

WHY I LIKE TO EAT LOCAL

by Jeanell Ruth Innerarity, Executive Director

When most people see oranges at the grocery store, they see neatly arranged rows of familiar fruits from which they can choose according to their tastes. When I see oranges at the grocery store, I see a farmer, a tree, a whole journey taken by a piece of fruit to get to me.

Experience a grocery store orange with me for a moment: At the store I see just a few varieties of orange. Many more exist, but these few varieties ship well over long distances. I choose one with a perfect, shiny, wax-coated rind. A sign indicates that this orange was shipped here from California, half a continent away. It is still a little green from being picked before ripening. I imagine the resources of man-hours, fossil fuels, refrigeration, wax coating, and packaging which brought this waxy green orange to me.

My experience with a local farmers' market or homegrown orange is different: The rind is a bit scuffy, but the internal fruit is undamaged and no bits of wax flake off on my fingertips. This orange has been grown for flavor, not appearance. It is an heirloom variety which thrives in this climate. It is no more than a day old and has required no packaging to reach me. I can picture the farmer plucking it right off the tree because I met her at a food co-op last week. This orange, then, becomes not just a food but a relationship. It becomes what eating local means to me.

Sources

Eat Here: Reclaiming Homegrown Pleasures in a Global Supermarket by Brian Halweil

What's Cooking in Your Food System? by Kami Pothukuchi

Health Benefits of Urban Agriculture by Bellows, Brown, and Smit

Amber Waves, June 2005 "Milestones in U.S. farming and farm policy" by Dimitri and Effland

www.myfootprint.org

www.worldwatch.org/node/1749

The Last Organic Outpost logo, featuring the text "The Last Organic Outpost" in a stylized, green, hand-drawn font. The word "The" is smaller and positioned above "Last". To the left of the text is a stylized green plant icon.

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FOOD SECURITY AND LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

An educational brochure
provided by

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*"Grow What You Eat;
Eat What You Grow."*

*—Joe Nelson Icet, Creative Director
Last Organic Outpost Founder*

WHY EAT LOCAL FOOD?

“Community food security is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.”

—Kami Potbukuchi of the Community Food Security Coalition

- The average food item travels 1,500-2,500 miles from farm to plate. This uses 4-17 times more fossil fuels than local food and exposes the food to potential contamination.
- Produce varieties are often selected for travel-ability rather than taste, thus limiting biodiversity and consumer choice.
- Marketing locally is easier for small, organic growers, and buying locally allows you to know your farmer personally.
- Eating locally can reduce your “Ecological Footprint.”
- Once harvested, food rapidly loses its nutritional content even when kept at standard refrigeration temperature.



OUR ROLE IN BRINGING LOCAL FOOD TO YOU

The Outpost provides affordable, sustainably grown produce right here in Houston.

The Outpost builds community by hosting events where homegrown food is available to eat, often within hours or even minutes of harvesting.

The Outpost teaches the Houston community about food production, from organic gardening to raw foods preparation.

The Outpost is starting a seed bank so that we can continue to reliably produce heirloom varieties of fruits and vegetables which thrive in the local climate.

The Outpost helps increase food security and decrease Houston's Ecological Footprint by utilizing greenspace as productive, fertile farmland.

The Outpost gives volunteers gardening skills and free produce in exchange for their labors of love.

The Outpost makes eating fun!

WHY EAT LOCAL FOOD?

A Community Food System is a system “in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution and consumption are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, and social and nutritional health of a particular place.”

—Growing a Community Food System by Garrett and Feenstra

- Every dollar spent locally generates almost two dollars for a local economy.
- In the last 30 years, Britain's traditional 2,000 varieties of apples have been reduced to two or three commercial varieties.
- In 1999, the USDA reported that 10% of U.S. households were food insecure, meaning that they could not reliably predict when or where they would receive their next meal.
- In the last century, farm size has risen from an average of 146 acres to 441 acres, while the number of farms has decreased from 5.7 million to 2.1 million.
- We have already lost 32% of our best farmland to development.
- Urban sprawl threatens over half of the U.S.'s remaining farmland.