

Podcast

[The Benefits of Eating Local]

You're listening to the Campus Recreation's Wellness Podcast, from the University of Northern Colorado.

The title of today's presentation is The Benefits of Eating Local:

We'll be discussing:

- What it means to "Eat Local"
- Benefits of eating locally grown food (including cost, taste, community support and environmental reasons)
- Where to look for local food, and
- Upcoming Wellness events that promote local foods

If I told you that there was a simple way to eat food that is more affordable, more flavorful, and more beneficial to the economy of your community would you be interested to hear more?

Good news: all of these goals can be attained through one modification in the way you purchase the food you eat. How? By eating local.

Although the word "local" has a flexible definition in terms of food, the basic concept refers to foods that are produced as close to home as possible. Buying local supports a more sustainable food system, meaning one that supports farmers, workers, animals and the community, along with the health of consumers.

While purchasers seem to constantly be torn between food trends like organic vs. conventional, low carb vs. low fat, and detoxing vs. not detoxing, the debate on buying local always seems to be a beneficial choice and here's why.

First off, It's More Affordable.

- While I can't guarantee that every locally grown food item will *always* be the cheaper option, by purchasing some or all of your food from a local source, you are cutting out the cost of transportation that you would normally pay if you purchased food from a larger grocery store or department store such as King Soopers, Wal-Mart or Target.
- Think about which foods are in season and check out a farmer's market in your community to buy accordingly. The food that is in season is usually cheaper than the food that is not in season.
- Did you know that in the U.S., the average grocery store's produce travels nearly 1,500 miles between the farm where it was grown and your refrigerator?

Taste

- In addition to food being more affordable due to less transportation cost, it probably tastes better too. Locally grown produce is harvested much closer to the day that you eat it compared to produce that is flown in from a different country.

Also, Buying Local means your Supporting Local.

- It makes sense. Buying food produced at a nearby farm keeps money in your community and/or state. This is something simple but effective that can be done to show your community support.
- Some foods can't always be purchased locally, but challenge yourself to experiment with new and interesting ingredients that you wouldn't normally buy instead of sticking with the same items every week. You may find a new favorite food item in the process!

Lastly, buying Local is Better for the Environment.

- Just as transportation of food raises the price of these products, it causes more environmental pollution due to fossil fuels too. You should also consider packaging and processing that goes into foods and food products. Just as shipping leads to environmental pollution, so does the required refrigeration process to keep food items cold. Large industrial farms are also large producers of air and water pollution.

I don't know about you, but I would love to have a conversation with my farmer on where my food came from and what type of farming practices were being used to create them. Having an organic label is something you have to pay for, and many small-scale farmers are organic in addition to being local but can't afford the credential. Always keep this in mind.

This information may be a bit overwhelming so I hope you don't feel the need to completely revamp your diet tomorrow. This can be as simple as choosing one item at a time and gradually adding more local items to your shopping list every week. Every little bit counts! Look for "local" signs at your grocery store, shop at Farmer's Markets when you have the chance, and if you're really interested, check for Community Supported Agriculture (or CSA) programs near you.

If you enjoy learning about "eating local" and are interested in additional information, stay on the watch for our Fall Fare Cooking Demo that will feature locally grown foods. In our demos, we prepare healthy dishes and give free samples along with recipes and nutritional breakdown. UNC will also be hosting its first ever campus Farmers Market. Check back for specific dates.

This has been a presentation from the University of Northern Colorado's, Campus Recreation, Wellness Programming. We hope you've enjoyed this presentation and be sure to download our other topics.

All information regarding upcoming events and programming is located on our webpage at:
www.unco.edu/campusrec.

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