



# Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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## Spring '13

Harvest list is online

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### Okonomiyaki – how to consume your vegetables the Japanese way

This is a cool way to use your CSA veggies. If you still have some cabbage left from last week, and have some other vegetables you may have had a hard time keeping up with, check out the back page for this recipe.

Okonomiyaki is an easy and tasty way to incorporate several vegetables into a single dish. While traditional okonomiyaki may require a few specific Japanese ingredients, such as okonomiyaki sauce, dashi, nori and okonomiyaki flour, you can easily substitute ingredients you likely have in your kitchen.



Don't hesitate to make more of it than you think you can eat in one sitting. Okonomiyaki makes excellent breakfast leftovers when reheated and accompanied with fried eggs.

## SPRING TIME, APHID TIME!



Each spring, as the weather warms, a few pests come to life in the fields and affect some of the crops. Some years are worse than others, and luckily this year we haven't seen many of them yet in our produce shares, maybe because the winter was harsh. Farmer Frank never uses any pesticides and relies solely on natural pest control methods, such as maintaining good crop diversity and promoting the presence of beneficial pest predators such as ladybugs and lacewings. Despite that, some pests, primarily aphids, inevitably appear for a short period of time at this time of year.

Aphids are small, soft-bodied, sap-sucking, pear-shaped insects, usually light green in color, with long antennae and long, spindly, articulated legs. They sometimes sport two pairs of thin, translucent wings. Aphids never last more than a few weeks. They are one of the first pests to hatch in the fields, but it doesn't take long for ladybugs and lacewings to hatch in turn and start eating the aphids. It is primarily the larvae of the ladybug and lacewings that have a strong appetite for aphids. Yes, our sweet and beloved ladybug is a voracious carnivore in its youth.

At Crooked Sky Farms, aphids primarily affect cruciferous vegetables, and cabbage and kale in particular. If present, you may expect to find them on the underside of kale leaves or nested between cabbage leaves. They are easy to spot, and if you notice any the best method to remove them is to vigorously swish the leaves in a bowl of water. That is usually sufficient to detach the aphids. If that doesn't work, adding a few drops of liquid dish soap to the bowl of water will encourage them to drop off - just be sure to rinse the leaves afterwards.

## QUE? QUELITES? OH, YOU MEAN AMARANTH GREENS?

Most of you are familiar with them. We get them in our shares occasionally (and during summer time, they are often the only greens we get). Even if you've never eaten them, you likely have seen them growing wild in your garden or along roadsides. Westerners generally consider them to be a weed (but not CSA members, hehe!), but they are wild-harvested and cultivated as an edible plant in Asia, Africa, Latin America and parts of Europe. In the Caribbean, amaranth leaves are used to prepare the famous callaloo and bhaji.

The word quelites (pronounced *kay-LEE-tays*) is the Mexican Spanish word for amaranth greens, although it is also often used for other plants such as lamb's quarters (chenopodium, or goosefoot). In their broadest meaning, quelites are simply wild greens.

Farmer Frank usually grows a beautiful cultivated variety, one with vivid green leaves with a red/purple center and a purple underside. But on occasions, we've also had wild quelites, i.e. volunteer quelites harvested from between the rows. Both are delicious and easy to use.

Use quelites as you would use any cooking greens. Just make sure to use only the leaves and not the stems (stems can be fibrous and older stems can even be woody). Quelites have a flavor reminiscent of spinach, so you can prepare them as you would spinach, simply steamed for example, or lightly sautéed with olive oil, onions and garlic. They are also great in bean casseroles or wilted in tacos.

## PARKING CHANGES



The parking lot on 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Arizona Avenue is no longer available to the public. It has been bought by the adjacent church and is now private. For help with parking around The Historic Y, please refer to the updated online map on our website (under "About Us" on our homepage navigation bar).

## **Easiest Greens in Tortillas**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

Any green tastes great wrapped up in a corn tortilla, with a bit of spice and cheese. An Asian chile paste tastes best, but you can use salsa to spice the greens, too. Multiply this simple recipe as needed depending on how many people will be eating. Greens stuffed into corn tortillas also make excellent enchiladas topped with a red chile sauce and baked!

2 large handfuls 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.

## **Mustard Greens and Pork Casserole**

Mustard greens are tasty when cooked with pork. The fat in the pork seems take the bite out of the greens and mellow out their flavor.

1/2 pound ground pork  
1 onion, chopped  
4 small potatoes, cubed  
1 bunch mustard greens (thick stems removed), coarsely chopped  
1/4 teaspoon thyme (or other herb)  
Salt and pepper to taste

Sauté meat, potatoes and onion in a skillet. If using sausage, break it up as you brown it. When meat is brown or rendered, add greens and thyme. Cover and simmer for 45 minutes or until potatoes are tender, stirring occasionally. Add 1/4 cup water or more if the mixture seems dry. Add salt and pepper to taste.

## **Okonomiyaki (Japanese fritters)**

Philippe, Tucson CSA

Fritters are a great way to use up vegetables that are lingering in your refrigerator. You can shred or grate just about any vegetables, including greens, mix them with flour and eggs, and turn them into delicious fritters. The following recipe is the Japanese version of our pan-fried fritters.

Okonomiyaki is traditional Japanese dish typically made from flour, eggs and shredded cabbage, with added vegetables and sometimes fish or meats. It is often compared to an omelet or a pancake and is sometimes referred to as Japanese pizza. I find it to be more like fritters. It is a very easy and versatile dish and there are infinite ways to make it. The following recipe is by no means authentic; it's just how I make it. I typically use with whatever ingredients I have on hand. It

has no seasoning other than the sauce but it is nevertheless packed with fresh flavors. However, if you want it to have an extra kick you can add black pepper, chile flakes or herbs.

### **The base:**

1 cup all-purpose flour  
1 cup water, stock, or dashi  
2 eggs  
1/2 cabbage, or 1-2 bunches other greens, shredded  
1 tablespoon olive oil

**Other ingredients** – add 2-3 cups of a combination of two or more of the following: chopped green onions, bacon, ham, thin slices of pork or beef (pre-cooked/sautéed), fish, shrimp, sliced mushrooms, nori flakes (dried seaweed), leftover cooked spaghetti or ramen, grated carrots, grated sweet potatoes, grated turnips, ... grated anything really.

**Toppings:** mayonnaise, okonomiyaki sauce (or substitute barbeque sauce, soy sauce or Worcester sauce.)

In a large bowl, mix the flour, water or stock, and eggs into a smooth batter. Add the cabbage and other ingredients. Mix gently until everything is well coated with batter. Heat oil to medium hot in a large skillet. Pour the mixture in skillet and press it down firmly, making a pancake that fills the skillet. I try to make it about 1/2 inch thick (make another if you have extra). Cover and cook for 4-5 minutes. Flip (I usually slide in on plate, cover with another plate, flip it and slide it back in the skillet) and continue cooking for another 4-5 minutes. Slide onto a large plate, cut in wedges, top each wedge with sauce and some mayo, serve, and enjoy.

## **Turnip and Potato Gratin**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This is an easy recipe to toss in the oven to bake while you prepare the rest of your meal. Depending on the other flavors in the meal, consider layering in a handful of chopped dill.

3 medium potatoes, thinly sliced  
3 medium turnips, thinly sliced  
1 onion, thinly sliced  
1-2 tablespoons butter, melted  
3/4 cup heavy cream (or use whole milk yogurt, thinned with water to make it pourable)  
1/2 cup bread crumbs  
1/2 cup crumbled or shredded cheese  
Salt and pepper  
Dill, if desired

Sauté onions in a small amount of oil until lightly browned. Add butter and vegetables and cook for about 5 minutes. In a small casserole dish, make layers of veggie mixture, drizzling each layer with cream and sprinkling with a bit of salt and pepper. Top with bread crumbs and cheese, cover with foil, and bake in a 375° oven for about 40 minutes, until cooked through. Remove foil and cook about 10 more minutes until the top is golden brown.