Cooking From Your CSA Box
Tips for Getting the Most from Your CSA Share

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with help from Friends of Real Food, an interest group of the Urban Ecology Center

We've put together this collection of tips and recipes to help you efficiently use the contents of your CSA box. Whether you're a CSA newbie or a member for many seasons, these tips will help you stock your pantry, prepare healthy quick meals and put away extras for future meals.

You’ve received your weekly CSA share... What is next?
- Get Excited
- Stay Open-Minded
- Read all that you can about new varieties
- Be on the lookout for new recipes—especially ones that use new/unusual vegetables from your box
- Taste something new!

Tips for Planning Menus

See what’s in your box THEN plan the week’s meals

Keep a well-stocked pantry—if you have common, useful, basic ingredients on hand, you'll be able to prepare just about any meal on a whim. Not sure what to stock? Try one of these sites for ideas or do a web search for “stocking your pantry”.

Simple Bites: http://www.simplebites.net/stocking-your-pantry-for-success/#more-1890
Good Cheap Eats: http://goodcheapeats.com/2010/02/build-frugal-pantry/

Use it Before You Lose it
- Keep track of the fresh produce you have on hand (Have a list on the outside of your fridge, in pantry...)
- Consider what’s most perishable. Lettuce, herbs, zucchini, cucumbers could last a week or less. Root vegetables, greens, heartier fruits can last a lot longer if properly stored.
- Handy tips about storing produce:

Incorporate your fresh produce into every meal

**Breakfast:**
- Broccoli, Herbs, Zucchini Omelets/ Scramblers
- Fresh Berries in Yogurt or on Cereal
- Vegetable Hash with Eggs
- Fruit/Veggie Muffins
- Smoothies—Fruits but also Spinach!
- Juices—Carrot, Beet Snacks
- Eggplant Hummus/Baba Ganouj with Vegetable Dippers
- Other Spreads for Crackers

**Lunch**
- Sandwich Spreads
- Pita Pockets
- Wraps
- Chicken/Tuna/Egg Salad pumped up with veggies
- Big Salads
Incorporate leftovers in the week’s meals
Consider cooking extra servings for lunches during the week or to go in the freezer for an easy dinner on a busy day. Think about dishes that easily incorporate leftovers such as frittatas or soups.

Try some Simple Food Preservation: Refrigerator Pickles, Freezing, Drying
- Shredded Zucchini
- Blanched Green Beans, Broccoli, Greens, etc.
- Dried/Frozen Herbs
- Pesto
  Use basil or other herbs; kale, kohlrabi, etc.
  Freeze in ice cube tray to use later

- Roasted Pureed Squash, Pumpkin for Baking, Soups, etc.
- Dried Spinach and Beet Greens (for Soups, Smoothies)
- Herbal Oils and Vinegars
- Make Extras and Freeze
  Soups, Stuffed Peppers, Casseroles, Lasagna

Have Simple Go-To Recipes

Dinner
- Big Salads—add kale, cabbage, herbs to lettuce
- Lettuce Wraps
- Soups
- Vegetarian Entrees
- Quesadillas
- Stir-Fry
- Roasted veggies (especially root vegetables)

Baked Goods/Desserts
- Quickbreads—Spinach, Zucchini, Carrot, Squash
- Fresh Fruits for Dessert
- Cakes, Pies
- Ice Cream—Fruits, Herbs

Use the Recipes that come with your CSA Box—branch out from there

Stir-Fry Recipe:
Use a variety of veggies - all cut about the same thickness:
- Carrots
- Bok Choy
- Salad Turnips
- Onions
- Green Beans
- Kohlrabi
- Broccoli
- Radishes
- etc. etc.
  - Heat a Wok or Large Saute Pan, add high-heat oil (try grapeseed)
  - Add denser veggies first so they can cook longer
  - Add more delicate veggies—onions, mushrooms, greens
  - Turn up heat and douse lightly with soy sauce and sesame oil
  - Serve over noodles or brown rice
    Optional: Garnish with fresh herbs—cilantro—or sesame seeds

Quesadilla Recipe:
Tortillas (Flour or corn)
Cheese
Sliced Peppers, Onions, Sliced/Steamed or Pureed Squash/Pumpkin, Chard/Other Greens
Another good combination is sweet potatoes, kale, and cheese
  - Heat a large pan or griddle, add high-heat oil, place tortilla, cheese, toppings, more cheese, another tortilla.
  - Let one side brown—flatten while cooking if you can—flip and brown other side.
  - Transfer to cutting board and cut with knife/rotary cutter
  - Serve with sour cream, salsa, guacamole, cilantro, etc.

Basic Vegetable Substitutions:
- Scallions > Leeks > Shallots > Onions
- Broccoli > Cauliflower > Kale > Cabbage
- Swiss Chard > Kale > Spinach
- Zucchini > Summer Squash
- Apples > Pears
- Pumpkin > Winter Squash > Sweet Potatoes
- Potatoes > Sweet Potatoes > Winter Squash
- Beets > Turnips
Tips from the Friends of Real Food: What to do Lots of Veggies in Your CSA Box

- Pasta Primavera
- Risotto – add any vegetables gradually as you stir the rice.
- Three-Greens Pasta – put greens (kale, spinach, arugula, chard, etc.) right in with the pasta water just before draining the pasta
- Soup – and you can freeze the
- Chop & throw any extra vegetables in the freezer and use later to make vegetable stock or soup
- Quiche or frittata
- Vegetable stir-fry
- Make vegetable chips.
- Stuff them, roast them, bake them, grill them, make kabobs.
- Make casseroles.
- Make vegetable smoothies.
- Make a big mixed salad with everything. Vinegar helps to preserve it for several days.
- Make a Mélange, a French word for a mixture of anything; in this case, vegetables.
- Make ratatouille.
- Include fresh herbs in everything. Chop them up into salads, stir frys, and vegetable dishes. Add chopped chives to cottage cheese or cream cheese to make a spread or dip.
- There are LOTS of things to do when you have a bounty of tomatoes!
  - You can just wash and freeze whole tomatoes in freezer bags or containers (The skins easily come off when defrosted.)
  - Roast or dry tomatoes (especially cherry) to store in refrigerator or freezer.
  - Make tomato sauce and freeze or can.
  - You can also make a tasty no-cook tomato sauce by chopping tomatoes with garlic, olive oil, basil, etc.

More than you can use this week?

- Gift extra produce to your neighbors/friends
- Or trade your extras with friends
- Host a party/potluck and share your food
- Take a preservation class

Additional Resources

Cookbooks:

- From Asparagus to Zucchini: A Guide to Cooking Farm-Fresh Seasonal Produce
  Order online from the Madison area Fairshare CSA Coalition or purchase at the Urban Ecology Center
- Vegetables from Amaranth to Zucchini: The Essential Reference: 500 Recipes, 275 Photographs by Elizabeth Schneider
- Chez Panisse Vegetables by Alice Waters
- Fresh From the Farmers’ Market by Janet Kess Fletcher
- Local Flavors Deborah Madison
- An Everlasting Meal: Cooking with Economy and Grace by Tamar Adler

UW Extension Learning Store for handy guides about How to Can and How to Freeze Fruits and Vegetables. you can order or view a PDF of each booklet online: https://learningstore.uwex.edu/Assets/pdfs/B3278.pdf

Find a Preservation Class:

- Mindful Palatte with Annie Wegner LeFort - Mindfulpalatemke.com
- Urban Ecology Center: urbanecologycenter.org