

5 Steps to Making the Most of a New CSA Membership

by Heather DeGeorge
Health & Wellness Coach



Know what you want

Decide exactly what you want from your CSA. Do you want organic produce? Are you looking for the ability to pick some of it on your own? Do you want meat AND eggs? And what are your requirements for how those were raised? Pastured only? Grain-supplemented? Organic and/or soy-free grain? Weekly or bi-weekly? Payment plan? Knowing what you want reduces the chance of disappointments because you will seek out the matching providers up-front.

Understand your schedule... and theirs

Making the most of what you receive each week (or every other week) means making sure you have the time to work with it. Most farmers will let you know what's coming a day or two ahead of time; but making sure you have the time to unpack and plan meals around what's in your box is a HUGE factor in that box being worth the money. In fact, sometime's it's worth paying a little more to pick up on a Tuesday because your little one has preschool Wednesday morning. Think about what you will save because you had time to ensure all the food got used!

Location! Location! Location!

Location matters. If it's going to be too much effort for you to get your food, you're unlikely to keep up with doing so. When considering location, think about your weekly schedule and see if they coincide with farm locations or farm pickup points. Or check the farm website to see if they offer delivery to the home (some do, but you're likely to pay more!)

Get some recipes ready

Look at what's included in your CSA share. Meat & egg CSAs don't often differ—or don't differ drastically. For produce CSAs, most farms publish a "harvest schedule" of the produce. Look through and pick out the things you are NOT familiar with. Start buying these foods at the store and testing recipes to find what your family likes before you start getting it every week. For produce, check the farm's website or look to vegetarian cookbooks even if you're not vegetarian for wonderful recipes that can serve as side dishes. And the internet has an endless supply of recipes at your fingertips!

When in doubt: try before you buy

If you are still hesitant, ask someone you know about buying someone's share when they're away so that you can make a trial run. It won't be the same as getting a share and being forced to make the adjustments, but if you prepare as detailed above, it might surprise you how easy it is!

These are just suggestions to help you get to the heart of your health and wellness challenges. If your issue is resolved using these tips... GREAT! Sometimes, the picture is more complicated. If you need additional assistance, let's talk. For more information specifically on this topic, visit: <http://heatherhas.info/csa102>

www.heatherdegeorge.com 630-687-1200