

# Farm Fresh Food Festival

## Action Project Lesson Plan

### Purpose

To expose students to the benefits of buying local. Not only is the food fresher, buying local food helps farmers and the environment.

### Overview

Students will visit a local grocery store or farmers' market to find foods that are grown locally. Once back at school, they will create a menu for a food festival that features local foods. Students will research the benefits to the local economy and the environment by choosing local foods and will display their results during the festival. Students will advertise their event and serve their food to the school, another class or even the teaching staff.

### Getting Organized

**Level:** Grade 6

**Curriculum Connections:**

Science- Biodiversity

Language- Reading, Writing, Media Literacy

Social Studies- Canada's Interactions with the Global Community

Health and Physical Education- Healthy Eating

**Length:** 2+ hours

**Materials:**

- Eco Adventure Guides (Action Project planning pages)*
- Paper
- Pencils, erasers
- Camera
- Art materials such as markers, pencil crayons etc. or computer design program (*optional*)
- Food to serve*
- Utensils and cutlery as required.*

### Teacher Background

Buying local food has many benefits for the local economy, farmers, the environment and you! When food has to travel long distances to get to Ontario, your grocery store and your home, it loses its freshness. Fuel emissions also add up as food travels by plane, trains, boats and trucks. These emissions add carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, contributing to climate change, which is a global issue.

Ontario farmers are good stewards of the land. They follow farming practices and regulations that try to ensure sustainability of the land for future generations of food production. When buying local food, you are supporting their efforts and helping ensure the sustainability of local food security.

Local food supports biodiversity! Community-supported agricultural farmers sell at markets and to local restaurants. They have the support they need to grow a range of different food items instead of large farming operations growing monoculture crops.

And of course, local food tastes better because it's fresher. Buying local empowers the buyer because you know where your food came from and at farmers' markets, you can ask questions about how the food was grown and meet the farmers who grew it!

# Activity

1. Find a local farmers' market or grocery store that has local food available and book a trip for your students. Have the students look for signs of local food and take pictures of what tells them that the food is grown locally. e.g. apples grown in Ontario.
2. If a class trip is not an option, as homework, have students accompany their parents to do the grocery shopping. Their homework is to make a list of local foods they can find where their family shops.
3. As a class, decide what kind of food you want to serve for the event.
4. Decide who is coming to the event, such as another class in your school, parents or people from the community.
5. You could open the event up to the whole school or serve the teachers a lunch. You could sell tickets to cover the cost and possibly fundraise for other environmentally connected projects.
6. Have some students research the benefits of local food and make a display such as posters or a power point presentation.
7. Have other students make invitations, announcements and decorations for the event.
8. You can make more elaborate food in a kitchen if you have access to one in your school or you can keep it simple by cutting up some vegetables, fruit and cheese to serve.
9. Not every item in a given recipe needs to be local; it could be homemade soup, featuring local butternut squash. Challenge your students to get as local as they can!
10. Keep track of each stage of your event by taking pictures. As a conclusion to the event, students can write about their experience and new understanding of local food using pictures to help tell their story.
11. Don't have access to a school kitchen? Here are some ideas of what you can serve.
  - You can slice up these local foods and serve with a dip or crackers:  
*Cheese, apples, berries, melon, peaches, pears, carrots, celery sticks and peppers*
  - If you can find some local cold cut meats, they can be served as sandwiches.
  - Make a salad.
  - Make some smoothies with local berries and dairy products.
  - Sundaes with berries and a local dairy's ice cream.

## EXTENSION

Through research and discussion, have your class consider the question "Can growing your own food in a garden at home or in your schoolyard increase biodiversity?" Students will discuss ways that a food garden could provide natural habitat, shelter and food for birds, wildlife and beneficial insects (yes, you might have to share!). They may also discuss planting a number of different varieties to add diversity; composting to increase soil health and allowing insects to flourish; planting heirloom or heritage food crops or berry-producing plants; providing pollen and nectar for bees and butterflies; and using less fertilizer, herbicides and pesticides.

As an extension to this project, your school could plant a new garden or enhance an existing garden, with edible crops that will introduce more biodiversity and habitat to your schoolyard.

### Considerations:

- If you are short on time, plant fast-growing crops such as herbs, lettuce, chard, arugula or other salad crops, radishes, beets, turnip, beans or peas.
- Consider planting perennial plants such as raspberry bushes or strawberry plants.
- Start small; add one or two edible plants to an existing or new native plant garden.
- Plant a fruit tree.
- Ensure your garden location is easily accessible, receives sufficient sunlight, and is close to a water source.
- For in-ground edible gardens, make sure your soil is healthy and free of toxins and contaminants before planting.

## Online Resources

Foodland Ontario | <http://www.foodland.gov.on.ca/english/>

Biodiversity Canada: Biodiversity in your Backyard | <http://www.biodivcanada.ca/default.asp?lang=En&n=002D699A-1>

Toronto Seed Library | <http://www.torontoseedlibrary.org/>

Ontario Edible Education Network | <http://sustainontario.com/initiatives/ontario-edible-education-network>

Permaculture Institute of Eastern Ontario | <http://eonpermaculture.ca/>

