



Tucson: City of *Gastronomy*

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Native Seeds/SEARCH seeks to find, protect and preserve the seeds of the people of the Greater Southwest so that these arid adapted crops may benefit all peoples and nourish a changing world.

In 2015, Tucson was the first city in the United States designated as a *City of Gastronomy* by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Native Seeds/SEARCH celebrates and promotes the ingredients that contribute to the designation.

When people hear the word gastronomy they often think of upscale restaurants, but this plays only a small role in the designation. The concept of gastronomy encompasses food ways – the intersection of food in culture, traditions, and history. Tucson has rich and diverse foodways.

There are many unique crops and wild food traditions that have been a part of regional foodways for centuries and continue to be kept alive today, particularly by Tohono O'odham and Yoeme (Yaqui) farmers. Among these unique foods are tepary beans, cholla buds, mesquite, prickly pear fruit and pads, and chiltepin peppers. Tucson's gastronomy has also been greatly influenced by the Spanish who introduced foods from the Old World such as wheat, fig, pomegranate, pork, and beef and also brought food traditions from farther south such as chocolate and many chiles. The blending of Indigenous, Spanish, and Mexican cuisine has resulted in a truly unique borderlands food culture.

Tucson's foodways continue to be shaped by fresh and new ways to use ancient ingredients, a thriving local food movement and its concentration in innovative food biodiversity conservation programs such as those at Native Seeds/SEARCH.

Poshol

Versions of this poshol, or traditional O'odham soup, have been consumed in the area for thousands of years. Tepary beans are the consistent ingredient. Huuñi Ga'i is made by roasting whole ears of 60-day corn picked in the milk stage over a mesquite fire. The corn is sun dried and then shelled and stored for later use. Wheat berries are a more recent introduction after the 17th Century. Other meat, grains, and spices can be added.

1 lb dried brown tepary beans
2 cups Huuñi Ga'i (dried roasted whole-kernel corn)
2 cups wheat berries
2 gallons of water or stock
salt and pepper to taste
Optional spices like Mexican oregano, cumin, garlic, or chile

continued

Sort and rinse beans. Add wheat and corn to the water or use stock for more flavor. Add optional spices. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer on low for 4-6 hours until the beans are cooked. A crock pot on high for 8-10 hours can also be used. Crushed chiltepins are an excellent garnish.

Cholla Bud Salsa

Cholla buds, called *ciolim*, are an important resource among the Pima and Tohono O'odham. They contain complex carbohydrates that help balance blood sugar levels and provide sustained energy. Buckthorn and Staghorn buds are harvested in the spring just after petals form but are not yet open. The spines are removed and the buds are dried and reconstituted. In addition to salsa, they can be used in soup, warm or cold salads, or sautéed on their own. Flavor is similar to asparagus tips.

1/2 cup dried cholla buds, reconstituted
1/2 cup tomatoes, diced
1/4 cup red onion, diced
1/4 cup cilantro, chopped
1-2 jalapeños, diced
1 tablespoon lime juice
Crushed chiltepins (optional)

Prepare dried cholla buds (see below) and chop into large pieces. Combine with remaining ingredients. Add salt to taste.

Basic Dried Cholla Preparation: Examine the dried buds and remove any remaining spines. Fill a large sauce pot with water and bring to a boil. Add dried cholla buds and simmer until buds are soft. Typically presoaked buds will soften in about 30-45 minutes. If you did not presoak, simmer for 1 1/2 to 3 hours. Drain and use in any recipe.

Borderlands Enchiladas

8 cleaned prickly pear pads (nopalitos)
3-4 cups cooked and mashed tepary beans (or any bean)
1/2 cup queso fresco
1 tin of Mano y Metate Mole Dulce

Soften cleaned prickly pear pads in boiling water for 3-5 minutes. Drain. Spread each pad with mashed beans and arrange in a flat casserole dish. They can be slightly overlapping. Cover with the Mole Dulce sauce prepared according to package instructions. Top with cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes until beans and sauce are warm and cheese is melted. Garnish with chiltepins and serve with flour tortillas.

Pozole de Trigo (Wheat Posole)

Traditional poshol or pozole is a hearty, simple stew celebrating the bounty of the recent harvest. It is traditionally served on May 15, the feast day for San Ysidro Labrador, the patron saint of agriculturalists. Wheat berries, corn on the cob, and summer squash are the essential components; the rest of the dish is easily improvised using whatever fresh garden produce is on hand and using meat or no meat. Beef is most traditional with this recipe but pork or chicken can also be used.

An Old World native, wheat was introduced to the region by Father Kino as he established missions throughout Sonora. For the local indigenous peoples, wheat grown during the winter complimented the traditional summer planting focused on tepary beans, corn, and squash. Wheat is now synonymous with Sonoran foodways and reflected by the preference of flour tortillas over corn.

1 cup wheat berries
3 liters stock
3 small to medium summer squash, cut into 2 inch cubes
3 ears fresh corn, cut into 1 inch pieces
4 cloves garlic, crushed
1 white onion, diced

Optional ingredients:

potatoes, carrots, peas, green beans, nopalitas, green chile, fava beans, purslane or verdolagas, amaranth greens, Mexican oregano, beef tail

Use a large stock pot that will accommodate all of the final ingredients. Cook wheat berries in stock until they open, about 45 minutes on a low simmer. Add in cooked meat and raw vegetables and simmer until vegetables are soft. If adding greens, wait until the end of cooking. Depending upon the quantity of vegetables you may need to add more stock. Season with salt and pepper. Serve with flour tortillas, limes, queso fresco, and of course crushed chiltepin.

Spicy Tepary Bean Brownies

1 cup cooked tepary beans, well drained
2 tablespoons instant coffee
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
3/4 cup sugar
3 tablespoons canola oil
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
2 eggs, well beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 tablespoons Mole Dulce powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
additional Mole Dulce powder for topping

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease an 8x8" pan. Process the cooked and well drained tepary beans in a food processor until smooth. Brown or black tepary beans will give brownies a dark color but white can be used as well. Add the remaining ingredients and pulse until just combined. Batter will be thick. Spread in the prepared pan. Sprinkle more mole dulce powder on top to form a thin crust topping for brownies. Bake for 30-35 minutes. Cool before cutting.

Chiltepin Hot Sauce

Chiltepin are the wild relatives of common chile pepper varieties. The pea-sized fruits are very hot and usually dried, crushed, and used as a condiment. Whole chiltepin or a version of this sauce is common in restaurants throughout the Tucson area and Sonora.

1 cup chiltepin (that is right - 1 cup)
4-5 cloves garlic
1/4 tsp salt
1/2 tsp Mexican oregano
1/2 tsp coriander seed
1/2 cup cider vinegar
1/2 cup water

Combine all ingredients in a blender and puree on high for 3-4 minutes. Refrigerate one day to blend flavors. Keeps indefinitely in the refrigerator. Use in soups, stews, eggs, beans, tacos, or tostadas. A batch of this will last a long time as most people serve it with an eyedropper!

Sonoran Salad

This salad is full of heritage foods of the Sonoran Desert.

1/2 cup dried cholla buds, reconstituted and chopped
1 cup White Sonoran wheat berries, cooked
1 cup brown or white tepary beans, cooked
1-2 jalapeños or other fresh chile, diced
2-3 I'toi onions (greens and bulb), chopped

Dressing

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons lemon juice

Mix together cooked cholla buds, wheat berries, beans, chile and onion. In a small bowl whisk together dressing ingredients. Add salt to taste and pour over other ingredients. Can be served warm or cold.

Tepary Bean "Hummus"

2 cups cooked white teparies, drained (reserve some of the cooking liquid)
1/3 cup olive oil
1/3 cup lemon juice
4 cloves garlic, minced
Salt and pepper to taste

Cook beans according to basic instructions. Drain and briefly rinse. Add beans and other ingredients to a food processor. Puree using the cooking liquid to thin if necessary. Add in ingredients or garnishes based on flavors you enjoy and have in your garden. Some options include fresh cilantro, roasted chiles or red peppers, Mrs. Burns' Famous Lemon Basil, pine nuts, capers, I'toi onion greens, hot sauce or chiltepin.

Serve with chips, veggies, or crackers. This dip also works well as a spread for sandwiches.

Ingredients for these recipes can be found at nativeseeds.org and our retail shop in Tucson, Arizona. Your dollars support our mission to conserve and promote arid-adapted agricultural seeds of the Southwest and Northwest Mexico.