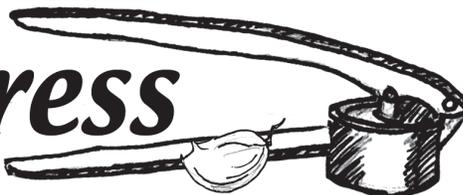




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Our Eighth Season of Community Supported Agriculture

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BOOK REVIEW

PLENTY: ONE MAN, ONE WOMAN, AND A RAUCOUS YEAR OF EATING LOCALLY

by Alisa Smith and J. B. Mackinnon, Harmony Books, New York 2007

Reviewed by Leda Meredith

Plenty: One Man, One Woman, and a Raucous Year of Eating Locally is a refreshing variation on the theme of how-to-save-the-planet-by-eating-righteously. This is not just another list of depressing statistics about how chemically dependent crops are shipped thousands of miles before they reach you, or one more plug for local, seasonal eating that relies on a juicy description of the difference between a supermarket tomato in January and the real thing from your garden in August. (All absolutely true and important, but I know that already, thank you. Hey, I'm a CSA member!). *Plenty*, written by professional journalists Alisa Smith and J. B. Mackinnon, does have its share of food related statistics. But this story is as much about how local eating changed the authors as it is about how such eating can change the world.

The book begins with their decision to spend a year eating only what is grown or raised within 100 miles of their apartment in Vancouver. They dub their experiment The 100-Mile Diet. This is the extreme sports version of local eating: even Gary

Nabhan in *Coming Home to Eat* gave himself a 250-mile radius to source his food from. Smith and Mackinnon allow themselves a few exceptions, but for the most part stick to their self-imposed rules, which include no olive oil, no citrus, no black pepper, no sugar or other kitchen "basics" that aren't grown in their part of the world. Their search for local sources of such staples as wheat flour and salt provides some of funniest and most touching anecdotes.

During the course of their 100 Mile Diet year they went online with the 100-Mile Diet concept and gave momentum to a growing movement of local eating organizations including their own 100milediet.org, as well as eatlocalchallenge.com and locavores.com.

I'd thought I was doing pretty well by growing some food in my garden, being a CSA member, eating seasonally and buying local whenever possible. But *Plenty* led me to reevaluate my kitchen and find room for improvement. For example, I was surprised to find that I had vinegars from California, Spain and Italy but none that came from anywhere within 3,000 miles



Palo Santo Tasting Event August 16th at the CSA

Palo Santo, the restaurant a few buildings up the block from the Garden, has a CSA share. The tasting will use CSA produce.

Please complete your share payments by August 16th!

of here. Five minutes online turned up a recipe for homemade vinegar and now I'm on my second batch. I noticed that there are no sources listed for the bulk organic popcorn and flour at the co-op so I did a little sleuthing and found out that the locally grown stuff is available from Wild Hive Farm at the Union Square Market. *Plenty* is a lively and thought-provoking read that has already inspired me to make several such unexpected (and delicious) changes. Highly recommended even if, like me, you aren't quite ready to relinquish your olive oil.

Plenty: One Man, One Woman, and a Raucous Year of Eating Locally / Alisa Smith and J.B. Mackinnon. Quarter-Acre Farm: How I Kept the Patio, Lost the Lawn, and Fed My Family For a Year / Spring Warren. Reading the OED: One Man, One Year, 21,730 Pages / Ammon Shea. Self-Made Man: One Woman's Journey Into Manhood and Back Again / Norah Vincent. Sitting In Bars With Cake: Lessons and Recipes From One Year of Trying To Bake My Way To a Boyfriend / Audrey Shulman. Skulls / Noah Scalin. Sleeping Naked Is Green: How An Eco-Cynic Unplugged Her Fridge, Sold Her Car, and Found Love In 366 Days / Van