

Food Roots

Food Roots

a local foods community cookbook

stories and recipes from
Local Foods Connection
farmers and clients



Food Roots is a joint effort by Local Foods Connection and the University of Iowa's Art and Ecology course. Project coordinated by Laura Dowd and Sarah Kanouse with funding from the Hawkeye Area Community Action Program, United Way, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. In-kind support from the Intermedia Program in the School of Art and Art History at the University of Iowa.

All photographs contained in this book were taken by Laura Dowd, founder and executive director of Local Foods Connection. Produce images are of food grown by small family farmers in Southeastern Iowa. People images are of clients, volunteers and farmers who participate in Local Foods Connection's programs and activities.

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Thanks to all the individuals and families who have enrolled in Local Foods Connection and taken on the challenge of incorporating lots of fresh, local food into their lives and diets. Thanks especially to the clients who shared their recipes, stories, and knowledge with us to include in this book. We are grateful for all the local, sustainable agriculture farmers who grow, raise, and produce the healthy, delicious, and wonderful food upon which everyone at Local Foods Connection has come to depend. We extend our gratitude to the volunteers and donors who made this book possible and who enrich our work every day.

—*Laura Dowd*

Thank you to the students in Art and Ecology for your hard work, good humor, and patience as we learned and worked together on this book. I am deeply grateful to the staff and board of Local Foods Connection for your incredible, detailed work on every aspect of this project and your enthusiasm for collaborating with my students. Thanks to the clients and farmers who took time out of your busy days to share a bit of your lives with the class—you taught us more than you know. And finally, thanks to the Intermedia Program and Sustainability Certificate at the University of Iowa for creating an environment where a class like this, and a teacher like me, can find a home.

—*Sarah Kanouse*



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introduction



About This Book

The stories and recipes in this cookbook came about through a collaboration between Local Foods Connection (LFC) and the Art and Ecology class at the University of Iowa. Over the course of several months, 14 students and an LFC volunteer interviewed several of the organization's client families and social service agencies, in addition to the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farmers from whom it purchases fresh food. Through gathering these stories and recipes, we have created a cookbook which highlights Iowa City's diverse food knowledge and educates the community about cooking and nutrition. Clients and farmers interviewed for this book come from Illinois, Iowa, California, Mexico, Guatemala, Republic of the Sudan, The Togolese Republic, El Salvador, and Thailand. The project assembles the knowledge and experiences of LFC's clients and channels student skills and energies to become involved in the community and in local issues such as poverty, hunger, and food justice in Johnson County.

Local Foods Connection enrolls low-income families and the agencies that serve them in CSA programs. CSAs provide a season's worth of fresh produce to consumers while paying local earth-friendly farmers fair prices for the food they grow, raise, and produce. Clients have the opportunity to visit a farm, as well as to learn healthy cooking methods. These opportunities are part of LFC's larger educational program, which covers nutrition, cooking, and environmental issues. While the local food movement in Iowa City is particularly strong, many low-income people feel excluded from it or are not even aware that one exists. Local Foods Connection tries to bridge this gap by serving single mothers, the elderly, people with exceptional medical needs, minorities, immigrants, and the under- and unemployed. LFC strengthens eastern Iowa's local foods network while empowering farmers who live and work just outside of our neighborhoods. For more information, contact: Local Foods Connection, PO Box 2821, Iowa City, IA 52244, (319) 338-2010, localfoodsconnection@yahoo.com, www.localfoodsconnection.org

**For the privacy of Local Foods Connection clients, pseudonyms have been used throughout the cookbook.*

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Local Foods Connection pays for a family's enrollment in a CSA program. A membership in a CSA is a promise of a box full of fresh produce from a local farm every week for about twenty weeks. A box is filled with a mixture of vegetables ready for harvest, from greens, turnips, and radishes in the spring to squash, eggplant, and potatoes in the fall. Shares can include bread, eggs, fruit, and flowers. CSA shares are paid for in the spring, guaranteeing farmers the income to produce their crops. In return, the farmers supply members with high-quality food throughout the growing season.

Food in CSA shares is harvested or prepared within a few days of when the farmer delivers it. LFC purchases produce grown without the use of synthetic chemicals, such as pesticides and herbicides. Most farm land in Iowa is taken up by large corn and soybean farms. Most of these corn and soybean crops are not for direct human consumption but are used to produce animal feed, high fructose corn syrup, and other food additives. On the other hand, CSA farmers grow a variety of fruit and vegetables to sell directly to individuals. Their farms are usually smaller, more labor intensive, and owned by a family.

We purchase goods from farmers who use sustainable farming practices, such as growing vegetables without chemical pesticides and raising animals in a humane environment. Farmers in Atalissa, Cedar Rapids, Dorchester, Grinnell, Iowa City, Kalona, Kanawha, Mechanicsville, Riverside, Solon, and West Branch provide us with fresh fruits, vegetables, bread, eggs, and meat.

What is Art and Ecology?

Art and Ecology is a studio-seminar course at the University of Iowa that explores artistic responses to environmental sustainability and related social issues. Working as a collaborative, creative research group, the students and professor joined forces with Local Foods Connection to further our understanding of local environmental justice issues and to make a contribution to the community where we live. The course is offered annually by the Intermedia Program of the School of Art and Art History, and students enroll from across the university, bringing a diverse set of skills and interests to the class.



Wilson's Apple Orchard, Iowa City





salads and soups



Eggplant, Local Harvest CSA, Solon



Eggplant Salad

by Fatma

1 eggplant
2 medium tomatoes, finely diced
½ each of green onion and green, yellow and red peppers, finely diced
1 carrot, shredded
1 tsp minced garlic
½ tsp salt
¼ tsp black pepper
Vegetable oil for frying

- Cut the eggplant into one-inch cubes; fry in vegetable oil until golden.
- Combine eggplant, raw vegetables, and remaining ingredients in a large bowl.
- Toss and serve.

Fatma's Story

I am originally from Sudan. I arrived here in August of 1999. Nothing is extraordinary about my immigration to the US and to Iowa City; just like many immigrants from the Middle East, my family and I were looking for peace, human rights, better economic opportunities, and better life chances for our kids.

When I came to the US, my family came to Texas, but we had friends and family in Iowa City. They told us it was a safe city, very good for families, good education, so that sounded attractive to us. So we moved to Iowa City. We became US citizens. We love it. It is a great place. My husband and I both received master's degrees from the university, and now both of my kids are going to be students at the University of Iowa in the fall. My son is going to study chemistry and my daughter is doing political science and international studies so she can study law.

We moved from Sudan because of a lack of human rights and women's rights. First, we moved from Sudan to the United Arab Emirates, where I

had my kids. No politics, no human rights, no women's rights. That's why I enjoy being here. I am a human being here. Being away from family, that is the hard part. We have to pay a lot to make a balance, so our children can know about their culture, their religion, and know their family members. But our children value democracy, freedom, and human rights; they live those values.

Being a part of Local Foods Connection and living in the Midwest has helped me greatly to be a healthy eater who chooses local produce for myself and my family.

The Sudanese community is in Iowa City is growing rapidly, which is nice. Our children have friends who share an immigrant culture. When my family arrived here, the Sudanese community was maybe fifty families, but now it is maybe 200 families. Because I work at our community's Neighborhood Center, I often

see new faces. Last week, I saw three new families. It is growing. They are all attracted to better education.

I received a master's degree in education—social foundations education. It is perfect for working here—a bit of counseling and sociology—it is great. I started working at the Neighborhood Center two weeks after arriving in Iowa City. I started as a part time teacher, and then after a few years I moved to the parent's support department.

Because I am a member of a sponsoring agency, I am able to help enroll families in Local Foods Connection. The organization partners with local religious institutions, social service agencies, and medical offices to find families to participate in its program. Personally, I am interested in eating healthy, which makes me more motivated to help people get enrolled. One mother is so happy she has given two presentations about her experience with Local Foods Connection. She teaches them about different vegetables and nutrients, local foods, healthy foods. It is great. Being a part of Local Foods Connection and living in the Midwest has helped me greatly to be a healthy eater who chooses local produce for myself and my family.



Peppers, Local Harvest CSA, Solon



Cactus Salad/Ensalada de Nopales

by Anna

1 lb of nopal cactus (available in Mexican grocery stores)

Onion to taste

3 tomatoes

2 serrano chile peppers

½ cup cilantro

2 lemons

1 tsp salt

- Cut the cactus into strips and steam in boiling water for 20 minutes.
- Wash the cooked cactus in cold water with the other vegetables in a colander.
- Chop the onions, tomatoes, peppers, and cilantro and put in a serving dish. Put the cactus on top.
- Add salt and the juice from the lemons.
- Add cheese if desired and serve with corn chips.

Anna's Story

My recipe is from my hometown in Guerrero, Mexico. I usually make it with my aunts and sisters.

LFC gives me good exposure to new vegetables to eat.

I have been in Iowa City for eight years. I am married and I have two kids—Eric has autism and David has problems with communicating.

Sometimes it is really difficult to take care of Eric. It's really tough, especially if we have friends and people over—it overwhelms him—but Iowa City is a great place to find care for our kids.

I have participated in LFC for two years. I feel that LFC gives me good exposure to new vegetables to eat. I usually use most of the vegetables. Sometimes I don't know how to use all the leafy greens. The cactus I use here in my recipe, I find in Mexican grocery stores. The cactus is a healthier substitute for meat and is cheaper. I mostly use tomatoes, peppers, and onions. Sometimes I use squash instead of cactus. The vegetables are very fresh. Through LFC I am able to visit the farms and they are very exciting—it is interesting to see how they harvest the vegetables.



Hot Peppers, Local Harvest CSA, Solon



Shrimp Salad/Ensalada de Camarones

by Laura

1 lb large, raw shrimp
½ cup onion, sliced
2 lb tomatoes
2 cucumbers
½ cup green onion, chopped
¾ cup cilantro
8 oz crab leg meat
1½ cups clam juice
2 large limes
2 Tbsp ketchup
1 avocado (optional)
1 jalapeño pepper (optional)
1 Tbsp salt

- Bring a pot of water to a boil for two minutes.
- Add the peeled shrimp and sliced onion and let them boil for three minutes. Remove them from the boiling water and set aside in a salad bowl.
- Chop the tomato, cucumber, green onion, and cilantro and add to the shrimp.
- Mix in the crab meat and clam juice.
- Squeeze the limes and mix with the ketchup, then add to the mixture.
- Finally, add salt to taste and the chopped jalapeño and avocado, if desired.
- Place the salad in the refrigerator for 15 minutes to cool. Serve with crackers.

Laura's Story

I chose this recipe to submit to the cookbook because it is fresh and healthy. It is a summer recipe. I have prepared this dish using food from my CSA share, but if I made it in Guatemala, it would taste even better. I grew up in Guatemala. Because my family lived close to the beach and in a tropical environment, we could go to the local seafood market. Fishermen would bring in fresh fish and shrimp almost every day.

Back then, when I was little, everything was fresher. We didn't have to eat anything processed. Here in America, it is different. For example, in Guatemala we didn't eat cereal for breakfast. We ate beans, tortillas, and a little piece of cheese. We could have fresh milk from the cow; we didn't buy it from the store. A friend or neighbor had a cow, and we could buy the milk from them. The cheese was fresh, made that day.

Here in America, the kids eat a lot of candy and chips. Now we find out that those foods are not good for our children. But back home, we got our sugar from the fruit that fell off the trees.

Here in America, the kids eat a lot of candy and chips. Now we find out that those foods are not good for our children. But back home, we got our sugar from the fruit that fell off the trees. There were fruits trees everywhere. Everyone had a lemon tree in their yard. The country I come from is hot, so we drink a lot of lemonade. We love lemons. Also, we had lots of mangos—varieties that you don't see here. My family had three mango trees

in our yard. Other fruits include nance, tejocote, and guava. I miss the fresh fruit very much. It was good times.

For dessert, my grandmother used to boil milk with cinnamon and sugar. She put it in little bags and gave it to the children. In our family, my grandmother cooked the most. She lived close to us. She made a lot of good food. She made a delicious pasta with tomato sauce (olive oil, garlic, onions). She would top it with a little cheese and fresh sour cream. Not at all like the processed, grocery store sour cream; it was very fresh.

For holidays we ate turkey, tamales (such varieties as chicken, pork, black beans, and sweet), a green salad (with lettuce, lemon, broccoli, and

nuts), a black bean salad (young black beans with corn and peppers), and a traditional fruit dessert (apples, pineapple, and other fruit boiled with cinnamon and raisins).

I have lived in the United States 17 years. In Iowa City we are able to find fresh food that is grown by local farmers. I have tried many new foods through Local Foods Connection. Fennel, for example, which is good in soups. Turnips we eat raw in salads. I'm still learning how to cook with kale and collards; even one leaf is a lot for me to cook. We chop it into soups and stir fries. I like bok choy and raspberries. Rhubarb was a challenge. It tastes good in pie. Also, I create my own dessert with rhubarb, apples, and sugar.



Cilantro, Oak Hill Acres, Atalissa



Cucumber Salad

by Isabel

4 cucumbers
1 head lettuce
½ red onion
1 tomato
1 carrot
Cottage cheese
Raisins
Olive oil

- Clean and peel the cucumbers, remove the seeds if desired. Slice into quarter-sized pieces.
- Chop the lettuce, red onion, tomato, and carrot. Mix with the cucumber.
- Top with cottage cheese, crumbled crackers, raisins, and a sprinkling of oil.



Gallina Pinta

by Isabel

The dish should have the texture of soup. My father and mother like it with onions, like a pozole. This dish is especially good in winter.

10 lbs meat on the bone
1 (16 oz) can of pinto beans
30 oz can hominy
8 oz can of crushed tomatoes
Onion, optional
Sugar, salt, pepper
Medium-sized pot of water for boiling

- Bring a pot of water to boil. Drain liquid from a can of beans; rinse, if desired.
- Add the beans to the boiling water. The water should cover the ingredients by several inches. Cook for 45 minutes.
- Add meat and cook for 2-3 more hours.
- Add the hominy, tomatoes, salt, and sugar. Boil for at least 15 minutes more.
- Serve with tortillas or chips.

Note: Hominy is usually made from field corn. The corn is removed from the cob, dried, and boiled with lye. The corn is soaked, boiled, ground, or cooked to make soups and stews, bread, chili, grits, casseroles, fried dishes, and tamale and tortilla dough.

When preparing this recipe, you have to be open-minded and not worry about exact measurements. For cooking times, you need to consider if the meat is frozen or fresh and if the beans are dry or soft. Tasting the dish while cooking will help you determine quantities. Be sure to leave the meat on the bone because it adds flavor.

Isabel's Story

I chose to submit the Gallina Pinta recipe for the cookbook because it is a nutritious and healthy meal. We get corn from Local Foods Connection and we can make hominy from it, although we also buy canned hominy. Sometimes the local farmers don't have much sweet corn because the raccoons eat it. In Mexico, we make a special treat from corn on the cob. We boil the ear of corn, rub butter on it, then mayonnaise, and then shake grated parmesan cheese on it.

When I was young, my father died and my mother went to work. My sisters and I had to cook for ourselves. We made simple meals, such as eggs and beans. I learned how to make hot dogs, hamburgers, eggs over easy, and other simple dishes.

Since I had a family of my own, I have been slowly learning how to cook. I cook twice a day.

Since I had a family of my own, I have been slowly learning how to cook. I cook twice a day. I don't know how to prepare real meals or formal foods. I am so-so, okay. Compared to a chef, I know nothing. My mom, who lives with me, helps prepare meals. Sometimes, over the weekend, I will cook meals for the whole

week. When Local Foods Connection gave us the opportunity to eat more fresh produce, I began to cook more. My mother taught me about steaming vegetables instead of boiling them. She told me that olive oil is healthier than lard or corn oil. I need to cook healthful food for my special-needs son. No more restaurants.

I came to the United States for a job and a better life. I lived in California for a while and then moved to Iowa. I worked for IBP meat packing company, now called Tyson Fresh Meats.



Stuffed Roast Pepper Soup

by Samantha

My Dad makes this recipe for all holidays.

2 lbs lean ground beef
2 (28 oz) cans diced tomatoes, undrained
2 cups cooked white rice
3 green, yellow or sweet red peppers, seeded and chopped
½ medium onion, chopped
6 cups water
8 beef bouillon cubes
½ tsp pepper
½ tsp paprika

- In a large soup pot, cook beef and onion. If you use lean ground beef, you do not need to drain the fat.
- Add water, bouillon cubes, pepper, paprika, tomatoes, and cooked rice. Bring to a boil.
- Reduce heat, cover, and simmer 1 hour.
- Add peppers and cook, uncovered, for 10-15 minutes or until tender.

Samantha's Story

I chose this recipe to submit to the cookbook because it contains many of the vegetables we receive from the CSA share. I had this soup growing up and I have always liked it. The recipe is satisfying. We have it at every family reunion and there is never any left. Even my grandchildren like it. The soup is not too spicy; if it were, I couldn't eat it anymore. I was diagnosed with cancer last year and now spicy foods upset my stomach.

Since my diagnosis, I eat more fresh vegetables than canned. I don't like the tinny taste of canned food any longer and fresh produce is better for me. Fresh asparagus is especially delicious. Canned asparagus tastes like the shoe strings from nasty tennis shoes. I love fresh asparagus grilled. My doctor at

the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics recommended to me that I eat more asparagus. She suggested that I eat more fruits and vegetables in general. When my stomach is upset, she said that I can eat as many as ten small meals a day, instead of three large ones. During my regular hospital visits, she always inquires about my diet. My doctor goes to the Farmers Market like I do. I pick up my CSA share there every week. We talk about the various vendors and different products they sell.

Before joining Local Foods Connection, my family went to the farmers' market once in a blue moon. Now the visit is a Wednesday ritual. We talk with the farmers at the Echollective Farm booth and they teach us about new ways to prepare food. I've never had shallots before; the farmer said I can cook it like garlic. We've learned about snow peas and mint. Heirloom tomatoes are so sweet! We prepare fennel and turnips like mashed potatoes, and the grandkids don't notice the difference. One time my grandson

One time my grandson thought a beet was a radish and he took a big bite. He didn't complain about the taste, but he didn't like the red color on his fingers.

thought a beet was a radish and he took a big bite. He didn't complain about the taste, but he didn't like the red color on his fingers. In addition, we visit other vendors at the market and have tried everything from Sno-Cones and egg rolls to barbeque sauce and jalapeño pepper jelly.

For all the years I've been in Local Foods Connection, I've shared the farm food with my neighbors. Even this year, when the share is smaller because of all the rain, we've been able to bring a dish from some of our dinners to an elderly neighbor who lives alone. I've lived in my small community within Iowa City for eight years—a trailer court on the outskirts of town. I am very active in my neighborhood association. I help people who need food, clothes, childcare, and school supplies. Not a day goes by without someone knocking on my door. We live on a corner lot and our yard is the community playground. Our community is tight-knit and we watch out for each other.

Being a part of Local Foods Connection has been great. We are eating many things we had never eaten before, lots of fresh vegetables, learning many different ways to use them, and how to eat healthier. And we've met neat people through the program.



Black Bean Soup with Pork Ribs

by Bella

1 lb black beans
1 lb pork ribs
1 tomato
1 onion
Cilantro to taste

- Boil the beans in water until soft.
- Add the pork ribs and boil for one hour
- When cooked, add the onion and diced tomato and cook for 20 more minutes.
- Add cilantro and serve with rice.

Note: If you start this recipe with dried beans, you should spread them out on a cookie sheet to find and remove small stones, debris, or damaged beans. Next, place the beans in a strainer and rinse them under cool running water. Before cooking most dried beans, they need to be presoaked. This shortens their cooking time and makes them easier to digest. Cover beans with cold water and allow to soak overnight, 6-8 hours. Cover 1 pound of dried beans (2 cups) with 10 cups of water. Most beans will rehydrate to triple their dry size, so be sure to start with a large enough pot. Keep the pot in the refrigerator to prevent fermentation. This traditional soaking method helps keep the beans intact.

For the quick-soaking method, boil the beans for two minutes. Next, take the pan off the heat, cover, and allow to stand for two hours. Beans are more likely to fall apart using this method. Whether you choose the traditional or quick soaking method, you must drain out the water in which the beans were soaked before cooking. Rinse beans again. Package instructions might offer you additional suggestions and tips.

If you are running short on time, you can use canned beans. Always drain and rinse canned beans before adding them to a recipe. Canned beans need to only be heated briefly.

Bella's Story

I learned this recipe from my mother in El Salvador and have changed it to include more vegetables. I cooked with my mother and we cooked and ate a lot of beans. We didn't often cook with meat because it was too expensive. Pork is cheaper here and we can afford to eat it more. It's very different in the US and Iowa City. Here we have everything and we can cook everything that we can afford to buy.

The farmers have a really hard job. It was really nice to see how they harvest and to see where the food that we put on our plates comes from.

I came to Iowa City around six years and my son, Leo, was born here. Up until 1½ years of age, he was doing fine. He tried new foods and ate purees. Then I started to notice problems. Leo stopped eating hard foods and would only drink liquids, such as milk and PediaSure®. He didn't even like to see hard foods on his plate. I discovered that my son is special needs. With autistic children, it is typical to start seeing problems at this age. Autistic children even regress; they lose the skills they have already learned. Leo went to therapy for over a year to learn how to eat. I continue the therapy at home by slowly introducing new foods to him. He likes carrots, apples, and green grapes.

Last year we had a little picnic at a local farm. I enjoyed it and had a lot of fun. We went to see how everything was grown. They had a little store where we could buy eggs and other food. It was really interesting. The farmers have a really hard job. It was really nice to see how they harvest and to see where the food that we put on our plates comes from. Green beans, cabbage, tomatoes, onions, and all the other things are essential to any recipe. A lot of spices come from the garden. Almost everything is my favorite because it is nutritious and fresh.



main dishes



Haricots Verts, Simone's Plain and Simple, Wellman



Sudan Iowa Casserole

by Azooz

1 zucchini, chopped
½ can chickpeas
½ can lima beans, yellow
Green beans, sliced
Green and red onion, sliced
Tomatoes, sliced
Chicken breast, chopped
Chicken broth
Mozzarella cheese (fat-free optional), grated
Mexican cheese, grated
Kale (frozen flakes)
Green pepper
Spices: coriander, parsley, cinnamon, salt and pepper

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
- In a pan, cook green beans, zucchini, green pepper, chickpeas, lima beans, and green and red onions.
- Add the tomato slices and season to taste. Steam on the stove until vegetables absorb the juices.
- In a separate pan, cook chopped chicken breast with a little chicken broth.
- Add chicken to vegetables. Sprinkle kale flakes over the top.
- Spread the mix in a casserole dish. Cover the casserole with shredded cheeses.
- Bake for 30 minutes.

Azooz's Story

My family and I came from Sudan. Since I was a little girl and teen, I had dreamed of coming to America. The land of gold paved streets and white candy that fell from the sky. Imagine my surprise when I came to this country! It was still beautiful with its lush green ground and great brown buildings, but it definitely was not what I expected. At first my family (my husband and my two children—a girl and a boy) lived in Virginia. We got a call from my husband's friend telling us to come to Iowa because it is safe, has great education, and is an amazing place to raise kids. My husband and I took the first plane over here and have resided in Iowa City for twelve long years. I am still happy about our decision.

Never before did I think about fresh food and the genetic make-up of food and vegetables.

In Sudan everything was fresh, tasty, and delicious. Mangos here are blah, whereas I could have a fresh, fleshy, juicy mango every day in Sudan. There are many spices and herbs that I used in my recipes that I cannot find or are not available here. I import coriander and dill from Sudan. Coriander I add to

meats, chicken, lamb, and beef. The Sudanese dill tastes much better. Overall I'm disappointed by the taste of the foods here. I prefer fresh and tasty.

With all the fresh food offered through Local Foods Connection, the CSA, and the farmers' markets, I have found confidence that I can regain the good taste and nutritional value I enjoy in my meals. I am happy to find food that does not have an altered genetic makeup. Hence I am able to prepare fresh delicious meals, share recipes, and also exchange experiences in cooking. Local Foods Connection has a great educational program too. We have tried many new foods, including kale, kohlrabi, cabbage, chard, and asparagus. I have studied and learned about what is good for my health. Never before did I think about fresh food and the genetic make-up of food and vegetables. In addition, I consider the nutritional value of food when choosing ingredients for a recipe, e.g. adding parsley, which contains more vitamins than carrots.

My son never used to eat vegetables! I tried several ways: blending, slicing, cooking from cookbooks, and slipping vegetables into smoothies. But he would taste it every time. Also I placed vegetables on top of pizza, but he would always pick them out. Talk about frustration! My family and I have always had a taste for creamy rich meals, such as Mullah or Molokhia, a Middle Eastern and West African dish using stew beef, camel, lamb, veal, or goat. It includes tomato paste or sauce, vegetables,

small okra, cubed potatoes, yam, zucchini, pumpkins, beans, or peas. These meals have been a family favorite, but we haven't always liked the growing waistlines that come with them. With this recipe for a reduced fat alternative, we're tricking our taste buds into thinking we're eating something fatty, when really this dish is stuffed with vegetable and animal protein as well as calcium, minerals, and vitamins. We have got the best of both worlds combined into this one delicious meal.



Parsley, Oak Hill Acres, Atalissa



Turkey Chili

by Healthy Neighborhood Challenge class participant, Free Medical Clinic,
Iowa City

1 Tbsp olive oil
1½ lbs ground turkey
1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1-2 green or red peppers, chopped
2 Tbsp grill seasoning, such as a mixture of salt, pepper, onion and garlic powder, coriander, and red pepper flakes
2 tsp cumin
½ tsp cinnamon
1-2 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
1 medium butternut squash, diced
1 large or two small sweet potatoes, diced
2 (15oz) can diced tomatoes with chiles, with juice
1 (28 oz) can crushed tomatoes
1 (15 oz) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
1 (15 oz) can black beans, drained and rinsed
Water or chicken stock, if necessary

- Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add turkey, chopped onion, garlic, and peppers. Sauté until meat becomes golden. If you are trying to cut down on your consumption of fat, you can cook the turkey separately and drain off the fat.
- Add spices, Worcestershire sauce, diced squash and sweet potatoes. Continue cooking until squash becomes slightly tender.
- Add canned tomatoes and beans.
- Simmer for 20-30 minutes. Season to taste.

Variation: This can also be made in a crock pot! Cook turkey with onions and peppers on the stove then transfer to crock pot. Add remaining ingredients and cook on low for 8 hours.

Healthy Neighborhood Challenge's Story

Our program is based out of the Free Medical Clinic in Iowa City. We are a community group that offers healthy living ideas and activities to folks who don't have access to similar education through other venues. Our class covers topics such as container gardening, herbs and spices, and preserving and freezing produce. We go out into the community and participate in such activities as mall walking and taking grocery store tours to discuss food labels. Our class has been running since July 2007, but this is only our second season with Local Foods Connection.

Sometimes participants are reluctant to try a new item, such as eggplant, but I encourage them to take some or to find a friend with whom to share it—to help build a community of fresh food lovers around them.

I chose to enroll the class in LFC because I believe that fresh produce is an important part of a healthy diet, and I wanted to give the class participants

a chance to try local, seasonal food. Many class participants are from lower income backgrounds and they don't purchase much fresh produce. I am originally from California, where we have farmers' markets year-round. I was shocked to discover that we don't have markets all the time here in Iowa.

Once a week our class meets at the farmers' market. We distribute the CSA share among the participants, and I try to ensure that everyone gets an equal portion. Sometimes participants are reluctant to try a new item, such as eggplant, but I encourage them to take some or to find a friend with whom to share it—to help build a community of fresh food lovers around them. In addition, we use the farm produce during our monthly cooking class, especially when there is an abundance of certain vegetables, such as zucchini or sweet corn. If, for some reason, we still have extras from a share, the produce is distributed at the clinic to the patients with appointments that day.

Editor's Note: Healthy Neighborhood Challenge's story was told by Shannon Ortiz, MPH, Program Director, and continues on page 58.



Thai Stir Fry

by Aum

Core Ingredients:

Garlic, chopped

Olive oil

Black pepper

Oyster sauce (available at Asian groceries; Chinese and Thai brands are recommended)

Fish sauce or soy sauce

Mayonnaise

Ingredients to choose according to season and preference:

1 cup of meat (chicken, pork, or turkey) or tofu

3 cups of chopped, fresh vegetables, based on season and preference:
zucchini, green onions, yellow squash, cabbage, red peppers, onions,
eggplant, Thai chiles, Thai pumpkin, kale, collards, bok choy, or spinach

Fresh ginger and/or basil if available

- If you are using chicken, pork, or turkey, slice it into small pieces. Marinate the meat in a mixture of oyster sauce, garlic, black pepper, and mayonnaise. Put meat in fridge until ready to use.
- Warm one teaspoon of oil in pan; when hot, add chopped garlic. When the garlic turns golden brown, add firm tofu (if you like tofu). Add three shakes of the oyster sauce and one shake of fish sauce.
- Add zucchini or other vegetables and leave the meat in the pan. When the zucchini or veggies are almost done, add black pepper.
- Serve with steamed Jasmine rice.

Variation: For a spicy recipe, eggplant and ground turkey are best. Cook the eggplant until soft, then add Thai chiles, oyster sauce, fish sauce, ginger, and basil. Turn off the stove after you put the basil in.

Aum's Story

This is a very simple recipe. Any vegetables can be used. Big leaves from kale and collards, bok choy (very good), spinach—everything green you can use. Green onions are very good. I put green onions in almost every dish. I like to play with color. My grandmother always said food is not just yummy,

My grandmother always said food is not just yummy, it has to look good too.

it has to look good too, so I put different colors in there. I will add yellow squash for color. Squash takes less time to cook than kale. Or I add cabbage or onion for white—I like cabbage crunchy,

so I don't cook it much. You can add red peppers or tomatoes for red.

We have different vegetables in Thailand. The pumpkin is very popular; I haven't found a similar tasting one in the US. Every baby has to eat pumpkin because of the vitamins. Pumpkin goes well with shrimp in this recipe. Thai eggplants are long and thin.

I serve this dish with jasmine rice. In Thailand, many traditional meals, such as spicy curry, soups, and stir fries, are served with white jasmine rice. When I have extra money, I buy brown rice and mix it with the white rice. Brown rice has more fiber and nutrition.

When cooking stir fry recipes, it is best to use a very heavy, cast iron wok, bowl-shaped. The thin, light woks they sell in most stores in America don't work. A real wok is made from iron. Ancient people believed that when you cooked from an iron pan, you got some iron in the food. My grandmother loved to cook. Her wok was so big that it could have been a swimming pool! She always cooked when we had a festival in the temple in South Thailand. I have cooked since I was little. I learned to cook with my mom. My sister's job was to clean. My brother's job was to take care of the outside.

I grew up in the kitchen. I love cooking. Once, to surprise my mother for her birthday, my brother and I made breakfast for her. We made her Thai scrambled eggs, which is like eggs mixed with Ovaltine®. Since my mother liked to drink coffee in the morning, we decided to save a step and add ground coffee beans to the eggs too. It tasted awful! The dog wouldn't even eat it.

Cooking real Thai food cheers me up. I love to share the food. I made 150 spring rolls last week. My children brought some egg rolls to school and I brought some to work to share. I put a coupon in the elementary school auction offering “Learn to make Spring Rolls.” It sold for \$75!



Red Giant Mustard Greens, Abbe Hills Farm, Mount Vernon



Aboda Dessi

by Amna

Mutton or lamb, cut into small pieces
Gumbo (okra), tops and stems removed
Onion
Spices, such as cloves, ginger, dried onions, sea salt, Huy Fong Foods
Sriracha Hot Chili Sauce, a crushed boullion cube
Green pepper
¼ tsp baking soda

- Put the meat in a pan and add salt, pepper, herbs, spices, and 1 cup of water. Cover the pan and bring to boil for 10 minutes. Remove from the pan.
- Put okra in the pan with 1 cup of water; add the baking soda and spices. Bring to boil, and then simmer until tender, turning often.
- Pour the cooked meat into the okra and check salt and spices. Choose spices to give the sauce a good fragrance.
- Add green pepper and onion. Let boil about five minutes.
- Serve with steamed rice or fermented corn dough (see note)

Note: The fermented corn dough is like a corn dumpling. To make, I combine corn masa mix and tap water in a bowl. I buy Benita brand masa mix at Aldi Foods; the ingredients are corn, water, and lime (slaked). Stir until well combined. Next I put the mixture in a pan and heat on the stovetop. Once warm, I add more corn masa mix. I stir continually with a spoon. Near the end of the process, I use a paddle to fold the dough. I put the dough in a bowl and cover with a plate. When ready to serve, I flip the bowl upside down and serve the rounded dough on the plate. This dough is similar to Kenkey, a staple food in Western Africa. However, in Africa, we have all day to cook and the dough is fermented longer. Here I need to take shortcuts and to economize.

Amna's Story

I chose this recipe because probably very few people in Iowa City know of this dish. It is particular to Togo, the country in Africa where I grew up. Also, this recipe is not expensive to make. You can purchase the okra at the farmers market or at Fareway. Cut off the stems and the tops from the okra. Farm-raised lamb is good because you know where it comes from. Otherwise, I purchase lamb from 'Akdeniz Market: Foods of the Mediterranean' in Coralville.

In Africa, people are more social than in America. You can visit your family or friends anytime.

Corn is grown in the south of Togo, and this dish is more popular in the south and central parts of the country. During the time of my grandparents, this type of food was for poor people. Families made this meal during breaks from work in the fields. However, lamb has increased in price. Now this dish is made for special occasions because of the expense.

You bring it to celebrations and dances, big occasions. People are forgetting how to make it.

Today, poor families substitute small fish for the lamb. We have two seasons in my country: rainy and dry. When it is a rainy day, you will find the small fish at market. The fishermen bring it. Women take home the fish and dry it. You can smoke the fish or lay it in the sun; there are many ways to preserve it. If we preserve the fish, we have enough for the dry season. During the dry season, there are not as many small fresh fish.

In Africa, people are more social than in America. You can visit your family or friends anytime. You knock on the door and are invited inside. You don't need to call beforehand. A household must feed its guests. We have an expression, "the visitor is queen." If you tell them to go home, it is bad for you. Sometimes you need to make a meal quickly to serve to the visitors. Aboda Dessi is perfect. If you don't have anything in your kitchen, that small fish can help you. You can send your children or maid to run to the market for fish. A similar dish is Yebessi, which contains fish, tomatoes, more chili peppers, spices, and water (if you don't have enough tomatoes). You cook it on the fire.



Summer Garden Stir Fry

by Amy

¾ lb chicken, cut into cubes
1 Tbsp onion, chopped
2 cups broccoli florets
1 cup carrots, sliced
1 cup snow peas
1 small yellow crookneck squash, sliced
½ cup green pepper
½ cup water or chicken broth
2 Tbsp oil
1 Tbsp soy sauce
1 Tbsp cornstarch
2 tsp chicken bouillon granules
⅛ tsp garlic powder
⅛ tsp red pepper flakes

- Cook vegetables in 1 tablespoon of the oil until onion starts to turn yellow. Vegetables should be tender-crisp. Remove from pan.
- Add another tablespoon of oil to the pan with the raw, cubed chicken. Stir-fry until chicken is thoroughly cooked, about 2-4 minutes.
- Mix the chicken bouillon, water or broth, soy sauce, cornstarch, garlic powder, and red pepper. Add to the pan with the chicken. Cook until bubbly and add vegetables.
- Heat through and serve over rice

Amy's Story

We come from a rural farming heritage, right here in Johnson County, Iowa. We have a Community Supported Agriculture group called Gooseberry Hill Subscription Produce. We deliver a basket of fresh produce to our subscribers' doors once each week from June to September. It's very rewarding to work with the clients of Local Foods Connection. The "Farmers Market to your Door" works well for so many people. We love the look on their faces each week as they receive their baskets. We have been doing this for ten years.



Broccoli, Local Harvest CSA, Solon



Tin Foil Dinners

by Stephanie

This is a very informal recipe because the ingredients change with whatever vegetables are available at the time. The amounts vary according to how much we want to eat, but it is one of our family favorites.

1 lb ground beef

Vegetables: potatoes, broccoli, cabbage, green beans, onions, summer squash, carrots, or any other vegetable you want to add

4 squares of tinfoil

Seasonings to taste

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Mix ground beef with salt, pepper, and other seasonings to taste.
- Divide the meat into four equal parts. Form four patties and place each in the center of its own sheet of tin foil.
- Wash vegetables and slice or chop according to preference.
- Pile as many vegetables as you want on top of the beef patty.
- Add salt and pepper to taste. Adding fresh herbs such as basil leaves is good too.
- Fold tinfoil around the beef and veggies and place on tray or cookie sheet and bake for 1 hour. This works wonderfully on a grill or campfire too.

Stephanie's Story

I like this recipe because as a single mom with five kids I don't have lots of time to cook, yet I want nutritious meals for my family rather than quick processed foods. This is a simple meal that doesn't take much prep time. I use whatever vegetables I have on hand, so there's a different combination every time. It is fun to use the veggies from the CSA shares because we never know what will be in the box from week to week. We get to sample new veggies that we had never tried before. Some we like and some we don't.

I've been challenged to try new recipes or find new ways to use familiar things. The children are always eager to see what is in the box and have been good sports about trying new things.

Having the resource of Local Foods Connection did not change my cooking as much as allow me to continue to cook the way I want for my family. I grew up in the Kalona area on a farm, and we had a large garden. Cooking good nutritious food from scratch was a way of life. After getting married and having kids of my own, I continued to cook this way. We moved out of state for several years and after returning to Iowa, we no longer had the resources or the time to have a garden. Due to financial difficulty and being a single mom, I also couldn't afford to buy much fresh produce. A good friend introduced us to Local Foods Connection, and we started getting the CSA boxes of vegetables every week. We've been getting these boxes for about four years now and it has been a great experience. I've been challenged to try new recipes or find new ways to use familiar things. The children are always eager to see what is in the box and have been good sports about trying new things.



Lasagna Casserole

by Dulce

4 cups uncooked pasta, any type

1 jar prepared spaghetti sauce

1 container cottage cheese

2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese

Any greens and vegetables from this week's farmers market (i.e. spinach or other greens, green beans, carrots, tomatoes, kohlrabi, squash, or zucchini.)

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Blend cottage cheese until smooth.
- Chop vegetables and boil pasta.
- Lay uncooked pasta on the bottom of a baking dish. Layer vegetables, cottage cheese, and spaghetti sauce over the pasta. Repeat until all ingredients have been used.
- Bake casserole for 60 minutes.
- Just before removing from the oven, add mozzarella, and bake until browned.

Dulce's Story

We are a “family” of three old friends. I met Adam my first year here in 1984 at Wild Bill's Coffee Shop in North Hall at the University of Iowa. We worked together for about six months at the UI School of Social Work, where Adam had been working for five years with his disability of cerebral palsy in his motorized wheelchair. Later I left this job to pursue some pertinent career interests. During this time, I met Mike in town, coming and going. Neither had met each other before I knew them both.

In 1999, I suffered a major stroke, just as I was graduating from the university in social work. My first job was working with Tom Walz. Along with several other disabled persons, I helped him establish Uptown Bill's Small Mall. Tom and I built a bookstore and started an e-commerce

business. During this time, I reacquainted myself with Adam and Mike. Both had built a dream house where they resided. Mike won a government grant to construct a house accessible to people in wheelchairs, with a specialized kitchen and bathroom, wide doorways, and more. They asked me to join them, and I moved into this delightful house. Now we all make meals and assist each other in pursuing a life of independence—a wonderful goal for the three of us.

As the year draws to an end, we at the Sackter House are very grateful for what we have had for the past 12 months. With Adam drawing near the end of his life, we are blessed with a fussy eater, who turns down food and lost about 30 pounds this year. He is so fussy about what we bring home and what he eats now. We keep offering vegetables, not only because he

Now we all make meals and assist each other in pursuing a life of independence, a wonderful goal for the three of us.

needs them but because they are one of the few things he can eat. We got a small food chopper, and the potatoes and beans became a common part of a stable diet that is

still keeping him in high vitamin counts today. Adam's cerebral palsy and his inability to swallow a lot of food keep me running for new alternatives. This year, no doubt, was one of the best he has had nutritionally. My other roommate has been counting the days 'til kohlrabi comes back in season. Myself, I used to be a vegetarian, and I will eat any kind of vegetable, but I am healthy again for the first time in four years, and we would like to credit Local Foods Connection and Oak Hill Acres. We are so appreciative of the generosity of the program.

Being in the Midwest, the recipes I use now have a lot of vegetables, as the farmers' market is full of so many vegetables and fun things. We actually started a flower garden one year, a treat I had for my birthday.

Editor's note: Wild Bill's Coffeeshop is a service learning project in the UI School of Social Work. The coffeeshop is operated by adults with disabilities, thus providing employment opportunities, a practicum for University of Iowa students, and an amenity for those who enjoy the coffeeshop. Uptown Bill's Small Mall, which offers small business opportunities for individuals with disabilities, grew out of the coffee shop project. Four businesses, including a coffee bar, a bookmart, a music shop with a meeting room, and a media production house, are located at 730 S. Dubuque Street, Iowa City.



Hearty Potato Bake

by Evelyn

8, two-inch meatballs
2 medium onions, cut in ½ inch slices
6 medium potatoes, cut in ¾ inch slices
2 cloves garlic, slivered
3 medium carrots, cut in ¾ inch slices
2 mild Italian sausage links, cut in 1 inch slices
¾ cup vegetable oil
¼ cup molasses
Pinch of savory
1 Tbsp sugar
⅛ cup olive oil

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
- Mix the carrots, onions, garlic, potatoes, sausage, and meatballs and place in a square baking pan.
- Sprinkle the savory and sugar on top of the vegetable and meat mixture.
- Blend ½ cup of the vegetable oil and ⅛ cup of the molasses. Spoon blend on top.
- Bake for about an hour.
- While the cassarole is baking, mix the remaining ¼ cup vegetable oil, ¼ cup molasses, and ⅛ cup olive oil together in a small bowl.
- Spoon this oil-molasses mixture over the casserole and bake for 20-30 more minutes.

Evelyn's Story

This recipe was put together by me—it didn't taste too bad at all! I am learning how to use herbs and spices to add deep flavor to the recipes.

I was very happy to participate in the Local Foods Connection program. It opened up my eyes into understanding how to put together and appreciate the natural and organic flavors of unadulterated vegetables.

I feel very encouraged to do further exploration of cooking and be courageous enough to offer and share the good (I hope) results of my culinary experience with my friends and neighbors who are much more experienced at cooking than I am.

Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to see what I can create in the kitchen from our truly wonderful nature's bounty.



Potatoes, Local Harvest CSA, Solon



Lamb Roast with Vegetables

by Caroline

Lamb
Carrots
Potatoes
Celery
Salt and pepper to taste

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Chop vegetables. Season the vegetables and meat.
- Place vegetables and meat in oven cooking bag and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Bake in oven for about 4 hours, or longer for more tender meat.

Caroline's Story

Caroline learned how to make pot roast from her mother. Instead of using the usual beef or pork, though, she roasted lamb, which came from ZJ Farm in Solon, Iowa. Of all the food she received through Local Foods Connection this year, the lamb was her favorite. It came around Christmas time and it was good. Caroline didn't know how to cook it, but her friends told her that it was like any other meat. So she roasted it with vegetables. This experiment was her first time cooking lamb, and her family enjoyed it.

Caroline prefers to cook greens, such as collards, turnips, and mustard greens, in the Southern fashion. You must clean the greens well; you can even soak them overnight. The next day you must get up at the crack of dawn to turn on the pot. Boil the greens with pork (especially ham hocks) and spices. The ingredients must cook all day, six to seven hours. If you use canned greens, you can cook them for less time, approximately 3 hours. Serve with corn bread.

Caroline doesn't consider herself to be a good cook. A lot of the food she received from the farm was new to her. Her kids liked the corn a lot. In addition, they were willing to try new foods, like spinach and fruit. Caroline

says that since her baby girl was born in Iowa she like the fresh apples more than her kids from Chicago.

A small community of other former Chicago residents is trying to replicate the Chicago food culture here in Iowa City, but it is difficult.

Caroline moved here with her children from Chicago about five years ago. She moved into the Section 8 housing on the south side of Iowa City, after being on the waiting list for about a year. Some of her family was living in Iowa City already, but her mom, uncle and sister still live in Chicago. Her grandmother lives in Alabama. Iowa City is a nice change, she says, if you get tired of the fast, city life. People are nice here, like some of the Local

Foods Connection volunteers she has met. The town is quiet, peaceful, and small. The schools are better. However, Iowa can be boring, and her kids complain that it's a college town. Especially if you don't have a car, there is nothing to do in Iowa City.

When possible, Caroline likes to take her kids to the Iowa Children's Museum in Coralville. Her daughter, Pearl, likes spending time in "City Works," which is a child-sized village where children can role play. Pearl goes shopping at the pretend grocery store and she designs her own pizza in the simulated pizzeria.

A small community of other former Chicago residents is trying to replicate the Chicago food culture here in Iowa City, but it is difficult. One favorite is the pizza puff, which is a soft flour tortilla filled with meat, pizza sauce, cheese and spices. Pizza puffs come in many varieties, including cheese only, spinach, taco, and ham. Chicagoans also love Italian beef sandwiches, made from thinly sliced beef, giardiniera (pickled peppers), and a highly seasoned juice served on Italian bread. Scott Petersen's Polish sausage is popular, but a person can get sick of eating it. People will make special shopping trips to Chicago to get groceries and favorite foods, although sometimes they can find what they need in Davenport or Des Moines. Popeye's restaurant in Waterloo is pretty good. When an Iowa City family makes a Chicago-style meal, they invite all their friends over to eat.

Editor's Note: Caroline, along with family and friends, shared this food story with us.

Mexican Stuffed Peppers/Chiles Rellenos

by Valeria

Salsa to serve with the Chiles Rellenos

- 6 small tomatoes (Roma are good)
- ¼ medium onion
- cilantro to taste
- 1 small clove garlic
- ½ tsp chicken broth powder

- Chop and combine all ingredients and combine in a bowl.

Peppers and Filling

- 1 lb boneless pork (pork loin works well)
- 12-18 poblano, anaheim or other green chile peppers
- 4 medium potatoes
- 1 cup fresh green beans
- 3 small carrots
- 1 medium onion
- 1 tsp chicken broth powder
- 3 bay leaves
- ½ tsp thyme
- 6 eggs

- Boil the pork in water with a pinch of salt until soft. When cool, chop the meat into small pieces.
- Remove seeds from the peppers and boil them in water until just soft. Slice the peppers lengthwise.
- Boil the potatoes, green beans, and small, whole carrots until soft. Dice the vegetables and set aside.
- Chop the onion and fry in a saucepan with olive oil until translucent. Add the diced potatoes, green beans, carrots, chicken broth powder, bay leaves, and thyme. Let fry for about 10 minutes.

- Add the meat and mix. Remove from heat.
- Stuff the peppers with the vegetable and meat mix.
- Separate the yolk from the whites of the eggs and put them in different bowls. Use a mixer to stiffen the whites. Once stiffened, add the yolks and keep mixing.
- Dip the stuffed peppers in the egg mix. You can use a toothpick to hold the peppers together.
- Fry the dipped peppers in olive oil until golden brown.
- Served with white rice and topped with the salsa.



Hot Peppers, Scattergood Friends School Farm, West Branch

Chiles in Walnut Sauce/Chiles en Nogada

by Valeria

This recipe is for special occasions. It is made during Holy Week. I learned it from my mother-in-law, who is from Guatemala.

Walnut Crème

1 cup walnuts, finely chopped

1 container of Salvadoran cream (heavy whipping cream can be used if Salvadorean cream is not available.)

- Whip the cream with a hand mixer. Then fold in the nuts.

Chiles and Filling

6 poblano chiles

1 lb ground beef

½ cup raisins

1 clove garlic

1 small onion

Pomegranate seeds

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
- Boil the poblano chiles until just soft. Cool and peel the chiles. Slice the long side of the pepper and remove the seeds.
- Sauté the chopped onion and garlic, add the ground beef, and cook thoroughly. Add the raisins.
- Stuff the peppers with the beef mix and line in a baking dish. Set this dish inside of another baking dish that is filled with one inch of water.
- Bake for 45 minutes.
- Remove from oven, top with the walnut crème, and sprinkle with pomegranate seeds.

Valeria's Story

I have been in Iowa City for 22 years. I came from San Diego with my brothers and sisters. I moved to Iowa because the situation in California is critical—the economy is bad and living costs are high—but the pay is low. And some places aren't good for your kids to grow up. In San Diego, there is fighting even within the Latino population. You are always fighting with your own people—Latino against Latino, legals against illegals, Central Americans against Mexicans—even people from Mexico City don't like their countrymen from Mexican small towns. In the barrios, Latino children are pressured to join Latino gangs. I didn't want my son to grow up in that environment. That is why we moved to Iowa. Even in Iowa City, though, if you search for trouble, you will find it. But if you search for a better life, you will find that too.

But it has to be everyday that you give a little bit of your heart in your food.

My point is to be proud of your own roots. And being proud doesn't mean being a big macho man. It means trying, like in this country they offer you a lot of opportunities. You can be Hispanic and be willing to improve your culture and take advantage of all the opportunities. That's what I try to teach my kids. But if you live here in US you have to respect the laws and be a good citizen. Like me, I was not born here but I've been here for 22 years. I try to respect everything.

I do a lot of cooking. I make the chile rellenos recipe a lot in the summer. I get all my ingredients at the farmers market, even the meat, because there aren't any preservatives. You can tell the difference—it's better.

In my house we do all kinds of different foods. Like, my kids like lasagna too! We do something easy, like at the church, I prepare a lot of different kinds of foods. For the old family and most other people, their favorite is ground beef lasagna. And hominy—like pozole. Every two weeks I cook for the Children's Center for Therapy in Iowa City. They like everything.

I learned my recipes from family. I've been around a lot of people from different countries—many different Latino people. I ask my sisters too.

People have their own secret when they cook. And it depends on your mood. If you don't feel enthusiastic, don't cook—because your food reflects how you feel inside. If you're angry and you try to make scrambled eggs,

they'll be horrible! When you're happy, you can see it and taste it in your food. Your cooking reflects how you feel that day.

My mother-in-law really loves to cook and you can see that in the way she cooks. She'll say, "This could be my last time to cook." She says, "Remember that this could be your last meal." So she puts her heart into it, and that's why it tastes so good.

A couple times a year is when you really get to prove to your family that you really love them—Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve. But it has to be everyday that you give a little bit of your heart in your food.

Editor's Note: The Children's Center for Therapy is a community-based, outpatient clinic that incorporates fun and play into research-based treatments. Through Social Skills programs, Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapy services, the staff positively impact each child's function, environment, and daily life. The family-friendly clinic provides services to children of all ages.



Green and Purple Basil, Oak Hill Acres, Atalissa



sides, condiments, sweets



Mashed Potatoes and Cauliflower

by Healthy Neighborhood Challenge class participant, Free Medical Clinic, Iowa City

Red potatoes

Fresh or frozen cauliflower

Low fat sour cream

Milk

Salt and pepper

- Chop 2-3 red potatoes per person and put in a big pot of water.
- Bring to a boil and let cook until desired tenderness is reached—about 12 minutes.
- Add cauliflower during the last 4 minutes of cooking time.
- Drain well and put in a large bowl.
- Add 1-2 tablespoons of sour cream per serving. Add enough milk to make it creamy. Add salt and pepper to taste.
- Mash to desired consistency.



Roasted Sweet Potato Fries

by Healthy Neighborhood Challenge class participant, Free Medical Clinic, Iowa City

This recipe is loved by many of our group. If we could, I think we would make this every month!

1 large sweet potato cut into thick matchsticks
2 Tbsp olive oil
1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Grease a cookie sheet with oil or line with aluminum foil.
- Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and toss until potatoes are evenly coated. Lay the potatoes flat on the prepared cookie sheet.
- Cook for 12-15 minutes or until desired doneness.
- Flip fries half way through cooking to ensure even roasting.
- Enjoy with your favorite sandwich or burger!

Variation: omit vinegar and add 1 more tablespoon oil, 1 teaspoon cumin, and ¼ teaspoon cinnamon to oil, salt and pepper.

Healthy Neighborhood Challenge's Story

This will be our second year that we have partnered with Local Foods Connection and my returning clients have been asking for weeks about when we are going to start again. This program, in addition to what we cover in our classes, has inspired my participants to want to try to have home container gardens again. There has been a very positive response to the use of LFC produce in our recipes! I have tried to cover a wide array

I loved to see the satisfied looks on their faces after just eating some simple mashed potatoes! Good, healthy food can also feed the soul!

of recipes, from typical Italian meals to Mexican dishes to comfort foods like macaroni and cheese, meatloaf, and mashed

potatoes. What we do is to mix things up a little by increasing the amount of vegetables in a meal (examples: shredding carrots and zucchini into pasta sauce, learning how to make different salsas, and sneaking in some veggies like butternut squash into mac and cheese and cauliflower/kohlrabi/turnips into mashed potatoes) and increasing flavor with herbs and spices versus salt. The group in our last cooking class was so excited to learn a new, more healthful recipe for something they already love. I loved to see the satisfied looks on their faces after just eating some simple mashed potatoes! Good, healthy food can also feed the soul!

Through LFC we have had the opportunity to learn about local, seasonal produce and even to visit ZJ Farm in Solon, to see from where our produce comes exactly. One of my favorite memories of LFC was our first season and our farm visit. We were able to rent a small bus from a local church and we took it to the farm. We walked all around the beautiful land on a perfect summer's evening and spoke with Susan J. At that time several of the women participating really enjoyed cooking their traditional recipes that included collards, so we were able to pick some collards before we came home. I have a great picture of us in the bus with our big bags of leafy greens. I will never forget that trip and our first true experience with local foods as a group.

Editor's Note: Healthy Neighborhood Challenge's story was told by Shannon Ortiz, MPH, and began on page 31.



Garlic, Echollective Farm, Mechanicsville



Squash Blossoms/Flores de Calabazas

by Amelia

Squash blossoms, chopped
Mozzarella cheese, grated
Tomatoes
Onions
Oregano
Salt
Butter or oil

- Clean squash blossoms. Look for insects inside and remove the stringy pistils.
- Finely chop the onions and tomatoes. Put vegetables in a bowl with the rest of the ingredients and mix.
- Heat a small amount of butter or oil in a pan. Add the ingredient mixture to pan and cook for 10-15 minutes. The water from the tomatoes and onions should create a light stock. If the mixture becomes dry while cooking, you can add a little water.
- Use this filling for tacos or quesadillas. Warm a tortilla in the microwave or a square grill pan for 40 seconds. Add warm filling and wrap closed.

Note: Finding squash blossoms in Iowa City is difficult because they are not often sold at grocery stores or farmers' markets. Try asking a farmer, visiting a farm, or growing your own squash plants!

Amelia's Story

I came to Iowa City six years ago by myself with five kids. My brother helped me to buy a mobile home. I am from Juarez, Mexico. Juarez is a very violent city. I have a daughter who was developing normally until she was eight years old. Then she started falling down, her balance was off, but the doctors in Mexico could not diagnose her. She underwent a surgery and the doctors found that she had an infection in her spinal column. She was no

longer able to walk. My brother told me that maybe the specialists here in Iowa could diagnose her. When I came to Iowa, I took her to the doctor and it was the same diagnosis—to wait and see what was happening. Right now we are just waiting. My daughter is now 12, but they still don't have a good diagnosis, and she is in a wheelchair.

My neighbor talked to me about the support group at the Arc of Southeast Iowa, which is how I became involved with LFC. This got me in contact with Laura, who has helped me get vegetables the whole season.

He's really tall now, and people ask him, "Why are you so big and tall?" He says, "Because my mother always fed me flowers!"

Last year we had the opportunity to eat more vegetables that we weren't always used to eating. My kids eat the cucumbers all season. For example, my daughter who is sick eats lots of vegetables in the summer, which helps keep her weight down. When she is hungry, she just finds a cucumber, peels it, and eats it.

When I was a young child, I was raised with my aunt because my mother had to work. My aunt was always gardening in the backyard, so we ate a lot of vegetables. It was something we could share together. She wanted to share this recipe because it was something that comforted her as a child. I used to cook it for my son over and over, and he asked, "Why do we always eat flowers?" I always told him, "To become big and strong!" He's really tall now, and people ask him, "Why are you so big and tall?" He says, "Because my mother always fed me flowers!" Now he tells his younger brother, "You should eat a lot of flowers because that will make you tall like me!"

Editor's Note: The Arc of Southeast Iowa assists developmentally disabled individuals realize their full potential in how they live, learn, work, and play. The Arc is active in providing classes, supporting programs, encouraging legislation, and increasing public awareness of the needs of individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities.



Zucchini with Cream/Calabacitas con Crema

by Graciela

2 medium zucchinis
3 red tomatoes
½ onion
2 jalapeño chile peppers, diced
1 garlic clove, minced
6 tsp of oil
1 cup of crema acida (see note)
3 bay leaves
Salt to taste

- Heat the oil in a frying pan and add minced garlic. Sauté briefly.
- Add the chile peppers and the chopped onion, tomatoes, and zucchini. Sauté for a moment.
- Add the bay leaves and salt to taste.
- Bring to a simmer and add the cream. Cook for five more minutes and remove from heat.
- Remove the bay leaves and serve

Note: Crema acida is homemade sour cream made from unpasteurized milk and is not available in Iowa. A rough substitution is to thin commercial sour cream with a little milk, or you can make your own homemade sour cream.

Graciela's Story

My name is Graciela and I live in Coralville with my husband. I have a daughter with special needs. I have lived here for 10 years now, and I like Iowa City a lot.

Since we began receiving the vegetables the health of the entire family has improved.

Because my daughter has serious health problems, we are included in many assistance programs like Local Foods Connection. We are very grateful for their generous help.

We are learning to eat more healthfully and naturally, and since we began receiving the vegetables, the health of the entire family has improved. Thank you for all the help and for teaching us to include a more balanced diet in our lives.



Onions, Local Harvest CSA, Solon



Watermelon Rind Pickles

by Eric

1 large watermelon
2 tsp alum
Ice water
2 lbs lemons

Syrup:

1 cup liquid ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup water to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vinegar)
1 lb sugar
1 tsp whole allspice
1 Tbsp ground cinnamon or 1 cinnamon stick

- Use the rind of a ripe melon. Remove the green skin and cut the white rind into strips about 1 inch wide and 3 inches long. Place into a large cooking pot.
- Cover with alum diluted with cold water (2 teaspoon alum to 1 quart water) and let sit for $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.
- Heat gradually to the boiling point. Cook 10 minutes.
- Drain the rinds and cover with ice water. Let stand 2 hours.
- Slice lemons very thin and boil in their own juice and a little water until nearly tender. Boil water away.
- Weigh melon rinds and add to lemons.
- Make syrup by whisking all syrup ingredients together.
- Place the drained melon rinds and lemons into the syrup and cook until tender.
- Seal pickles while hot. A 24-pound melon makes six pounds of fruit.



Ground Cherry Jam

by Eric

3 cups ripe ground cherries
¼ cup lemon juice
½ cup water
1 package Sure-Jell

- Place all the ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a boil until the ground cherries burst open.
- Mash the cherries well so that they will absorb the sugar better.
- Continue cooking as directed on Sure-Jell package.
- Jar and seal (see note). Recipe makes three medium jars of jam.

Note: Always follow USDA guidelines, available on their website, for preparing and processing all canned goods. Sterilize your jars, use new, self-sealing, two-piece lids, and boil for the time recommended for your recipe and altitude.

Eric's Story

These are my grandmother's recipes from Northwest Iowa. We lived on a farm when I was a boy. Grandmother grew onions and mustard and celery seed. Eggs were from the chicken coop. We didn't buy much when I was a kid, just flour and sugar and stuff. My mom and I lived with my grandparents because my dad was going to Drake University in Des Moines.

My grandmother saved the seeds from our plants in the fall and then planted them in the spring. Seeds for watermelon, cucumbers, everything...Nothing went to waste.

On the farm, we raised cattle, hogs, and chickens. We had an apple tree and a pear tree; we grew wild grapes. We picked wild gooseberries and ground cherries. Grandma grew lettuce, tomatoes, watermelons, and cucumbers. It was a huge garden. If we wanted to eat, we had to work on the farm. We sold everything we grew and raised. Our family got indoor plumbing in 1947. We had one main sink. It wasn't until 1959 that we got two indoor bathrooms and a water heater.

I would get up in the morning, harvest eggs, go to school, come home, do homework, and then do more chores. We milked the cows in the morning and night. We had a machine that separated the buttermilk from the cream to make butter. Buttermilk went to the hogs. We ate well. My grandmother's potato salad and apple pie were my favorites. She used lard from the animals that we slaughtered for the pie crust. We smoked the ham from the pig. We canned hamburgers. To can a hamburger, you put it in a jar, pour the fat on top and put it in the refrigerator. It would keep for weeks.

Grandma made sour cream and cottage cheese. Something that city people don't see: she would make watermelon rind pickles. They taste like bread and butter pickles, but instead of cucumbers, she would use watermelon rind. The kind you buy in the store is very expensive and it doesn't taste nearly as good as my grandmother's did. Next time you are in the pickle aisle, look around for them in tall skinny jars. She used the white part of the rind, not the green skin. They were very crunchy and delicious.

Grandmother made ground cherry jam too. Ground cherries look like a Japanese lantern. If you pop it open, it looks like a green cherry inside. If you eat the ground cherries, they are very sour. But my grandmother would sweeten the jam. My grandmother saved the seeds from our plants in the fall and then planted them in the spring. Seeds for watermelon, cucumbers, everything. She saved seeds. Nothing went to waste. To help my grandmother, I peeled the apples and sliced them for apple pie making. I brought water in from the well. That is why I learned to cook. I helped grandmother, I did whatever she needed, and I watched her cook.



Watermelon, Sass Family Farm, Riverside



Healthy Zucchini Bread

Head Start, Iowa City

2 large eggs
⅔ cup granulated sugar
¼ cup canola oil
¼ cup canned pumpkin
1 cup shredded zucchini (approximately 1 medium)
Zest of one lemon
1 tsp pumpkin pie spice
1 ¼ tsp nutmeg
¾ cup all purpose flour
¾ cup whole wheat flour
½ tsp baking soda
¼ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a loaf pan with cooking spray.
- In a large mixing bowl, beat eggs and sugar together.
- Beat in oil and pumpkin until smooth.
- Add zucchini, lemon zest, pumpkin pie spice, and nutmeg. Stir well.
- In a medium bowl, sift together remaining ingredients. Gently stir into zucchini mixture until incorporated and moistened. Do not overmix.
- Pour into prepared loaf pan. Bake 45-50 minutes until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

Editor's Note: Recipe by Stephanie Gallagher, reprinted with permission from about.com



Ruby Rhubarb Ginger Crunch

Head Start, Iowa City

- 4 cups rhubarb (fresh or frozen)
- 1 cup cranberries, pitted tart cherries, blueberries, or strawberries (fresh or partially thawed)
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup honey
- ¼ cup white flour or whole wheat pastry flour
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ - ¾ tsp freshly grated ginger

Topping:

- ½ cup white flour or whole wheat pastry flour
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ⅓-½ cup chopped hickory nuts, pecans, or walnuts
- 4 tbsp cold butter, cut into pieces

- Combine rhubarb and cranberries (or other fruit) with sugar. Let stand 15 minutes, tossing often.
- Heat oven to 350 degrees; grease a deep-dish pie pan.
- Add honey, flour, vanilla, and ginger to fruit; toss well. Spread in pan. Bake 20 minutes.
- Meanwhile, make the topping. Combine flour, sugar, and nuts. Cut in cold butter with pastry cutter or your fingers. Refrigerate while rhubarb bakes.
- When fruit has baked 20 minutes, sprinkle topping over it and continue to bake until bubbly, 30-40 minutes longer.
- Serve warm with vanilla ice cream or vanilla yogurt.

Editor's Note: Reprinted with permission from Asparagus to Zucchini by the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition

Iowa City Head Start's Story

The Head Start program provides grants to local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to economically disadvantaged children and families, with a special focus on helping preschoolers develop the early reading and math skills they need to be successful in school. The Early Head Start program was established to serve children from birth to three years of age in recognition of the mounting evidence that the earliest years matter a great deal to children's growth and development.

Head Start programs help kids become socially and cognitively ready to start school by supporting enrolled children and their families with education, health, nutritional, and social services. In eastern Iowa, Head Start programs are run by HACAP, which focuses on early child development to provide essential resources to children during a critical time of growth. The Iowa City Head Start program has been a member of Local Foods Connection since 2009.

In order to use the fresh, local food available to them through Local Foods Connection, the staff at Head Start needs to put in an effort above that which would normally be required of them to provide meals for the children. The teachers make special trips to the farmers' market to collect the food from the farmer. Sometimes the teachers even drive to area grocery stores to purchase ingredients needed for recipes and other produce. Bringing unprocessed and healthy foods into their kitchen is only the first step in the process of integrating new and challenging foods into their menu planning.

The Head Start cook could easily open a can of asparagus, heat it on the stovetop and serve it to the children to meet the nutritional guidelines enforced by the national office. Head Start must follow the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) regulations. CACFP plays a vital role in improving the quality of day care for children and elderly adults by making care more affordable for many low-income families. Using ingredients that are available year-round, such as canned goods, enables Head Starts to plan these carefully-regulated school menus in advance.

Depending upon seasonal, locally-grown produce items is more challenging because the staff will not know what will be available from the

farmer until market day. If a teacher brings Chinese cabbage back from the market, then she and the cook must make changes to the planned menu. The staff could replace the canned asparagus with fresh cabbage if the substituted item offers the children equal nutritional value. The “Healthy Zucchini Bread” recipe could meet a bread or a vegetable requirement. Furthermore, they must send the recipe to the Nutrition Manager in Cedar Rapids for approval.

The Iowa City Head Start cook says that the reaction of the children makes all her effort worthwhile.

Not only does the recipe need to meet governmental nutritional requirements and be approved by the regional Head Start headquarters, the recipe must be manageable by the cook and appetizing to the children! Although the staff members are thrilled that the quality and variety of the food they offer to the children are much better now that they

participate in Local Foods Connection, they must be determined and creative to satisfy everyone.

The Iowa City Head Start cook says that the reaction of the children makes all her effort worthwhile. When she walks into the classroom and the children shout, “You are a good cook!” she feels happy and validated. She takes the time to make meals that taste good to the children. “It is part of my job to ensure that the kids are eating,” she states. The zucchini bread is popular with the children. The staff ensure that the children try raw zucchini too.

Head Start found the “Healthy Zucchini Bread” recipe on About.com, in the “Cooking for Kids” section. Most of the other recipes they take from the cookbook provided to them by Local Foods Connection, *From Asparagus to Zucchini: A Guide to Cooking Farm-Fresh Seasonal Produce* by the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition (MACSAC), including “Ruby Rhubarb Ginger Crunch,” a favorite of the cook and kids.

Rhubarb is expensive at the store, so the staff had never given it to the children before. When the kids first saw the rhubarb crunch, they said “Ew!” The staff members act as positive role models by enthusiastically tasting new foods in front of the children.

Head Start provides the children with a full breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack every day. Head Start feeds some of the kids more than their own parents do. The children and staff eat every meal together family-style. They pass around bowls and the children serve themselves. “The children get their serving sizes figured out pretty quickly,” says Liz, one of the teachers. “Once they tried the rhubarb crunch, they loved it.” About feeding the children healthy food, the cook says, “I love it. I truly do.”



Oak Hill Acres, Atalissa



food information



Sass Family Farm, Riverside

PARTS and



TOP TEN REASONS TO BUY LOCAL FOOD

1. Locally grown food tastes better.

Food grown in your own community was probably picked within the past day or two. It's crisp, sweet, and loaded with flavor. Produce flown or trucked in from Florida or Chile is much older. The average distance food travels from the farm to your home is 1,500 miles.

2. Local produce is better for you.

Fresh produce loses nutrients quickly. Locally grown food, purchased soon after harvest, retains its nutrients.

3. Local food preserves genetic diversity.

In industrial agricultural, plant varieties are chosen for their ability to ripen simultaneously and withstand harvesting equipment; for a tough skin that can survive packing and shipping; and for an ability to have a long shelf life in the store. Only a handful of hybrid varieties of each fruit and vegetable meet those rigorous demands, so there is little genetic diversity in the plants grown. Local farms, in contrast, grow a huge number of varieties to provide a long season of harvest, an array of eye-catching colors, and the best flavors.

4. Local food is GMO-free.

A June 2001 survey by ABC News showed that 93% of Americans want labels on genetically modified food—most so that they can avoid it.

5. Local food supports local farm families.

With fewer than one million Americans now claiming farming as their primary occupation, farmers are a vanishing breed. Commodity prices that farmers receive for their crops are at historic lows, often below the cost of production.

6. Local food builds community.

Knowing the farmers gives you insight into the seasons, the weather, and the miracle of raising food. In many cases, it gives you access to a farm where your children and grandchildren can go to learn about nature and agriculture.

7. Local food preserves open space.

As the value of direct-marketed fruits and vegetables increases, small family farmers will be less likely to sell their land for development.

8. Local food keeps your taxes in check.

Farms contribute more in taxes than they require in services, whereas suburban development costs more than it generates in taxes, according to several studies. On average, for every \$1 in revenue raised by residential development, governments must spend \$1.17 on services, thus requiring higher taxes of all taxpayers. For each dollar of revenue raised by farm, forest, or open space, governments spend 34 cents on services.

9. Local food supports a clean environment and benefits wildlife.

A well-managed family farm is a place where the resources of fertile soil and clean water are valued.

10. Local food is about the future.

By supporting local farmers today, you can help ensure that there will be farms in your community tomorrow, and that future generations will have access to nourishing, flavorful, and abundant food.



FOOD SAFETY

When serving, keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

- Never leave perishable food out of the refrigerator over 2 hours. Bacteria that can cause food poisoning grow quickly at warm temperatures.
- Pack lunches in an insulated carrier with a cold pack. Caution children never to leave lunches in direct sun or on a warm radiator.

When handling leftovers, use small containers for quick cooling.

- Divide large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator.
- Don't pack the refrigerator too full—cool air must circulate to keep food safe.
- When you question food safety, if in doubt, throw it out.
- Never taste food that looks or smells strange to see if you can still use it.
- Is it moldy? The poisons that molds can form are found under the surface of the food. Most moldy food should be discarded. Sometimes, hard cheese and salamis and firm fruits and vegetables can be salvaged by cutting out the mold and a large area around it.

When to worry, is it food poisoning?

Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, or cramps can indicate food poisoning. Depending on the illness, symptoms can appear anywhere from 30 minutes to 2 weeks after eating bad food. Most often, though, people get sick within 4 to 48 hours.

Why do so many people get food poisoning?

At the right temperature, bacteria you can't see, smell or taste can multiply to the millions in a few short hours. In large numbers, these microorganisms cause illness.

You don't have to get sick.

Nearly 95% of foodborne illness cases could be avoided if people handled and prepared food properly.

When shopping, buy cold food last, get it home fast!

Make grocery shopping your last errand. Select frozen and refrigerated foods last. Take food straight home to the refrigerator and/or freezer. Never leave food in a warm car!

When storing food, keep it safe - refrigerate!

To help control bacteria, keep your refrigerator as cold as possible without freezing milk or lettuce—generally 40°F.

When preparing food, keep everything clean!

- Wash hands in hot, soapy water before preparing food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets.
- Bacteria can live in kitchen towels, sponges and cloths. Wash them often.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, and fish and their juices away from other food. For instance, wash your hands, cutting board, and knife in hot, soapy water after cutting up the chicken and before dicing salad ingredients.
- Thaw food in the microwave or refrigerator, not on the kitchen counter where bacteria can grow in the outer layers of the food before the inside thaws.

When cooking, cook thoroughly!

Use a meat thermometer to check that meat is cooked all the way through. Cook:

- Ground beef, lamb or pork to 160°F
- Ground turkey or chicken to 165°F
- Beef or lamb roasts and steaks to at least 145°F
- Fresh pork roasts and chops to at least 160°F
- Poultry to 180°F

Eggs

- Salmonella, a bacteria that causes food poisoning, can grow inside fresh, unbroken eggs. To avoid problems, cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm, not runny.

- Don't use recipes in which eggs remain raw or only partially cooked. Keep eggs refrigerated.

Use microwaves carefully!

- The microwave is a great timesaver, but it has one food safety disadvantage—it sometimes leaves cold spots in food. Bacteria can survive in these spots.
- For even cooking, stir food and rotate the dish during cooking.
- Observe the standing time called for in a recipe or package directions. This allows the food to finish cooking.
- Food microwaved in plastic containers or plastic wrapping might contain plastic molecules driven into the food by the energy of the radiation. These compounds may disrupt the hormonal balance of the body and increase cancer risks. Never put food into a microwave oven in anything other than a microwave-safe glass or ceramic container, and never cover it with plastic wrap



Lettuce Seedlings, Oak Hill Acres, Atalissa

TIPS FOR HEALTHY EATING

Tips to encourage healthy eating in your children

- Buy and serve more fruits and vegetables.
- Buy fewer soft drinks and high calorie snack foods like chips, cookies, and candy.
- Eat breakfast every day.
- Plan healthy meals and eat together as a family.
- Eat fast food less often.
- Offer your child water or low-fat milk more often than fruit juice.
- Some kids need to have a new food served to them 10 times or more before they will eat it. Don't get discouraged!
- Try not to use food as a reward.
- Start with small servings and let your child ask for more if he or she is still hungry.

Tips for reading the nutrition facts

It depends upon what's most important to you. Ask these questions of yourself, and then focus on certain facts.

Is weight maintenance or loss on your mind?

Compare labels and choose food items with lower calories, saturated fat, and trans fat content. Also, choose foods with higher levels of dietary fiber.

Concerned about heart health?

If you have a choice between items with different types of fat, choose those with monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fat (voluntarily listed) instead of saturated or trans fat. Also, choose foods with higher levels of dietary fiber.

Is diabetes an issue?

Pay particular attention to the grams of total carbohydrate and dietary fiber. Remember that 15 grams of total carbohydrates equals one exchange or one serving of grains. In addition, choose foods lower in saturated fat and calories.

Just trying to stay healthy?

Choose foods high in dietary fiber and lower in calories, saturated fat, and trans fat.

Tips for reading food labels

- Begin by looking at the serving size and the number of servings in the package.
- The information listed on the label is for one serving. If you plan to eat the whole package and it contains two servings, you must multiply the numbers on the label by two.
- Serving size can often vary between different brands of the same food, so be certain when comparing labels that you also compare serving sizes.

Tips for including produce in every meal

- When making sandwiches, remember to fill it out by adding vegetables such as tomatoes, green peppers, cucumbers, and onions.
- Add a side salad to any meal. Make it more colorful by including vegetables such as carrots, tomatoes, broccoli, or shredded cabbage. Or, for more variety, consider throwing in fruit such as apples, mandarin oranges, nectarines, strawberries, or cranberries.
- Snack on fresh carrots, peppers, or celery. Try dipping them in reduced fat cream cheese or salad dressing.
- Make your coleslaw, tuna, and chicken salads more exciting by incorporating chopped apples, raisins, shredded carrots, diced celery, or chopped pineapple.

Tips for increasing daily intake of whole grains

- Use a whole grain product in place of refined foods. For example, choose whole wheat bread instead of white bread.
- Choose whole grain, ready-to-eat cereal for breakfast or snacks.
- When baking, substitute whole wheat or oat flour for up to half of the white flour.
- Eat popcorn for snacks.
- Try whole grain chips such as corn tortilla chips.
- Add barley, wild rice, or brown rice to soups and stews.
- Instead of white pasta or rice, substitute whole grain pasta, brown rice, or a new grain like quinoa or bulgur.

Tips for choosing more nutrient-dense foods

- Choose fresh fruits and vegetables more often.
- When buying canned or frozen fruits and vegetables, select those packed in their own juices or with no added sugar.
- Look for whole grain as the first item in the ingredient list of breads, cereals, and pastas.
- Grill, bake, or poach fish, meats, and poultry.
- Choose “loin” or “round” cuts of red meat and pork. They have the least amount of saturated (unhealthy) fat.
- Select beverages and snacks that do not list sugar or high fructose corn syrup as one of the first four ingredients.

Note: The information included on this book is for educational purposes only. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. The reader should always consult his or her healthcare provider to determine the appropriateness of the information for their own situation or if they have any questions regarding a medical condition or treatment plan.



Scattergood Friends School Farm, West Branch

Apples

- Select firm, well-shaped, colorful apples.
- Refrigerate in a bag with perforated holes so apples can breathe and still be preserved.
- Wash apples with water and eat raw with the skin on, or cut them up to remove the core.
- Apples are often cooked, boiled, steamed, baked, or grilled. Apples can be used in both sweet and savory recipes.
- Use softer apples for applesauce and firmer apples for pies.

Asparagus

- Use within three days.
- To keep it fresh, trim a little from the base of the stalks. Stand in a glass of water in an upright position and store in the refrigerator.
- Green asparagus does not need to be peeled, however white asparagus does.
- Trim an inch or two off the end of the stalk, depending on how tough it is, before cooking.
- Asparagus can be boiled, steamed, microwaved, roasted and grilled.

Brussel Sprouts

- Eat a serving of Brussels sprouts with a serving of whole grains for a complete protein meal.
- Since Brussels sprouts are compact and firm, it is easy to overcook them. Steaming them to a bright green color, approximately 7 minutes, is sufficient.
- Use a paring knife to cut an “x” into the ends of the sprouts to help cook them thoroughly.
- Or cut the individual sprouts in half. Then you can cook them for a shorter time and judge the cooking process more easily.

Snow Peas and Snap Peas

- Store in a plastic bag in the refrigerator and eat as soon as possible.
- Flavor and crisp texture loss occur when they are stored for more than a few days.
- Fresh peas don't require much cooking; steam for 3 minutes, boil for 1½ minutes, or stir-fry for 2 to 3 minutes.
- Both varieties are also very tasty eaten raw. Snow peas require no special preparation, while sugar snap peas should be de-stemmed.
- To de-stem a snap pea, break the stem off the pod almost completely, then pull the stem downward. The stem is connected to the seam running down the side of the pod. With practice, the stem and seam can be removed in one motion.

Fennel

- When choosing fennel, the bulbs should be firm and round.
- Fennel should be stored dry, unwashed, and wrapped in a plastic bag.
- Fennel will keep for up to 5 days in the refrigerator.
- To prepare, wash with cold water, cut off green top, trim at the base removing brown layers.
- Fennel can be braised, sautéed, baked, or grilled.

Spinach

- Select spinach with leaves that are clean, fresh, young, tender, and with a good green color.
- Avoid large, yellow, or discolored leaves.
- Fresh spinach cooks down to about ⅓ the amount—1 cup raw will become ⅓ cup cooked.
- Adding nutmeg to spinach helps to offset the subtle bittersweet taste.
- Store in airtight plastic bags for up to 5 days in the refrigerator.
- Spinach can be frozen or cooked and stored for longer periods of time.

- To keep spinach from darkening, cook in enameled or glass pots.
- Spinach is a tasty addition to quiches, salads, or other minimum cooking recipes.

Strawberries

- Strawberries grown naturally, without the use of artificial fertilizers or pesticides, are smaller than commercial strawberries, but they pack a big punch! They are sweet and flavorful.
- Just before eating, wash berries with fast running cold water. The friction of the running water helps remove bacteria.
- Avoid allowing strawberries to sit in water because they will lose flavor and color.
- For maximum shelf life, store unwashed fresh strawberries in a clean refrigerator.
- Leave the green caps on the strawberries until you are ready to eat them. This helps maintain higher levels of vitamin C.
- Always avoid moldy berries. If one berry in a package has mold, the spores will have infected the other berries.
- Try eating strawberries by themselves, with some low fat yogurt, or as part of a frozen fruit salad.
- Add strawberries to a green lettuce or spinach salad to give your family a tasty surprise!
- To save them for a later snack, place clean strawberries on a cookie sheet in the freezer. Once frozen, transfer to a freezer bag.

Whole Grains

- A whole grain is the unrefined seed (kernel) of a plant. It contains three layers: bran, germ, and endosperm.
- Whole grains are good sources of dietary fiber, vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folate), and minerals (iron, magnesium, and selenium).
- Consuming three to five servings of whole grains per day may help reduce your risk of some cancers, cardiovascular disease, and type II diabetes.
- Eating whole grains is helpful in controlling weight. They fill your stomach more quickly and provide fewer absorbable calories.



PRODUCE COLORS AND NUTRITION

Red

Strawberries, raspberries, red apples, blood oranges, cherries, red pears, pomegranates, watermelon, red pepper, radishes, red potatoes, rhubarb, tomatoes

Protect against heart disease and certain cancers. Aid in memory and urinary tract function.

Yellow & Orange

Yellow apples, citrus fruits, peaches, apricots, carrots, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, summer and winter squash, yellow pears, pumpkin, yellow tomatoes, cantaloupe, lemon, mangoes, papaya, pineapple, tangerines

Protect against heart disease and certain cancers. Boost immune system.

Green

Lettuce, kiwis, broccoli, green pears, green grapes, green beans, avocados, honeydew, limes, green peppers, sugar snap peas, peas, spinach, cucumbers, zucchini, Brussels sprouts, artichokes, leeks, green onions

Reduce risk of certain cancers. Improve vision and help build bones and teeth.

Blue & Purple

Plums, blueberries, blackberries, black currants, purple grapes, eggplant, raisins, purple cabbage

Reduce risk of certain cancers. Protect urinary tract from infection. Help memory and reduce free radical damage during aging process.

White

Cauliflower, onions, garlic, kohlrabi, bananas, brown pears, white peaches, white nectarines, mushrooms, potatoes, shallots, white corn, soy products

Protect against heart disease and certain types of cancer. May reduce cholesterol levels. Soy produces estrogenic effect; helpful to reduce hot flashes during menopause.



Leeks, Local Harvest CSA, Solon



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PHOTOS

Cover: Green Onions, Local Harvest CSA, Solon

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Introduction: Fennel, Scattergood Friends School Farm, West Branch

Main Dishes: Butternut Winter Squash, Fae Ridge Farm, Iowa City

Sides, Condiments, Sweets: Pumpkin Flower, Simone’s Plain and Simple, Wellman

Food Information: Okra Flower, Gooseberry Hill Farm, Iowa City