

Prairieland Community Supported Agriculture
Week 15 – Aug 8, 2007

From the Farm

The Moores received 4/10 of an inch of much needed rain this week. However, the heat and humidity are off the scale. Jim is picking tomatoes at 5am to avoid some of the worst of it.

Moving? Sabbatical?

If you will be moving, heading on sabbatical, or otherwise won't be needing your share and want to sell it, please let us know and we will offer it to those on our waiting list.

Please email info@prairielandcsa.org or call 355-6279.

In Your Share Today:

Red and white onions, green beans, slicing tomatoes, bell peppers, cubanelle peppers, 1 spicier pepper, Asian and European style eggplant, zucchini, yellow squash, and cantaloupe!!!

Recipes and Storage Tips:

If your bell peppers have any red/orange tinges on them you can leave them on your counter to ripen. They will turn fully orange or red in just a few days. However, fresh chiles are best stored in the vegetable bin of your fridge.

Speaking of chiles, their heat varies according to growing conditions—hot drier weather produces hotter peppers. As a rule of thumb, the smaller the pepper, the higher the heat. Drying chiles increases their flavor and reduces their heat. If you aren't up for using your dark green poblanos right now, you can start a string of them to make mole later this season, before the tomatoes are gone. You can store dried chiles in a plastic bag in your freezer.

To reduce the heat in recipes with chiles, you can use less pepper or omit the seeds and ribs entirely. To douse the flames if you get a bite that's too hot, reach for tortillas, rice, beans, milk or milk products, salt, and/or sugar. The capsicum in chiles is contained in t-shaped crystal structures that actually stick into your tongue. Unfortunately, drinking water or beer will only make the heat worse by spreading the capsicum oil around in your mouth.

Roasting peppers concentrates peppers' flavor, as well. Whether you remove the seeds when using roasted peppers in recipes is up to you. Roasted peppers are great additions to scrambled eggs, think breakfast burrito and huevos rancheros.

Add a few roasted chiles to your favorite steak or tofu marinade. Cornmeal griddle cakes with salsa are a great way to use chiles, tomatoes, onions, and peppers.

Cornmeal Griddle Cakes

1 cup yellow cornmeal

1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1 1/2 t sugar or more to taste
1/2 t salt
1/2 t baking soda
1/2 t baking powder (see note above)
1 c buttermilk or plain yogurt, or soy yogurt
1/4 cup milk or soymilk
2 T vegetable oil
1 large egg or equivalent egg replacer

Mix the dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Mix the buttermilk, milk, oil and eggs together and stir into dry ingredients until just mixed. Let batter sit for 5 to 10 minutes. Cook on a medium hot griddle. If batter is too thick, thin with a little more milk.

Salsa Fresca

3 large ripe tomatoes
1/2 red onion
1 to 2 serranos or equivalent other spicy pepper
juice of 1 lime
salt

Core tomatoes and finely chop. If desired, roast them over a gas burner flame on a skewer while using a hot mit. You can lay larger peppers on the burner directly. Cover with a damp paper towel after charring to steam the skin away from the pepper. Scrape with a knife to remove skin once steamed. Rinsing the pepper under water will remove the oils and flavor. Remove seeds if desired. Place peppers and remaining ingredients in bowl with tomatoes. Salsa is best served within 3 to 4 hours of being made. Keep chilled until serving.

Of course salsa recipes are merely suggestions, feel free to add roasted bell peppers or other ingredients you want.

Potato and Pepper Hash

Potatoes and peppers are a great combination. Add a few roasted chiles to perk up your favorite potato soup. Or make a pepper and potato hash. Chunk peppers and potatoes. Toss with olive oil, salt and pepper. Place in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake at 400 degrees until tender. Toss with a roasted chile and serve with grilled meats or scrambled eggs.

Poblano Potato Soup

You can also add one or two roasted poblanos to your favorite potato soup recipe.

Asian Noodle Salads

Another great way to beat the heat is with Asian inspired noodle salads. These salads are great for crowds and you can vary the ingredients by what's in your fridge. You can use them to use up leftover chicken, fresh bell peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, thinly sliced

fresh napa cabbage or thinly sliced steamed regular cabbage, julienned zucchini or yellow squash, green or red onions, as well as thinly sliced basil and/or chopped cilantro.

You can use rice noodles or Chinese egg noodles. Here is a great all purpose peanut dressing:

1/4 to 1/2 c peanut butter (smooth or crunchy)
1/2 t chile paste or a couple of strips of fresh spicy chile
2 1/2 T of black Chinese vinegar or Worcestershire sauce, or rice vinegar
2 1/2 T mirin or sherry
3 T soy sauce or shoyu
3 cloves garlic
1/2 inch piece of fresh ginger or 1 t ginger pulp
2 T sugar
5 T or more of water to thin

Place all ingredients in a blender or use a hand blender. If you do not have a blender just mince the garlic and ginger as finely as possible and stir together. Thin dressing to the consistency of thick salad dressing with water, adding extra if necessary.

Eggplant

Grilled eggplant also is good with peanut sauce. Make kabobs with eggplant (sprinkle with salt first and let sit for 20 minutes before grilling), onions, and peppers and grill. Serve with noodles or coucous and sauce.

Green Beans for easy meals

Use last week's Parthenon Green Beans recipe and add the results to some cooked bowtie pasta or other favorite shape. Add feta cheese and sliced Greek olives if desired.

Or use the Parthenon Green Beans as a base for a pretty salad. Layer with sliced tomatoes and fresh mozzarella cheese. Sprinkle with additional salt and pepper and drizzle with a little extra olive oil and/or balsamic vinegar if desired.

Cantaloupe

Sliced or cubed melon is always refreshing. However, you can also combine 3 cups of cubed melon with 1 peeled sliced seeded cucumber (or just use more melon) . Dress with the grated zest of one lime, 3 T lime juice, 2 T honey, 1/8 t salt, 1/2 small chile, and 1 T of chopped cilantro. Chill up to 2 hours. This dish gets hotter as it sits.

If you've got a recipe, we'd love to have it. Email info@prairielandcsa.org or call 355-6279 and I'll type while you read it. I've only met two people I couldn't keep up with in the last 15 years, both petroleum traders based in New York. Questions, comments? Pass those along, too.