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# THE WSU ORGANIC STANDARD

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## The Ups and Downs of Eating in Season

This week I want to address some recent comments and concerns. Many of you have surely noticed the amount of produce in the CSA boxes varies and, over the last couple weeks, has been less than normal. You'll also remember that at the beginning of the season the shares only contained a few items, then quickly became loaded in "greenery". While we try to provide as consistent quantities as possible, the amount of produce will vary week to week and throughout the season. This is largely due to the fact that with the exception of some fruit from the orchard later in the season, we produce almost everything you receive in the shares. Because of this you are all "Eating In Season". This is very different to the quantity and variety of our industrial food complex supplying the majority of our grocery stores. There, you can basically get almost any type of produce any time of year because the world market delivers these goods across the globe from climates that are at the time, "in season".

At the Organic Farm we are much more vulnerable to the shifts and varying moods of the season. Many variables control which crops are producing and how much they can produce. So while we do our best to plan for a consistent amount of produce, it's our natural environment that calls many of the shots.

The advantage you have in a CSA model is that when the farm does well you all reap the benefits. Likewise, when the weather isn't cooperating or the gophers take out a planting of beets, you will all feel that as well. I'm not in the habit of announcing all of our crop failures but do try to keep the members informed of the general trends through the newsletter.

We've also worked hard to identify an average amount of produce for both box sizes based on

feedback from our annual member survey and personal communications. Still, while one family may feel they are not getting enough each week, another is suffering through too much. This is by far one of the greatest challenges to the CSA model. We have to find a comfortable average for the majority of our customers and that obviously won't work for everyone. For those of you that find the shares too large, many find friends or neighbors to share with. For those that don't find the shares large enough, you always have the farmer's markets and stores to make up the difference.

I do hope that all of you are learning what it means to eat fresh, local, in season produce. And while I understand that it does have challenges, the CSA can be a very empowering program to be a part of. For those of you that would rather have more control of your food purchases the CSA is probably not the best way to go. We again will ask all of you to participate in our annual survey at the end of the season. It's a great place to have your voice heard.

--Brad



**Last week's Field Day was a success! We are always thrilled with the results of the mass clean-up efforts and also got to meet some new people interested in farming and share what our program has to offer. Thanks for coming out to learn more about the farm!**

Green salad and crusty bread are two of my favorite foods. Here is a salad dish that combines them both—and makes a place for nearly everything in this week's box. This bread salad, or *panzanella*, is made with homemade garlic croutons and a fresh basil dressing that is good on any number of other things: roasted potatoes, grilled veggies (summer squash!) or just a big bowl of salad greens. As well, it's a recipe that I most appreciate making in season. At other times of the year, all of the tomatoes and basil (with the olives and cheese) makes this an expensive dish. But in the height of summer when these veggies and herbs abound, it's a delicious treat. Enjoy!

--Jamaica



### **Rustic Bread Salad**

*Adapted from Rebar Modern Food Cookbook, by Audrey Alsterberg and Wand Urbanowicz (Big Ideas, Canada, 2001)*

¾ cup Basil Vinaigrette (recipe follows)	1 cup Kalamata olives, pitted and halved
1 baguette, cut into 1-inch cubes (about 4 cups)	½ a Walla Walla sweet onion, finely sliced
3 garlic cloves, minced	1 round (8 oz.) fresh mozzarella, thinly sliced
3 tablespoons olive oil	½ - 1 cucumber, sliced into half moons
¼ teaspoon salt	3 cups romaine or leaf lettuce
4 ripe tomatoes, coarsely chopped	¼ cup fresh basil leaves, sliced in thin ribbons

First, make croutons with the baguette: preheat oven to 350°F and in a large bowl, toss the bread cubes with the olive oil, garlic and salt; spread the cubes in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake for 8-10 minutes until evenly browned and crisped.

While the croutons are baking, prepare the basil vinaigrette. When the croutons emerge from the oven, place them in a bowl and toss them with enough vinaigrette to lightly coat. Then, combine with the remaining salad ingredients. Drizzle more dressing and toss together so that the vegetables and croutons are all lightly coated. Serve immediately—serves 4, amply, as a main course salad.

### **Basil Vinaigrette**

*Adapted from Rebar Modern Food Cookbook.*

2 garlic cloves, minced	¼ cup, packed, fresh basil leaves
1½ tablespoons Dijon mustard	½ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons honey	1½ teaspoon cracked pepper
¼ cup red wine vinegar	1 cup olive oil
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar	

Combine all of the ingredients, except for the oil, in a food processor. While blending, slowly add olive oil and continue blending until the dressing is thick and creamy. This will keep, refrigerated, for up to three days. Makes about 1¼ cups of dressing.