



10 day local food CHALLENGE

how local can we go?

2015

TIPS FOR CONVENING, ORGANIZING AND FACILITATING YOUR OWN 10-DAY LOCAL FOOD CHALLENGE

First, we strongly recommend that at least one member of your group (you?!) become a member of the 10-Day Local Food Challenge, both to get access to tips, recipes, and outreach materials to support your group, and to in turn support the long term growth of local food systems. You'll have access to experts in gardening, cooking, food preservation, advocacy, group leadership & facilitation, and eating well on a budget; twice-monthly newsletters with recipes, thought-provoking articles, the latest news in local food, and tips for sharing the Challenge; and a private membership community to network with local foodies both near and far. Plus, on all 10 days of the Challenge, you'll get a brief email full of fun and encouragement to cheer you and your group members on.

Ready to get started? Here are some commonly asked questions and answers.

Q: I'M NOT REALLY SURE WHO TO INVITE. WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST?

A: To start, try choosing people from these categories:

- Those you'd most enjoy spending time with, who consistently bring the fun and tend to be supportive and compassionate
- Those most likely to want to go a little more local
- Those who like to cook or garden
- Those closest to you (like family, neighbors, colleagues)

A balance of folks who already know each other and those who might benefit from getting to know new people will make your group doubly attractive to prospective members.

Q: ONCE I'VE DECIDED ON WHO TO ASK, HOW SHOULD I GET STARTED?

A: Share the idea of the 10-Day Local Food Challenge early (now!). The best way is to share in person, preferably when you're eating or shopping for local food, working together in the garden, or sharing another local-focused activity. Tell them about why you're looking forward to the Challenge, and invite them to join you to share it from October 1-10, 2015. Let them know that it's not about compliance, but about curiosity and collaboration; not perfection but edification. And the purpose is to get creative, get connected, and have fun together during the 10-day experiment in going more local.

If you can't get together in person, you could create an email with similar content, and a link to the 10-Day Local Food Challenge: localfoodchallenge.org & localfoodchallenge.org/how-to. Give them time to learn about the Challenge, and offer to answer their questions. If you can't answer a question, please don't hesitate to contact our Community Instigator, laurie@localfoodchallenge.org, and she'll be happy to help you!

Q: HOW SHOULD WE ORGANIZE OURSELVES? WHAT HAVE OTHERS DONE?

A: Generally, you'll want to meet together once to plan (about a month before the Challenge, early Sept. is preferable, but any time before the Challenge is fine) and once to celebrate (we recommend sharing a meal on Food Day, October 24), so as the group leader, you should find a place and set a time. (One easy way to do that if your group members are internet savvy is via the free scheduling tool Doodle.)

Many groups like to do their "stock-up shop" together at their local farmers market too; it's so much fun to share ideas and knowledge as you shop together.

Finally, we urge you to share your group info. - how many people, whether it's an informal/eclectic group, a group of colleagues, or a group formed through another community group (place of worship, book group, neighborhood watch, Slow Food group, etc. - on our GroupSite or by emailing our Community Instigator laurie@localfoodchallenge.org.)

Q: WHAT SHOULD WE DO BEFORE THE CHALLENGE?

A: At your opening meeting (about a month before the Challenge, if possible), you'll want to introduce yourselves, share your own particular hopes, questions, and concerns about doing the Challenge, and start to share your individual resources and expertise so that all group members help each other. As a group, you should decide on how you'll keep in touch during the Challenge to collaborate for your mutual success. Some will do that via email or group texts, others will become members of the 10-Day Local Food Challenge Groupsite and form a subgroup together there, so they can share recipes, photos, and support, all in one place. As the group leader, you should take notes on each person's contact info., hopes, questions, concerns, expertise, and resources, as well as any agreements group members come to about helping each other.

Don't forget to bring some local refreshments, or to share that fun by asking everyone to bring one very simple local snack, finger food, or beverage. (As group leader, you might want to provide the snack plates, cups, napkins, etc.)

We suggest that every group member take the free opening survey to help set their own goals and identify their exotics. Doing that together on smartphones, laptops, and tablets at your first meeting can be a fun way to learn about each other and to start talking about the joys and challenges of going more local.

It's not necessary for you to attempt to convince other group members to do anything at your first meeting, and it's not a problem if the main outcome of your first meeting is simply to introduce yourselves, share contact information, goals, and questions, and decide on when you will meet to share experiences and celebrate after the Challenge.

Q: DURING THE CHALLENGE, WHAT SHOULD WE - AND I AS THE GROUP CONVENOR - DO?

A: One of the great joys of the Challenge is that you've got clear parameters to strive for (but not to judge yourselves over), but how you get from day 1 through day 10 of the Challenge and what you learn is an organic, one-foot-in-front-of-the-other process.

The main thing you as a group leader/convener can do is to keep bringing the non-judgmental, fun-loving, problem-solving mindset, in whatever ways suit you and your group. That might mean sharing recipes or photos of your experience via your Groupsite subgroup or email, sharing tips from your 10-Day Local Food Challenge daily emails, or even convening a “happy hour” (at whatever time of day and refreshments suit your group) or two at a local-focused restaurant or in someone’s home, cooking or shopping together, or just texting a message of encouragement every day or two.

You might also encourage your group members to make some notes about their experiences, take some photos, share their own recipes and resources, and to contact you and/or fellow group members if they ever run into problems or questions.

Q: OK, WE’VE COMPLETED THE 10-DAY LOCAL FOOD CHALLENGE! WHAT NOW?

A: Celebrate!

First, ask all your group members to take the post-Challenge survey to reflect on what they did and what they learned. This is super-important for their own learning and will set you all up for fun and fruitful conversations at your potluck, and it’s vital to the future of the Challenge, because it’s how our leadership team finds out what you all learned and also what help, support, and encouragement you need to do even more in the future. It’s also one way for us to share our growing movement with the wider public, growing the Challenge and our local food systems year after year.

Next, convene a local-focused potluck at the location of your choice. Invite group members and their families (if the latter is comfortable for your group members). At the potluck, enjoy each others’ company and...

Consider holding your potluck on Food Day, October 24. Because Food Day and the 10-Day Local Food Challenge share this passion, Food Day is featuring the Challenge on their website and we are encouraging Challengers to host events on October 24, 2015.

Ask each member to share his or her greatest triumph, funniest moment, new resources and recipes, biggest “a-ha”, and to make one resolution about how they’ll incorporate what they learned into their daily lives or weekly meal plans. (in other words: what will become their “new normal” habit(s) or practices after learning from the Challenge).

Some groups decide together to share resources throughout the year too. (e.g. swapping veggie starts for their gardens, trading off on bulk shopping for local food, sharing CSA baskets, meeting at the farmer’s market every other week, canning or baking together, prepping multiple batches of signature local recipes then meal-swapping, etc.)

REMEMBER:

Every step of the way, if you have questions or want to share your group’s brilliant new ways to go local together, we want you to share them with us!
You might even be featured in our Ready. Set. Eat Local! Newsletter or on our Groupsite!
Just contact laurie@localfoodchallenge.org any time!