

Garden Harvest Recipes

Patty G. Leander, Texas Gardener Magazine

Vegetable Quesadillas

1 mild pepper, diced
2 zucchini/yellow squash, diced
1 tbsp oil
1 cup fresh corn kernels
2 small tomatoes, diced
¼ cup cilantro
1 Tbsp lime juice
4 flour tortillas
2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded

Heat oil in skillet and sauté peppers and squash 3-4 minutes. Add corn and cook 2 more minutes. Stir in tomatoes, cilantro and lime juice and season with salt and pepper. Heat one tortilla in a non-stick skillet until lightly browned. Flip and top with ½ cup vegetable mixture, then sprinkle with ½ cup cheese. Top with second tortilla and carefully flip over. Heat 2-3 minutes, remove from pan, cut into 4 wedges and serve. **Yield: 4-6 servings**

Fresh Southern Peas

2 slices bacon, chopped
½ cup chopped onion
3-4 cups Southern peas
2-3 cups water or chicken broth
½ tsp sugar
½ tsp salt
½ tsp pepper

Cook bacon until crisp. Remove from pan. Sauté onion in drippings. Add remaining ingredients and simmer 45-60 minutes, until peas are tender. Add more liquid if necessary. Serve with crumbled bacon. **Yield: 4-6 servings**

Roasted Flat Beans

These roasted beans melt in your mouth. I came across this recipe in a Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA) publication a few years ago. The recipe was originally shared by Sheila and Matt Neal of Neal's Deli in Carrboro, North Carolina. They recommend it as an economical side dish to feed a crowd and they say it tastes even better if made a day ahead. I can attest to that!

2½ lbs flat beans, rinsed and stemmed
½ cup peeled and thinly sliced garlic
2 cups diced yellow onion
2 medium-sized tomatoes, grated*
1 tsp sugar
½ tsp black pepper, coarsely ground
¼ tsp red pepper flakes
1 tbsp kosher salt
3 bay leaves
1 cup water
½ cup extra virgin olive oil

Heat oven to 350°. Gently and thoroughly combine the above ingredients in a roasting pan. Place parchment paper directly onto the beans. Cover with a tight-fitting lid or foil. Cook until the beans are tender, stirring well every 15 minutes for about an hour and 15 minutes. **Yield: 4-6 servings**

*Grating tomatoes is an easy way to "peel" them. Cut the tomato in half and remove seeds with your fingers. Place the cut side down on the coarse holes of a box grater. Run the tomato back and forth until all the flesh is grated. Discard the skin.

French Mother's Cucumber Salad

This comes from a friend's niece who spent a semester with a family in France, eating daily from their summer garden. It's quick and delicious and can be made "to taste". I like to add purple onion.

1 large or 2 small cucumbers, sliced (peel if desired)
Equal amount of cherry tomatoes, halved
Small mozzarella balls
Olive oil
Balsamic vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste
Fresh basil

Combine cucumbers, tomatoes and cheese. Mix together one part balsamic vinegar to two parts olive oil. Season with salt & pepper and add to cucumber mixture. Chill slightly before serving. Garnish with basil.

Lake House Cucumber Salad

4 fresh cucumbers, pared, if desired
2 teaspoons kosher salt
1 tablespoon sugar
1/3 cup rice vinegar
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/4 cup chopped dill or mint
1/4 cup chopped parsley
1 red onion, thinly sliced
1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
2 tablespoons olive oil

Halve cucumbers lengthwise and remove seeds. Cut into thin slices and place in a colander. Sprinkle with salt and let drain 15 minutes. Place in large bowl and toss with sugar and vinegar; let sit one hour. Stir in onion, tomatoes and herbs, then drizzle with olive oil and toss gently. Refrigerate 2 hours before serving. **Yield: 6 servings**

Thai Cucumber Salad

2 cucumbers, cut into matchsticks
1 onion, thinly sliced
1/4 cup chopped mint
1 tsp chili paste
2 tbsp lime juice
1 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp rice vinegar
Salt to taste
1/2 cup roasted peanuts, chopped

Combine chili paste, lime juice, vinegar. Combine cucumbers, onion and mint in a large bowl. Whisk remaining ingredients together in a small bowl. Pour over cucumbers and mix gently. Let sit at room temperature for 10-15 minutes to allow flavors to blend. Garnish with chopped peanuts before serving. **Yield: 4 servings**

Sweet and Sour Cucumbers with Dill

4 cucumbers, thinly sliced
2 tsp kosher salt
1 cups white vinegar
3/4 cup sugar
1 tsp celery seed
1 tsp black pepper
1/2 cup chopped fresh dill
1 onion, sliced

Place cucumbers in a colander and sprinkle with salt. Toss to coat and let stand 15 minutes. Drain well and pat dry. Mix vinegar, sugar, dill and seasonings and pour over cucumbers and onion. Chill 1-2 hours before serving.

Soba Noodle Salad with Cucumber and Mango

¾ cup rice vinegar
¼ cup sugar
½ teaspoon salt
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 jalapeño or serrano chile, seeded and chopped
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 tablespoon sesame oil
12 ounces soba noodles or thin spaghetti
2 large cucumbers, seeded, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced
1 ripe mango, peeled, halved and thinly sliced
1 cup chopped fresh basil
1 cup chopped fresh mint
1 cup chopped peanuts

Heat vinegar, sugar and salt over medium heat until sugar dissolves, about 1 minute. Stir in garlic and jalapeño and set aside to cool. Mix in lime juice and sesame oil.

Cook noodles in large pot of boiling water until tender but still firm to bite, 4-5 minutes. Drain then rinse under cold water. Drain again, shaking off excess water. Transfer noodles to a large bowl. Add dressing and toss to coat. Add cucumber, mango, basil and mint to noodles and toss gently. Sprinkle with chopped peanuts and garnish with lime wedges just before serving. **Yield: 6-8 servings**

Favorite Dill Pickles

This recipe makes 2 quarts, double if you have an abundance of cucumbers. Start with clean, sterilized jars. Use the grape leaves if you can find them – they contribute to crispness.

Small, whole pickling cucumbers, washed and drained
1 cup vinegar (white or apple cider)
2 ½ tablespoons pickling salt
2 cups water
4 heads fresh dill
4 cloves of garlic
4 hot peppers (optional)
4 grape leaves (optional)

Bring vinegar, water and salt to a boil. Meanwhile place one hot pepper, one clove garlic, one head of dill and one grape leaf in each quart jar. Pack tightly with cucumbers (sliced or whole) and add another head of dill and garlic clove. Fill jars with hot pickling solution, leaving ½" headspace at top of jar. Wipe rim and seal with lid. Process jars in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes OR skip the water bath, let jars cool, top with lids and store in the refrigerator for short term enjoyment.

Aloo Bhindi (Spicy Potatoes & Okra)

¼ cup canola oil
2 medium potatoes, sliced
1 lb okra, sliced
1 medium onion, sliced
1 tsp salt
½ tsp turmeric
½ tsp cayenne

Heat oil in a large skillet. Add potatoes and cook until lightly browned, 5-10 minutes. Add okra and cook gently over medium low heat 10-15 minutes. Add onion, salt and spices. Mix gently, remove from heat and cover pan. Let sit 5-10 minutes to absorb flavors before serving. **Yield: 4 servings**

Cheesy Tomato Pie

So yummy...add more ham, substitute bacon, or skip the pork altogether.

2 medium tomatoes, sliced
1 unbaked pie shell
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
1 c shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
1 c diced cooked ham
½ c sliced green onions
1 tsp oil
1 egg, beaten
1/3 c half and half
1 tbsp chopped basil
¼ tsp black pepper
½ c shredded parmesan cheese

Salt tomatoes lightly and let drain 15-20 minutes. Pat dry and set aside.
Brush pastry shell with mustard and fill with ½ cup mozzarella cheese. Sauté ham and green onions in hot oil for 5-6 minutes and spoon into crust. Top with a single layer of tomatoes.

Combine egg and half and half; pour over tomatoes. Top with basil, pepper, remaining mozzarella and parmesan. Bake at 425° for 20-25 minutes. Cool slightly before serving. **Yield: 4-6 servings**

Fried Green Tomatoes

This is a non-traditional take on a Southern classic from the folks at Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company.

Tomatoes

6 large green tomatoes, sliced ¼" thick
All-purpose flour

Pat tomatoes dry and dip both sides in flour to absorb moisture. Set aside.

Batter

1 package (12-14 oz) silken tofu
2-3 Tbsp water

Crumble tofu in blender and puree, adding water gradually until the mixture becomes creamy. Pour batter into pie plate and set aside.

Breading

1 cup panko bread crumbs
½ cup cornmeal
2 tbsp nutritional yeast flakes
1 tbsp onion powder
1 tbsp garlic powder
1 tbsp turmeric
½ tsp cayenne
½ tsp salt
Parsley flakes

Stir all ingredients together and transfer to a shallow pan. Dip tomatoes in batter then into panko mixture, patting the breading onto tomatoes so it adheres well. Heat about ¼" of oil in a cast iron skillet and fry tomatoes on both sides until browned. Serve warm. **Yield: 6-8 servings**