

# Instructions

To personalize the front of the May 2016 Newsletter Template for your region, visit the buy vs. rent calculator available here:

<http://journal.firsttuesday.us/wp-content/uploads/BuyVsRentFarm-FINAL-usage-rights.pdf>

Use the information from that calculator to personalize the message and table comparison on the front of the May 2016 Newsletter Template.



# Real Estate Matters

May 2016

## Dates to remember

Cinco de Mayo – May 5

Mother's Day – May 8

Memorial Day – May 30



## Chicken enchilada soup

- 1 tbs vegetable oil
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- ½ cup diced onion
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup masa harina (corn flour)
- 3 cups water
- 1 cup enchilada sauce
- 1 pound processed cheese, cubed
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp chili powder
- ½ tsp ground cumin

1. Heat oil in a pot over medium heat. Brown chicken breasts for 4-5 minutes on each side. Shred and set aside.

2. Add onions and garlic to the pot and sauté until onions are translucent. Pour in chicken broth.

3. In a medium bowl, combine masa harina with 2 cups of water and whisk until well blended.

4. Add the masa harina mixture to the onions and garlic. Mix in the remaining water and next 5 ingredients; bring to a boil. Add shredded chicken. Reduce heat to low and simmer until thickened. Serve with tortilla chips and enjoy!

## Buy Versus Rent Comparison Analysis

Costs	Buy	Rent
Monthly Rent	\$ NA	\$
Monthly Principal and Interest	\$	\$ NA
Monthly Mortgage Insurance	\$	\$ NA
Monthly Taxes	\$	\$ NA
Homeowners' Insurance/ Renters' Insurance	\$	\$
Monthly Maintenance/ Landscaping/Pool	\$	\$
Utilities	\$	\$
Homeowners' Association (HOA) Dues	\$	\$
Monthly Income Tax Savings	\$(-)	\$ NA
<b>Monthly Cost</b>	\$	\$



## Thinking about going solar?

The cost of solar panels has fallen by 50% in the past four years, while electricity costs have risen considerably in California. Consider these questions before you purchase solar panels or enroll in a solar lease program.

### 1. How much will going solar save me on my monthly electricity bill?

Solar lease programs advertise a monthly savings of 15% off your current monthly electricity rate. This rate is locked in for the length of the lease and will not rise with inflation. On the other hand, purchasing a solar system outright (costing an average of \$15,000-\$30,000) may take years to pay off.

### 2. Will installing solar panels add to my home's value?

Yes, going solar may add to your home's value. Nine out of ten homebuyers prefer to purchase an energy-efficient home even if the purchase price is two-to-three percent higher than a similar non-energy-efficient home, according to the National Association of Home Builders. However, a two-to-three percent price increase is not worth the \$15,000-\$30,000 investment. A zero-money down solar lease may offer a solution, but there are complications to consider with solar leases, as well.

### 3. Will a solar lease derail the sale of my home?

There have been cases of solar lease contracts putting a home sale on hold or even cancelling a sale. To avoid these complications:

- ask the solar leasing company about the requirements for transferring a solar lease to a homebuyer before you sign a monthly contract;
- do the math to figure out if the monthly savings are worth the potential complications with the eventual sale; and
- if you decide to go with a solar lease, disclose the solar lease to all potential homebuyers upfront to make sure it doesn't become an issue before closing.

## Your May Maintenance Tip

Maintaining a healthy lawn requires plenty of water and fertilizer, but you don't have to empty your wallet to keep your lawn green. Cut your costs by:

- watering your lawn only one to two inches per week;
- keeping mower blades sharp and clean to trim grass for maximum moisture retention;
- mowing your lawn to no lower than two or three inches to reduce root exposure and water evaporation; and
- investing in a self-mulching lawn mower to allow the cuttings fertilize the lawn.

A vibrant yard doesn't always mean having a lawn, either. Consider replacing your grass with cost-effective alternatives, such as:

- drought resistant plants;
- seeds or young plants as they are cheaper than buying full grown plants;
- trees and plants native to your area to eliminate the need for extraneous watering; and
- fruit trees or a vegetable garden.

