



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 502 ~ August 24, 2015 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Summer 2015

Harvest list is online

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Many more recipes on our website

Freezing Chiles Güeros

While pickling them is a popular way of preserving them (see back page), you can also freeze them.

Just slice each güero in half, remove the seeds if you wish (it will reduce some of their heat), and place them in an airtight Ziploc® freezer bag. Keep in the freezer for up to a year, and use as needed.

We recommend wearing rubber or vinyl gloves when processing güeros.



Josh's Grass-Fed Lamb Share

We are taking orders this week (Aug. 24-25) and next week (Aug. 31-Sept. 1).

Shares will be ready Sept. 8-9.

Reserve your share with a \$20 deposit at the front desk.

For more info on lamb shares, check our web page at Products > Meats, or ask at our front desk.

Prickly Pear Fruit Harvesting and Processing



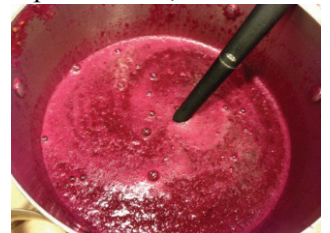
No, we don't have prickly pear fruits in our shares, but we have them all around us: indeed, it is the time of year for the desert to yield its magenta magic and for us to enjoy this cooling drink! Making prickly pear juice is easy once you know how to do it, and it is incredibly rewarding. And it always draws oohhs and aahhs from those who try it. The juice, usually with additional sweetening, can be added to refreshing lemonades, margaritas and martinis, and it can be turned into jellies,

sorbets, sloshies, paletas (popsicles) and raspados (shaved ice snowcones).

We like Desert Harvesters' method for its ease and simplicity (www.DesertHarvesters.org).

HARVEST FRUIT: 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 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 ample fruit for wildlife and new cactus generation.

PROCESS FRUIT: To process, first wash the fruit by placing it in a sink full of cool water and swishing it around with a large spoon. Then place whole fruits, glochids and all, into a blender or food processor. Blend to make a slurry. Strain the slurry through a pillow case, fine mesh strainer or a colander lined with cloth. We recommend using a clean, old t-shirt or pillowcase rather than cheese cloth. Use a spoon to press the juice from the seeds and skins. Let the strained juice settle. Gently pour the juice off the top, leaving most of the sediment behind. Freeze prickly pear juice in ice cube trays then transfer to airtight freezer storage bags.



Alternatively, you can put whole Prickly Pear fruits in the freezer. To thaw and process later, line a colander with a clean pillowcase or t-shirt 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.

DRINK FRUIT JUICE: Prickly Pear fruit is a deliciously refreshing fruit celebrated for its vibrant magenta color, its unique flavor, and its cooling properties. Prickly Pear juice can be diluted with water or added to lemonade or other drinks to make a refreshing beverage. Or use it to make the regional favorites of syrup (to top pancakes or ice cream, or flavor/color margaritas) or jelly (great on toast)!

NOTE: Prickly pear juice has a cooling effect for some people. If you're a person who is sensitive to it, a large quantity of non-diluted raw juice may cause chills and body aches. (We recently heard from some folks who had a bad reaction from drinking about a half cup of juice diluted in water.) Drinking a few glasses of lemonade with a splash of prickly pear juice 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. Just start with small quantities and increase in small increments to find the amount that is right for you!

Eggplant Pasta in Yogurt Mint Sauce

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

This recipe is adapted from a simple Turkish dish of grilled eggplant topped with yogurt sauce. If you can, try grilling the eggplant for a richer, smoky flavor. Many recipes also add ground beef or lamb to the dish.

1 large or 2-3 medium eggplants
1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon oil
1 1/4 cups plain yogurt
Juice from one lemon
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon fresh mint, chopped
1 teaspoon chile flakes, optional
1 package pasta, cooked and drained
Salt and pepper to taste

Prepare the yogurt sauce first, up to a day ahead of time. Stir together yogurt, lemon juice, garlic, about half the mint, and chile flakes if using. Set aside. While pasta is boiling, prepare eggplant. If you are going to grill the eggplant, slice it in lengthwise strips and marinate briefly in oil, vinegar and salt and pepper. Grill over hot coals until browned on both sides. Chop into bite size pieces and proceed with recipe. To cook on the stovetop, heat oil in a large skillet and add chopped eggplant.

Stir to coat in oil, then cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until beginning to soften and brown. Mix vinegar with about one tablespoon of water and pour over eggplant. Cover and let steam until completely cooked through. In a large bowl toss together cooked pasta, eggplant and yogurt sauce. Serve sprinkled with remaining mint.

Chiles Güeros en Escabeche (Pickled Güeros)

Amy Valdes Schwemm, Tucson CSA

Güeros, or Yellow Hots, are pale yellow (blonde) chiles that turn orange when ripe. They resemble jalapeños except for their color and for their pointier, tapered end. They are also hotter than jalapeños. They are very popular for pickling.

Ingredients:

Güeros
Vinegar, cider or distilled
Salt, non-iodized

Extras:

Carrot
Onion
Garlic
Mexican oregano

Cut slices of onion, garlic and carrot. Chiles can be left whole with stems or sliced and seeded (wear gloves if you're going to slice them).

Mix vinegar and water in equal parts, making enough to easily cover chiles and extras. Place vinegar/water solution and veggies in a non-reactive pot with one teaspoon salt per cup of solution. Cover. Bring to a boil and cook veggies for 1 to 3 minutes (more time for whole chiles, less for sliced). Do not let chiles get soft!



Remove from heat and let cool. Put in jars, making sure the chiles stay submerged, and refrigerate. They will keep up to a year.

Cucumber and Quelites Salad

Nan Rollings, Tucson CSA

Combine sour cream & fresh lemon juice to your desired thickness. Add chopped cucumbers (used the yellow lemon cucumbers from CSA) and quelites leaves. Enjoy!

Prickly Pear Fruit Lemonade

Paul Durham, Tucson CSA

1/2 cup prickly pear juice or 8 prickly pear ice cubes
1/2 cup lemon juice, or 8 lemon juice ice cubes
1/2 cup sweetener (sugar, honey or agave nectar) - or more, to taste (you can double it if you like it sweet)
2 litres (approx. 2 quarts) club soda, ice cold
Ice cubes
Fresh mint leaves (optional)

If using sugar or honey, first dissolve it in 1 cup of boiling water then allow to cool to room temperature.

In a pitcher, mix prickly pear juice, lemon juice, sweetener and club soda. Add ice cubes and mint leaves.

Amy's variations:

- Mesquite broth or syrup can replace some of the sweetener. To make, simmer broken mesquite pods in water until brown and sweet, then strain.
- Replace some of the lemon juice with sweet orange juice and reduce the sweetener. Or use sour orange juice, utilizing some of the "ornamental" harvest that goes to waste!
- Replace some of the water with apple juice. No additional sweetening required.

Paul's tip if you're in a hurry:

You can replace the lemon juice and sweetener by using 1/2 cup of frozen lemon juice concentrate for every 1/2 cup of prickly pear juice.