



local food **CHALLENGE** *how local can we go?*

2015

Dear local food provider or purveyor,

We're glad to know you'll join us in this year's **10-Day Local Food Challenge**, using it as a helpful tool to spark interest and enthusiasm in potential and current customers, and as a tool to establish consistent demand for your local product(s) and develop a sustainable web of local food producers to serve our community.

You can use the Challenge in any way that suits your own community, resources, and culture. It plays nicely with others, so if you're considering using the Challenge as ramp-up, follow-up, or intensifier for another local food initiative in your community, that will work well. Conversely, as a stand-alone program to generate excitement and deepen commitment to local food, the Challenge will serve you and your customers well.

OVERVIEW OF THE 10-DAY LOCAL FOOD CHALLENGE: OCTOBER 1-10, 2015

The Challenge is a fun and engaging way for your customers to dive a little deeper into their own local food lives, to meet local eaters within your community and all over the continent if they choose, and to get advice, tips, and inspiration from experts on budgeting, preparing, and supporting local food.

For 10 days in the 10th month, Challenge participants attempt to eat only food grown within 100 miles from home, allowing just 10 "exotics" - foods from afar they can't live without.

Individual participants can go it solo; form informal local groups of neighbors and friends; jump into a community-based group through your local implementation of the Challenge; or find community and support through membership in the 10-Day Local Food Challenge's GroupSite community and its twice-monthly newsletter with recipes, tips, mini-Challenges, and quizzes.

localfoodchallenge.org/join-us/

HOW-TO FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS

The 10-day Local Food Challenge is open to anyone. Challengers can use our website - **localfoodchallenge.org/how-to** - as a guide or you can provide them with a local hub and support via the outreach materials noted below. Then, from October 1-10, they challenge themselves to eat food produced within 100 mile radius of home, allowing 10 exotics (foods from afar they can't live without).

It's that simple, and that Challenging. We've found that the 10-day, 100-mile, 10 exotics parameters provide an inspiring yet flexible set of "rules" for the game of going a bit more local, and that what participants learn during those 10 days translates most often into consistent dedication to consuming more local food long-term, and helps them uncover and overcome previous obstacles while setting up new habits that enable them to reliably do so as well.

We offer online, expert support for those who want or need it, for a nominal fee that helps us sustain our efforts. You can guide them to that support at **<http://localfoodchallenge.org/join-us/>**.

SUPPORT FOR YOU, THE LOCAL FOOD GROWER OR PURVEYOR

We know you know your community and will find unique ways to use the 10-Day Local Food Challenge. To support you in outreach, we provide PDFs for posters and two sizes of info. cards: postcard and business card. We also provide a brief tip sheet/how-to with basic steps to follow before, during and after the Challenge.

If you do need any personalized assistance, feel free to contact our Community Manager, **Laurie Pitts, at laurie@localfoodchallenge.org**

BACKGROUND OF THE 10-DAY LOCAL FOOD CHALLENGE

In September 2010, creative social innovator Vicki Robin undertook her own local food challenge - 30 days eating only food sourced within 10 miles of her home. What she discovered moved her to share her experiences - and her questions - through her book, *Blessing the Hands that Feed Us* (Viking Penguin 2014). Approached by readers for guidance on how to set up their own experiments, she came up with a simple basic design: For 10 days or more eat food grown within 100 miles or less of your home. Give yourself 10 or fewer exotics, foods from afar (like coffee or oil) to make it do-able. Within a month she'd built a website and a Facebook group, and launched the 10-Day Local Food Challenge in the Fall of 2014.

Vicki says, "My experience of my 10-mile diet was profound. It changed me. Not only how I eat but where I belong. I felt as never before part of a people and a place, and that my destiny is tied to whether this place flourishes or not. Eating became an act of belonging. I call this 'relational eating'. To even coin a term is odd. Everyone eats. Most humans for most known history have been farmers. Many people maintain food gardens (during WWII 40% of the nation's fresh food was from Victory Gardens). Local food isn't some odd sideline for hippies and yuppies. It's normal. Abnormal is 'anywhere, anytime, anything food.' The 10-Day Local Food Challenge is my gift to eaters - discover for yourself the transformations that come when you put your life in the hands of those who grow food in your wee patch of the planet."

Ten days seemed long enough to go through a life-changing experience but not so long that busy people couldn't imagine doing it. One hundred miles as the crow flies seemed to be a wide enough circle to find a sufficient variety of foods. Those that needed more space set a wider circle, and stuck to it. Ten exotics were to take the pressure off - and because she needed 4 (oil, caffeine, salt and lemons) to survive her own 10-mile diet.

Eaters from around the continent and several other countries signed up to find out more. When ready to commit, they took surveys about their locations, intentions, habits, and hopes; and made their own personal commitments for the grand eating experiment. On Facebook, they connected with support, enthusiasm, problem solving, issue opening, and recipe sharing. By the time Halloween rolled around, friendships had blossomed across thousands of miles, and strangers from around the corner had become food buddies too. Momentum grew.

At the end of the Challenge the eaters reflected on their experiences and responded to a survey sharing what they learned. Inspired volunteers gathered, compiled, and analyzed their responses. Their feedback indicated that the 10-Day Local Food Challenge is a winning formula and a team formed to share the Challenge with an even wider audience in 2015.

Today, thousands of eaters around the world are pondering how they'll challenge themselves to take their next important steps in growing local food systems right in their own communities.