



Fresh Prospects

The Prospect Heights CSA Newsletter



...BUZZ WORD

locavore - n. a person who eats only locally grown food.

The term was coined by a group of activists who vowed to eat only foods grown or harvested within a 100 mile radius of San Francisco for an entire month. Locavorism spread in the Bay area—and beyond—in August 2005 and again in May 2006 when the group encouraged other concerned consumers to follow suit. The original locavore team has renewed the challenge for September 2007. If you're ready to join them, visit www.locavores.com for more information.

The locavores are no food Nazis. The pleasures of good food and cooking are paramount to the cause, and locavores recognize that it's not always practical to stuff your pantry entirely with local ingredients. Here are some of their tips on making responsible food choices, as published in an article in the San Francisco Chronicle.

Choosing Organic vs. Local

You may find yourself confronted with the choice of organic or local. How do the two fit in each other? Here are the Locavores' guidelines:

- Whenever possible, buy, eat and cook local, i.e. within the foodshed.
- If not locally produced, then organic. This choice generally protects the environment and your body from chemicals and hormones.
- If not organic, then family farm. If it comes down to Kraft versus Cabot (a dairy co-op in Vermont), choose Cabot.
- If not family farm, then local business. Coffee and wheat products may be difficult. At least support a local coffee-roasting house and local bakery.
- If not a local business, then go for terroir. Purchase foods that express the region they are grown in and support the local agriculture. If you're buying Brie, buy it from Brie, France; if Parmesan cheese, from Parma, Italy.

Foodshed Sources and Alternatives

If you want to practice foodshed eating, but some of the staples of your diet just don't fit, what can you do? First, research an ingredient to find out where it comes from, then research a local source.

After that, the choices basically boil down to three—give up the ingredient; ignore the foodshed philosophy for this food and keep eating it; or seek some middle ground using creative strategies such as the following:

- Coffee: Buy beans that are roasted locally and/or by fair trade producers.
- Tea: Drink herbal teas from homegrown or locally grown fresh herbs, such as lemon verbena, peppermint, lemongrass
- Wheat breads and pastries: Buy only locally baked breads and pastries, or bake your own with locally milled flour.
- Pasta: Buy from small local producers, or use pasta made from locally grown grains.
- Chocolate: Buy chocolate that's made locally by environmentally conscious producers.
- Ketchup (and soy sauce, fish sauce and other condiments): Buy products from local manufacturers.
- Salt: There is local salt, but you may not like its taste, or find it as pollutant-free as you'd like, so choose salt that is as free of additives as possible.
- Black pepper (and other exotic spices): Substitute chile pepper or California red peppercorns.
- Sugar: Use locally harvested honey instead.
- Vanilla: Substitute other aromatics in baking, such as lavender or rose petals.