



TUV HASHAVUA

BEST OF THE WEEK

Eating-Down the Pantry

Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA Member Maki Hoashi and blogger Jessica Fisher

**MANY THANKS
TO OUR
VOLUNTEERS !**

7/7 [Week #7 – A]

5-8pm Pick-up

Stella Xu

Ellen Lee

Manisha Shah-Balangon

Ariela Fryman

1pm Truck Unloading

Laurie Duke

Jessica Keane

Babitha Dhuler

8pm Unclaimed Shares

Eynat Naor

7/14 [Week #8 – B]

5-8pm Pick-up

Alissa Harris

Robert/Jessie Schwartz

Jesse Shapiro

1pm Truck Unloading

Valeria Vavassori-Chen

Marci Birnbaum

Laurie Duke

Min Kuo

8pm Unclaimed Shares

Lenny Fuchs

TUV HA'ARETZ CSA at the
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tuv@fhjc.org

- **Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA:**
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- **Facebook:**
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- **Golden Earthworm Farm:**
goldenearthworm.com
- **FHJC:** www.fhjc.org
- **Hazon:** www.hazon.org

Problem: every member of my family was going to be away this month. That means my obsessively stocked pantry, fridge, and freezer contained far too much food for just me. And there was the specter of the weekly CSA share – and this time of year is when production at the farm ramps up and we are flooded with leafy produce and zucchini, and the fruit shares are starting! My freezer is already full, so freezing everything till everyone gets back is not a viable option. And when my family members come back, there will be more food ingredients coming in.

In the past, I would have had a big dinner party; and I used to have hungry kids come by and would send them home with lots of leftovers. Those kids now have kids, and it's mid-summer with lots of friends have moving or on holiday. And work has been really busy for me, without time or mind for entertaining.

I would concentrate on using and eating what I have in the house already. We all do this now and again to save money, make space, not waste, or because we are too busy to shop and store. Those on food stamps and limited budgets do this by necessity; others do it as a lifestyle, maybe because they dislike shopping. Essentially, I imposed a moratorium to not buy new food, and to make do with what I already have. But what about fresh vegetables and fruit? Having weekly shares in a CSA makes this easy – and I appreciate the produce a lot more while on my food-shopping exile. And I do have a lot cooked down and stored.

In my research, I learned that this concept is referred to as “eating-down the pantry,” and is a practical and frugal thing to do for a limited time. Eating-down is traditionally done in January and in July – months which follow traditional American all-out feasting events, when there is a lot stocked up in anticipation for the big meals and guests, and thus a lot of leftovers, too.

Blogger Jessica Fisher of “Good, Cheap Eats” and “Life as a Mom” points out that a “pantry challenge” is a great way to use up what you already have, rather than just going out to get what you think you want or need. She writes:

When I was a young newlywed, I cooked almost every day, planned meals once a week, and shopped daily. I spent enough to feed a small country. In fact, in 1994 I spent more on groceries for two people and occasional guests as I did in 2006 to feed a family with five children! One of the causes of my over-spending was that I bought whatever I wanted whenever I wanted it. Our cupboards and fridge were almost always bursting at the seams. As was the trash bin.

Good stewardship and good eats should be a package deal when you do a Pantry Challenge. There are huge benefits to using what you already have:

Waste less. *When I make a concerted effort to use what we have, I throw away less. Leftovers are gobbled up for lunch or get remade into something tasty and different, like soup or stir-fry. I keep my refrigerator cleaner and more organized, so things don't go bad before I am able to use them. I'm able to rotate the stockpile of pantry items and use things before they hit their “best by” dates.*

Make do. *In the old days, I would run to the grocery store if I needed any ingredient for a recipe. This means that I would spend \$30 when all I went for was a head of garlic. I ended up finding other things to buy while I was there, and the trip cost me much more than it should have, especially when you include the cost of transportation and time to get you to and from the store. I learned to go without or make something else work just as well as the usual. Maybe we use garlic powder instead of fresh cloves. Maybe I serve chicken and gravy over rice*

instead of potatoes. Maybe I add red pepper to a salad instead of tomatoes. After all, it's just one meal, and it generally turns out all right.

Discover old (and new) favorite ingredients.

While I'm rifling through my cupboards, I find all kinds of things I forgot I had, such as, "We have all these chocolate chips? Let's make cookies!" Or, "I didn't know that we had all this quinoa. Let's make a salad!" I get reacquainted with old favorites and am inspired to use them up.


Learn what not to buy. On the other hand, I also get to face the music when it comes to poor purchases. I am reminded or discover what not to buy in the future, thus avoiding more poor purchases, such as, "Why did I buy this almond paste when my daughter is allergic to nuts?" Or, "Never buy this kind of pasta again."

Be more creative. When I make a concerted effort to eat what we already have in the kitchen, I find that I'm more creative in the kitchen. Learning to make do and rediscovering old and new favorite ingredients often results in great recipes that I wasn't anticipating.

Save money. Limiting my shopping saves us money, both on food and transportation. To some this is a novel idea. You mean you don't have to go grocery shopping every week — or every day? Most of us have several weeks' worth of food stored somewhere in our homes. We often overbuy. Eating down the pantry helps us lose the excess and keep in our wallets the money we might have spent.

MY CONCLUSIONS: Like a diet, it's easy to do at the beginning, and gets harder as you go along. I was surprised at what broke me from the "no food spending" policy — a sale on chicken at the local market (I bought and froze it in mom's freezer; I decided I could buy it, but I couldn't use it ... weird, right?), and someone had posted on Facebook one weekend about buying a sack of warm, crackling bagels, and the sound it makes when the baker's dozen is tossed into the brown paper sack ...

Sometimes a little duress will reap many rewards beyond the obvious. The creative cook in me made some pretty delicious things: cooked lettuces in the form of grilled salads, braised with peas, butter, and garlic; kale and chard stems in soups and braises, and the leaves rolled around mixtures of leftovers, rather like stuffed cabbage; salads for breakfast; turnip tops and all manner of leftover cooked and salad greens in spanakopita. This was a great balance to my busy schedule at work. I also started making No-Knead Bread again.

And by the way: my total food cost this month, including the day I didn't resist temptation to the aforementioned chicken and bagels: \$16.73. 

WHAT'S IN THE BOX??

Carrots, Basil, Green Cabbage, Red Leaf or Batavian Lettuce, Romaine, Radicchio, Zucchini, Cucumber

Do your workout with the TRUCK UNLOADING volunteer shift!

We need volunteers for August, September, and beyond. This is a wonderful shift for those who want a mid-day volunteer task: it is from 1-2pm on Tuesdays.

You'll have to sign up for 4 weeks, however they need not be in a row.

Please contact Alexa (alexaweitzman@gmail.com) with questions. Thank you for fulfilling your mandatory volunteer commitment!

DRIVERS WANTED!

We are still in need of a few additional volunteers for some unclaimed shares delivery slots:

09/01 (A-week)
10/27 (A-week)

If you have access to a car, please email me directly with the date(s) you can help:

IWARCH

@GMAIL.COM

Even if you have already fulfilled your volunteer requirement by doing another task, you can still take one of these shifts. All volunteers are greatly appreciated!

COLD ZUCCHINI SOUP

Anita Bleick | Serves 4-6
1 tbsp vegetable oil
1/2 med onion (cubed)
4 cloves garlic (minced)
2 pounds zucchini, chopped
1 quart / 4 cups stock / broth
3/4 to 1 tsp powdered ginger salt and pepper, to taste

Cook onion and garlic in vegetable oil till softened. Add zucchini, spices, and stock and bring to a boil. Simmer till the zucchini is tender. Puree with immersion blender. Eat cold or warm.

ENSALADA DE CALABACÍN

Frida Khalo | Frida's Fiestas | Serves 6-8
8 tbsp. olive oil
3 tbsp. red wine vinegar
1 tsp. kosher salt, plus more
1/2 tsp. sugar
6 small zucchini, sliced
2 avocados or cucumbers, sliced
3 oz. queso añejo or parmesan, crumbled
2 tbsp basil or cilantro, roughly chopped

Shake 6 tbsp. olive oil, vinegar, salt, and sugar in a glass jar until emulsified; set aside. Heat 2 tbsp. olive oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high; cook zucchini until golden, 10-12 minutes. Let cool slightly and overlap on a serving platter with avocados or cucumbers. Sprinkle with salt and drizzle with the vinaigrette; garnish with queso añejo or parmesan and cilantro or basil.

PETITS POIS A LA

FRANCAISE | Serves 2
Nigella Lawson, foodnetwork.com
3 small scallions, finely sliced
3 tbsp unsalted butter
1 clove garlic, minced
1 or 2 heads lettuce, shredded
2 cups frozen small peas
salt and pepper, to taste.

Cook the scallions in the butter and oil until soft. Stir in the shredded lettuce, and when it is wilted add the frozen peas, salt, and pepper. Cover the pot and simmer until everything is tender and the liquid flavorful and reduced. Serve in bowls with spoons.

Maki Hoashi enjoys the challenge of using whatever the CSA shares bring each week. She and the husband post the results of their meals on Facebook; when people ask if she blogs, she points to her fb feed ☺