

Instructions

To personalize the front of the May 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 Newsletter Template.



Real Estate Matters

May

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
Monthly Cost	\$	\$



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.

