

# AJO COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE



Fall 2009 / Week 7 of 13

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**Planned harvest:** Baby Swiss Chard, Pumpkin, Wheat Berries, Hakurei White Turnips, Pink Radishes, Green Chiles, Tomatoes, Farmer's Choice.

**Why should we care about okra?:** People either love okra or hate it! Ajo CSA member Jane Canon went and found a list of reasons why we should give eating okra at least a try:

In terms of nutrition, okra contains vitamins A and C and is a good source of iron and calcium. It also contains starch, fat, ash, thiamine and riboflavin. What makes okra special is the superior fiber found in okra which helps to stabilize the blood sugar by curbing the rate at which sugar is absorbed from the intestinal tract. This fiber is also excellent for feeding the good bacteria (probiotics) which contributes to the health of the intestinal tract. Okra's famous mucilage (a lot of people claim they don't like okra exactly due to it) binds cholesterol and bile acid carrying toxins dumped into it by the filtering liver. Okra also helps lubricate the large intestines due to its bulk laxative qualities. The okra fiber absorbs water and ensures bulk in stools. This helps prevent and improve constipation. Unlike harsh wheat bran, which can irritate or injure the intestinal tract, okra's mucilage soothes, and okra facilitates elimination more comfortably by its slippery characteristic. It helps to neutralize acids, being very alkaline, and provides a temporary protective coating for the digestive tract. Okra thus also assures easy passage of waste from the body. Okra is also used for healing ulcers and to keep joints limber. Okra also treats lung inflammation, sore throat, and irritable bowel syndrome. Okra is also good for asthma since its vitamin C is an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory, which curtail the development of asthma symptoms. Okra is believed to protect some forms of cancer expansion, especially colorectal cancer. Eating okra helps to support the structure of capillaries and fights pimples and helps smooth your complexion. In fact, according to history records, the world's most beautiful women, Cleopatra of Egypt and Yang Guifei of China loved to eat okra. Some information shows that eating okra can even lower the risk of cataracts. Okra is completely non-toxic, non-habit forming, has no adverse side effects, is full of nutrients, and is economically within reach of most individuals unlike over-the-counter drugs. (Adapted from <http://www.pyroenergen.com/articles07/okra-health-benefits.htm#>).



Jane tends her beloved okra plants at the Ajo Community Garden

**News from the Farm:** The plans for this year's pumpkin patch are coming together as Frank is harvesting his crop of pumpkins in Duncan. He is hoping to open not one but two pumpkin patches, one at 40th Street and Southern, and one at the central farm on 19<sup>th</sup> Street and I-17. Families are invited to come to the central farm not only to get their pumpkins but also to enjoy train rides and play in a corn maze (a maize maze? amazing maize?): unfortunately the corn field that was growing so well got severely attacked by worms, and the corn cobs failed to develop correctly so the corn is not suitable for consumption and will therefore be turned into a corn maze. The pumpkin patches should be open this weekend, and we will let you know the hours as soon as the farm finalizes them. In the meanwhile you can enjoy the Jack-o'-Lantern pumpkin you are getting in your share this week, and don't forget – if you do not feel like joining in with the ghostly activities, you can always eat your pumpkin, too, since they are grown naturally and with beyond-organic and sustainable methods!

# RECIPES ETC.

## Nina's Green Tomato Chutney

2 large green tomatoes, chopped  
2 gala apples, chopped  
1 medium white onion, sliced  
1 tsp sea salt  
½ cup apple cider vinegar  
2-3 Tbsp brown sugar  
¼ raisins, chopped  
¼ ground pepper, or more to taste

Combine vinegar and sugar in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Add all the other ingredients, bring to a boil again and then reduce heat, and simmer, uncovered, 30 to 45 minutes or until thick, stirring frequently. Cool and pour into airtight container and refrigerate, or sterilize in a jar. Serve with crackers and cheese selection, or over your grilled meats or tofu.

Variant: For an Indian chutney, add the following to the ingredients listed above: 1 tsp minced peeled fresh ginger, ½ teaspoon ground coriander, ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon, ¼ teaspoon ground allspice, ¼ teaspoon ground red pepper or chili powder, 2 garlic cloves, minced, and ½ Anaheim pepper, seeded and chopped.

## Green Tomato and Greens Gratin

(adapted from The New York Times)

1 bunch Swiss chard, arugula, braising mix or turnip greens  
1 pound green tomatoes, sliced a little less than 1/2 inch thick  
Cornmeal for dredging (about 1/2 cup)  
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 garlic cloves, green shoots removed, minced  
2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves, chopped  
3 large eggs, beaten  
1/2 cup milk  
3 ounces gruyere cheese, grated (1/2 cup, tightly packed)

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Oil a 2-quart baking dish or gratin with olive oil. Bring a large pot of generously salted water to a boil, and fill a bowl with ice water. Stem the chard (or other greens) and wash the leaves in two changes of water. Rinse the stems if wide and dice. Set them aside. When the water comes to a boil, add the greens and blanch for about one minute. Transfer to the ice water, cool for a minute and drain. Squeeze out excess water and chop. Set aside.

Season the sliced tomatoes and the cornmeal lightly with salt and pepper. Dredge the tomatoes in the cornmeal. Heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a heavy nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, and fry the sliced tomatoes for two to two minutes on each side, just until lightly colored. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Heat the remaining tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat in the skillet in which you cooked the tomatoes, and add the onion and the chopped chard stems. Cook, stirring, until tender, about five minutes. Add a generous pinch of salt and the garlic, and cook together for another minute, until the

garlic is fragrant. Add the thyme and the chopped chard, and stir together for minute over medium heat. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Beat the eggs in a large bowl with 1/2 teaspoon salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. Whisk in the milk. Stir in the cheese and the chard mixture. Transfer to the gratin dish. Layer the tomatoes over the top. Place in the oven, and bake 30 to 40 minutes, until set and beginning to brown.

## Lynn Cooper's Famous Stuffed Peppers

Halve the peppers lengthwise, fill with chopped onion, cilantro, tomatoes, cooked rice, black beans all mixed with a little lime juice and garlic to taste. Grate cheddar or Mexican cheeses over and bake one half hour at 325.

## Chef Elizabeth Milburn's Butternut Squash Quiche

1 single pie crust  
1 medium butternut squash  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
1 large white onion  
2-3 Serrano chilies (or substitute Anaheims)  
1 Tbsp fresh or dried thyme  
½ Tbsp cinnamon  
12 eggs  
1 cup heavy cream  
1 to 1.5 cups crumbled feta cheese  
Olive oil  
Salt & pepper to taste

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. Make single pie crust in a 9" pie pan. Peel and cut squash into ½" cubes. Slice onion into ½" pieces. Sauté squash, onions and garlic in a small amount of olive oil until done. Add Serrano chilies, garlic, thyme, cinnamon, salt and pepper (to taste). Continue cooking for about 1-2 minutes. Set aside and let cool slightly.

Beat eggs until blended. Add cream and about ¼ tsp of salt. Arrange squash mixture in bottom of pie crust. Add feta cheese and spread evenly. Pour egg/cream mixture on top and sprinkle with crushed pepper.

Bake until done (about 45 minutes). Serve warm.

## Chef Elizabeth's Baked Bartlett Pears

4 pears, almost ripe  
½ c brown sugar  
½ c butter  
1 tsp cinnamon  
½ tsp nutmeg  
½ c dark rum  
1 tsp vanilla

Cut the pears in half, lengthwise and core. Place them face down in a baking dish. Sprinkle with brown sugar, vanilla and spices. Dot with butter and pour the rum over them. Cover the dish with foil and bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees) until done. Check them after 20 minutes and baste with the sugar, butter, rum in the bottom of the pan. Serve warm with unsweetened whipped cream and a sprig of mint.