

09-03-04 Planning for a Winter Share

Though most CSA's distribute only during the harvest season (June to November around here), people tend to get hungry year-round. Many of the NYC Greenmarkets also close down in the winter months, making it harder for farmers' market shoppers and CSA members to find locally grown food once it gets cold outside.

However, there's local food to be had even in the middle of February: crops like potatoes, winter squash, carrots and turnips can be stored for months; hardy greens such as kale can last in the warmer parts of Long Island well into the winter; many crops can be harvested fresh straight through until spring if protected by a greenhouse; produce can be canned, frozen, pickled or dried to preserve the summer's bounty; and dairy, meat, and bread products are available regardless of the season. The question is: how can we access that food once our CSA distributions and Greenmarkets close up for the season at Thanksgiving time?

This year, Just Food is working to organize a Winter CSA Share option at certain sites throughout the city so that we can eat locally-grown, year-round. A Winter Share will differ from a regular CSA share in a few ways.

- Winter Shares will be distributed once a month instead of once a week, since most of the food will last at least a month in storage;
- Winter Shares will not be available at every CSA site; however, if your site is not hosting a Winter Share, you may still be able to access a Winter Share distribution point in your borough or near your workplace.
- A CSA group that wants to host a Winter Share may need to find a separate place to do Winter Distribution, since outdoor spaces are probably not feasible in the cold and snow.

Just Food needs the input of CSA members throughout NYC to help determine the ideal number of sites and share price for a Winter Share. Please fill out the Winter Share survey that we have created on-line at www.justfood.org/wintershare.html as soon as possible. On the survey, you can indicate if you would like to receive further information about Winter Share options, and you can suggest that your CSA site be a Winter Share distribution site.

Possible Winter Share Items (take the on-line survey to register your preferences!)

Stored root vegetables (carrots, potatoes, turnips, etc.)

Stored winter squash

Apples

Hardy greens (kale, etc.)

Greenhouse items (salad mix, etc.)

Canned items (tomatoes, peaches, etc.)

Pickled items (cucumbers, beans, etc.)

Locally baked breads

Frozen vegetables

Frozen fruits

Frozen prepared items (soups made with local veggies, etc.)

Dairy products

Chicken

Beef

Lamb

Pork

Dried foods (chilies, sundried tomatoes, etc.)

Ornamental items (dried flowers, braided garlic, etc.)



Just Food links local farmers and city groups,
and provides technical assistance
to start CSAs in New York City.

For more information:
call 212-645-9880 or visit www.justfood.org