



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Fall 2013

Harvest list is online

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our website

Lamb Shares

We are now taking orders for lamb shares from Josh. Lamb shares weigh about 9 pounds each and cost \$9.00 per pound. A \$20 deposit is required to reserve one. A lamb share typically includes several kinds of chops, an arm or a leg roast, ground meat, ribs or riblets, and shanks.

They will be available for pickup starting next week, Dec. 10.

Josh's Eggs

Chickens are laying fewer eggs now, partly because of the shorter days and partly because many hens are molting at this time of year. Unfortunately, Josh didn't have enough eggs to cover the cost of our trip to pick them up. So, sadly, no Josh's eggs this week. We will be making the trip next week.

Bigger share this week

Weather is not the only factor that influences what vegetables we get. Human factors also play an important role. Farmer Frank had intended to give us a larger share last week, as is his custom for Thanksgiving shares. However, some new recruits arrived at the farm last week, and in the process of training them, the instructions to give us bigger shares got lost. To make up for it, Farmer Frank is sending us an extra item this week.

CHIOGGIA BEETS: FASHIONABLY ITALIAN



Farmer Frank grows a number of different varieties of beets, such as Detroit Red, Bull's Blood, Golden and Chioggia. Chioggia (pron. kee-O-dja) beets are an heirloom beet variety that originates from the small Italian island of Chioggia located near Venice in the Venetian lagoon. As with people, some beets are more stylish than others, and Chioggia beets sure beat all other beets

when it comes to style: when sliced, they reveal beautiful concentric red and white rings, like candy cane, or like a Target® logo on steroids. Use Chioggia beets as you would other beets but know that their stunning stripes fade when cooked.

The beet, or beetroot (*Beta vulgaris*), is a plant from the Chenopodiaceae family, like amaranth. A closer relative of the beet is the Swiss chard, and greens from both beets and Swiss chard taste very similar. Beets are widely cultivated in North America, Europe and Asia. Their cultivation stretches as far back as the second millennium BC. The plant was probably domesticated somewhere along the Mediterranean, from where it later spread to Babylonia by the 8th century BC and as far east as China by 850 AD. The beet became commercially very important in 19th-century Europe following the development of the sugar beet in Germany, from which sucrose could be extracted, providing an alternative to tropical sugar cane as a source of sugar. It remains a widely cultivated commercial crop for producing table sugar.

The bulbous beet roots are eaten either grilled, boiled, or roasted as a cooked vegetable, cold as a salad after cooking and adding oil and vinegar, or raw and shredded, either alone or combined with any salad vegetable. Beets and either oranges or grapefruit make a very nice combination. Beets are also frequently pickled.

The green, leafy portion of the beet plant is also edible. Beet greens can be used as you would Swiss chard. They are most commonly served sautéed or steamed, and have a taste and texture similar to Swiss chard.

A traditional Pennsylvania Dutch dish is red beet eggs. Hard-boiled eggs are refrigerated in the liquid left over from pickling beets and allowed to marinate until the eggs turn a deep pink-red colour.

Betanin, the red color compound obtained from the roots, is used industrially as red food coloring, e.g. to intensify the color of tomato paste, sauces, desserts, jams and jellies, ice cream, sweets and breakfast cereal. It is also betanin that can cause urine and stool to assume a temporary reddish color. This effect is completely harmless and subsides once the food is out of the system.

Beets have one of the highest sugar contents of any vegetable. Up to 10 per cent of a beet is sugar, but it is released slowly into the body rather than the sudden rush that results from eating pure sugar.

Fruity Beety

From The New Laurel's Kitchen

Lucky for us, citrus and beets are in season at the same time. The tart sweet flavor of citrus is a real boost for beets.

4 beets
3 oranges
2 tablespoons grated coconut
1 teaspoon honey
Juice and zest of 1/2 lemon
2 tablespoons currants (I substituted raisins)
1 teaspoon vinegar, if desired
Pinch salt

Wash beets and steam whole until tender; then peel. Grate or slice into long, thin pieces. Peel, seed and cut up oranges. Place half the oranges in blender with coconut, honey, lemon juice and zest, and blend two minutes. Mix all ingredients, balancing the sweetness with the additional vinegar if needed. Chill, letting the flavors blend for two hours or so.

Beet Sushi

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

The vibrant color of cooked beets looks a lot like the raw tuna used in sushi rolls, they are an unexpected but delicious vegetarian alternative to fish. The spice in the arugula resembles the heat of wasabi and is also a great fit for this dish. You can make actual sushi rolls, which require a bit of manual dexterity, or you can toss all the ingredients together in a salad and simply garnish with crumbled nori sheets (dried seaweed).

2 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
2 teaspoons sugar
2 1/2 cups cooked short grain rice
4+ sheets nori (seaweed wrappers), crumbled for salad
1 bunch beets, cooked, peeled and cut into thin strips
1 bunch green onions, sliced in half lengthwise for rolls or chopped for salad
1/2 bunch arugula, cleaned and rough chopped for the salad or left whole for the rolls
2 teaspoons soy sauce
1 teaspoon wasabi paste
Toasted sesame seeds, for garnish

Mix the vinegar and sugar together, and stir until sugar is dissolved. Toss half of the mixture with the cooked rice and the other half with the cooked beets. Assemble rolls by spreading a thin layer of rice over the top 1/3 of a sheet of nori. Add the vegetables across the top half of the rice, then roll up, starting at the top end where the rice comes all the way to the edge of the nori. Ideally, you want the rice on the top of the roll to just meet the rice where it ends in the middle as you roll up your sushi. A sushi mat is helpful but not necessary. Seal the edge with water. Use a very sharp knife to cut into bite size pieces. Mix wasabi paste with soy sauce. If making a simple salad, use this for a dressing. If making rolls, use this mixture as a dipping sauce.

Radish Fritters

Tina Hansleben, Tucson CSA

Fritters are great for winter vegetables and you will probably see many variations of fritters in the recipe section of the newsletters during the winter. When making fritters, it is important to start with a hot pan, otherwise the fritters soak up too much oil as the pan heats up.

1 bunch radishes
1/4 cup flour of choice (I have used many different kinds of wheat-free flours with success.)
1 egg
1 handful basil or other fresh herbs, chopped
Juice and zest of one lemon
1/2 teaspoon salt
Sugar, to taste
Oil for pan frying
Goat cheese, to garnish

Shred the radish bulbs into a large bowl. Add egg, herbs, lemon peel, salt, flour, and half the lemon juice. Add a little more flour if the mixture is still very wet – you want the vegetables to stick together. Heat a pan to medium with oil. Scoop out the mixture in a 1/4 cup measure and press down with a spoon. Drop mixture onto the pan, flatten with a spatula and fry until golden on each side. Mix remaining lemon juice with a little sugar until you have a sweet concoction to drizzle onto the fritters at the table. Garnish with cheese and serve.

Eggplant Pesto

Paula Redinger, Tucson CSA

1 medium eggplant
1-2 tablespoon olive oil
1-3 cloves garlic, pureed
2-3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
chile flakes or chile powder to taste
thin spaghetti or other pasta of your choice
optional garnishes
additional Parmesan cheese
slivered sundried tomatoes
fresh basil cut into thin strips

Roast the whole eggplant until the skin is blackened and the flesh has collapsed and is very soft. You can do this on a grill, in a dry heavy pan on the stove top, or in a hot oven. When the eggplant is cool enough to handle, cut in half and scoop the flesh into a small food processor. Add the garlic, olive oil, cheese, optional chile and puree. Toss with hot pasta and top with optional garnishes
One recipe makes enough "pesto" for 1-2 servings of pasta.