

# Cooking From Your CSA Box

## Tips for Getting the Most from Your CSA Share

### **Prepared by:**

Annie Wegner LeFort - The Mindful Palate: School of Thought and Taste

[Mindfulpalatemke.com](http://Mindfulpalatemke.com) - [awl@mindfulpalatemke.com](mailto:awl@mindfulpalatemke.com)

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**

#### **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:

<http://www.realsimple.com/food-recipes/shopping-storing/more-shopping-storing/how-to-store-vegetables>

<http://www.thekitchn.com/the-kitchens-guide-to-storing-fruits-and-vegetables-tip-roundup-176308>

**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>

#### **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
- Pestos
- 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

### 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

### 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.

## 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 fries, 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/Food-Preservation-and-Safety-C60.aspx>

### Find a Preservation Class:

- Mindful Palatte with Annie Wegner LeFort - [Mindfulpalatemke.com](http://Mindfulpalatemke.com)
- Urban Ecology Center: [urbanecologycenter.org](http://urbanecologycenter.org)