



# *Tucson Community Supported Agriculture*

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## Winter 2014

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our website**

#### How Our Grass-Fed Beef Shares System Works

Once a quarter we order a whole cow or steer from Josh. Josh's cattle are entirely pasture-raised and well-cared for on his ranch south of Willcox.

When the animal is ready for processing, Josh takes it down the road to Guzman's Meat Processing, a small, family-owned meat processor. We ask Guzman to cut the animal according to our own specifications, i.e. a specific ratio of steaks, roasts and ground meat. Although it's a common practice to add fat back in when making the ground beef, we tell Guzman not to, resulting in extra lean ground beef.

At that time, we start taking orders for beef shares. To ensure that everyone who pays a deposit gets a beef share, we usually take deposits for fewer shares than we think we can make. For example, if the animal is small, it will produce about 40 shares: we will only pre-sell 35 shares and waitlist the rest.

This time we were able to make enough shares for everyone who ordered one plus the 6 members who were waitlisted.

Typically, a beef share includes 2 steaks, a roast, 2 packs of ground beef and a miscellaneous cut (BBQ ribs, short ribs, stew meat or shanks).

Organs (liver, tongue, kidneys, heart) are not part of the shares but are sold separately at the front desk.

#### Dog/Stock Bones

As with every beef share delivery, we also get the bones from that same animal. Since beef share pickup days can be a bit hectic, we usually don't sell the bones until the following week. Those bones are great for dogs but also to make beef broth. They cost \$1/lb, and whatever is not sold after a couple weeks is donated to the Tucson Zoo (the lions like them).

## **BEETS**

Regardless of your politics, you don't have to do as your president does in all things. Apparently, Barack Obama doesn't like beets. Say what?! What's not to like about beets? This little root vegetable has so many varieties and uses: mangelwurzels for fodder, the sugar beet for sugar, chard for leafy greens, and beetroots or garden beets for the root vegetable.

Sometimes called "blood turnips," beets trace their history to the second millennium BC, and have been popular from the Mediterranean to China. While we tend to think of beets primarily for their roots, beet leaves were widely popular until the cultivation of spinach. In 19th century Europe, beets became commercially significant once it was discovered that they offered an alternative to sugar cane.

At the CSA, we usually get Bull's Blood and Detroit Red beets, known for their tender, sweet burgundy-colored leaves, but also Chioggia beets with their recognizable red-and-white striped roots. Chioggias tend to be sweeter than other beets.

Beet leaves can be steamed or stir-fried. Roots can be boiled or roasted, or eaten raw, and they're usually sliced or shredded. Beets can also be pickled. Save the pickling juice and use it to dye hard-boiled eggs, which is a tradition of the Pennsylvania Dutch. Beets can also be juiced in a home or commercial juicer, and drinking beet juice is said to make you perform better in sports due to the abundance of nitrates.

It might make you perform better elsewhere, too: the Ancient Romans believed beetroot juice to be an aphrodisiac. The Romans also treated fevers and constipation with beets. During the Middle Ages, people ate beets to help with digestion and to enhance the health of the blood.

Beets are a good source of fiber, potassium, iron, and folic acid. The pigment betacyanin, which makes beets red, is an antioxidant. All that goodness in one remarkable vegetable? Makes you want to eat them all year. But maybe you shouldn't eat them all the time: beets are high in oxalic acid, which is said to contribute to the formation of kidney stones.

## **STORING YOUR GREENS**

A couple members have recently left me a voicemail asking how to best store greens. Unfortunately I could not get back to them because their number was blocked and I could not look them up in our members database because I could not quite understand their name. Since we've had quite a few new members recently, I thought a small reminder on how to store greens would be useful.

Leafy greens need cold, moisture (but not too much) and air circulation (but not too much). The best way to achieve this is:

1. wash them in cold water
2. shake or pat them dry (you can also use a salad spinner if you have one)
3. wrap them in paper towels or clean and dry kitchen towels
4. place the wrapped greens in a plastic grocery bag in the refrigerator's veggie drawer.

That's how they keep the longest, up to a week. The slightly damp towels get a degree or two colder than the fridge and help slow down how fast water evaporates from the cells. The grocery sack protects the greens from the breezes in your fridge while still allowing what moisture does seep out to actually evaporate.

However, if you are going to eat them within a day or two, you can also directly place them in plastic bag in the refrigerator's veggie drawer.

Beet greens and turnips are perfectly edible, so don't throw them away. But make sure to separate the bulbs and the greens right away to maximize the longevity of both.



### **Fruity Beety**

Maggie Newman, Tucson CSA (adapted from The New Laurel's Kitchen)

Citrus juice and beets go great together. You can play with this recipe, adding fresh herbs or toasted spices. For a beautiful presentation, cut beets and oranges into thin rounds and layer together. Use the additional ingredients to garnish the top, rather than blending together.

4 beets  
3 oranges  
2 tablespoons grated coconut  
1 teaspoon honey  
Juice and peel from one citrus fruit  
2 tablespoons raisins  
1 teaspoon vinegar, if desired  
Salt to taste

Wash beets and steam whole until tender; then peel. Slice into thin rounds or bite size chunks. Peel, seed and cut up oranges. Place coconut, honey, citrus juice and peel in a blender, and blend 2 minutes. Mix all ingredients, balancing the sweetness with the additional vinegar if needed. Chill, letting the flavors meld for two hours or so.

### **Wheat Berries with Beets and Walnuts**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

If you haven't used your wheat berries yet, this is the recipe to try. Pre-roast the beets and boil the wheat berries earlier in the week for a really quick meal. Add the beet greens if you like, or save them for another dish. Pasta works well in place of the wheat berries if you prefer.

1 bunch beets, roasted, peeled and diced  
1 large handful fresh herbs (parsley, dill, cilantro, mint all work great), finely chopped  
1 handful walnuts, roughly chopped  
1/2 bunch green onions, thinly sliced  
1 pound pasta, cooked or about 3 cups cooked wheat berries  
1-2 tablespoons olive oil  
1-2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar  
Salt to taste

Mix together all ingredients, seasoning to taste. Let sit for at least 30 minutes to allow flavors to meld. Serve warm, or as a cold salad. Garnish with whole parsley leaves.

### **Stoemp (mashed potatoes with friends)**

Philippe, Tucson CSA

Pronounced *stoemp*, this typical Flemish and Dutch dish consists of potatoes mashed with greens and/or root vegetables, or even with bacon. It is similar to Irish colcannon. It's very easy to make and versatile in its use of ingredients. Typical friends for the potatoes are carrots, kale, cabbage, spinach, green beans, or Brussels sprouts, but you can use any CSA greens or root vegetable, including mustard greens, chives, leeks, onions, garlic, endive, frisee, turnips, turnip

greens, etc. The proportions are flexible. The potatoes should remain dominant with the other ingredients not exceeding 1/3 of the total.

1 lb potatoes, diced  
1/2 lb of any combination of leafy greens or root) or root vegetables (diced)  
A few clumps of butter  
Some milk or cream  
Salt and pepper  
Nutmeg

Boil the potatoes and friends together until potatoes are soft. Drain. You can also cook the potatoes by themselves while sauteing the greens and/or roots in some butter or oil until tender. This way, the flavor of the friends don't get lost in the boiling water. Mix the cooked ingredients in a mixing pot and mash together with a few clumps of butter. Add a pinch of nutmeg and salt and pepper to taste. Add a little milk or cream to achieve desired consistency. You can use a food processor instead, if you want a smooth puree. You can get more creative with your stoemp by adding friends such as roasted chiles, broccoli, grated cheese, summer squash, sweet corn, etc. The sky's the limit.

### **Basic Enchilada Sauce**

Sara Jones, Tucson CSA

If you are wondering what to do with the HUGE bag of dried chiles we received in our shares last week, here is one way to use some up. Double or triple the recipe and freeze some, if you like. We get the basic Anaheim-type dried chiles at the CSA, which are a great base for enchilada sauce. If you have them around, feel free to supplement or substitute other dried chiles for a more complex flavor.

4-6 dried red chiles, rinsed clean  
1/2 onion, minced  
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin  
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano  
1 tablespoon oil  
1 teaspoon white vinegar

Remove stems (and most seeds for a milder sauce) from chiles. To re-hydrate, leave them submerged overnight in warm water. You can also pour boiling water over chiles and leave them to re-hydrate for about 45 minutes. Once pliable and moist, puree in a blender or food processor with about 1 cup of the soaking liquid. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium high heat. Add onion and cumin and stir until fragrant. Pour in chile mixture and oregano. Be CAREFUL, the steam the chiles will release is spicy – don't lean directly over the skillet! Cook, stirring continuously, for about 3 minutes. Remove from heat and add vinegar and a bit of salt to taste. Puree again if you want a smooth sauce.