

Nutrition 12
The Eat Local/Whole Foods Challenge Potluck & Essay
Held in the Upper Level of the Student Union

There is a growing movement that encourages consuming locally grown, whole foods. In this assignment, your task is to learn about why local foods are encouraged, try buying/using a local food, bring your experiment for others to share, and write an essay about your experience and the rationale. Details follow.

Cook or prepare a food dish made from whole (unprocessed) foods. At least one of your ingredients must be locally grown or produced. Please follow the spirit of these instructions rather than getting uptight about definitions, but here are some general working definitions that may be helpful:

By “whole (unprocessed) food,” I am referring to something that comes from nature, as opposed to a box, can, in frozen form, or otherwise transformed by someone else. It can be of plant or animal origin but try to get as close to its original form as possible. If you choose animal foods, you don’t have to go so far as to purchase an entire animal – but do use a whole piece of meat, such as a piece of steak or a chicken breast, as opposed to ground hamburger, luncheon meats or sausage. For plant foods, choose fresh produce (not canned or frozen), whole grains (not pre-cooked or instant), or dried beans (not canned). Milk and eggs are also acceptable. You won’t be penalized as long as you pay attention to the spirit of this instruction, avoiding prepared foods, foods in boxes, and trying to get closer to foods as they occur in nature. Two allowable exceptions include flour (as long as it is a whole grain) and oils that don’t contain added flavorings or other ingredients. Please don’t check with me about whether specific ingredients fit the definition – work it out on your own, and address any confusion or difficulties in the essay.

“Local” is defined as something grown within 200 miles. As much as I’d like to support home-grown foods, please get at least one food from another source – I’d like you to have the experience of shopping for local foods. Do your research first and think about the intention about buying local foods before making your purchase. For example, Costco sells some lettuces grown by a local farm. However, it is unlikely that the lettuce stayed local - Costco buys in large quantities and has the product shipped to a central location before distributing it to the local stores. In other words, even though it may be a locally grown food, it doesn’t meet the criteria of this assignment.

Having a hard time deciding what to bring? The Statler Library has a large collection of cookbooks and “food books.” Try using this as an opportunity to expand your horizons. We all have different values that we bring to this project and I hope you can rise to the challenge and incorporate your “food values.” If limited time or money is among your concerns, for example, challenge yourself to find a quick preparation or low-cost dish. There will be other students that share your values and will be interested in learning new possibilities.

On the potluck day, **bring:**

- 1) Your food, along with any necessary serving utensils. (You may bring your own utensils or plates for eating, but this isn’t necessary.) Plates, forks, spoons and cups will be supplied; if your item requires anything else, such as a bowl to eat it from, please provide it.
- 2) A name for your dish, written on a piece of paper that can be displayed with your food. The name should be chosen creatively, keeping in mind that well-chosen names play a role in people’s evaluation of a food’s taste. After the name, in parenthesis, label your food “non-veg,” “veg,” or “vegan.” (“Veg” stands for “vegetarian.”)
- 3) Your recipe. The recipe must be typed or printer-generated (no handwriting). The first line of your recipe page should include the name you chose for the dish so that your recipe can be easily filed and found. Label whether the food is non-veg, veg or vegan. At the bottom of the page, include your name and section number. Provide enough information so that someone else can reproduce the food. Note that a copy of this page will be made accessible to other students.

Some advice:

You get to decide on quantity, but keep in mind that you don't have to feed the whole class. There will be a lot of people bringing food and eaters will be looking for small samples of individual dishes. Make your dish user friendly – have everything pre-cut in small pieces so that it's easy to eat in small quantity.

The **Final Essay** should include the following components:

- 4) What was your locally produced ingredient? Where did you shop? Tell me something about the farm. (If it's not labeled, ask! Your grocer should be able to provide this information – and if they can't that is also interesting information for discussion in your paper.)
- 5) Give three reasons to support buying locally produced food. At least one of those reasons should be directly personal (such as health or palatability) and at least one environmental. (Be sure to explain each and not just list them.)
- 6) Was this a difficult assignment? Did you have to avoid certain items that you normally use?
- 7) Would you find this challenging to do on a regular basis? What did you learn?
- 8) Optional questions to explore: Did you have any particular challenges, such as limited time, cooking experience, or lack of a kitchen? How did you work around these? Did anything stand about others' contributions that you want to comment on?

Your essay should be at least 600 words. (That's the approximate equivalent of 1½ pages, single spaced, 12 point Times Roman font, 1" margins.) Feel free to elaborate more deeply on any of the points to meet the length requirement. While I won't be explicitly grading you on presentation, I do expect a logical, understandable essay. Free help is available from the Writing Lab in the Learning Assistance Center (Room 207, beneath Rosenberg Library). If you use any outside resources (websites, books, etc.), please provide reference information.

	Grading Criteria	Points
A	#1 above (Make sure your contribution gets on the participation list at the potluck.)	.5
B	#2 and 3 above (note: without a recipe, you will probably lose points elsewhere)	1
C	#4 above	1
D	Meets the challenge of using whole food (or at least addresses any difficulties in essay).	1
E	Essay includes #5-7 and meets length/presentation components listed above.	1.5
	Taste	0
	Total	5

If you can't participate on your potluck date, you have two options: 1) contact the instructor if you would like to discuss the possibility of participating with another class; or 2) participate in the end of the semester potluck. If you choose this latter option, your essay is due on the potluck day. Note: if you participate in the end of semester potluck in lieu of your class potluck, you won't get double credit for participation. (In other words, you will get points towards this required class assignment, but will not get any points towards the optional out-of-class assignments.)

Want more information about why buying local food is valuable? Check out The Sustainable Table website, in their Issues section, Buy Local: <http://www.sustainabletable.org/issues/buylocal/>.

Class	Date of potluck. Essay due one week later.
MWF 9:10	Wed, 3/25 and Mon, 4/27 All students attend both sessions; if your last name starts with A-N, bring food to the first potluck only; last names O-Z, bring food to the second potluck only.
MWF 10:40	Friday, 3/27
T/Th 8:10	Thurs, 4/30
T/Th 11:10	Tues, 4/28