

## **Lesson: Eat Local Food**

### **Supplies Needed:**

- 4.8\_LV\_Eat-Local-Food-Visual
- (Optional) Seed packets for students to start planting at home

### **Goals:**

- Students will understand the concept of “local food”.
- Students will identify ways to eat more locally produced foods.
- Review concepts from previous lessons to increase the likelihood of implementation into the student’s daily food choices

### **Background:**

Choosing foods grown locally, or within a 100-mile radius of your home can have a positive impact on the environment. Buying foods, including vegetables, fruits and meats from local farmers, reduces the amount of fuel consumed and pollution emitted from the transport. At times the products may be shipped over 1000 miles or further, to reach the destination for sale. Knowing the farmer that raises the food you eat, helps you to understand how your food is grown and what their farming practices are. Some ways to start buying locally are to participate in Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs), to frequent farmers markets, or by creating your own garden at home.

In order to continue eating locally during the winter months, people can buy extra produce when in season and preserve them by canning and/or freezing. Berries and most vegetables freeze well. Preserving can get them through most, if not all, of the winter depending on how much is stored. Some vegetables do not preserve well, for instance cucumbers. Hard-to-store produce should be enjoyed to the fullest when they are in season. Eating certain foods at different times of the year makes these foods special and more like a treat.

### **Lesson:**

Who can remember the three macronutrients?  
(*Carbohydrates, protein, fat*)

Which macronutrient gives us quick energy?  
(*Carbohydrates*)

What are some examples of foods with carbohydrates?  
(*Fruits, vegetables, grains, bread, milk, beans, potatoes, spaghetti*)

Which macronutrients give us long lasting energy?  
*(Fat and protein)*

What are some examples of foods with healthy fats?  
*(Fish, nuts, milk- mostly the protein, grain or dairy groups and some fruits like avocados).*

What are some examples of foods with protein?  
*(Chicken, meat, beans, nuts, cheese)*

Great!

Does anyone know what it means when we say to buy local food or to eat locally?  
*(Eating fruits, vegetables, and meats that are grown and raised close to your home)*

**(Show slide 1.)** To buy your foods locally means the food was grown or raised within a 100-mile radius of your home. This means that you can buy food that is grown on a farm 100 miles north, 100 miles south or 100 miles east or west from your town. This does not have to be exact but it is a good guideline to start with.

**(Show slide 2.)** There are a number of reasons why eating locally is recommended.

1. Buying locally reduces the fuel used to transport produce long distances. It takes a lot of energy to move food from far away farms to our grocery stores. Over the past few years, we have begun to see the need to preserve our natural resources (things that come from nature) so that they are around for years to come.
2. Second, the food is most likely fresher because it takes less time to get to the consumer once it has been harvested. A strawberry coming from California is picked, packaged, shipped and then put out for sale. A strawberry coming from Michigan can be processed and ready for sale in less time.
3. Third, it is easier to learn about how the local food was grown and what, if any, chemicals were used. When buying from small farmers you can often talk to them about their farming practices and beliefs and maybe even tour the farms. Knowing how your food is grown is important information, just like reading nutrition labels, when choosing what foods you will put in your body.

**(Show slide 3.)** So how do we eat locally?  
*(Farmers' markets, reading labels in grocery stores, gardening, freezing produce when it is fresh)*

One idea is to go is the farmers' market. Here, local farmers drive their produce or meats to the market for sale. You can walk from booth to booth, compare prices, and talk with the actual farmers or someone that works on the farm. They can give you information about how fresh the produce is, how it is grown, and often offer ideas on how to prepare a fruit or vegetable that you are not familiar with.

If you do not have a farmers' market nearby, you can still shop at the grocery store. More and more fruits and vegetables are including the location where they are grown on the labels or packages. For instance, if you want to buy strawberries, you will find, especially in the winter months, most are grown in Florida or California. Try to choose foods that were grown as close to your home as possible.

Another idea is to start your own garden at home. Not only will this save you money, but gardening is a fun hobby for the summer months when you do not have school. You will be amazed as you watch these vegetables grow. There is nothing more rewarding than nurturing a plant or a particular vegetable until it is ready to pick and eat! There are always challenges to successfully growing plants but this is part of the fun. If you have a sunny spot outside or sunny window inside, try planting your own seeds. Start small with lettuce or herbs, or even a couple of bean plants and see what happens

What should we do about eating bananas, avocados or other produce that can never grow in our area because of the climate? Should we never eat them again?  
(No).

No, we should not stop eating them, but we can be more careful with our selections. If we change our habits to eating more in the summer from the farmers' market, then it is okay to buy tropical fruits and vegetables from the grocery store.

The point is to eat more locally when we can. This helps to preserve the environment and support the local farmers. Even small changes will make a difference.

You will feel good about protecting your planet when purchasing foods locally!

**(Review Game)** Now we are going to play a game to review what you have learned this year. Let's split into two groups. **(The class can be divided up into more than two groups, depending on how the desks are grouped together and what will work best for the classroom set up.)**

I am going to ask Group #1 a question. That group will have 30 seconds to discuss the answer. If their answer is right they will get a point. If the answer is wrong, Group #2 will have a chance to respond. One point will be given to the group that gets the right answer. The next question will be directed to Group #2, with Group #1 having a chance to answer if Group #2's answer is wrong.

Please do not call out the answer. Okay let's get started. **(Do as many questions as possible until the end of the lesson. Leave time to tally which team is the winner.)**

1. What is one way to increase the amount of whole grains that you eat?  
*(Substitute whole grains for processed grains, for instance, brown rice instead of white rice, whole wheat pasta instead of white pasta, whole wheat bread instead of white bread.)*
2. What is the difference between a whole grain and an enriched grain?  
*(A whole grain has all three parts, the bran, germ and endosperm. The enriched grain has been processed and the vitamins and minerals were added back into the product.)*
3. There are three main fats that we need to be aware of in our food. Can you name two of them?  
*(Saturated, unsaturated and trans fat)*
4. Even if the label says 0 trans fat, there still may be small amounts of trans fat in each serving. What word or words in the ingredient list tells us there are trans fats in the product?  
*(Partially hydrogenated)*
5. If a food has saturated fat and there is 10% of saturated fat or more in a serving, is this a Go Food or a Slow Food?  
*(Slow Food - It is best if there is less than 10% saturated fat per serving.)*
6. Is it better to have a snack bar with 350 mg of sodium or 200 mg of sodium?  
*(200mg of sodium, the less the better)*
7. Too much salt in our diet over a long period of time can lead to disease. Can you name two of these diseases?  
*(high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke)*
8. Name two ways to reduce our salt intake.  
*(Eat whole foods, read nutrition labels, eat less processed foods, avoid adding salt to food)*
9. Eating too much sugar can lead to some problems with our health. Can you name two of them?  
*(Type 2 diabetes, tooth decay, weakened immune system, unhealthy weight gain).*
10. Is it better to have 10 grams of sugar in an apple or 10 grams of sugar in a cookie? Explain your answer.  
*(10 grams of sugar in an apple - the sugar is used the same way in our bodies but the apple will also provide vitamins, minerals and fiber. The cookie most likely will not provide nutrients.)*

11. Can you name three cardiovascular exercises that strengthen the heart?  
*(Running, jumping jacks, swimming, anything that gets heart beating fast at a sustained rate)*
12. How much total exercise do you need each and every day?  
*(60 minutes)*
13. What is the most amount of screen time we should have each day, which includes TV, computer, video games and iPods?  
*(2 hours)*
14. What are two examples of whole grains?  
*(Oats, brown rice, popcorn, whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta)*
15. How can you tell if a product contains whole grains or enriched grains? *(Read the ingredient list)*
16. Why is it better to have an apple instead of apple juice?  
*(Fiber in the apple)*
17. Is it okay to eat Slow Foods?  
*(Yes, just limit how many you eat and make sure it is not replacing the foods your body needs like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and water.)*
18. Where can we find how much sodium a product has?  
*(Nutrition label)*
19. What nutrients do whole grains have in them that processed grains do not?  
*(B vitamins, healthy fats, fiber, protein, and minerals)*
20. What are the three parts of the grain?  
*(Bran, germ and endosperm)*
21. What's the minimum number of servings of fruit we should have every day?  
*(Two)*
22. What's the minimum number of servings of vegetables we should have every day?  
*(Three)*