



WEEK OF FEBRUARY 20TH 2017 #8/52



National CSA Sign-Up Day February 24, 2017

What the heck is CSA Sign-Up Day? I asked myself the same question. As it turns out in 2015, Small Farm Central released a report on CSA Memberships for 2014. What they found was more people signed up for a CSA membership on Friday, February 28 than any other day that year. For 2015, they created the first National CSA Sign-up Day, and this year it falls on Friday February 24th. Since the 24th is this Friday, I thought it would be a good time to talk about the CSA and to ask all of you for some extra support. You can help the farm by writing Yelp reviews, posting on FB, sharing photos on your Instagram, or even a quick Tweet, letting all your friends, family and co-workers know how much you love your Farm.

Last year, when I asked for your help it was amazing how quickly we saw the numbers go up, so I know for a fact what you do works. Shortly after that big push we went through the treatment rounds with Nigel again, making it impossible to stay on top of things and keep the momentum going. But we did learn a few things. Many of the new sign ups loved the produce, but found it too hard to get through it all before items went bad. The obvious solution is to offer two sizes of CSA shares. We have considered many times in the past, but we always had great concerns that we might open a Pandora's Box that we couldn't get out of. There are many issues to address: it makes our operation less stream-lined, it creates more opportunities for mistakes, confusion for the members when picking up shares, etc, and our packaging company doesn't offer a small box as a standard option. By chance, we recently found an alternate company (more expensive of course!) that does have a size that will work. So we ordered a couple hundred and have been running an experiment with about 10 people over the last few weeks. The feedback has been really great. Folks are happy with the assortment and the amount. The smaller share is perfect for 1 to 2 people to get through in a week. One of the members told us she walks to pick up her box and the new size is much easier to carry on her walk home. I also heard from people who have multiple roommates that our full size share takes up too much space in their shared space refrigerator, so that was a problem.



National CSA Sign-Up Day February 24, 2017 continued

When we looked at the subscription numbers we discovered nearly 70% of you get a CSA share every other week. We could make a significant difference to the farm's income just by converting many of you every week folks to a weekly smaller share. You always have the ability to put a share on hold when you need to, so you needn't worry about missing a box if you are out of town.

If all goes well, we will be introducing our new "Box for 2" this week. Connie and Liz are working very hard to get the new share size set up with the software by the end of the week - just in time for CSA Sign-Up Day. I am hoping we will also be able to set it up as an extra, so if you have a party or event, or people coming to stay and you need some extra produce you can order the smaller share size as an add on item.

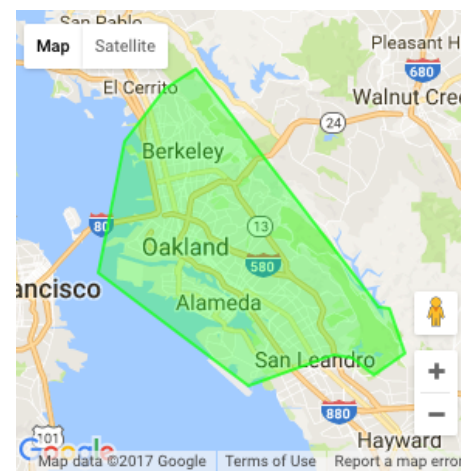
With the Event Season just around the corner it is a great time to commit to the CSA. Strawberry Days, and Tomato Sauce Parties will be here before you know it. So keep those memberships going! Thanks for all your support!

More CSA Home Delivery Options

For a couple of years now, we have offered the home delivery option for our San Francisco members. We work with a delivery company called RickShaw. It is an additional fee, but we are only charging enough to cover what RickShaw is charging us. This is a convenient service that brings your CSA share right to your door, or maybe to your work, and a surprising number of our SF members have signed up.

A few months ago, RickShaw expanded their delivery zones to include parts of the East Bay and Peninsula. We haven't really talked about it much, but since we are focusing on upping the CSA membership this week, I figure now is an excellent time to make sure everyone is updated. We have included the maps, so you can see the coverage area. I don't know what the policy is for companies like FB or Google, etc if employees can get deliveries at work? But it is a densely worker populated region, and maybe a good way to spread the word, and have people get CSA Shares?

Unfortunately, the home delivery option is the only way we can get CSA Shares down the Peninsula, it is too far for our trucks to deliver to drop sites.



East Bay Home Delivery: Berkeley through Oakland



Peninsula Home Delivery: Daly City through Sunnyvale

Nothing New Under the Sun

There are two almost universal truths in food. Every culture has a donut of some form - from the American classic to the Israeli sufganiyot or the Indian Gulab Jabun (an incredible fried dough soaked in a spiced honey syrup) to the East African Mandazi. Nobody doesn't love a donut.

Likewise, every culture has a dumpling. We talked about this last week with some riffs on Asian dumplings, but the technique of stuffing a dough "wrapper" with a flavor bomb is common across the planet. Today, we'll talk about Italian dumplings (aka, ravioli).

Perfect for the start of spring, these roasted carrot ravioli are best served poached and then sautéed in a little brown butter with thyme leaves. This is a great way to get used to handling fresh pasta dough, and if you have little hands around the kitchen it's a great way to get your tiny humans involved in cooking dinner rolling out the pasta dough or spooning the filling onto the sheets.

Mario Batali's Pasta Dough

Want to try your hand at your own pasta dough? Bravo! Here's Mario Batali's classic. People have been making this for ages. If your first batch doesn't work out, try again! It's fun, and a great way to relax into making your meal from start to finish. If you want a smaller batch, just use 2 cups flour and 2 eggs. The ratio is 1 egg for every 1 cup of flour, so you can scale up or down as needed.

2 cups All Purpose Flour
2 cups 00 Flour (or just use 4 cups All Purpose)
4 large eggs

1. Mound the flour in the center of your cutting board, and make a well in the middle.
2. Crack the eggs into the well, and using a fork beat the eggs a little and then begin incorporating the eggs into the flour, starting with the inner rim.
3. Once you have half the flour incorporated, the dough will start to come together. You can begin kneading it using the palm of your hand primarily. Continue to knead for about 10 minutes, adding small (I mean really small) amounts of flour as needed.
4. Pasta dough is slightly tacky when done.
5. Make a disc of your dough, and wrap in plastic. Let rest on the counter for 30 minutes before using. Refrigerate for up to a week if you decide to make it ahead.



Roasted Carrot and Ricotta Ravioli

This recipe comes from the delightful Domenica Marchetti, and while it's based on roasted carrots, it works with any vegetable you can puree such as squash, sweet potato, turnip, celery root, or even peas.

3 large carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks (3/4 pound)
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground pepper
2 teaspoons unsalted butter
1 tablespoon minced shallot
1 tablespoon heavy cream
5 ounces drained ricotta (line a strainer with a towel and drain ricotta for 30 mins)
3/4 cup freshly grated parmesan
Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
1 large egg yolk
1 batch pasta dough (store bought is fine)

1. Preheat the oven to 400.
2. In a baking dish, toss the carrots with the olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Cover with foil and bake for about 30 minutes, until tender and lightly browned. Let cool slightly.
3. In a small skillet, melt the butter. Add the shallot and cook over moderate heat until softened, about 3 minutes.
4. In a food processor, combine the carrots, shallot and cream and puree until smooth. Transfer the puree to a bowl. Stir in the ricotta, parmesan and nutmeg and season with salt and pepper. Stir in the egg yolk.
5. Split pasta dough in half and roll into two rectangles, about 8" by 16"
6. On one half of each rectangle, place 1 Tbsp of filling approximately 2" apart along the line, leaving at least 1" to the edge.
7. "Paint" a line of water in a square around each filling drop with a brush or your finger.
8. Fold the top half of the rectangle over the filling, and press down around the filling to remove air pockets and seal the edges where the water is.
9. Cut the ravioli out using a sharp knife or pasta cutter if you have one.
10. Place on a lined sheet tray until you are ready to poach.

This Week's Box List

Pea Shoots
Carrots (Terra Firma Farm)
Romanesco
Broccoli or Cauliflower
Red or Green Cabbage
Stir Fry Mix
Spring Onions
Green Garlic
Pomelo
Apples (Hidden Star Orchard)
Mandarins

To cook: Boil a large amount of water in the biggest pot you have. When the water is at a rolling boil, drop the ravioli in one at a time and cook until the float (3 - 4 mins).

While the pasta is cooking, melt a few tablespoons of butter in a sauté pan, and let get a tiny bit of color.

When the ravioli are done, remove them using a strainer or slotted spoon and place them directly in the hot butter. Let the ravioli get a little crispy and then turn over (the pasta will 'let go' of the pan when it's ready to turn over - have patience or your pasta will burst). Toss in a handful of chopped herbs (parsley, sage, thyme, rosemary) and turn out onto plates or shared platter. Top with some leftover cheese (if you have any).

All other recipes can be found at:
www.eatwell.com under the "CSA Farm Box" tab. Just click "Recipes."

