



Tucson Community Supported Agriculture

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Summer 2012

Harvest list is online

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Here are some cool recipes for this hot, hot week!

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Many more recipes in our online recipe archive

More chile news

Farmer Frank said that we are almost done with the hot green chiles we have been getting. The next batch, which we may start getting as soon as next week, will be comprised of milder green chiles.

Tomatillos



Tomatillos are related to the gooseberry. They have a sweet and tangy flavor and are a classic in Mexican food. To use your tomatillos, first remove their papery husks. They also have a sticky residue on their skin that is easily removed by dunking them in water.

You can also use them raw. But grilling or skillet roasting whole tomatillos gives a smoky depth to their flavor. Just cook them over medium high heat, turning occasionally, until they are mostly brown (some black charred spots are fine). Grilled tomatillos and green onions make a delicious salsa, blended with a little salt, pepper, lime juice and cilantro!

HOW HOT DO CHILES GET? THE SCOVILLE SCALE

Many of you are likely familiar with the Scoville scale. American pharmacist Wilbur Scoville devised this scale in 1912 to measure the spiciness of chile peppers. What is being measured is the concentration of capsaicin in the chile. Capsaicin is the compound that stimulates nerve endings to produce the sensation of heat. The unit of measurement is the SHU (Scoville Heat Unit). Pure capsaicin has a measurement of 16,000,000 SHU.

Here are some examples of SHUs:

Bell peppers: 0	Cayenne: 30,000-50,000
Anaheim, Poblano: 1,000-2,500	Thai chile, Chiltepin: 50,000- 100,000
Jalapeño: 3,500-8,000	Habañero: 100,000- 350,000
Serrano: 10,000-23,000	Pepper spray: 1,500,000-2,000,000

When consumed, capsaicin binds with pain receptors in the mouth and throat that are responsible for sensing heat. Once activated by the capsaicin, these receptors send a message to the brain that the person has consumed something hot. The brain responds to the burning stimulus by raising the heart rate, augmenting the body temperature, increasing perspiration and releasing endorphins. This is why consuming hot chiles is reputed to cause a mild sensation of euphoria.

Capsaicin is wildly used in ointments to relieve pain from arthritis, shingles, sprains, muscle aches, itchiness and skin inflammation. There is also scientific evidence that capsaicin is capable of killing prostate cancer cells in mice.



What can you do if you get an excessive burning sensation from hot chiles? Well, first, it is best to avoid if the first place: wear latex gloves if you are handling chiles with an SHU higher than 2,000.

Second, remove the seed cores and inner membranes (or pith) of the chiles, as that is where the capsaicin is most concentrated. The seeds themselves do not produce capsaicin, but they can still cause burning because of residual capsaicin from the membranes and core to which they were attached.

Avoid rubbing your eyes with any part of your hands that have manipulated the chiles. If you get skin burn, the best remediation is to coat the exposed skin area with alkaline compounds such as Milk of Magnesia or Mylanta, or oily compounds such as Vaseline or petroleum jelly. The gel from the aloe plant is also effective. Applying an ice pack or dipping the affected area in a bucket of ice cold water will also provide relief. Capsaicin can also be removed with a soapy solution. However, capsaicin is not water-soluble, so just rinsing it with water only will have no soothing effect. Capsaicin is soluble in alcohol, so if your mouth is burning, drinking a shot of tequila will help! Drinking milk, or chewing on some bread soaked in olive oil will also help.

Green Enchilada Sauce

Philippe. Tucson CSA

1 basket tomatillos, husked and quartered
2-3 green chiles, roasted, skinned and sliced
1 medium onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 tablespoon mole verde
1/4 cup chopped cilantro (or basil)
Optional: 1/2 lb ground pork, or green chile pork chorizo
Olive oil
Salt to taste

Sauté onion and in olive oil until onions are tender. If using meat, add meat now and sauté until meat is browned. Add tomatillos, green chiles and garlic. Cover and simmer for another 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Turn of heat. Add cilantro. Can be served hot or cold.

Serving suggestions: Serve as a sauce over enchiladas or with chilaquiles. Serve with squash fritters, or on a bed or rice. The meatless version can be served cold as green salsa.

Sara's Calabacitas

Sara, Tucson CSA

Use any summer squash you have available. Serve with some beans and tortillas for a quick meal.

1 medium summer squash, sliced into half moons
1 tomatillo, chopped
Kernels from 2 ears of corn
1 small onion, sliced
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons oil
1 teaspoon cumin
1 tablespoon Fresh Savory or Oregano (or use 1 teaspoon dried)
Salt and Cayenne pepper to taste

Heat oil over medium high heat and add onion. Sauté onion for a few minutes then add garlic and spices. Cook, stirring continuously, until garlic and spices release fragrance. Add vegetables and oregano, cover and lower temperature to medium-low heat. Cook for about 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until squash is tender. Salt to taste. Serve with cheese if you like.

Okra Creole

Gina, Tucson CSA

.....add some shrimp or chicken to this classic Creole dish and serve it over rice for Sunday night supper (I served it over brown rice).

1 pound fresh okra
2 Tablespoons oil (*I used canola*)
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
1 small onion, chopped
2 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded and coarsely chopped

1/2 green bell pepper, finely diced
1 teaspoon sugar (*or other sweetener*)
1/2 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground black pepper to taste.

If using fresh okra, wash, dry and trim the okra and slice it into medium-thin rounds. In a large skillet, heat the oil over moderately high heat. Add the okra and cook until it is slightly softened. Add the remaining ingredients and cook, stirring for 5 minutes. If the vegetables seem too dry, add about 1/3 cup water (*I added some water just to help with the cooking of the okra*). Turn the heat to very low and simmer for about 1 hour, until all of the liquid has been absorbed (I put a lid on the pan and then removed it at the end to lessen the liquid a little, but still left a little moisture). Serve hot.

Apple Melon Cucumber Salad

Diana Stirling, Tucson CSA

Use equal parts:
Apple
Honeydew (or similar green or white) Melon
Cucumber

Cut into chunks. Mix and dress lightly with a splash of vinegar, lime and a pinch of sugar. Top with peanuts or fresh mint, if desired.

Melon Cucumber Salsa

www.theorganickitchentucson.com

This recipe was featured in last week's newsletter, but we ended up not getting any cucumbers. So here it comes again, and hopefully so are cucumbers.

1 cup melon, diced small
1 small cucumber, peeled, seeded, and diced small
Grated zest and juice of 1 lime
2-3 tomatillos, diced small (if desired)
1 tablespoon minced basil
1 tablespoon chopped mint leaves
1 jalapeno, seeded and finely diced
1 small knob of ginger, peeled and grated
Salt, to taste

Mix all the ingredients. Serve over tacos or quesadillas or with chips or bread.

Melon Sorbet

Philippe Waterinckx, Tucson CSA

1 melon (cantaloupe or honeydew), peeled, seeded and cubed
3 tablespoons lemon or limejuice
2 tablespoons vodka
1/4 cup sugar

Place all ingredients in a food processor and process until smooth. Refrigerate until chilled. Pour the chilled mixture into an ice cream maker and process according to manufacturer's directions. Transfer sorbet to an airtight container and freeze 3 to 4 hours before serving.