

AJO COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE



Fall 2009 / Week 1 of 13

Editor: Nina Altshul Layout: Peter Altshul

Planned harvest: Melons, Asian Pears, Cucumbers, Eggplants, Trucker's Delight Corn, Bell Peppers, Sweet Potatoes, Farmer's Choice (maybe okra, or green tomatoes...).

Welcome to the Fall Session of 2009! The end of the season potluck was held after a short shower, so the air was clear and cool, at least for a little while! Farmer Frank came down from Glendale looking like a true gentleman farmer. He brought organic compost for all of the CSA members, and leftovers will be donated to the Ajo Community Garden and the Ajo Elementary School Garden. Before we all dug into the potluck, Frank gave us some insights into what to expect during the Fall season. For Frank, the Fall is the most fun season: while we can expect to continue receiving summer crops such as melons (into November if all goes as planned), corn, cucumbers and tomatoes, the first cooler crops will find their way into our weekly shares as well. The first greens have been planted, and should be ready to harvest by the end of September. According to Farmer Frank, we should be receiving some interesting varieties this year! We will be getting more pears, and the first oranges and grapefruits. The winter squash and pumpkins have also been planted, and should be ready for our harvest food demo before Thanksgiving. Thanks to everyone who came and contributed to the potluck, and we're looking forward to a delicious fall!

In addition to great food, what else can we expect this session? Ajo CSA will be holding a screening of one of the top "real food movement" movies of this summer, **Fresh** (date and place to be announced). On November 21, Chef Cheralyn Schmidt of University of Arizona Agricultural Extension Office has kindly offered to prepare a **harvest food demonstration** especially for us, including the glorious greens, just in time for the beginning of the holiday season. In addition, the Ajo Community Garden Consortium and Ajo CSA are planning to hold an **educational week** during the third week in November, including lectures at the library, tours and workshops, and Frank has already agreed to come back to Ajo and give a talk on sustainable farming. But first, don't miss our stand during the community breakfast as part of the **Ajo International Day of Peace** celebrations on September 20! Our group will be baking healthy cakes using wheat and squash from the farm in solar ovens, so come grab some for yourself!

In addition to produce from Crooked Sky Farms, Ajo CSA is proud to offer an option to sign up for a **meat share** once a season. We are starting with grass-fed beef from **Double Check Ranch** in Winkelman, AZ. Check out their website (www.doublecheckranch.com) or come and tour the ranch! On September 27, Paul is opening his ranch to visitors, so if anybody wants to attend the tour, please sign up during the pick-up! If you have already signed up, your meat share will be here in the third or fourth week of September. You can also order frozen **old-fashioned, natural, free-range pasture-raised chickens** from **Josh's Foraging Fowls** in Wilcox, AZ (AbarHfarm.com). Josh's is a small family farm and no antibiotics or growth hormones are used. The hens are fed high quality locally raised grains and an organic mineral mix. And just in time for Thanksgiving, you can also order Josh's **turkey!** The price is \$4.20/lb and the birds weigh between 15-18 pounds. The sign-up will be open until the end of September.

We have a few new members this season, so let's recap the **Ajo CSA pick-up etiquette:**

1. Bring your own bags/boxes etc.
2. Check your name off on the Ajo CSA Pick-up Sheet before you get your veggies.
3. Handle the produce as little as possible. Please do not pick through items to get the best-looking ones. Farmer Frank breeds the produce for flavor, not for looks or shelf-life, therefore they tend to bruise and spoil when handled repeatedly. Please just take the portion indicated and move along to the next crate.
4. Take your whole share: No more, no less. Make sure that you always leave with 8 different items. If you don't want something, talk to other members about trading, or look at the Trading Table for possible substitutes.
5. A whole share is put on the Trading Table at the beginning of the pick-up to give you an option to trade in the items you do not want, or to get more of what you do want. There are no limitations on how many items you can exchange but you have to trade a whole portion for a whole portion, e.g. you can only trade an entire share of green chiles for the whole portion of something else e.g. a whole melon.
6. Please stick to the allocated pick-up timeframe. Right now we are keeping to the old schedule of 6:30 to 7:30 on Saturdays, but the moment the temperatures come down will move it to earlier hours. If you can't pick up, ask a friend or neighbor to pick up your share for you or let me or another member know that you will not be picking up that night. I can save it for you for a day or two but only if arranged in advance! If you do not show up and do not get in touch with me, you will forfeit your share.

RECIPES ETC.

Smoky Eggplant Soup

(submitted by Stephanie Doerries, adapted from *Vegetarian Southwest* by Lon Walters)

5 Japanese eggplants, peeled and cut into medium-sized cubes
2 Tbsp salt
1 Tbsp olive oil, plus more for brushing on eggplant
½ cup roasted green chiles, fresh or frozen, cleaned and chopped
¾ gallon vegetable stock (see Nina's recipe in Summer 2009 Week 11 Newsletter)
4 Glendale Gold onions, chopped
3 tomatillos, chopped
½ Tbsp chopped fresh thyme (or ½ tsp dried)
1 Tbsp chopped fresh basil (or 1 tsp dried)
4 cloves garlic
½ cup grated Parmesan
3 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
½ Tbsp ground fennel seed
Salt and pepper to taste

Toss eggplant with kosher salt in a colander and let stand for 1 hour to leach excess water. Preheat oven to 400°F. Pat excess water and salt off eggplant. Brush with olive oil and roast until brown and tender. Simmer vegetable stock for 15 minutes. Sauté onions and garlic and add to vegetable stock. Add eggplant, chiles, tomatillos, and thyme. Simmer for an additional 30 minutes. Purée soup in a blender and add basil, Parmesan, balsamic vinegar, and fennel seed. Adjust salt, pepper, and seasonings as needed. Serve warm and enjoy!

Rigatoni with Beef & Eggplant Ragu

(adapted from *EatingWell Magazine* April/May 2006)

8 ounces whole-wheat rigatoni, rotini or penne
8 ounces ground beef (preferably grass-fed)
4 cloves garlic, chopped
1/2 teaspoon fennel seed
3 cups diced eggplant (about 1/2 medium)
2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 8-ounce cans no-salt-added tomato sauce
1 cup red wine
1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano or 1 teaspoon dried
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
2 teaspoons pine nuts, toasted
1/2 cup crumbled feta (optional)

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cook pasta until tender, 8 to 10 minutes or according to package directions. Meanwhile, cook beef, garlic and fennel seeds in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat until the beef is browned, about 3 minutes. Add eggplant and oil; cook, stirring occasionally, until the eggplant browns, about 5 minutes. Add tomato sauce and wine; cook, stirring occasionally, until the sauce thickens, about 10 minutes. Stir in oregano, salt and pepper. Drain the pasta; serve topped with the sauce and sprinkled with pine nuts and feta, if using.

Nina's Spicy Eggplant and Nut Soup (vegan)

6 baby eggplants, cut
½ cup scallions, chopped (or substitute yellow onions)
2 ears corn, kernels cut off the cob
2 green bell peppers, deseeded and deveined, chopped
3 Tbsp sesame oil
1 Tbsp salt, plus extra for salting eggplants
1-inch fresh ginger root, peeled and grated or chopped
1 Tbsp ground cumin
a pinch of cayenne pepper, or more to taste
1 Tbsp ground coriander
1 tsp turmeric
1 large (28 oz.) can roasted diced tomatoes, with juices
½ cup creamy or chunky natural nut butter (peanut, macadamia and/or cashew)
8 tomatillos, husked, washed and chopped (or substitute 3 Tbsp lemon juice at the end of the cooking)
Cilantro, basil, whole nuts, chopped fresh bananas etc. for garnish

Salt your eggplant chunks, and let stand for at least half an hour. Using a towel, tap and drain as much liquid as possible. Heat up 2 Tbsp of sesame oil and fry the eggplant pieces for about 10-15 minutes, until lightly brown on all sides. Remove from pot, add the remaining sesame oil and quickly fry the spice combination (ginger, cumin, coriander, turmeric and cayenne). Then add the onions, and fry for about a minute, add the corn and peppers and fry for a few minutes. Add the eggplant and tomatoes, stir, add enough water to cover and bring to a boil. Dissolve nut butter in 1 ladle of soup, then add. Stir, add tomatillos, and then let simmer for at least 15 minutes, or until eggplants are fairly soft. Taste and adjust the seasoning, including salt, if needed. Let cool slightly before serving. Serve in a bowl with a heaping spoonful or two of white basmati rice served in the middle, and sprinkled with garnishes of your choice.