

Local Food
Challenge
2014



READY. SET.
eat where you're planted

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

**10 DAYS
100 MILES
10 EXOTICS**

localfoodchallenge.org

HEAL your relationship with food.

Take charge of your DIET.

Be NOURISHED by food that breathes the same air, drinks the same water and soaks up the same sun you do.

COMMIT to your place on earth.

Find COMMUNITY.

Create a VIBRANT food culture.

LIBERATE yourself from almost total dependency on a food system whose bottom line is profit.

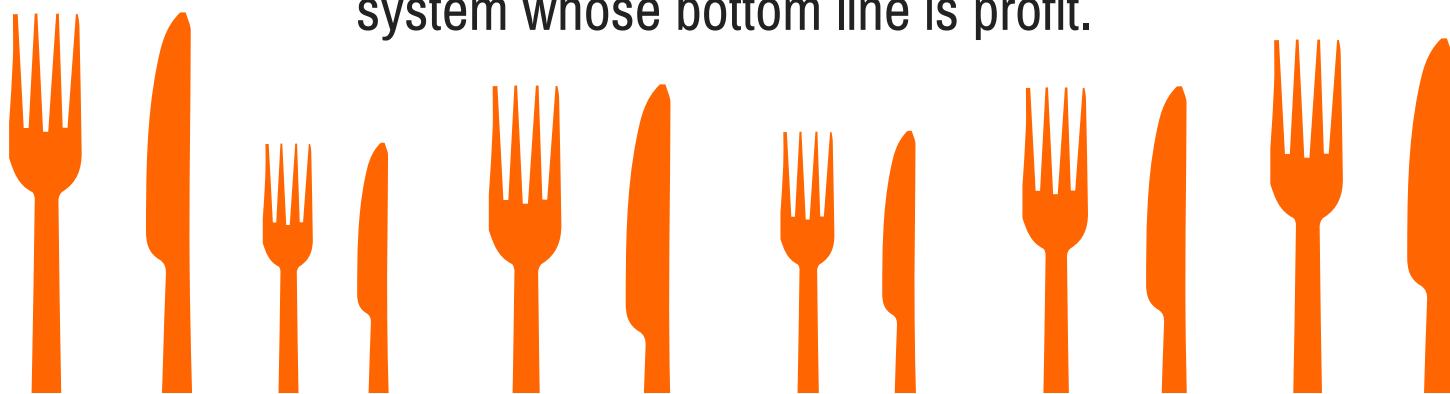


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What it's all about

MISSION, VISION AND BACKGROUND

The Local Food Challenge invites you to learn about yourself as an eater and your community food system by committing to eat, for 10 days, food produced within 100 miles of your home, allowing 10 exotics, foods from afar you can't live without.

It's simple, but not necessarily easy (it's a challenge after all):

- You start by taking a survey to affirm your commitment.
- You do the Challenge with a spirit of curiosity. No shame no blame. We learn from both successes and failures.
- You join the community either on Facebook and/or our various educational and support programs to tell your stories and hear others.
- At the end you take a comprehensive survey to reflect on your experience while helping build the local food movement.

Why 10 Days?

That's long enough to go through a life-changing experience but not so long that busy people can't imagine doing it. Go shorter if you must, longer if you dare.

Why 100 Miles?

Alisa Smith and J.B. MacKinnon's 2007 book, *Plenty*, documented their one-year experiment in 100-mile eating. Now, 100 miles is almost synonymous with "local". Also, 100 miles as the crow flies should be an abundant, varied eating region for most of us. One hundred, though, isn't the definition of local. Some use their state as their boundary. Or bioregion. The idea is to set the bar high enough so you stretch, but low enough so you are pretty sure you can do it.

Why 10 exotics or less?

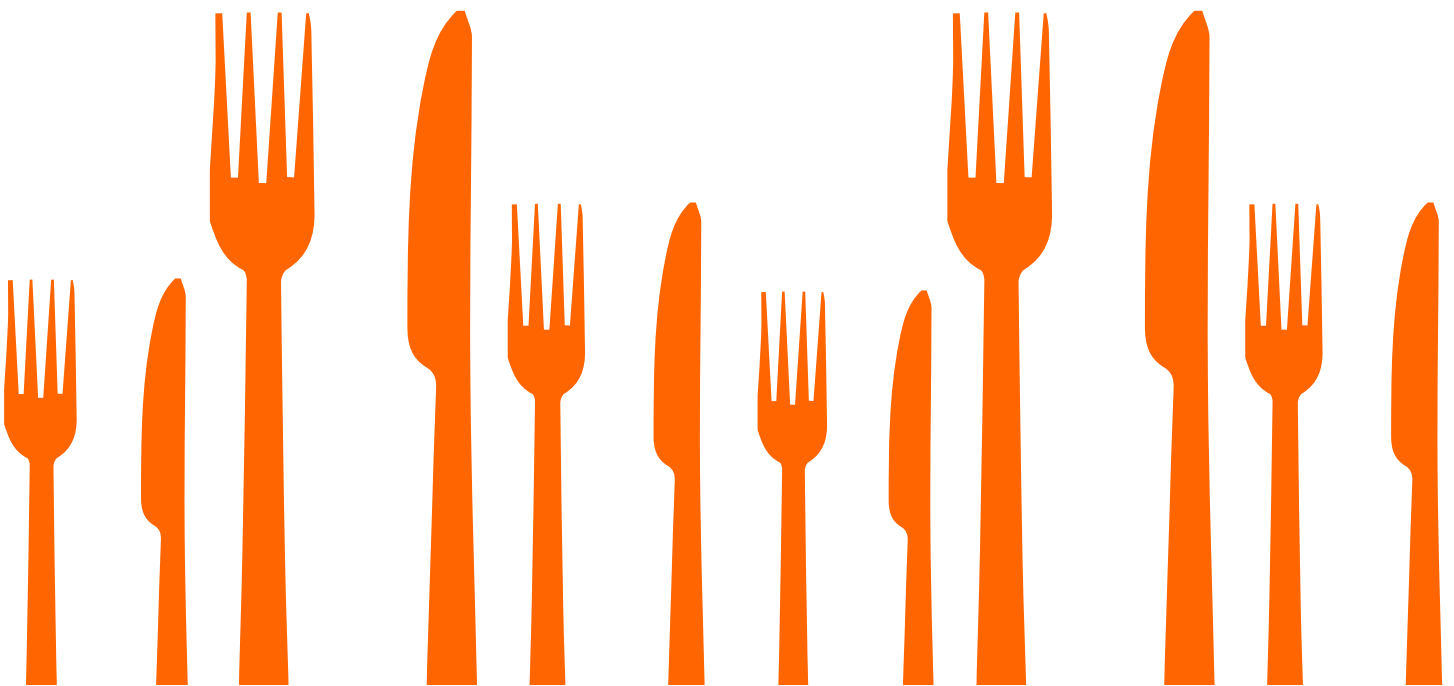
Some foods are so essential to our well-being that excluding them could be a deal breaker. What are your exotics? Oil? Avocados? Chocolate? Coffee? Salt?

This Challenge is designed as a game anyone can play, alone or with friends, groups, classrooms or whole towns. **Why would you want to do the Challenge?**

- **Fun**
- **Curiosity**
- **Tastes better**
- **Love my farmers**
- **Better for my family**
- **Alternative to corporate food**
- **Do it anyway**
- **Love to cook**
- **To see if I can!**
- **My friends are doing it**
- **Be an example to others**
- **Other**

Whatever your motivation, think of the 10-day Local Food Challenge like a 10K Run. You'll have the support of many people – and organizations – to train (find your food), do it (cook and eat your local bounty) and celebrate your win (tell your story, have a feast).

If you want to read what the 2014 Challengers learned, go to page 6. Or just do it and surprise yourself.



Ready... Set...

Locate Your Food Sources

- Home production
- Trade with neighbors
- CSA
- Farm Stand
- Farmers Market
- Underground food system (eggs, milk, cheese, meat, jams, canned foods)

Store Food You Won't Find Fresh

- Canning
- Freezing
- Cool storage (root cellar, unheated garage)
- Fridge

Get Ready to Cook

- Assemble tools (knives, crock pot, rice cooker, peeler, slicer, pots and pans)
- Find fair trade exotics (support local producers everywhere)
- Watch our cooking videos
- Read the blog for inspiration

Assemble a Group (or go it alone)

- Sunday cooking club
- Classroom
- Church
- Town
- Community Garden
- Bunch of friends
- Restaurant
- Scouting troupe
- Family
- Facebook friends
- Local action team
- Study group
- National organization membership

Our Local Food Challenge team stands ready to support you in forming, sustaining and enriching your groups.

***GO!* And tell us all what's up, down and delicious.**

Background

September 2010, creative social innovator Vicki Robin (*Your Money or Your Life*, *Blessing the Hands that Feed Us*) 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 - with a wider world. So she wrote *Blessing the Hands that Feed Us*, set up a website and a Facebook group, and launched The 10-Day Local Food Challenge.

In October of 2014, she invited eaters everywhere to commit, for 10 days, to join her experiment, eating only food produced within 100 miles of their home, but allowing 10 exotics (food from afar they couldn't live without, to make the challenge more doable). Her intention? To get people thinking, connecting, experimenting, and having fun. And to see if - and how - all their thinking, connecting, experimenting, and having fun might change their eating habits and together grow our local food systems for good.

On the 10 Day Local Food Challenge website, eaters from around the continent checked in; 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. Those reflections, challenges, issues, solutions, trends, and – of course! – recipes are offered here, in the next three sections of this text.

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. Will you join them?

So What?

Very simply, dedicating yourself “faithfully” to living a value you espouse but don’t fully embody is a powerful personal transformational journey. Like Lent or a meditation retreat. Like running a Marathon. It opens your eyes. It strengthens your commitment to be the person you want to be.

Beyond that, it gives you a high-integrity place to stand for challenging the status quo. As the story goes, a distraught mother came a long way to ask Gandhi to tell her son to not eat sugar. “Bring him back in 2 days.” It was a hardship to stay two days in a strange town, but what could she do? In two days she returned. Gandhi looked at the boy and said, “Stop eating sugar.” “Why couldn’t you have told him 2 days ago!!!” “Because two days ago I was still eating sugar.”

If we want a GMO-antibiotic-cruelty-free, non-toxic, fair to farmers and nutritious food supply, the 10-Day Local Food Challenge gives us firsthand experience of what we stand for. We know we are participating in building the world we want, bite by bite, even as we protest and boycott the food system we don’t want.

The local food movement is a positive revolution. It gives us an empowered place to stand as we work to change the parts of the industrial corporate food system that are toxic to our health, well-being, communities and democracy. While our individual efforts may seem small compared to the enormity of the task, our personal experiments will open our eyes, ground us in our food home and probably motivate us to work for change.



“Eating local food becomes ethical and spiritual as well as all the other reasons to do it—sociability of farmers’ markets, freshness, unique and diverse cultivars, greater nutrition.”

- Vicki Robin

Voices of the Local Food Challenge 2014

A NARRATIVE HISTORY

One hundred and twenty 10- Day Local Food Challenge participants joined the Facebook group from around the world! Predominantly from the U.S. West Coast, and including Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, North Carolina, Ohio, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Maine, New York and as far away as Denmark, India, Australia and Newfoundland, Canada.

Participants hunted high and low, ran into dead-ends, were suddenly 'gifted' with foods from friends and neighbors, discovered what says local isn't always, got to know local producers, discovered some right under their noses. They found local foods that surprised them like peanut butter, alligator, grains and flours, and that some foods they thought would be easy turned out to be hard to find like fresh local eggs.

Knowing how to cook at home is extremely helpful, knowing how to grow your own food and put it up by canning is ahead of the game.

Eating local while dining out was a challenge and in most cases impossible. Some lived where fish and seafood seemed plentiful but they might have to fish for it themselves, while others could easily just walk into the local seafood market. An understanding of regional and local cuisines emerged as well as eating in season. Eating in real time.

Questions of having to travel far to get local and the contribution that might make to greenhouse gasses arose. Finding that local may not mean sustainably raised. Or that 'local' was processed nearby but the ingredients were from faraway. "Never assume" became a mantra. Getting to know the farmers and food producers seemed essential.

Discussions about the future of food, about poverty and access to fresh local foods and how it impacts health, about gluten-intolerance and grains, and even the future of home cooking took place.

We learned about alternative sources of finding food such as food swaps, gifting, gleaning, SNAP program for local foods, CSA's, the backyard garden, and group purchasing.

Surprises were found: a local peanut butter producer, salt harvester, grain grower and mill, a baker committed to local ingredients, and backyard banana patch.



"Relational eating is being in it together."

- Vicki Robin

Advice and exchange of knowledge was rich. Tips on cooking from scratch, recipes, understanding the true nature of our food (ie: eggs are really seasonal), how to plan ahead for local meals. Sharing resources were plentiful. And encouragement was abundant!

A sense of community reflected among the challengers. The meaning of a meal shared, the family sitting down for a meal together, the generosity of strangers in sharing their food with others, and really getting to know the places where they lived.

Take-aways were that there is a lot to learn, planning is essential, they were willing to spend more time, use food money strategically to include more local, fresh local food is delicious, recognition of the importance of 'exotics' to a meal, everyone falls off the wagon now and then, local food doesn't always cost more, and they had a lot of fun! Most of all the benefits of eating local on health, place, economy, community, spirit and environment are extraordinary.



"This is not just a story about food... It is a story of rekindling hope."

- Vicki Robin



Preparing

STOCKING UP: LOCAL FOODS & EXOTICS

"Farmstand: tomatoes, eggs. CSA: celery, patty pan squash, radishes. Local farmers: ground beef and lamb. Exotics: avocado, black pepper, sea salt. Homegrown: garlic, serrano peppers." - Susan Cunningham

"I've processed 3 pounds of corn, 10 pounds of tomatoes and 5 pounds of green beans. I have salmon on order from a local fisherman. I have a monumental supply of local Rockwell field beans. And I'm buying up many pounds of potatoes from a biodynamic farmer; his crop has blemishes that make less committed consumers not buy them." - Vicki Robin, blog post

"I am grateful that my girls (chickens) are giving me 3 eggs a day, so that is taken care of. I will be researching the local market for cheeses. With regards to veggies, I will be shopping the local farmers market 2X/week. I have an apothecary full of dried herbs for teas and spices. My exotic list could be short, at the moment it includes COFFEE. :)" - Nita Kostroski Durant

"One of my reasons for joining this challenge is to discover exactly how many "exotics" I really use on a regular basis and determine which ones I would rather not live without. As I reach for ingredients to add to my daily cooking, I am much more conscious of WHERE it came from and how far it traveled." -Anonymous

"I'm thinking I need to squirrel away a stock of local veggies, because if I run out during the challenge, grocery store replacements are likely to come from California or Mexico." - Susan Cunningham

Anatomy of a Local Meal

COOKING & FEASTING

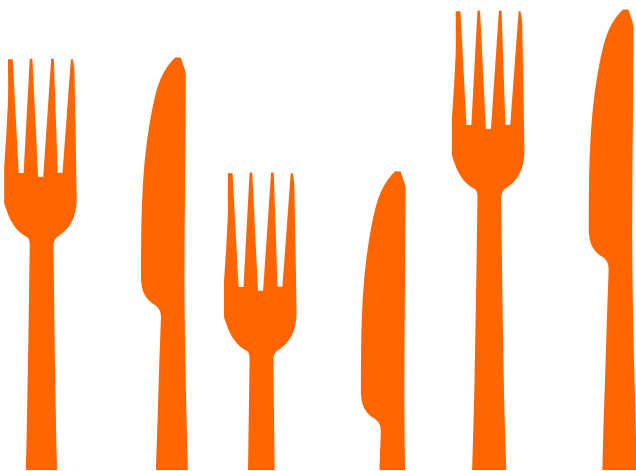
"Great! What a day of feasting. Just finished a pot roast from last year's harvest of a local highland bull - with carrots from my garden and potatoes from my neighbor, simmered in ketchup I made last summer. Today's exotics: almonds, coffee, limes, oil, salt." - Vicki Robin

"Today's [lunch] was a roasted butternut squash ravioli from the CSA with a tomato sauce I made and froze last summer. Topping was fresh oregano, garlic chives and thyme from the garden. The exotic was the mixed Italian cheeses. Side salad of tomatoes (garden), lettuce, apple, sweet red pepper (CSA)." – Cindy Blackshear

"Dinner - All local? No way. About 70%. Corn on the cob grown by my brother's neighbor, sauteed okra grown by a very local farmer, Blueberry muffins with blueberries picked from my uncle's and half and half from the local dairy. Blue crab Italian pasta - all spices from my garden. Crab meat from local grocery but guaranteed from Lake Ponchatrain. Exotics in this meal are tomatoes, pasta, eggs, flour and sugar (local cane but packaged in TX). Kids will probably put butter on their corn. Sugar was disappointing and can't believe I can't find anyone local selling eggs! Total cost around \$10. Will feed us all with leftovers."
- Tushanna Boaz

"Relational eating is being in it together."

- Vicki Robin



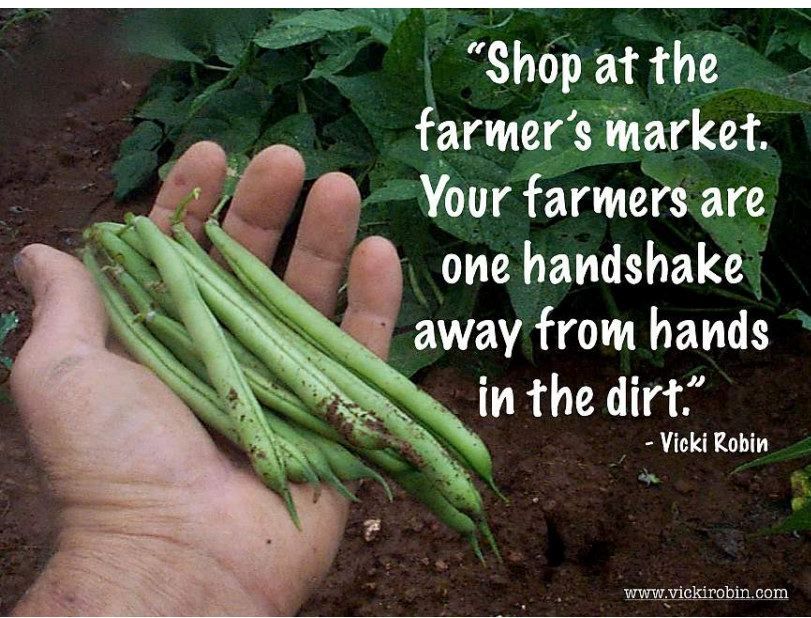
Finding Local

SOURCING & FORAGING

"Big challenge is school lunches, typically my nine year old likes peanut butter and honey. This means I will need local peanut butter...well today I went to my local co-op and ran into my friend and neighbor who works in the produce department. He told me about an organic peanut farmer in Washington. They may be farther than a hundred miles but I'm committed to tracking him down. I have a vitamix and can easily make peanut butter." - Sarai Stevens (Farmer: Alvarez Farms Yakima/Sunnyside area)

"Day one was spent in the car, stopping at all the places I should stop at "one of these days". One of these stops yielded local veggies, honey, fish, frozen berries, and a new hook up for piggy food! All the produce too soft to sell was out back, first come first serve." - Meghan Kasper Andruscavage

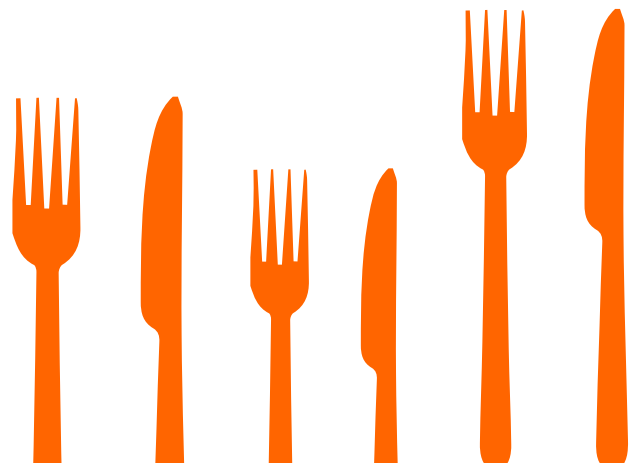
"I live on an island, so I sort of expect that people will be selling fish on every street corner, and yet, they are not. I can get a very limited variety of fish and shellfish at the local grocery stores. Why the local fish scarcity? Does everyone go out and fish their own?" - Susan Cunningham



"Shop at the farmer's market. Your farmers are one handshake away from hands in the dirt."

- Vicki Robin

www.vickirobin.com



An Egg Adventure

FINDING FRESH LOCAL EGGS

My source's girls have barely any eggs now that it's getting darker, so I'm back to Skymeadow. I haven't gone into their chicken house but I do know them and what they feed their chickens. Yolks nowhere near as rich as my friend's free range ones but it does satisfy the locally grown condition.- Vicki Robin

Moulting season - fresh local eggs are quite a bit harder to find now. - Richard Jehn

Yes, eggs are seasonal, once the daylight is less than 14 hours per day, the pituitary gland tells the egg factory to close up shop for the winter. Some breeds from cooler climates will continue laying. – Aloria Lanshaw

Great day at our tiny [Farmer's Market]. We had 5 farms represented today. Finally found eggs! So I was a pig and took the only 2 dozen in the whole market. - Tushanna Boaz



WHAT IS LOCAL?

“What is local? I believe local is one important value but not the only one. I advocate for OWL.

Organic. Whole. Local. All is best, any two are good, even one lived fully is enough to start the shift.

Organic = protection of soil through sustainable farming practices and human health through non-toxic food.

Whole = food in its most natural state, unprocessed, grown from seed, plucked from perennial plants, foraged from the wild.

Local = prosperous local economies, community control over food and farming (sovereignty), strong webs of local relationships (safety, integrity), most fresh, straight from the ground, cow, goat, chicken.”

- Vicki Robin, blog post



Challenges in the Field

LOCAL FOOD - FINDING A DEFINITION

Local food as a consumer preference is definitely on the rise. But it seems hard to define. Some obvious connotations are: fresh, clean, nutritious and some sort of vague neighborliness. But the term has no fixed meaning. No standards or certification.

Challengers preparing for their 10-days within 100 miles have asked:

- If it is processed locally with ingredients from elsewhere is it local?
- If it is locally grown but sold by a corporate chain, is it local?
- If it's 200 miles away, is it local?

"Q: I sometimes buy baked good from local merchants, but how can I check to see if the flour and ingredients they buy are local?" - Sara B. Cooper

"A: Most often if the ingredients are local it says so on the package. It's a point of pride. By asking, though, you show the baker you are interested in local products. luckily we now have a baker [on Whidbey Island] who is passionate about local grains - and bakes with them." - Vicki Robin

"As I reach for ingredients to add to my daily cooking, I am much more conscious of WHERE it came from and how far it traveled. " -Anonymous



"This is such a large discussion. My rule is to know the producer. I actually take time to talk with the people who make the organic cheese south of Bellingham, the folks at Osprey Hill Farm who grow the chickens." - Richard Jehn

"I've been having a similar experience. Growing awareness of how many everyday ingredients in my cooking are exotics. I live in Minnesota, which has a lot of diversity in agriculture and countless CSAs and small farms that grow plentifully for the food co-ops. Meats, vegetables, fruits, dairy, all easy to get from within 100 miles. But seasonings, that's another story. I'm now aware that salt and pepper, which I use on many things I cook, have to occupy 2 of the 10 spots on my exotics list!" - Betsy Barnum

"And all the baking ingredients like baking soda, baking powder and flours. . . those aren't available locally". - Anna Steeples Sherber

"But it certainly brings home the point that buying local is not that same thing as knowing your farmers. Do not be shy about asking questions about how your food was produced, most farmers will be thrilled to talk about it." - Aloria Lanshaw

"I'm thinking a third category: regional. Local is that 100 mile radius, but I've been thinking about trading habits before fossil fuels. So "regional" might be different in different areas and not necessarily defined by miles. To me, in my area, that would be Cascadia whose borders are mountains and sea. That would make "exotics" something outside my region...say spices and citrus." - Cindy Blackshear



"Here in the Upper Midwest, there's lots and lots of food production going on...but most of it is processed and trucked out to other regions. To find local foods, I'm finding you really need to track down a direct source (farmer/fisherman/etc.) and make a personal connection, OR talk a small store in a rural location into carrying a few local goods like seasonal produce in limited quantity. The regulations in place restricting access to local foods is astounding to me! Everything has to be processed, packaged, sealed, shipped through a big supplier, which is just nuts."- Cris Cantin

"This thread reminds me that it's apple harvest time in Chelan County, WA right now. And one of the most ridiculous things I've ever seen is the local Safeway store in Leavenworth WA. Practically right outside the back door are hundreds of acres of orchards. But does Safeway get any local apples... technically YES! However... first the local apples are picked, then sent to the packing house in Cashmere, six miles away. From there they are shipped to the regional Safeway warehouse in Portland Oregon

- over 200 miles away. And then shipped

BACK to the local Safeway store in Leavenworth! Total travel miles -

almost 500 for apples grown less than a mile from the store! Go figure!"

- Anonymous

"It's fascinating that something apparently simple - local food - is actually more complex once you take on a challenge to DO it. Thank you all for entering into the experiment and asking these questions" – Vicki Robin





RELATIONAL EATING

"For me, this is one of the most important aspects of local. A community is a web of relationships that hold you when you fall and support you when you go forth. It is a currency really – a flow of resources, from sharing love to borrowing luggage. It is a non-governmental safety net. The richer in connections a community is, the more needs it fills – entertainment, sociability, celebrations, service groups, and this can translate into employment in the money economy. Local food is a key part of a strong community because we literally come to depend upon one another for our daily bread. Even with all this complexity, though, I'll bet you – and I – still think that "local" is buying big red tomatoes from the farmer who grew them. Which it is." - Vicki Robin, Blog post : 9 Ways to Slice a Pie



Challenges in the Field

EATING OUT AND EATING LOCAL

"Last few days I see how hard it is to move in the "anywhere-food"-world with a commitment to local. Went to a birthday feast last night like a dieter going to a wedding, I'd say. I brought my local crackers and a really delicious hummus made with local rockwell beans to share with others... but eventually I just waved a magic wand and declared the whole table temporarily local and ate these whole foods, cooked with love. Was that falling off the wagon, or an appropriate bending to the moment?

So what is "the wagon" that we are all on? For one, it's testing ourselves. Taking us off the industrial feed and seeing what happens to our preferences and habits. Knowing ourselves as eaters. It's also testing our local/regional food systems: how robust are they? How aware are other eaters? What could and should happen to strengthen the farms and farmers and ranchers and dairies that feed us - and give everyone convenient access to fresh local food at least some of the time." - Vicki Robin

"A hot dog from say Olympic Provisions in Portland would be local, sustainable and guilt free! I live in a rural location that has tourism and some of the folks from Portland have come out over the years and serve local sustainable food on the menus. What will be wonderful is the day we will know without any thought that the hot dog on the cart is local." - Kathleen Davies

"Both days we've eaten at Greenbank Farm cafe where the majority of their food is locally sourced. I was dismayed traveling on the ferry at breakfast, but sure enough here's bagels with a sign that their flour was sourced in Washington." - Cindy Blackshear



"I am starting to crave a meal out somewhere but there are absolutely no local foods restaurants here not even if you pick and choose on the menu." - Jan Deligans

"One of my take-aways from this challenge is the difficulty of eating local when eating out. I haven't set foot in a fast food restaurant in years and frequent local places but where IS that food coming from? And how do we ask without seeming to put someone down?" - Cindy Blackshear

"Tomorrow we have an employee meeting with lunch provided. Who knows where the food will come from, but not partaking at all will be noticed and perhaps frowned upon." - Susan Cunningham

"At this point, I think it is most important to bear in mind that the intention of this challenge is increasing awareness of our food sources and making changes, not flogging ourselves for circumstances beyond our control." - Aloria Lanshaw

"My office is 2 blocks from the lusciousness and local abundance that is Pike Place Market, and yet when we order in food for meetings we still get out-of-season, tasteless strawberries and melons from Mexico. Limp lettuce from who knows where, and pink grainy things referred to as "tomatoes" but in no way resembling an actual tomato. It drives me crazy. I want to tell the admin to give me the \$50 they're going to spend and I'll go get some REAL food at the Market."
- Susan Cunningham

"Maybe this challenge is helping us learn together not just how to eat locally but how to share what we are doing in a way that doesn't put people off. Let's not make "local food" the new "right way."
- Vicki Robin



Challenges in the Field

THE COST OF GOING LOCAL

“We need to approach this in a whole systems way. Budgets are actually a whole system approach to spending. Let's say you budget \$300 a month for food. One option is to spend a little less on impulse buys so you can spend more on food - put another \$50 a month in the food category. If you want to eat more fresh, whole, local foods and stay within \$300/month there are other strategies. Would you be willing to eat less meat (a high cost food) to be able to afford to pay more for fruits and veggies? I've found that I now eat half the meat I used to eat, but better meat. Would you be willing to grow some green food on your deck or in your backyard - sprouts, herbs, kale, chard. A little home grown food could keep you within \$300. Would you be willing to not throw away food? Would you be willing to buy some blemished or curly produce if your market was willing to have bargain bins of "ugly" veggies (in France this is happening).” - Vicki Robin

“Growing a garden and cooking from scratch are the two prime examples”. - Annabel Ascher

“Another idea is to plan some meals that are a bit heavier on less expensive foods (ahhh, the glorious potato) and lighter on more expensive (meat and cheese). Another is to treat this like a devotional practice. It's a 10 day devotion to exploring an important value: local food. Strengthening our local communities and local food systems is, for me, one of the most important ways to create security now and in the future.” - Vicki Robin



"I could buy chicken from a CSA at \$28 per bird, more or less. And I can't eat leftovers because of a mast cell activation disorder. I can have ONE day old, thats it. It kills my one bird-three dishes-six meals weekly menu. And I am not saying that the properly raised barnyard bird isn't WORTH \$7.00 a pound under the present circumstances vis a vis the American Agricultural system. But still, I can get a whole Rosie for about \$12.00, or I can spend about \$7.00 a pound but buy just a smidge. One half pound is enough for a stir fry for two. And no left-overs. This is my dilemma at the moment." - Annabel Ascher

"\$8 is the going rate for local organic eggs in Sebastopol CA." – Annabel Ascher

"One of the reasons I changed to a vegan diet was economic. When I learned several years ago that half a cup of boiled dry beans has the same amount of protein as one egg it was easy for me to make the switch because one dozen organic eggs cost \$4 while a pound of dry beans costs only about a buck." - Anonymous

"I am paying very close attention to costs because that is a big barrier for so many, and I would love to have a template for overcoming this issue that will work over a broad area." - Annabel Ascher

"A rousing discussion happening here about how to deal with cost of local. I want to point out that the challenge is designed to surface these struggles and raise the questions - so that we seek answers ultimately as we-the-eaters and change the conditions. So your struggles are also important information." - Vicki Robin





After the Challenge: How to Keep Going

“Since my original local food challenge I've developed relationships with farmers, found favorite foods (some illegal actually), mapped farm stands, filled my freezer and pantry from the garden and friend's animals and so even though I'm not holding myself to any standard, I think I am around 50% from 100 mile with 10 exotics. My big breakthrough is finally letting go of the stress over spending more. I simply buy local and lovely food and don't question it in terms of comparison shopping”. - Vicki Robin

“I committed myself to at least one local-focused meal per day this winter and a minimum of two per day, Spring through Fall.” - Laurie Pitts

“I just completed my wonderful 10 Day Local Food Challenge and found that living in my urban setting of Austin Texas prompted a visit to the many Farmers Markets for my local foods (my garden suffered this year and canning has not hit my to do list yet). My eating pattern is and has been as seasonal as possible, but finding a good cookbook comes in handy. I am happy to have participated in this challenge and look forward to continuing this pattern of awareness and healthful eating in a much greater capacity since participating in these 10 days of joyful enlightenment. Sat Nam.” - Nita Kostroski Durant

“Cheese was the big one for me. Now buying local instead of at the grocery store.” - Cindy Blackshear

“I think my biggest take-away from this is that if you want to eat at a restaurant/deli/take-out at all, you will have no idea where your food is coming from. I don't know how to reconcile that.” - Susan Cunningham

“My takeaways: social eating is challenging as I've seen others note. I want to be more mindful of what I just "pull off the shelf" and that means being more mindful when stocking the shelf. Salad dressing is an exotic! I'm sure there's more and will add as things come to mind.” - Cindy Blackshear

“Yahoo! Made it through Day 1 yesterday and it was some of the best food ever.” - Jan Deligans

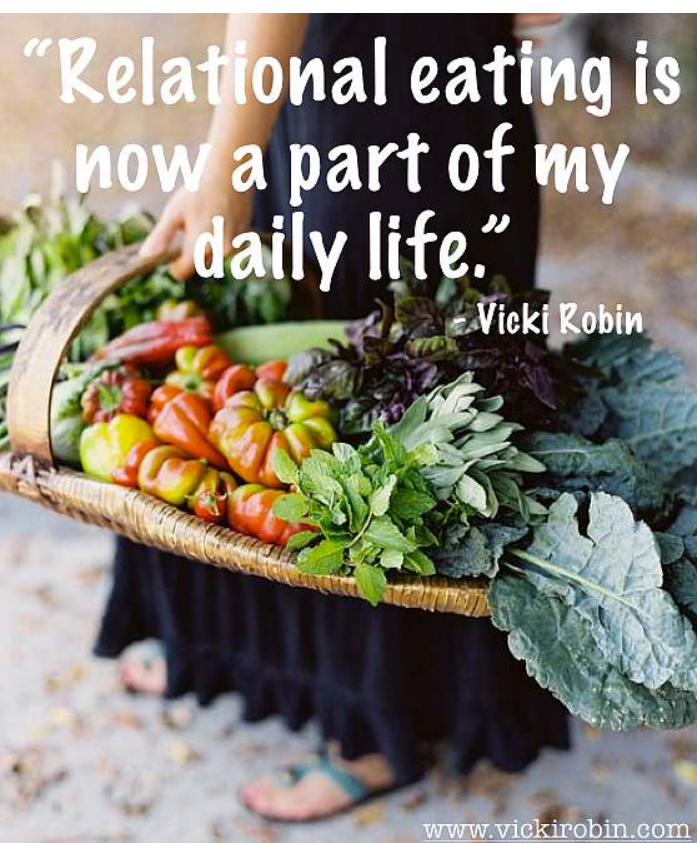


“So here's some things I'm learning: even the co-ops aren't labeling their products as to the locality they come from in a coherent enough way to be able to discern that information. Many products don't identify where they come from at all.” - Jan Deligans

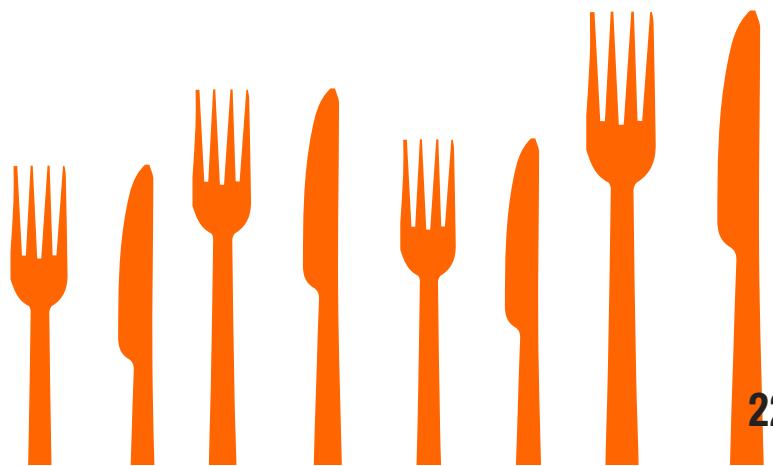
“Oh, I always eat local!” that was a delusion! I have a new respect for how much attention is required to really do this, and planning, and substituting and not being attached to certain foods I think I “need” (like half-and-half). That eating local requires a bigger mental and maybe emotional shift than I was prepared for.” - Betsy Barnum

“Eating locally, the market, my garden, the food my husband and I cook and preserve, the informal community economic network we have connected and amplified...it all feeds into a way of life that makes me quite happy and rich.” - Sarai Stevens

“What an important series of insights. Many people are in your shoes they think they are eating local, but when they commit they realize how diverse their even simple food sources are. Ironical: a local food restaurant buying food from Wal-Mart. No need to judge them. It's the system. Congrats for keeping the boundary firm because it sent you on an informative hunt. Keep posting.” - Vicki Robin



“As a farmer, everyone eating local for 10 days amounts to 2.7% of the year, which is not enough to sustain any farmer. BUT, committing to eating X number of meals per week CAN sustain local agriculture” - Aloria Lanshaw





I suspected, we-the-supposedly-local eaters, would have [this realization] - that we are more woven into the industrial system, in our preferences, habits and sourcing, than we imagine. For me this realization from my 10-mile diet is what's calling me ever more loudly to be a system-changer. I thought my activist days had settled into a more seasoned acceptance, but I'm now prowling for answers and actions so we-the-eaters are not totally subsumed into the matrix of industrial food. I believe it is no longer just personal choice. Personal choice is the START of the change we need. It gives us moral vigor and great compassion for all of us trapped in this fast changing food supply chain. Which puts me in unknown territory. What laws, ordinances, licensing, regulations need to change. What assumptions need to change. What needs to be closely examined the way the Environmental Working Group does. Not with rancor but with a mama bear ferocity when her cubs are threatened. And how can we-the-(now more aware)-local food challengers shine a light on what can change in ourselves and what needs to change so that OWL (organic whole local) food captures even 50% of our mind share - and mouth share." - Vicki Robin



Recipes from the Local Food Challengers

Sourdough Buckwheat Pancakes

sourdough starter
1 cup buckwheat flour
1 cup water or whey
1 egg
1 tablespoon olive oil

Begin with your sourdough starter. Add 1 cup of buckwheat flour and 1 cup water or whey, let sit for 2 days. Remove 1 cup of buckwheat starter, add 1 egg and 1 tablespoon olive oil. Whisk together cook on hot griddle. Makes 5 4-5 inch pancakes, 3 for breakfast 2 for lunch. Refeed starter. Enjoy again in 3 days! It sets a nice rhythm in the kitchen...

Eagle Song Evans Gardener

Cornmeal Griddle Cakes Recipe

2 cups white or yellow cornmeal
2 teaspoons baking powder
¾ to 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1 cup water, plus more if needed
¼ - ⅓ cup mild-flavored vegetable oil, for frying

1. In a large bowl, whisk together the cornmeal, baking powder, and salt.
2. In a second bowl or large liquid measuring cup, whisk the egg and 1 cup water until smooth. Stir the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients, using as few strokes as possible. The batter should be soupy but not watery.
3. Heat ¼ cup of the oil in a cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Ladle ¼ cup of batter into the heated skillet for each cake, being careful not to crowd the skillet. The batter should immediately sizzle at the edges.
4. Cook the cakes until the bottoms are a rich brown and bubbles form on the tops and along the edges, 2 to 3 minutes. Turn and brown the other side, an additional 2 to 3 minutes. Serve immediately, flipping those little babies onto a plate and passing them along while you fry up the remaining cakes, adding oil to the skillet as needed.

<http://leitesculinaria.com/77176/recipes-cornmeal-griddle-cakes.html#RMBFyM8tJJYB5CbF.99>
via Tushanna Boaz

Easy Winter Curry

Local chicken leftovers, roughly 1 cup, pulled into large chunks

Local carrots (6-8 medium, rolling cut)

Local onion, large dice to match rolling cut

2 tablespoons coconut oil

2 tablespoons mild Indian curry paste

1 can light coconut milk

Sea salt to taste

2 local scallions, greens, chopped

2 tablespoons local cilantro, chopped

Optional:

1 teaspoons ginger (add with curry paste)

1 large yam, diced to match rolling cut (add about 5 minutes into carrot cooking time)

Sauté onion and carrot for about 8 minutes in coconut oil with salt on medium heat. Add curry paste and ginger. Cook for a few more minutes, stirring occasionally. Add coconut milk. Cover and simmer 10-20 minutes. Add large chunks of leftover chicken. Heat through gently, about 10 more minutes. Taste and season. Serve with scallions and cilantro as garnish.

Delicious and local forward. Makes 4 servings.

Laurie Pitts

Corn Tortillas

2 cups masa harina

1 tablespoon lard

1 teaspoon salt

1 ½ cups water

Mix lard into masa and salt and slowly add water. The dough should be a little on the wet side. Let sit for 30 minutes and then press. For fresh masa harina - www.mexicoinmykitchen.com has a great step by step guide.

Mariah Raftree Ross

Squash Spread/ Squash Butter

4 - 5 pounds of zucchini or squash sliced (or grated if you want)

4 - 8 cloves of garlic (to your taste) chopped

onions optional

¼ - ½ cup fresh basil

In a large pan pour in some olive oil and about a tablespoon of ghee. Add garlic (and onions if you like) and saute. When translucent, add squash, turn heat to low and cover, stirring occasionally. As the squash cooks down, you can take off the cover and begin stirring. Keep it at a medium heat. You'll see the liquid from the squash accumulate. Cook uncovered for about an hour. The squash will get nice and mushy (some call this recipe . Add the basil and cook another 10 minutes or so to get the great basil flavor infused. Add salt and pepper to taste. I have this with pasta from a local source and it's like pesto. Or sometimes I use it with locally made tortillas or tortilla chips. Yum!

Sara B Cooper

Crock pot Zucchini Louisiana

4 - 5 pounds of zucchini or squash sliced (or grated if you want)

4 - 8 cloves of garlic (to your taste) chopped

onions optional

¼ - ½ cup fresh basil

In a large pan pour in some olive oil and about a tablespoon of ghee. Add garlic (and onions if you like) and saute. When translucent, add squash, turn heat to low and cover, stirring occasionally. As the squash cooks down, you can take off the cover and begin stirring. Keep it at a medium heat. You'll see the liquid from the squash accumulate. Cook uncovered for about an hour. The squash will get nice and mushy (some call this recipe . Add the basil and cook another 10 minutes or so to get the great basil flavor infused. Add salt and pepper to taste. I have this with pasta from a local source and it's like pesto. Or sometimes I use it with locally made tortillas or tortilla chips. Yum!

Sara B Cooper

Fresh Fig Bread Pudding

Adapted from a recipe in the SF Chronicle

3 1/2 tablespoons butter
4 cups milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
3 eggs, lightly beaten
1 1/2 cups brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
10 to 12 slices day-old country-style bread
1 pint fresh figs, stemmed and sliced in thirds lengthwise

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Use 1/2 tablespoon of the butter to grease a 2-quart baking dish.

Pour the milk into a large bowl. Add the vanilla, eggs, all but 6 tablespoons of the sugar, and the salt. Mix well. Add the bread and let stand until it is thoroughly softened, about 10 to 20 minutes, depending upon the dryness of the bread.

Arrange a layer of bread in the bottom of the prepared pan. Cover it with a layer of figs and then drizzle with some of the egg-milk mixture. Repeat twice, pushing the layers down as you go and ending with a layer of figs, putting them cut-side down. Add the remaining egg-milk mixture. Sprinkle with the reserved 6 tablespoons sugar. Cut the remaining 3 tablespoons butter into small pieces and scatter them over the top.

Bake for about 45 minutes, until the pudding puffs and turns golden, and a knife inserted into the center comes out clean. Remove from the oven and let stand for about 10 minutes before serving.

viaTushanna Boaz

<http://circle-b-kitchen.squarespace.com/food-and-recipes/2010/8/3/fresh-fig-bread-pudding.html>