper

Heat oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat. Add onion and cook until golden, about 3 minutes. Add garlic, ginger, pepper, curry powder, and okra. Stir-fry about 5 minutes. Stir in the salt and pepper.

Chile and Corn Stir-Fry

Philippe Waterinckx, Tucson CSA

4 roasted green chiles, peeled with membranes and seeds removed, chopped (use less if chiles are hot)
1 ear of corn, kernels cut off
1 tablespoon oil
1 or 2 tomatoes, quartered
1/2 onion, sliced
1 garlic clove, crushed
1/2 glass white wine
1/2 bunch cilantro or parsley, chopped
1 cup vegetable stock

1 cup rice

Sauté the chiles in oil for 5 minutes on each side. Add the onion and tomatoes and cook for another 3 minutes. Add the garlic, corn, wine and stock and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in the cilantro or parsley. Serve on top of steamed or boiled rice.

Green Chile Enchilada Sauce

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Make a big batch of this to freeze for a special treat during the non-chile season.

6 large chile, roasted, skin and seeds removed, chopped
1 can diced tomatoes
1/2 cup veggie stock
2 teaspoons toasted cumin seeds
2 teaspoons dried oregano
2 tablespoons oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 onion, diced

In a medium sized stock pot, heat oil over medium heat. Saute garlic, onion and cumin until fragrant. Add the rest of the ingredients and cook over medium heat for about 20 minutes. Process in a blender or food processor until smooth. Freeze in small freezer bags for easy defrosting.

Zucchini and Chile Cornbread

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is a great cornbread to serve with a soup or stew. Add cheddar or goat cheese to the recipe if you like.

1 cup flour
3/4 cup cornmeal
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup yogurt
1 egg
2 tablespoons honey
3 tablespoons melted butter, or oil
1 cup shredded zucchini
2 roasted chiles, peeled and chopped

Set shredded zucchini in a colander to drain. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Mix together dry ingredients in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, mix together egg, yogurt, butter and honey. Pour wet ingredients into dry ingredients and stir gently. Add zucchini and chiles and stir until just combined. Pour batter into greased muffin tins or an 8-inch square baking pan. Bake 25-30 minutes (or about 20 minutes for muffins). The top will spring back when touched and a toothpick will come out clean when cornbread is done.