Why You Should Join a CSA Program

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CSA is an acronym for Community Supported Agriculture. When you join a CSA program you pre-pay a local farmer for future delivery of their produce. The pre-payment is called a “share” or “farmshare” because you are buying a share of the output of the farm. In exchange for your pre-payment you receive a box of produce weekly for the time period covered by the program. These programs offer significant benefits to both the farmer and the consumer.

Here’s why you should join a CSA program.

- **You’ll eat better quality vegetables.**

  Your local pick-up of vegetables will have been harvested at the very peak of

ripeness. This maximizes the vitamin, mineral, and phytonutrient content of the vegetables, many of which can only reach maximum nutrient content when allowed to ripen “on the vine”. You’ll smell and taste the remarkable difference from supermarket produce!

- **You’ll eat a greater variety of vegetables.**

Because the vegetables are harvested at their peak you can never be quite sure what will be in your weekly box. You’re guaranteed to get some vegetables you’ve never eaten. My local organic farmer provides a letter with each pick-up providing cooking tips and recipes. It’s a great way to expand your taste and improve the nutrient richness of your diet!

- **You’ll eat more vegetables.**

When you get home with your vegetables you’ll be more likely to include them in your meals. You’ve made an investment and you won’t want to waste it. They’re fresh, taste great and I guarantee you’ll be eating more vegetables!

- **You’ll save time.**

I really don’t enjoy the supermarket lines and having to pick through a lot of vegetables to try to find something fresh. Although the farms are typically not as conveniently located, the break in routine and the chance to buy your produce in the open air can be very enjoyable.

- **You’ll save money.**

Buying in advance allows the farmer to know his demand ahead of time so he can plant and harvest the appropriate amounts, reducing waste and allowing him to charge a lower price to CSA customers. It's a win-win situation!

- **You'll get to visit the farm weekly.**

It's important to know where your food comes from and how it is produced. The farmshare allows you to talk directly with the farmer who grows your produce, and ask how it was grown. Our farmshare also has fresh flowers and herbs, at no extra charge, available to customers of the CSA program.

- **You're supporting the local community.**

When you buy into a CSA program you are supporting your local economy. You're buying from your friends and neighbors. Your hard earned dollars stay in your community.

- **You're supporting the availability of local, in-season produce and the farms it comes from.**

Local farms are critical to reclaiming our health as a nation. Large food industry conglomerates have denatured our food supply with excessive processing and poisoned it with toxic fertilizers and genetic modification all in the interest of greater profits. You can be an agent of change! Join a CSA program.

We buy our CSA locally and get the most fabulous organic vegetables from Mary-Margaret and

Gene Ripley at the Ripley Farm (http://ripleyorganicfarm.com/csa-farm-shares) in Dover-Foxcroft, ME. To find a CSA program in your area go to http://www.localharvest.org/csa/and enter your zipcode. The LocalHarvest website has the most comprehensive directory of CSA farms, with over 4,000 listed in their grassroots database.

Photo 1 Michael Rasmussen, Sun Gold Farms, CSA August 11, 2012, Picassa Web Album