

Seasonal Eating
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Spring Brings Strawberries and CSAs
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Back in the winter months, as I was dreaming of the beginning of the fresh produce season, I signed up for the Delvin Farms Spring CSA. I have wanted to try a CSA for several years now and when I read about the spring one, I jumped on board!



CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture. Basically you purchase a share of the harvest of a specific farm at the beginning of the season (or planning season) and receive a box of produce on a delivery schedule, usually every week or two. CSA's started out as produce shares, like fruits and vegetables and sometimes eggs, milk or honey depending on the farm you joined. Now we are seeing more meat CSA's popping up. Some of the advantages are that you get your food from a local farmer that you know, you know the methods that are used to grow that food (some are organic farms, some are traditional, etc.), you get a variety of foods that maybe you would never try otherwise, you get lots of produce to feed your family and it's just fun as you get surprised every time you pick up your share!

So I joined a Spring Produce CSA for four weeks with a half bushel box each week. This was perfect for me as I like to buy from our local Bedford County Farmers Market through the summer but it doesn't open until June.

My first couple of boxes have been filled with asparagus, kale, lettuce, chard, strawberries, watercress, radishes and sweet potatoes from the fall harvest. As a result I have been cooking up a storm using the fresh items.

Since the strawberries are ripe here in Bedford County, I wanted to share with you a way to preserve the harvest for use later and baking is a great way to do that. I made a Strawberry Almond Bread to freeze for use later in the year. This quick bread is easy to make a great treat for breakfast, an afternoon snack or even for dessert. It makes two big loaves and I served one of the loaves with a fresh strawberry butter. The strawberries won't stay around for long so get your fill this month and preserve some strawberry baked goods for later.

If you want to follow the four week journey of my CSA boxes check out the Seasonal Eating Blog on the Family tab of the Bedford County Extension website (bedford.tennessee.edu).

Strawberry Almond Bread

- 3 cups flour
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 quart strawberries, hulled
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten



1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon almond extract
1 cup finely chopped, toasted almonds

In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, salt and baking soda. Place the strawberries in another bowl and cut up with a hand chopper or place in food processor and lightly pulse until chopped. Pour the strawberries and liquid into the flour mixture and add oil, eggs, vanilla extract, almond extract and almonds. Stir just until dry ingredients are incorporated. Pour into 2 light colored loaf pans lightly greased or sprayed. Bake at 350 degrees for 55-60 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool for a few minutes and then turn out onto a rack to cool completely. Serve with strawberry butter.

Strawberry Butter: In a mini food processor, combine 1/2 cup softened butter and about 6-7 chopped strawberries. Process until strawberries are small flecks in the butter, scraping down the sides often. Store in the refrigerator but bring to room temperature before using.