

AJO COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE



Winter 2008 / Week 8 of 12

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Planned harvest: Cauliflower (green, purple and tan), Cabbage, Spinach, Lettuce Mix, Swiss Chard, Herb Mix (basil, dill, cilantro, parsley), Citrus, Broccoli

Ajo CSA at Ajo Health Fair and Ajo Garden Club: On Saturday, January 31, the Desert Senita Health Clinic is hosting the Ajo Health Fair from 10 am to 2 pm, which is dedicated to promoting healthier lifestyles. Ajo CSA was invited to have a booth there, so Farmer Frank and I will be there to answer any questions and promote healthy, local and sustainable eating. There will be other booths offering a lot of information about things like alternative healing methods, solar oven cooking and bicycle riding for health and well-being. On Monday, February 2, I will be giving a talk at the Ajo Library at 10:30 and presenting the general CSA model as well as the Ajo group and our activities. You are all invited to both events, to participate and share your experience, and bring your friends too!

Ajo CSA food preparation demonstrations: In order to share tips on how to “process” your fresh produce, I am inviting all members who are willing to give away some (not all!) of their culinary secrets during the pick-up to get in touch with me. We already have a confirmed raw foods demonstration on March 6, so don’t be shy!

Local Sour Orange Marmalade: Marie, an Ajo resident for 16 years, is now selling her famous sour orange marmalade, drawing on her Irish roots and following a traditional Scottish recipe. If you are interested, give her a call at 387-5435.

Healthy, local and sustainable food in the White House: The New York Times reports this Monday that Sam Kass, a 28-year private chef who worked for the Obamas while they were living in Chicago, is now working in the White House. Mr. Kass is one of the new breed of chefs who are concerned about the environment and about poor eating habits in this country, and has been quoted as saying people in his profession should take the lead in tackling public health issues. According to the Times, Mr. Kass’s Inevitable Table, a private chef service in Chicago, specialized in cooking and shopping “mainly from local farms,” and purchasing wines from “small sustainable wineries.” All sample menus started with salads and all main courses included plenty of vegetables. Mr. Kass’s appointment signals changes at the White House that should please chefs like Alice Waters and writers like Michael Pollan, who have lobbied the Obamas to set an example for the rest of the country by emphasizing healthy, local and sustainable food. It also suggests that a vegetable garden on the White House grounds, another of Ms. Waters’ and Mr. Pollan’s dreams, could be on the horizon.

PETA’s “Veggie Love” ad: Every year, right before the Super Bowl, PETA always takes the promotion of the no-cruelty lifestyle a step further (or too far – I’ll leave the judgment to you). NBC refused to air Veggie Love during the Super Bowl on the grounds that it was “too sexy.” (Not for the faint-hearted.)

(<http://www.peta.org/content/standalone/VeggieLove/Default.aspx>).

Dolphin “chef” follows cuttlefish recipe, eats locally: National Geographic News reports that a wild female Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin was seen repeatedly catching, killing and preparing giant cuttlefish following the same “recipe” in order to prepare a mollusk meal. The dolphin repeatedly herded a cuttlefish to the seafloor, pinned it with her snout, and thrust it downward, breaking its internal shell and instantly killing it. She then raised it into the water and beat it with her snout, draining its ink. Then she put it back on the seafloor and scraped it on the sand to remove the bone. Researchers explained that the ink tastes bad and is difficult for dolphins to digest, and the bone is not nutritious. Many cuttlefish bones were found, suggesting that this behavior, where the reward only comes at the very end of a complicated process, is learned and passed from dolphin to dolphin and from generation to generation.

RECIPES ETC.

Roasted Cauliflower (submitted by Laura Altshul)

My stepmother-in-law Laura says that she has had excellent results roasting cauliflower: “It gets amazingly sweet – I just stick it in a pan all cut up with olive oil drizzled on and some salt and pepper and let the heat do the work, maybe 400 degrees...it almost caramelizes...delicious hot or cold.”

Nina’s Spaghetti Squash Quiche

Cook your spaghetti squash in your favorite way, halve it when cool enough to handle and clean the middle part of strands and seeds (which you can clean and roast with some oil and salt for delicious snacks). Take one half of the squash in your hand and scrape out the strands with a fork – they will look like short spaghetti, and hence the name. Clean and steam or braise one CSA share of greens (I used collards, but any would do). In another bowl, mix one container of ricotta cheese with 2 eggs, add some salt and crushed chili peppers (I prepared mine by crushing them and then toasting them slightly on a bit of oil with some salt). Add the cooked chopped greens and the spaghetti squash strands, mix well, and put in an oiled tray. Sprinkle with chopped or sliced almonds. Bake at 380 °F for about 35 minutes or until a bit bubbly on the top.

Chicken Gyros with Yogurt-Dill Sauce

(submitted by Bruce Secker, from epicurious.com)

Bruce adds that this is a great way to use a bumper crop of dill.

1 cup plain nonfat yogurt
2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon chopped fresh dill
1 large garlic clove, minced
1 teaspoon plus 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 pound skinless boneless chicken breast halves, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
1 teaspoon dried oregano
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 medium onions, thinly sliced
4 pita bread rounds, heated

Stir yogurt, 2 tablespoons dill, garlic and 1 teaspoon lemon juice in small bowl to blend. Season with salt and pepper.

Place chicken in medium bowl. Sprinkle with oregano, 1 teaspoon dill and salt and pepper. Toss to coat. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken; sauté until brown and cooked through, about 5 minutes. Transfer to plate. Add 1 tablespoon oil to skillet. Add onions; sauté until beginning to brown, about 10 minutes. Return chicken and any juices to skillet. Add 1 tablespoon lemon juice. Stir until heated through, about 2 minutes.

Arrange pita rounds on plates. Top pita rounds with chicken mixture. Spoon some yogurt sauce over chicken. Serve, passing extra sauce separately.

Nina’s Cabbage Strudel

7 sheets phyllo dough
1 onion, chopped
1 carrot (or sweet potato or a piece of winter squash), grated
½ cabbage, thinly sliced or cut on your mandoline
2 cloves garlic, chopped
½ cup rice vinegar, mirin (rice cooking wine), or lemon/orange/grapefruit juice
soy sauce to taste
any fresh herbs, to taste

Sauté the onion in olive oil with a sprinkle of salt for about 5 minutes, and then add the carrots, cabbage, garlic and season with soy sauce to taste. When you can smell the garlic, add the fruit juice or vinegar, and cook for about 15 minutes, then add fresh herbs and mix. While the filling is cooking, lay out the phyllo dough, butter or oil each sheet and stack. Cool the filling slightly, spoon along the bottom edge of the layered phyllo dough, and roll into a roll. Carefully transfer to an oiled baking tray, and bake for about 20-30 minutes at 375 °F or until slightly brown on top. Serve with meat, tofu or veggie sauce to your taste. It goes great with basic tomato sauce with mushrooms, too.