



**Planned harvest:** Melons, Tomatillos, Tomatoes, Glendale Gold Onions, Red LaSoda Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Dried Beans, Eggplants.

**Husky Little Tomatoes – Tomatillos:** Tomatillos (*Physalis philadelphica*), or “little tomatoes” in Spanish, are also known as husk tomatoes or ground cherries. They are members of the nightshade family and are actually more closely related to Cape gooseberries than tomatoes. This plant originated in Mesoamerica, more specifically in central Mexico, where at present both wild and domesticated populations may be found. Various archaeological findings show that its use in the diet of the Mexican population dates back to pre-Columbian times, and was a staple of the Aztecs. In pre-Hispanic times in Mexico, it was preferred far more than the tomato (*Lycopersicon* sp.), however, this preference has not been maintained except in rural areas. And by the way, the name “tomato” derives from the Nahuatl “tomatl”; this word is a generic one for globose fruits or berries which have many seeds, watery flesh and which are sometimes enclosed in a membrane.

The tomatillo has been a constant component of the Latin American diet up to the present day, chiefly in the form of sauces prepared with its fruit and ground chilies to improve the flavor of meals and stimulate the appetite. The tomatillo is also used in sauces with green chiles, mainly to lessen their hot flavor. The fruit of the tomatillo is used cooked, or even raw, to prepare purees or minced meat dishes which are used as a base for chili sauces known generically as salsa verde (green sauce); they can also be used to accompany prepared dishes or as ingredients in various stews. Tomatillos can be refrigerated up to 4 weeks in a paper bag. Finally, tomatillos can be quite inconsistent in flavor, with some being intensely sour and others tasting mild and sweet. Some cooks use a pinch of sugar to balance the taste of very tart tomatillos.



Preparing tomatillos: Before using, peel off the husks and rinse to remove the sticky residue. Other than peeling off the husk, do not peel the green skin. Tomatillos are traditionally used in three ways—raw, boiled/blanched, or roasted/grilled. Uncooked tomatillos add a fresh, tangy citrus-like flavor and are often used in Mexican table sauces. Finely dice or purée them. Blanching mellows the flavor: bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the whole tomatillos (husks removed and rinsed) and boil for about 5 minutes until soft. Drain and crush or purée as directed in your sauce recipe. Roasting tomatillos while leaving slightly blackened skins on enriches a sauce with a smoky, woody flavor. They can be roasted under the broiler, with a propane torch, or over an open flame such as a grill or a

gas burner. Make sure the heat is quite hot, otherwise the tomatillos will turn mushy before being charred. Dry roasting produces an earthy, nutty flavor. Place the tomatillos in a heavy skillet (preferably cast-iron). Turn heat to low. Roast for about 20 to 30 minutes, turning occasionally, letting each side take on a rich, burnished golden color before turning.

(adapted from *Neglected Crops: 1492 from a Different Perspective*, by J. E. Hernández Bermejo and J. León (eds.); and Kate’s Global Kitchen at [globalgourmet.com](http://globalgourmet.com)).

*Melon of the Week: The Snow Leopard Honeydew is the first-ever variegated honeydew. This small, pretty melon grows well in hot climates. It has sweet white flesh and characteristic honeydew flavor. Averaging about 2 lbs., it makes an excellent dessert for 1-2 people.*

# RECIPES ETC.

## Nina's Salsa Verde with Green Chiles

1 CSA basket of tomatillos, peeled, washed and chopped  
2 small Glendale Gold onions, chopped  
1 clove of garlic, chopped  
½ cup roasted mild green chiles, fresh or frozen, cleaned and chopped  
1 tsp ground cumin  
½ tsp ground coriander  
1 Tbsp sunflower oil (or other mild-tasting oil)  
1 tsp Mexican oregano (can be found at Native Seeds Search; of substitute regular oregano)  
Salt, to taste  
Lemon pepper, to taste  
1 cup water, approx. (or soup stock)

Heat up the oil and fry onions with spices. Add garlic and the tomatillos, then add the water – make sure it doesn't completely cover the tomatillos or else the salsa will be too watery. Bring to a boil, and simmer for about 10 minutes or until tomatillos are soft. Then add the chiles and reheat. Let cool enough to handle, and blend, in batches, if necessary. Adjust the seasoning. This salsa will keep in the fridge for about 5 days. Serve it cold with chips, or reheated over burritos, enchiladas, eggs or meat of your choice (chicken or pork work particularly well), use it for bean or meat chilis, or freeze for later.

## Navajo Eggplant with Charred Tomatillo Sauce

(from Zion National Park, Utah, adapted from *The New Southwest Cookbook*, by Carolyn Niethammer)

4 large yellow onions, roughly chopped  
1 ½ Tbsp light brown sugar  
4 cups vegetable stock, made with 2 cubes salt and pepper  
4 slices of French bread  
1 cup cheddar cheese, grated

1 large eggplant (or two medium)  
1 Tbsp salt  
10 medium tomatillos  
1 cup heavy whipping cream  
1 ½ tsp pepper  
¾ cup all-purpose flour  
3 eggs, beaten  
¾ cup bread crumbs  
¼ cup vegetable oil, divided  
½ cup grated mozzarella  
½ cup grated provolone

Cut off the ends of the eggplant and discard. Cut the eggplant in half lengthwise, then cut each half into ¼-inch thick slices. Season with salt to draw out moisture. Let it sit uncovered at room temperature until moisture appears, about 30 minutes, and then pat dry with paper towels.

Meanwhile, peel the husks from the tomatillos, cut the tomatillos in half, and remove the blossom cores. Lightly blacken them on a grill or under a broiler. Watch them closely while preparing them since you want the skins blistered and the flesh soft but still juicy. Combine the blackened tomatillos and cream in a blender until smooth. Set aside.

Mix the pepper with the flour. Place the flour, beaten eggs, and bread crumbs each in its own shallow bowl. Dredge the eggplant slices first in flour, then in egg, and then in bread crumbs, laying them in a single layer on a cookie sheet.

Film a heavy frying pan with vegetable oil, using just part of the oil. Working with a few eggplant slices at a time, brown on both sides over medium heat, then reduce heat and continue to cook until tender, about 5 minutes total. Repeat with the remaining slices, using more oil if needed. Drain on paper towels.

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Alternate layers of eggplant slices and charred tomatillo sauce, ending with sauce, in a 9 x 12-inch ovenproof casserole dish. Sprinkle with a mixture of grated mozzarella and provolone cheese. Bake about 20 minutes until the cheese is melted and the sauce is bubbling. Serve with fresh tomato salsa on the side.

**Nina's Note:** You can simplify this recipe by grilling the eggplant slices first (without breading and frying them) and then layer in the casserole dish. Proceed according to the recipe.

## Chicken-Tomatillo Soup

(adapted from *Café Pasqual's Cookbook*, by Katharine Kagel)

1 ½ Tbsp olive oil  
½ red onion, finely minced (or substitute 2 Glendale Golds)  
6 cloves garlic, finely minced  
2 celery stalks, including leaves, cut into ¼-inch slices  
3 dried red chiles, rinsed, stemmed, seeded, and chopped into small pieces  
2 tsps ground cumin  
1 Tbsp paprika  
8 cups chicken stock  
20 tomatillos, husks removed, cut into quarters  
5 Tbsp tomato paste  
2 cups fresh or frozen corn kernels  
2 tsps granulated sugar  
About ¾ pound fresh mild green chiles, roasted, stemmed, peeled, seeded, and cut into long thin strips to measure 1 cup  
1 whole chicken breast, about ¾ pound  
Salt and freshly ground pepper  
½ cup fresh cilantro leaves, stemmed and finely minced, for garnish

In a large soup pot, heat the olive oil until quite hot. Add the onion, garlic, celery, and dried chiles and sauté for 5 minutes. Stir in the cumin and paprika. When the spices are incorporated, add the stock, tomatillos, tomato paste, corn, sugar, and green chiles. Add the chicken breast and simmer until the breast is cooked through, 15 to 20 minutes.

Using a slotted utensil, remove the breast from the stock. Continue to simmer the stock while the breast cools until it can be handled. Bone and skin the cooled breast, then shred the meat. Add the shredded chicken to the soup pot to heat through, about 3 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Garnish with cilantro in individual bowls just at the moment of serving.

**Nina's Note:** To make a vegetarian version, replace the chicken stock with your favorite veggie stock, and instead of chicken add cubed firm tofu after 15 to 20 minutes of cooking, reheat and serve.