

AJO COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE



Winter 2008 / Week 6

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Planned Harvest: Lettuce, Spinach, Bok Choi, Spaghetti Squash, Dried Anaheim Chiles, Citrus Mix, Wheat Berries, Sunchokes.

News from the Farm: After harvesting the first cabbage we have been enjoying in the past week, Tania reports that broccoli and cauliflower will be ready soon, while they are replanting the cold weather crops like greens that we have been getting lately. Also, the farm usually holds a picnic at the farm in November or December for their CSA members, but since the Tucson CSA organizer had to leave for Europe this fall, it didn't happen. However, Tania says that it will probably happen sometime in February. I'll keep you posted.

Greens and Vegetables with a Gentle Touch (submitted by Bruce H. Secker)

The wonderfully fresh produce we have enjoyed in the past few weeks does not need a heavy-handed touch. Often greens and veggies can be served raw and those which are cooked should normally, except in a few curries and hearty winter stews, should not be treated to long cooking with a myriad of ingredients. The true taste just doesn't come through. Here are a few ideas to try:

Lettuces, Red/Green Spinach – Place a bed of greens on a salad plate. Alternate slices of avocado, orange, radish, turnip, etc. on top, pointing slices to the center of the plate to form a star. Use your favorite dressing.

Red/Green Spinach, Red/White Chard – Remove or split the stems. Steam for 3 minutes for spinach or about 7-8 for chard in 1/4" of water and a pinch of sugar. Drain and plate the greens. Top with fresh spaghetti sauce made from diced fresh Roma tomatoes, sliced green onions, and oregano cooked for 3-4 minutes.

Kale – Sauté 2 cloves of minced garlic in 2T of olive oil for 30 seconds. Add about 5 cups of shredded kale with 1C of chicken (veggie) stock. Cook 15 minutes or so. Drain and serve as a side with rice and black beans. Add bits of ham to the beans if you like.

Strive for 5...or 6...or 7! Green squash (zucchini), yellow squash, shredded carrots, pea pods, parsnips, bok choy, etc. all make a wonderful vegetable medley. Sauté any of these in 1T of olive oil and/or butter for 4-5 minutes. Add 1t basil, oregano, or Herbes de Provence (my favorite). Add 1/2 C of chicky or veggie stock and sauté for 5-7 minutes or until veggies are crispy-tender. The subtle depth of flavor in the mixture is irresistible! Veggies can be very sexy!

Greenies – Our daughter has been on a 100% uncooked (raw) veggie diet for some time. She has one green drink per day, often in the AM. Place 1-2 C shredded greens, 1 apple seeded and quartered, 2T honey, and 2 C chilled apple juice. Blend until smooth. Add about 1 C ice cubes if you have a heavy-duty blender. Blend. You can use many different greens and fruits such as spinach, kale, carrots, pears, peaches, bananas, etc. until you find the combination you prefer.

Wheat Berries

They work best if first soaked (like dry beans) and then cooked. To boost their nutrients, you can also leave them soaking longer, for approx. 24 hours till they start sprouting. When cooked you can use them as breakfast cereal (lightly ground, and with milk or soymilk, like porridge), as a substitute for rice, in soups and stews, casseroles, for stuffing, e.g. bell peppers, etc. If, however, you want flour instead, you will have to grind the berries yourself. A coffee grinder will do the job just fine. Before using, the grains have to be cleaned: Crooked Sky Farms' grains are mostly clean, but they do include some chaff and also tiny black wild mustard seeds from the field. The seeds are harmless and can safely be left in. The chaff can be removed by winnowing the grains before use. To winnow grain, stand out of doors in a breeze or in front of a fan, and pour the grain from one bowl into another a few times and let the chaff blow away in the breeze. Just like with dry beans, I recommend taking a big enough baking tray and sorting through to remove any other impurities.

New Mexico style red chili (submitted by Ed Mosimann)

So you've picked the red chili in October, hung your ristra (string of chili) outdoors, out of the sun, where the hot dry breezes worked their magic for two months, and moved them into the garage for winter (another 3-4 months), and finally you get to eat them... or the CSA did all the work for you, and now you get to eat them. Cheating, but who's looking. NOTE: If this your first time handling chili, wear gloves/minimize contact, cover any cuts, do not breathe the dust, and NEVER rub your eyes! Chiles need to be dry enough to break into flakes. Cut or break the top/seed pod off, trim away any mold or insect areas and put the seeds aside for pizza and to torture your friends! A Texas/New Mexico tradition. Put chili into a blender and use pulse to reduce chili to small flakes... not fine powder. My blender takes about 10 seconds to produce desired flake size. At this point you can do any number of things. You can toast the flakes on a cookie sheet, in an

RECIPES ETC.

oven, for a roasted flavor. Watch closely! Easy to burn. Then turn into gravy, salsa, rue... You can make a rue with chili flakes, fresh garlic, salt (some sea salt is a must to pull out chili flavor, and not be left with just the 'heat'), water and very little flour as needed for consistency. Put on fish with lemon. You can add meat stock to turn it into incredible gravy. You can make a paste with oil to flavor dishes later. This is what I like to do. It gives you the most flexibility. Some use olive oil, but I like canola, sesame or light oils that won't fight the chili flavor. I cook it up on low heat in a sauce pan with salt, a dab of pesto, and just enough oil to wet completely. Drizzle on the end of your favorite burrito, and you'll wonder how you lived without it. For those of you that like more complex flavors, try it with chopped kalamata olives (use less salt here). Keep refrigerated, and it will last for months.

Nina's Wheat and Bean Fritters

Soak about 1 cup of wheat berries for at least 12 hours, then cook in salted water to cover the berries for about 2 hours or until tender; for enhanced taste you can add a veggie bouillon cube to the water. Let stand. Soak 2 cups of small white navy beans overnight, then cook with bay leaf, sage and 3 cloves of garlic till soft. Add salt. Drain beans and wheat, then put in a bowl, and add about ½ an onion, quickly sautéed in some olive oil, ½ cup of rolled oats, ½ cup of chopped flat leaf parsley, one egg and mix. Add enough flour to bring it all together, about 2 tablespoons. Let rest for a few minutes, and then gently shallow-fry in the pan. Serve with cabbage slaw or any other salad.

Nina's Cabbage Slaw

2 cups thinly sliced cabbage (red or green, or both)
½ cup cranberries
¾ cup thick yogurt
¼ cup sour cream
1 teaspoon mayo
½ T of fennel pollen (or dill or caraway seeds)
salt to taste

Mix and let stand for at least half hour before serving.

Nina's Wheat Berry Pudding

2 cups pre-soaked wheat berries
5 cups milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon cardamom
1 Tbs. cinnamon
1 pinch of salt
½ T butter
1 T orange zest
2 T brown sugar or other sweetener

Grind the wheat berries in the food processor until you have a coarse meal. Put in your slow cooker, add the rest of the ingredients, and cook at low heat for 6-8 hours. Or use a casserole dish and cook in an oven at 300°F for about 3½ hours. Gently stir occasionally to prevent the skin from forming. Serve warm or chilled. For a special treat add a teaspoon of cocoa or dark chocolate.

Nina's Moroccan Chicken Tagine with Wheat Berries

Spice Mix:

1 T caraway seeds
1 T cumin seeds
1 T cardamom pods
1 T sweet red pepper powder
3 T cinnamon
A pinch of cayenne pepper

Grind together in a spice grinder or mortar and pestle, and store in an airtight container. You can also mix the same spices pre-ground.

2 cups of cooked wheat berries
4 boneless chicken thighs, drumsticks or breasts
8 cloves of garlic
1/2 cup of olive oil
1 cup dried apricots
1 cup dates, pitted
3 onions, sliced
3 T almond butter
1 pinch of saffron threads
1 tsp turmeric
1 can of crushed tomatoes (preferably fire-roasted)
salt and pepper
1/4 cup cilantro leaves

Put 3 T of spice mix in a food processor with garlic cloves and olive oil and puree to a smooth paste. Place the chicken in a freezer bag with the paste, mix well and place in the refrigerator to marinate for a minimum of 1 hour. Place cooked wheat berries into your slow-cooker or large pot along with dried apricots, dates, onions, almond butter, saffron, turmeric, salt and pepper, and add the marinated chicken. Add the can of tomatoes, and pour in enough water to just cover everything. Cook on low heat for 6-8 hours. If you are using the Dutch oven, put a tight fitting lid on the pot, place over medium-high heat, and simmer for 2 hours, until the chicken is tender and the liquid has thickened. Adjust seasoning and add cilantro leaves just before serving.