

AJO COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE



Summer 2009 / Week 8 of 13

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Planned harvest: Tomatillos, Tomatoes, Melons (double share), Red LaSoda Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes, Green Beans, Glendale Gold Onions.

Food, Inc.: A new must-see movie for foodies and locavores is hitting the big screens this summer, trying to answer the question “How much do we really know about the food we buy at our local supermarkets and serve to our families?” In *FOOD, INC.*, producer-director Robert Kenner and investigative authors Eric Schlosser (*Fast Food Nation*) and Michael Pollan (*The Omnivore’s Dilemma*) lift the veil off of the food industry – an industry that has often put profit ahead of consumer health, the livelihoods of American farmers, the safety of workers and our own environment. The filmmakers expose the highly mechanized underbelly that’s been deliberately hidden from the American consumer. They illustrate the dangers of a food system controlled by powerful corporations that don’t want you to see, think about or criticize how our food is made. *FOOD, INC.* also reminds us that despite what appears to be at times a hopeless situation, each of us still has the ability to vote on this issue every day – at breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Food, Inc. is currently screening in Tucson at the Loft Cinema, at 3233 E Speedway Blvd. We attended the opening night last Friday, where a lot of people and organizations on the local real foods scene set up with stands, gave speeches and offered free food samples, including the Tucson Community Food Bank, Marana Farm, Sleeping Frog Farm, Primo Restaurant, Native Seeds Search and Tucson CSA. On Sunday, July 26, a special screening of *Food Inc.* will be held at 7 pm at the Camelview Theater in Phoenix, put on by Phoenix Slow Food and Edible Phoenix. The movie will be followed by a panel discussion with local group of food system experts. Tickets must be purchased in advance at <http://www.eventbrite.com/event/340216597/YG2G>. I definitely recommend seeing the movie, and I hope to be able to bring it to Ajo soon. I’ll keep you posted.

Glendale Gold Little Sweetie Onions: The onions we have been getting recently in our shares not only taste great but are special also because they are Crooked Sky Farms’ very own onion variety. It is an heirloom variety of sweet onions native to the Phoenix Basin. The seeds of those onions used to be distributed by a well known seed company, but when the seed company decided to discontinue the variety last year, Farmer Frank approached the seed company and purchased the rights to trademark and distribute that onion’s seeds. He subsequently renamed it the Glendale Gold Little Sweetie Onion, and has since been growing those onions on his farm.

It is quite a significant event in the world of heirloom seeds when a seed company discontinues a seed it holds the rights to. That variety may become extinct. Unfortunately, heirloom varieties are becoming increasingly rare as seed distributors move to newer hybrids. Large seed companies prefer hybrids because growers can’t reliably reproduce the plants by collecting the seeds. Instead, they must purchase all their seeds from the seed company. Protecting heirlooms from extinction preserves the genetic diversity of our crops. Scientists point out that genetic diversity may be especially important as climate change occurs – some varieties may show greater ability to adapt and thus prevent widespread crop failures. Thanks to grass-roots seed-saving organizations, non-profit seed-saving organizations such as Native Seeds/SEARCH, heirloom seed companies, and individuals such as Farmer Frank (and many others around the world), the genetic material of some heirloom varieties is being preserved. (adapted from the Tucson CSA newsletter)

Melon of the Week: The Sugar Nut Canary is a wonderful early-ripening canary type with yellow skin and white flesh with a greenish tinge. The seed cavity is fairly small, and the flesh is very sweet and flavorful.

RECIPES ETC.

Simple Melon Soup

(inspired by Tucson restaurant Primo, served at the opening of Food, Inc. in Tucson)

½ Armenian cucumber, deseeded, cubed
1 cantaloupe, peeled and deseeded, cubed
1 lemon, juiced
2 Tbsp agave syrup
salt to taste

Blend the cantaloupe and cucumber with a bit of water to achieve a desired consistency, add lemon juice and syrup and a bit of salt. Mix well and refrigerate for at least an hour before serving.

Simple French Onion Soup

(submitted by Stephanie Doerries, adapted from *The New Students' Veggie Cookbook* by Carolyn Humphries)

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

Heat extra virgin olive oil in a large saucepan or Dutch oven and sauté the onions, stirring, until turning golden (about 10 minutes). Add the brown sugar and continue sautéing until the onions turn a rich golden brown, stirring all the time (about 10 minutes). Stir in the stock and a little salt and pepper, bring to a boil, reduce heat, partially cover, and simmer gently for 15-20 minutes until the onions are really soft. Taste and re-season if necessary. When ready to serve, toast the bread on both sides, place into soup bowls, and top with cheese. Spoon the soup over, serve, and enjoy.

Tomato Onion Compote

(adapted from Jim Leiken, as published in the New York Times)

4 plum tomatoes (about ¾ pound), halved lengthwise and seeded
¼ teaspoon sugar
Salt and freshly ground white pepper
3 thyme sprigs
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

1 Spanish onion (about ¾ pound), quartered lengthwise and thinly sliced
¼ cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained and finely chopped
2 tablespoons chopped basil.

Heat oven to 200 degrees. Line a baking sheet with foil, and spread tomatoes cut side up on sheet. Season with sugar, ¼ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon pepper. Scatter thyme and garlic on top, and oven-dry for 4 hours. Meanwhile, in a medium sauté pan, heat olive oil. Add onion, season with salt, and cook over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until very tender and golden brown, about 35 minutes. Cool tomatoes, then peel and place on a cutting board. Finely chop tomatoes with cooked garlic. Place in a bowl. Pull oven-dried thyme leaves off their stems and add to tomatoes; discard stems. Add sun-dried tomatoes, onion and basil to bowl and combine. Taste compote, and add salt and pepper if needed. Serve as a topping for a burger, grilled meats or any other relish.

Nina's Herbed Squash and Corn Thai Curry

1 Tbsp coconut oil
2 small zucchinis (or any other type of squash, like butternut, peeled), sliced
1 package firm tofu, drained and cubed
2 ears of corn, kernels cut off (or use frozen corn)
3 banana chile peppers
1 cup cilantro, washed and dried
2 cups basil, washed and dried
¼ cup P'itoni onions (or scallions, or substitute Glendale Gold), sliced
1 can coconut milk
3 Tbs soy sauce, or more to taste
2 Tbsp red (or green) Thai curry paste
salt, to taste
pepper, to taste

Heat up the coconut oil, and start by frying the tofu and the squash with 2 Tbsp of soy sauce. When the tofu is nicely brown and the squash soft, add corn, and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes. In the meantime, mince cilantro, chile peppers and basil together, then add to the pan. Add the onions, and stir, then add the coconut milk. Rinse out the can with a little water and add that as well. Stir in the curry paste and the remaining 1 Tbsp of soy sauce, bring to a boil, and simmer for about 5 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Serve over jasmine or basmati rice.