

The Locavore Café
Why and how to choose local food

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This document is the result of the author's participation in the BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation's Summer Institute for Educators in 2010. This third year level course in curriculum design is offered every other year through the University of British Columbia's Faculty of Education's Office of External Programs.

In the summer of 2010 the Foundation partnered with the Teachers of Home Economics Specialist Association – THESA – and the Office of External Programs to make the Summer Institute a part of the Home Economics Education Diploma Program. This program consisted of 10 three credit courses that closely examined the Home Economics Curriculum IRP's and explored creative ways to address the learning outcomes.

Participants (30 educators from a variety of secondary disciplines and from many regions of the province) were based at the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands Abbotsford Agriculture Centre in Abbotsford, BC. As a result of visits to local farms and through intensive classroom work they developed a number of teaching strategies drawn from the agricultural, environmental, economic and nutritional concepts featured in the IRP's.

Participants taking the course for credit created teaching modules such as this to share with other educators around the province.

The BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation is supported by the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands as well as the agricultural community. Participants were sponsored for their farm tours as well as their meals (prepared by our Summer Institute chef using fresh and delicious local products).

Visit the BC Agriculture in the Classroom website at www.aitc.ca/bc for further information on this and our many other exciting programs or to order additional resources for your classroom.

Thank you for bringing agriculture to your classroom. We hope that you too will find it a great teaching tool to enhance your lessons.

www.aitc.ca/bc

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Synopsis:

This resource has been developed for Foods and Nutrition 12. It includes several teaching activities designed to answer three basic Questions: Should we choose local foods? What is considered local? What local foods are available?

Rationale:

Besides water, there is nothing more important to human life than food. We use food for sustenance, comfort, and celebration. Yet despite its significance to life and culture, we have completely lost touch with where our food comes from. We treat food and agriculture as if they are two separate entities. We have become what Wendell Berry describes as industrial eaters. We have become victims of our food system.¹ Much of the food found on our grocery store shelves is so packaged and processed, it no longer resembles the thing it was when it originally grew from the ground. It has become something no longer identifiable as animal, vegetable, or mineral.²

Our victimization has dire consequences. Our fresh water supplies are depleting. Our climate is changing. Precious farmland is being covered over with concrete. People around the world are starving while industrialized nations throw away food by the truckload.³ Despite medical advances, the next generation is slated to be the first in history that has a lower life expectancy than their parents. This destruction and disrespect for our Earth, and ourselves, is the legacy we will leave for future generations, if we don't choose to stop being victims of the industrial food system.

There are two simple things we can do to regain control. First, we can make small and simple changes in our own lives. Second we can help our students to do the same. If we can help our students to enjoy, if not love, good, basic, wholesome food, so much else will follow. If we help them to become passionate about good food, they will in turn become passionate about the earth. Without a healthy earth – there is no healthy food, and without healthy food there are no healthy, people.⁴ In short, teaching young people to care about the food they eat, is teaching them to care for their farmland, and their planet. With this care and knowledge young people can begin break free from the hold the processed food has on them.

The best way to enjoy food is when it is picked ripe and comes directly from a farm or garden. The best food is local. It's hard not to like a tomato that actually tastes like a tomato, or a strawberry, that tastes like nothing but a good, sweet, strawberry. We should select our recipes carefully, ensuring the inclusion of fresh, flavorful foods wherever possible. There is a lesson and a story behind every single product that we use in our classrooms, we need to learn these stories and share them with our students. There is no better place to reconnect food and agriculture, and to create an awareness of the food system, than in foods classrooms.

Grades 11 and 12 are a specifically important time to introduce the concept of a local food diet to students. They are, after all, at an age where they are making an increasing number of decisions for themselves. They are choosing many of the foods that they eat, and are not far from filling their own

¹ Berry, Wendell. *The Pleasures of Eating*. 1990.

² Kingsolver, Barbara, Steven L. Hopp and Camille Kingsolver. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A year of Food Life*. Harper Collins Publishers: 2007.

³ Diouf, Jacques. *Feeding a world of 9 Billion*, 2007.

⁴ Riley, Malcom. *Sustainable Futures: Food choice matters*, 2005.

cupboards and making their own food decisions. There is no better time than the senior high school years to facilitate learning that will help students make choices that will be beneficial to their health, and the health of our planet as they move in to adulthood, and away from their parents.

Possible PLO's Covered:

- A6 Adapt ingredients and methods to create original recipes
- B2 Choose and demonstrate appropriate cooking methods for particular products
- D2 Analyse global and environmental health issues related to the production and consumption of food
- D3 demonstrate an understanding of formal table etiquette
- A1 Analyse sources of food-borne illnesses and apply appropriate preventative measures
- A2 apply appropriate precautionary measures and emergency response associated with food preparation, including – handling equipment and hot foods safely

Objectives: Students will be able

- to list local foods grown in their area.
- to source some local foods that can be found in their area.
- assess the importance of consuming local foods.
- prepare products using local ingredients

Activity 1

Introducing the Concept - Locavore

Materials:

- copies enough for half the class of: 10 Reasons to Buy Local Food (access at www.aitc.ca/bc/uploads/buy_local.pdf)
- copies enough for half the class of 100 Mile Diet Skeptic (access at <http://communities.canada.com/vancouver/blogs/parenting/archive/2009/05/12/100-mile-diet-criticism-locavore.aspx>; <http://communities.canada.com/vancouver/blogs/parenting/archive/2009/05/13/eating-local-locavore.aspx>)
- copies of Fish and Food in BC Poster Size Map (order free from BC Agriculture in the Classroom (BCAIRC), <http://www.aitc.ca/bc/index.php?page=resource-order-form>)
- copies of any local food related material, e.g., farmer's market brochures, farm tours, farm fresh guides, etc.
- poster paper and markers

Introduction

- Create a list on the board or overhead of what the students have eaten most recently (e.g., for breakfast, snack, lunch, etc.). Then ask students indicate whether the food was local or imported and put an "L" or "I" or "U" if unsure, beside each. Explain that today because of a very complex food system, most of us have no idea where our foods come from, how it comes to us, or how it is grown and processed.

Should we choose local?

- Randomly have students individually read one of two articles (I would suggest giving three kitchen groups one article and three kitchen groups the other article) – 10 Reasons to Buy Local Food, and 100 Mile Diet Skeptic.
- When they are finished, have small groups of students with the same article get together and determine the 5 most compelling reasons for the author's point of view.
- Have each student partner up with another student who has the opposing article. Have the partners create a T chart of the pros/cons of eating locally. Discuss the most common pros and the most common cons.

What is local?

- Explain that there are different definitions of local. Local could imply your country, province, city and surrounding area, or could have a distance attached to it such as 100 miles (161 km) as in the 100 Mile Diet or time as in the 30 minute diet (where all food has to be accessible 30 minutes from your home).
- Brainstorm and decide what the definition of local would work best for your area.

What foods are local?

- In small groups have students create a list on poster paper of foods that are grown in the local area (provide maps, and brochures for them to use as references.)
- Once the list has been compiled, direct students to circle all the foods that are in season right now.
- Then have students underline foods that are available fresh throughout the year by underlining them (such as meat, poultry or dairy products).
- Then have students put a box around any foods that may be available because they have been processed or preserved (e.g., made into juice, jam, pickles; canned or frozen or dried, etc.)
- Have students share their list (or do a gallery walk) and then discuss whether they could eat locally all year long.

Exit Slip

- have students complete an exit slip using the following stem:
- Some people believe it is important to eat local because _____
- Other people are skeptical because _____
- I think _____
- because _____

Activity Two

The Locavore Cafe

[Note: this may take from 3 to 7 classes depending on how much time you allot for research and finding recipes]

Materials:

- cookbooks, magazines, brochures on eating locally,
- access to the internet for research
- copies of the handouts: The Locavore Cafe Assignment, Ingredients and Sources, The Locavore Café Mark Sheet

Introduction:

- Ask students to write down their favorite food. Ask a few students to share with the class what that food is, make a short list (3 – 5) on the whiteboard or overhead screen. Go through the list as a class and decide if those foods could be made using local ingredients. Discuss why or why not, and offer suggestions as to what could be altered or changed to make the food local.

The Locavore Café Assignment

- Review assignment sheet. You can either choose a month that everyone will do or you can assign different groups different months. Students may work on this project individually or in partners.
- Discuss recipe formats, the size of the recipes, and expectations for the project
- Review Ingredients and Sources and The Locavore Café Mark Sheet.
- Review possible resources of information.
- Explain that the menus will be presented to the class and one recipe from each menu will be selected to be prepared for a Locavore Sampling Lab.
- Determine a timeline and review expectations.

[For example, a) how many classes to find recipes, make modifications, determine local sources, b) what date to submit menu for selection of recipes for the lab (on this day either the teacher can determine one recipe from each menu to be prepared for sampling or the class can decide), c) preparation of a market order, d) date of lab and sampling class, etc.]



The Locavore Cafe Assignment

Congratulations! You have just purchased a café and have decided to serve foods made from local ingredients. You have decided that each month you will feature different menu items based on local ingredients that are in season. Your job is to create a menu for the month of _____.

Your menu should include a minimum of two items in each of the following categories: Starters (which could include soups, salads, or appetizers), entrees: served with at least one side, and deserts.

The following items are very difficult or impossible to find locally, so you will not be able to include them in your menu: coffee, tea, chocolate, sugar, most cooking oils, flour – you will need to omit them or find substitutions for them.

From the list of items above you may choose two “wild cards”. These are items that are not produced locally, but you may use in your menu. Choose carefully.

You will need to be creative and will likely have to make adaptations to the recipes that you choose. For example; substitute butter for oil and honey for sugar (for tips on substituting honey in recipes see the list of web resources).

Your completed project must include the following:

- A menu: 1 -2 pages, complete with menu titles and descriptions of the food (see example)
- A recipe for each item on the menu, with their sources (if recipe ingredients have been adapted the source should say “adapted from _____”)
- A list of ingredients needed to make each menu item, and a local source where they can be purchased (use the sheets provided) –for the purposes of this assignment you can assume that all produce is available from a local farm, Farmer’s Market, or Winter Market. You will need to find a local source for meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy, honey, and any other products you would like to incorporate.

Recipe	Ingredients	Source

My two wild card ingredients are: _____

The Locavore Café Mark Sheet

	Teacher Mark	Student Mark
10 Menu presentation -Very neat and organized -Menu Items Are categorized -Menu Items are named		
10 Menu Selections -Can be sourced locally -Are in season -Are described in an appetizing manner		
10 Recipe Selections - Are simple -Use variety -Have been appropriately adapted		
10 Recipes - All recipes are included -Are in standard recipe format -Are complete (include all steps and ingredients)		
10 Ingredient list -All ingredients are included -Local resource is listed for each ingredient		
5 Sources -Sources are given for all recipes, including those that have been adapted		
/55 Total		

Possible Extensions:

1. Invite parents or teachers for a student prepared 100 mile lunch or breakfast.
2. Visit local farm(s) selected by the teacher, or selected by students in their projects.
3. Have students visit a local Farmers Market or Winter Market.
4. Arrange a field trip to a restaurant that specializes in using local ingredients.
5. Bring in a guest speaker from the Slow Food Movement.

Web Resources for BC

BC Association of Farmer's Markets: <http://www.bcfarmersmarket.org>

-Good resource for finding local markets and recipes

Farm Folk City Folk: <http://www.ffcf.bc.ca/>

- Lots of information here, under resources and in their knowledge pantry you will find seasonal availability charts for Metro Vancouver, Shuswap, West Kootneys and Okanagan

Get Local : <http://www.getlocalbc.org/en/where.php>

- The what, where and how of eating local, offers an extensive list of vendors in the Vancouver area that carry local foods

BC Fresh - <http://www.bcfreshvegetables.com/bcfresh/home>

- Information on why to eat local, recipes, and seasonality charts

BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation - <http://www.aitc.ca/bc/>

- Field trip ideas, lesson ideas, school programs, and awesome resources on foods grown in BC (where they are produced and how they are processed etc.)

100 mile Diet Society - <http://100milediet.org/>

- Recipes and information, plus map your hundred mile radius

Local Eating.ca - <http://www.localeating.ca>

-Offers blogs and information on what is in season as well as a search tool to help find local foods in your area

Farm Fresh - <http://www.bcfarmfresh.com/>

- Fraser Valley Farm Direct Marketing Association - List of farms in the Fraser Valley with contact information, recipes and local events

Slow Food Vancouver- <http://www.slowfoodvancouver.com/>

-Information on seasonal foods, including seafood as well as noteworthy local, national and world news related to food

Edible Vancouver - <http://www.ediblecommunities.com/vancouver/>

-Articles, recipes and sources for local foods

Honey substitutions - <http://homecooking.about.com/od/specificfood/a/honeytips.htm>