

From Your Living Well Coach:  
**100 Mile Diet**

## Eating Locally - The 100 Mile Diet

The phrase "100 mile diet" was coined in 2005 by the Vancouver couple, Alisa Smith and James MacKinnon, who decided to source all of their food and drink from within 100 miles of their home. Their objective was to support the local economy, based on organics and sustainability, and cut greenhouse gas production by eliminating the need for global transportation.

It is estimated that food sold in North American grocery stores travels 1500 miles from farm to plate - a 25 percent increase from 1980. Even certified-organic produce is grown on vast farms, many overseas, and shipped long distances.

This was not always the case. In the early 1900s the majority of North Americans lived in rural areas and one third of the population was farmers. Those were the days when people knew their local milkman and butcher and exotic foods like oranges were only eaten on special occasions and the late summer was spent canning and preserving the harvest for the winter. Now, less than 2 percent of the population is farmers and people get their food from a few large farms that dominate the market.

Unfortunately, the great gap that exists between the farmer and the average consumer fosters a serious disconnect between consumers and their food supply. Most people are completely unaware of who produces their food, what the fields and barns look like, or what methods the producers use. In North America we assume we don't have any problems with the food system because everything is (relatively) cheap and readily available. But in the last few years we've begun to see problems in the agriculture business with mad cow disease, salmonella on spinach, not to mention the genetically modified food debate.

To find your 100 Miles visit  
**[www.100milediet.org](http://www.100milediet.org)**



## Why Eat Locally?

### 11 Reasons from The 100 Mile Diet

#### 1. Taste the difference.

At a farmers' market, most local produce has been picked inside of 24 hours. It comes to you ripe, fresh, and with its full flavor, unlike supermarket food that may have been picked weeks or months before. Close-to-home foods can also be bred for taste, rather than withstanding the abuse of shipping or industrial harvesting.

#### 2. Know what you're eating.

Buying food today can be complicated. What pesticides were used? Is that corn genetically modified? Was that chicken free range or did it grow up in a box? People who eat locally find it easier to get answers. Many build relationships with farmers whom they trust.

#### 3. Meet your neighbors.

Local eating is social. Studies show that people shopping at farmers' markets have 10 times more conversations than their counterparts at the supermarket.

#### 4. Get in touch with the seasons.

When you eat locally, you eat what's in season. You'll remember that cherries are the taste of summer. Even in winter, comfort foods like squash soup and pancakes just make sense—a lot more sense than flavorless cherries or strawberries from the other side of the world.

#### 5. Discover new flavors.

Ever tried sun chokes? How about purslane, quail eggs, or emu? These are just a few of the flavours you could sample with local eating. Even familiar foods can be more interesting. Count the types of apples on offer at your supermarket. Maybe three? Small farms are keeping alive dozens of other varieties while many more have been lost in our rush to sameness.

#### 6. Explore your home.

Visiting local farms is a way to be a tourist on your own home turf, with plenty of stops for snacks.

#### 7. Save the world.

A study in Iowa found that a regional diet consumed 17 times less oil and gas than a typical diet based on food shipped across the country. The ingredients for a typical British meal, sourced locally, traveled 66 times fewer "food miles." There's also an environmental benefit to buying local food. Farms are relatively close to the markets where they sell their food (usually within 50 to 250 miles), so they use less energy and other resources getting their produce to market.

#### 8. Give back to the local economy.

Buying local food also can be a social statement. Shoppers buying from local farms are supporting the regional

economy, helping to preserve family farms and getting to know the people who raise their food. A British study tracked how much of the money spent at a local food business stayed in the local economy, and how many times it was reinvested. The total value was almost twice the contribution of a dollar spent at a supermarket chain – plus you get to support your neighbours.

#### 9. Be healthy.

A local diet is much more likely to involve lots of fresh produce and homemade meals and not a lot of junk food and processed fats, additives and sugar. You will probably sample a wider variety of foods and will definitely eat more fresh food at its nutritional peak.

#### 10. Create memories.

There is a theory that a night spent making jam or pickles with friends will always be better a time than the latest Hollywood blockbuster. We're convinced.

#### 11. Have more fun while traveling.

Once you're addicted to local eating, you'll want to explore it wherever you go. Local eating is relative so in Mexico you might enjoy hot-spiced sour oranges, but in PEI you might luck into some amazing local potato chips!

