



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

Newsletter 745 ~ August 17, 2020 ~ Online at www.TucsonCSA.org

Summer 2020

Harvest lists are online.

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Find many more recipes on our website.

Now Taking Orders for Chicken Shares

We're partnering with Top Knot Farms to offer chicken shares. Top Knot Farms is a small family-owned poultry farm in Benson, AZ that raises birds on pasture.

Each share will consist of two pasture-raised chickens, one whole and one butchered, and will cost \$50. To pre-order your chicken share, please put down a \$20 deposit with the CSA Shop volunteer. Chicken shares will be ready for pickup on 8/25 and 8/26.

It's Chile Season!

It wouldn't be August at the CSA without the smell of roasted green chiles. Starting this week, Farmer Frank will be sending them, roasted and fresh, for our produce shares. Please let one of our volunteers know if you prefer mild chiles and we'll do our best to accommodate your request.

The Best Blue Corn Tortillas in Tucson

By Shelby Thompson

After moving to Arizona at the age of four, Carlos Figueroa returned to his hometown of Tepic, Nayarit almost every summer into adulthood. There, he reveled in the taste of warm corn tortillas that were made daily at the tortilleria in town. At the end of each summer Figueroa returned home in search of fresh corn tortillas that rivaled those made in Central Mexico, only to find that there were none. So, he decided to make his own.

"How hard could it be?" Figueroa thought to himself as he set out to make his own fresh corn tortillas. "It turned out to be really hard!" he says now, looking back on the process that got him from tortilla enthusiast to tortillero. Figueroa didn't necessarily intend to start a tortilla company... it just kind of happened. Upon realizing that he couldn't access high-quality dried corn as an individual consumer, Figueroa made up a (then) fake company and called it Maiz Tucson. Even with heirloom corn in-hand, Figueroa wasn't getting the results he wanted, so he bought a stone grinder to make better masa. Finally equipped with everything he needed to make a proper corn tortilla – great corn, a large pot, a stone grinder, a tortilla press, and a comal – Figueroa realized that he wanted to make tortillas for more than just himself and his loved ones. He quit his longtime research position at the University of Arizona, took a few months off to travel in Mexico, and returned to Tucson to make Maiz Tucson a real company.



Heirloom blue corn. Photo courtesy of Carlos Figueroa.

When your product is made with only three ingredients – corn, water, and slaked lime – they have to be good. That's why Figueroa sources heirloom corn from Masienda and Tamoia, two companies that partner with organic corn farmers in Mexico who dedicate a small portion of their fields to grow the "family corn" that he uses in his tortillas. Depending on its growing conditions, the same variety of heirloom blue corn can taste completely different. Thankfully, each batch of corn comes with information about the farmer, location of the farm, and the elevation at which it was grown, giving Figueroa intimate insight into his ingredients.

Making corn tortillas from scratch is simple but time-consuming, says Figueroa. He starts the process by breaking a kernel or two of corn in his mouth to learn more about it, often reckoning its taste and texture with the farm from which it came. Then, the corn gets rinsed to remove any chaff before it's added to a large pot of water and slaked lime. There, the nixtamalization process begins.

Follow Maiz Tucson

Website: Maiztucson.com

Instagram: [@MaizTucson](https://www.instagram.com/MaizTucson)



Wood-fired comal at Mission Garden.



Photo by @saucybill



Birria on blue corn tortillas.



Our bodies have difficulty digesting and absorbing nutrients from dried corn in its natural state. Nixtamalization is the age-old process of making dried corn edible and is thought to have originated in Mesoamerica between 1200 - 1500 BCE. Soaking dried corn kernels in a mixture of water and slaked lime (food-grade calcium hydroxide) changes its structure by removing the outer pericarp from each kernel. This allows our bodies to digest dried corn more easily and absorb the amino acids found within it. The process also removes micro toxins and toxins that can be poisonous. "Without slaked lime, we can't have tortillas," Figueroa says of the key ingredient in nixtamalization.



A ball of masa ready to be pressed. Photo courtesy of Carlos Figueroa.

For a process that increases digestibility and nutrition and removes toxins, nixtamalization is rather simple: dried corn kernels, water, and slaked lime are brought to a boil in a large pot over the stove. Once the mixture comes to a boil, the heat is lowered and the mixture simmers until the corn kernels reach the right consistency. Once the corn has steeped in the lime-water mixture anywhere from 8 - 16 hours, the pericarp is rinsed off and what's left of the kernels goes straight into the stone grinder. What comes out is masa, which is kneaded into a smooth ball. The masa is then shaped into small balls, each of which is fed into

a hopper that presses the tortillas. Once the tortillas have been briefly cooked on the comal, they're packaged and delivered to Tucson CSA.

Although Maiz Tucson is still young, Figueroa has some exciting projects in the works. In partnership with Mission Garden and Arevalos Farm, he received a Capacity Building Grant from the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona to make his blue corn tortillas even more local. As a result of the grant, Mission Garden is growing Tohono O'dham 60-Day Corn, which Figueroa will use for tortilla-making demonstrations in the fall; Aaron Cardonas, owner of Arevalos Farm, is in the process of growing heirloom blue corn for Figueroa to use in his tortillas; and Maiz Tucson has a new grinder on the way, which will allow Figueroa to make more masa, reduce waste, and make the process faster. "Hopefully, by next year, the tortillas will be made with Arizona-grown corn," he says.



While flour tortillas are great to eat on their own, corn tortillas should be paired with something in order to really make their flavor stand out. "I like to do a really crispy fried egg with a yolky center and some really spicy salsa," says Figueroa, adding, "If you get a really good egg it makes all the difference." Still, he emphasizes the importance of keeping it simple to allow the fresh corn tortillas to shine.

You can find Maiz Tucson heirloom blue corn tortillas in the Tucson CSA Shop every Tuesday and Wednesday from 4-7 p.m. for \$5/dozen.

RECIPES

Tomatillo and/or Apple Crisp

Rachel Yaseen, The Organic Kitchen

What a great surprise that you can use tomatillos in a sweet crisp! Rachel made this for a cooking demo years back and we include it in a newsletter every summer to remind folks about this different way to use tomatillos. You can use all tomatillos if you still have a previous shares worth or use some of your apple share. You will be surprised by how easy and delicious this is!

Tomatillos and/or apples diced— enough to cover bottom of oven pan

1/4 cup coconut sugar
1 1/4 cup dried coconut flakes
1 1/4 cup oats
1 cup coconut sugar
1 stick butter, cold, cut into 8 pieces
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350 °. Butter or oil the bottom and sides of a 9 by 14” pan. Mix tomatillos and apples with 1/4 cup sugar and spread over bottom of pan. Mix oats, coconut, coconut sugar, salt, and cinnamon in a separate bowl. With your fingers or the back of a spoon, smoosh the butter into the dry mixture until it blends in. Sprinkle on top of the tomatillo mixture. Bake 45 minutes. Serve warm or room temperature with a scoop of ice cream or whipped cream if desired.

Piperade and Eggs Piperade

This traditional Basque dish calls for “piment d’Espelette” (a local Basque pepper) but you can use green chiles plus Jalapeño or Serrano, or even Habañero if you like it hot. However, if the green chiles are spicy to begin with, you can omit the extra spicy chile. Basque Country is a region that straddles France and Spain across the western Pyrenees mountains.

3 large green chiles, seeds removed, chopped
2 tomatoes, diced
1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 Jalapeño or Serrano chile, finely chopped (or 2 teaspoons of dry chile flakes), if desired
2 tablespoon olive oil
Salt

Heat oil in a skillet over medium high heat. Add green chiles and onions. Sauté for about 5 minutes until onions are translucent. Add garlic and Jalapeño and sauté for another minute. Add tomatoes. Add salt to taste. Reduce heat to medium and cover. Cook for another 10 minutes. Serve with a baguette. Piperade is often served with scrambled eggs.

Eggs Piperade

One variation of this dish is to include the eggs in it instead of having them on the side, as in the style of a Spanish tortilla. Once the piperade is cooked, compact it with a spatula and pour

4 beaten eggs evenly over it. Cover, and cook for another 5-10 minutes or until the beaten eggs have set. Cut in wedges and serve with sliced baguette. It can be served hot or cold. It makes a great picnic dish.

Honey Sweetened Zucchini Bread

Shelby Thompson, Tucson CSA

When you’re tiring of zucchini midway through the summer, a loaf of this honey-sweetened zucchini bread is a great way to make it disappear. Sweetened with raw local honey and made with a good amount of whole wheat, honey-sweetened zucchini bread is the prefect breakfast, snack, and dessert for you and your family. Feel free to swap out almost any summer squash for the zucchini in this recipe, simply making sure to peel off tough skin and scoop out large seeds.

1/2 cup coconut oil, olive oil, or melted butter
1/2 cup whole milk yogurt (use applesauce for a dairy-free version)
1/2 cup raw local honey
3 eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon fine sea salt
2 cups grated summer squash
1 ½ cups whole wheat flour (spelt works well here)
1 ½ cups all purpose flour
1 ½ cups mix-ins, such as chocolate chips, nuts, or dried fruit (optional)

Grease a bread pan and preheat the oven to 350° F. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together oil (or butter), yogurt, and honey until they are well combined. Add the eggs and vanilla and whisk well. Sprinkle the cinnamon, nutmeg, baking soda, baking powder, and sea salt over the mixture and whisk to incorporate. Using a spatula or large spoon, mix in the grated squash until it is evenly distributed. Stir in the flours until there are no dry clumps left. If using mix-ins, stir them in now. Scrape the batter into the prepared bread pan and smooth out the top so that it is even. Bake the bread for 45-55 minutes, rotating halfway through the baking time, until a cake tester inserted in the middle of the loaf comes out clean. Allow to cool before slicing and serving. After a day, refrigerate or freeze the honey-sweetened zucchini bread to preserve it better.