



Notes From the Pea Patch

Foxtail Community Farm

Season 6, Week 9

August 1, 2011

Wife's

Farmer's ^ Notebook

There was no question what we would have for dinner this past Saturday. The tomatillos from last week's share were waiting in the fridge, and I had enchiladas suizas on my mind. I love Mexican food, and this particular dish is my beloved favorite.

It was no stretch to concoct a Mexican feast around this special ingredient. Summer crops are upon us, and the hot dry weather has been good to them after the wet spring took a toll on our early harvests. Tomatoes are spilling out of their green tills on the counter, and the fridge drawers that only a few weeks ago were sparsely populated with lettuce and garlic scapes are now stuffed full with peppers, onions, and greens.

We came in from swimming around 3 pm, and I tucked the kids away with some popsicles while I got started in the kitchen. I looked at the fresh sweet corn I'd bought that morning and briefly fantasized about tamales, but a glance at the clock confirmed that would need to wait for another day. Instead, I decided to surround the enchiladas with simple sides.

First I made two salsas: the salsa verde I'd been coveting all week, plus a big bowl of pico de gallo (literally "beak of the rooster", this is simply fresh diced tomatoes, sweet and hot peppers, onions, herbs, lime juice and salt). The hot peppers got divvied up accordingly – the milder jalapeños, seeds removed, in the pico for everyone, and the hot green chilis in the salsa verde for me and Eric. Once those were done, I made the enchiladas, setting aside half the shredded chicken and cheese for the kids' make-your-own soft tacos (they don't yet love these creamy enchiladas). While the enchiladas were melting in the oven, I husked corn and diced veggies for calabacitas, heated a can of black beans (you have to give yourself some short cuts) and mashed avocado with sea salt and a squeeze of lime. In the final remaining minutes, Malcolm poured tortilla chips in a basket while I stirred up two batches of margaritas: the good

~ Continued on reverse ~

This Week's Harvest

Broccoli – it's about time, already! Our spring broccoli was wiped out by the rainy weather, so we're glad to finally be able to harvest our summer crop. Store unwashed in an airtight bag in the fridge. Broccoli won't last as long in hot weather, so use it within a few days.

Hot Peppers – shares include pepino (plump round red or green, mild heat) and cayenne (thin, long tapered green or red, moderate heat). Handle hot peppers with care to avoid burns – consider coating your hands in cooking oil, and scrub hands and utensils well with soapy water afterward. Heat is reduced by removing inner white ribbing and seeds.

New Potatoes - we generally have not had good luck with potatoes on this farm due to the rocky, heavy clay soil. Shares include chieftain (red) and/or kennebec (white).

Sweet Peppers – we picked our first colored peppers this week – an unusual purple variety – along with green. Reds and yellows will be coming soon! Store in fridge.

Also...

Bunching Onions ~ Eggplant ~ Tomatoes
Lettuce (large shares) ~ Tomatillos (rotating) ~
Okra (rotating) ~ Summer Squash (rotating)
Sweet Basil ~ Cherry Tomatoes

Fruit Shares: Plums from Love Apple Farm in Ghent (Columbia County). Fruit is picked "tree ripe" - allow to soften and sweeten on counter to desired ripeness, then store in fridge. *Produced using Integrated Pest Management (IPM), with no artificial ripening chemicals.*

Coming Attractions

- Carrots
- Green Beans
- Peaches (Fruit Shares)

kind for me and Eric, and a fizzy version (lemonade, lime juice, orange seltzer and marschino cherry garnishes) for the kids.

The dining room table became a buffet, everyone piled up their plates, and we sat on the front porch listening to reggae mixed with the battling crows of Foghorn Leghorn and Napoleon (oh yeah, have I mentioned that four of our hens are not hens?) I sat out there for awhile after the kids disappeared to watch a movie, watching the waning sun on the mountains and listening to the steady buzz that accompanies these summer evenings. I think one of the best things about summer is its endurance – as wonderful as this day was, there are still plenty of wonderful harvests and days to come before fall arrives. If you'd like to try our menu, read on. I'm already thinking about our next summer feast...



Recipes of the Week: A Mexican Summer Feast

The Main Dish: Rachel's Enchiladas Suizas

A dairy-loving European-influenced Mexican dish. These amounts are approximate...I neglected to write down amounts as I was cooking

- 2 chicken breasts (bone-in or boneless)
- salsa verde (*see last week's newsletter for recipe*)
- 1 cup sour cream or crème fraiche, plus ~ ½ cup heavy cream
- 1-2 cups of seasonal vegetables, diced or sliced into bite-sized pieces (I used zucchini, beet greens and some grated carrot)
- 1 onion, diced plus 1-2 cloves garlic, minced
- cumin, coriander, salt & pepper
- butter
- grated Monterrey jack or Swiss cheese.
- 8-10 corn tortillas

Poach the chicken breasts in water or broth with some oregano, salt & pepper. Remove, let cool and shred – you should have about 2 cups. Save broth.

In same pan, sauté the veggies with some butter or olive oil and salt. Remove and mix with chicken.

In same pan (lazy), sauté onions and garlic in butter. Add cumin and coriander. When soft and fragrant, stir in sour cream, heat through, then add 1-2 cups broth left over from poaching. Cook, stirring frequently, until it forms a nice sauce, adding heavy

cream to thin to desired consistency. Season with salt & pepper. Spread a thin layer of sauce over bottom of a 9x12" baking dish.

Divide remaining sauce in half. Create enchilada filling by mixing chicken, vegetables, half the cream sauce and half the salsa verde. Heat tortillas to soften (you can wrap in tinfoil and warm in oven, or heat individually on a hot skillet). Working quickly while they are soft, place some filling in each tortilla, top with a generous pinch of grated cheese, roll up and place in the baking dish. Cover rolled tortillas with the remaining sauce, then the remaining salsa verde, then sprinkle with grated cheese. Bake at 350°F for about 30 minutes.

A Special Side: Calabacitas

Think of this as Mexican succotash. You can certainly experiment with different additions, but these are traditional.

- 6 ears sweet corn, kernels removed (~ 3 cups)
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 sweet pepper, diced
- 1 small summer squash, diced
- 1 mild hot pepper, minced
- butter, cumin, salt & pepper
- heavy cream
- a few slices of fresh lime

In a heavy skillet, melt butter and sauté onion, garlic and cumin. Add corn, squash and peppers and cook, stirring frequently, for a few minutes. Add salt & pepper to taste. Add a few splashes of heavy cream and cook a few more minutes until cream thickens. Squeeze with fresh lime juice and toss again.



Member Corner

Member question: I see cucumbers and okra listed in the newsletter, but I haven't received any - what's going on?

Foxtail Answer: when a crop is in limited supply, we start by delivering it only to large-sized shares. If limited picking persists, we may move to "rotating shares" – including that item in a subset of shares (usually one delivery site) one week, then another the next. Rest assured, we do keep track of these rotations and strive to give everyone a taste of what's in season!