CSA Member Tool Kit

New to CSA? Looking to purchase and eat more locally for the whole season? Below is an easy toolkit to help get you ready for, and to support you throughout the growing season!

Learning to Plan

My Awesome farmer friends at Crossroads Community Farm near Madison offer a 4 part playbook on their website. My favorite part if their simple approach to thinking about your CSA share each week involves

1) Spreading your CSA box out of the table

2) Identifying vegetables (you can do this using Cattail Organics Weekly Video "what's in your box" or using the newsletter)

3) Sorting things into three categories Raw, Freeze/Preserve, and Cook.

Raw includes anything you can easily make into a salad, eat raw as a snack, or add raw into already cooked dishes.

Freeze is anything you might have extra of or want to save for winter like extra cherry tomatoes; kale; sweet peppers, beans etc. (see preservation links below). If you feel like you will eat your whole CSA box without any problem these are items you can leave for last or prep them (cut etc) and wait to freeze for 5 days.

Cook is anything left over after that. These are the items that are probably hardest or least familiar. For cook items pull out a cookbook (see my list below - especially Asparagus-Zucchini), your weekly CSA newsletter or online search engines. If you are going to search online try to find a recipe that uses 2-3 different vegetables at a time. I personally like https://www.epicurious.com/ and https://cooking.nytimes.com/ both which let you type in multiple vegetables and/or ingredients.

How to Stock Your Pantry for a Season of Veggies

- The best resource out there on how to stock your pantry and do basic prep to get the most out of CSA and how your life can get way easier! Getting Hooked on Cooking with CSA

How to Store/Preserve Vegetables!

- Cornell Cooperative Extensions Storage Guidelines for Fruits and Vegetables simple, easy and safe guidelines
- How to Store Vegetables in a Typical Suburban Home provides an awesome 2 page handout you can print
- The National Center for Home Preservation is a great resource for canning, pickling, freezing and more!
- Fermentation isn't hard or dangerous and it is a mostly lost skill everyone in the world has had. Shared Harvest CSA offer this great resource and my favorite book on the topic is Salvatore Katz’s Wild Fermentation
**Best 5 cookbooks**

Many people like myself find cookbooks simply overwhelming. But having several on hand can be a great experience and you can relax in bed (sans screen time) and plan in a more relaxed way. Here are my top 3 cookbooks to enable local eating in order of importance and ease. All are appropriate for beginners and seasoned chefs!

1. **Asparagus Through Zucchini** - put out by the Fairshare CSA Coalition in Madison this book is made for CSA members in WI. It is organized by vegetable and not overwhelming for a novice.
2. **How to Cook Everything Vegetarian** - a guide to literally everything from what to have in a basic kitchen to when you can substitute in new veggies into classic recipes. The wider known How to Cook Everything is also fantastic.
3. **The Moosewood** (the classic book or one of the many newer ones). These are rich in vegetable centered and mostly vegetarian dishes that are great as main dishes or sides.