

Recipes

CHICKEN & ZUCCHINI ENCHILADAS

Adapted from Half Baked Harvest

1 ½ boneless skinless chicken breasts	1 poblano pepper, sliced
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil	2 cups salsa verde
2 tsp chili powder	½ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
2 tsp cumin	10-12 corn or flour tortillas, warmed
1 tsp smoked paprika	1 ½ cup shredded cheddar or jack cheese
kosher salt and pepper	1 avocado, sliced
2 zucchini or summer squash, chopped	juice of 1 lime

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Toss the chicken with 1 tablespoon olive oil, chili powder, cumin, and paprika. Season with salt and pepper.

Heat a large skillet over medium high heat. Add the chicken and cook 4-5 minutes per side or until cooked through. Remove the chicken from the skillet and shred with 2 forks.

Add the remaining olive oil to the skillet. When the oil shimmers, add the zucchini and poblano pepper. Cook until the zucchini has caramelized and is soft, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the shredded chicken, 1 cup cheese, ½ cup salsa verde, and cilantro. Toss to combine.

To assemble, pour ½ cup of the salsa verde onto the bottom of a 9x13 inch baking dish. Spoon a little of the chicken mixture down the center of each warmed tortilla, tuck and roll, placing the tortilla, seam side down, into the baking dish. Pour the remaining salsa verde over top of the enchiladas and top with the remaining of the cheese. Transfer to the oven and bake for 15-20 minutes, until the cheese has melted.

To serve, top with avocado, lime juice, and fresh cilantro

GUACAMOLE SALAD

Adapted from How Sweet Eats

8 ounces shredded lettuce or cabbage
2 avocados, chopped
1 cup chopped tomatoes
1 jalapeno pepper, sliced
¼ cup chopped cilantro
kosher salt and pepper
3 tbsp freshly squeezed lime juice
1 tbsp olive oil

Combine the lettuce or cabbage, avocado, tomato, jalapeños and cilantro in a bowl. Season all over with a big pinch of salt and pepper. Drizzle with lime juice and olive oil. Toss well and serve immediately.



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Log in to your CSA account online to find a customized list, photos and descriptions for your share.

Farm Share Storage & Use Tips:

- Eggplant: Wrap unwashed eggplant in a paper towel (not plastic) to absorb any moisture, and keep it in the veggie drawer of your refrigerator. Use within a week.
- New Potatoes: New potatoes are freshly dug and not yet cured. These should be stored in the refrigerator in a paper or perforated plastic bag.
- Okra: Keep okra in a paper bag in the fridge. It will store for at least a week. A small bit of black streaking is normal.
- Peppers: Refrigerate peppers unwashed in a sealed plastic bag in hydrator drawer for 1-2 weeks.
- Tomatoes: Store tomatoes upside down on a plate or cutting board at room temperature. Do not refrigerate tomatoes; cold temperatures deplete their flavor and texture.
- Spaghetti Squash: Store in a cool, dry, dark place. Under the best conditions, they should keep for 3-4 months. They get sweeter in storage as the starch converts to sugar. Once cut, you can wrap them in plastic and store them in the refrigerator for 5 to 7 days.

Beneficial Insects

Icky is the first thing that comes to mind when people think of insects. I, for one, don't like having them crawl or slither on me or fly into my face. However, when bugs are where they are supposed to be, it can be beautiful. I would suggest the evolutionary diversity of the insect world rivals the truly bizarre creatures in our oceans. Snorkeling around a reef is awe inspiring but you're not gonna get me too far from land or a boat. Thirty years of organic farming has blessed me with an opportunity to live amongst an incredible array of insects that continue to carve out a niche for themselves on this planet.

For starters, there are a relative handful of insects that harm agricultural crops. In 2022 there are hundreds, or more, synthetic chemicals that have been formulated by smart people to kill them. Some kill the adults on contact, others die when they eat the chemical, others keep larvae from pupating, and some give them some sort of disease or virus or something. There are certain sprays for certain bugs, some kill everything that looks like a bug, all of them are debilitating or deadly to humans. Every time one of these chemicals is released, the collateral damage extends well beyond the target pest, throwing the rest of nature's balance out of whack, which requires more sprays. My question is, since pesticides have been sprayed on millions of acres of corn and soybeans for decades (or nowadays actually inserting the ability to kill insects into the genetic code of the plants) why are the pests still a problem?

Organic farmers take the long view of coexistence with insects when it comes to managing our crops. A few pesky aphids on a tomato plant is not a problem, hundreds or thousands are. (For reference aphids are coarse-ground-pepper sized sap sucking insects that flourish on tomatoes and often vector in tomato killing viruses and diseases.) The thing is, Mother Nature already provides us with insects that live off aphids if we give them half a chance. Elmwood is home to several species of gnat sized wasps that pierce the skin of adult aphids with their ovipositor to lay their eggs. When the eggs hatch a few days later, the wasp larvae eat the guts of the aphid, effectively killing it, before burrowing out to mate and make another generation of wasps.

While that sounds all fine and dandy, many pieces of the puzzle had to come together for this beneficial insect to do our bidding. First of all, the farm has to provide a suitable habitat for mom and dad to safely survive in this world. Second, these teeny tiny insects must have something to eat and drink to sustain themselves. Thirdly, there have to be some aphids around for them to have a place to incubate their eggs.

Each spring we grit our teeth as we see aphid numbers rising before the wasps stealthily fly in to the rescue. After all the years, what we are doing seems to be working since the threshold of too many aphids on the tomatoes has not been breached, which is good because we certainly would not resort to spraying some highly toxic synthetic chemical. Entomologists have developed charts of how many years, or decades, it takes for the ecosystem to bioremediate the residual effects of insecticides on these and countless other dainty little creatures.

Watching a praying mantis snatch a fly with its front legs and slowly devour it is a real thing of beauty. Adult lady bugs are the media darlings of "good bugs," however they really don't eat all that much because of that hard shell restricting their growth. Their larvae on the other hand look like itchy bitsy alligators roaming over and under plant leaves in search of prey, often out of our sight and out of the direct sun. Learning to identify these insects at the various life stages is a lifelong learning opportunity and fun to boot.

A sign of success of the local food movement is that there are now enough organic growers around the country looking to augment their farms' natural enemy profiles that there are beneficial insect farmers. We can have lady bugs, praying mantis egg masses, aphidoletes aphidimyza pupae, assassin bug and green lacewing eggs delivered to our door. Who knew there was such a thing?

We do buy in some beneficials for greenhouse and high tunnel intensive systems but mostly we provide enough plant diversity and habitat for our native species to prosper. Why would we spray a toxin designed to disrupt a minute biochemical pathway of an insect pest when there is already an insect designed to find the chink in the armor of pests? Patience is a virtue and it seems to be paying off for us. We don't experience pest outbreaks like we did back when we embarked on this organic adventure. It's like National Geographic right before our eyes. Thanks for your interest in understanding and your support of the farm.—Mac