



GrayIsGreen

Who are we?

Gray Is Green is an online gathering of older adult Americans aspiring to create a green legacy for the future. As environmentally conscious elders, we respond to a generational call: to co-create a future of economic justice, ecological sustainability and social justice.

We hold next generations of humans in mind and consider the future of ecosystems and other species. We are alert to the historic challenges facing our planet. And we are aware of the question arising from descendants generations hence:

What did you do, when you knew?

What do we do?

We aspire to embrace our eldership, living beyond consumerism and ageism. **Our Curriculum for Gray-Green Living** offers a variety of ways to join—and re-engage with—this elder movement.

We offer a periodic newsletter, a speaker's bureau, online resources, a [Facebook page](#) for relevant updates. In partnership with congenial organizations, we serve as a central clearinghouse of ideas and communications for older adults interested in greening their lives, learning about sustainability, advocating for sound public policy, being creative stewards or grandparents, emerging as elders, and mentoring young people.

*We invite **you** to get involved!*

www.grayisgreen.org

Community Resilience

What is the Local Food Movement?

The food we eat has so many labels that it can make us wonder what exactly we are eating and why it suddenly seems so important to know what is in our food and where it has come from. Many of the issues that food activists are concerned with were issues our parents and grandparents didn't have to deal with. In the past, food was always more or less local, grown in the backyard, on farms in their local community. Only in the last few decades has our food system become globalized. In response, a local food movement has arisen—all around the world—in which people are reclaiming their place in the food chain of their own neighborhoods and communities.

What is the Local Food Movement?

The local food movement which has arisen in neighborhoods and communities around the planet consists of people like you and me who want to know where their food is coming from. They want to know the people who grow their food as their friends and neighbors, and they want to reclaim their own gardens and backyards as places to grow food they can call their own. The term [local food system] is used to describe a method of food production and distribution that is geographically localized, rather than national or international.

What is Local Food?

Local food is grown or raised and harvested close to consumers' homes, then distributed over much shorter distances than is common in the conventional global industrial food system. In general, local food systems

are associated with sustainable agriculture, while the global industrial food system is reliant upon industrial agriculture.

How a community defines what foods are or are not local, depends on the nature and context of that community. There is no agreed-upon distance from farm to table that defines food as local. However, those who identify with the local food movement resonate with two major ideas. The first idea being the desire of having a close relationship with those who grow their food; and the second being the ideal that local food should be grown and distributed in sustainable and ecologically-sound ways.

The Ecological and Economic Costs of Long-Distance Food

Food grown and distributed within the global industrial food system tends to support economic systems of production which are ecologically and environmentally damaging. The carbon footprint of our industrialized, non-local system of food production and distribution is one of the primary contributors to climate change. Foods grown hundreds and thousands of miles away must be transported by train, plane, and automobiles emitting dangerous levels of carbon into the atmosphere.

Our friends at Eat Low Carbon² tell us that a food which is air freighted emits 30 times more greenhouse gases than food shipped by boat from the same location. Many foods found at your local grocery store come with a high climate price tag.

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Community Resilience: What is the Local Food Movement?

The Economic Benefits of Local Food

Local food activists also understand the economic benefits³ of buying their food locally. For instance, the massive distribution costs in transporting food many miles are cut down. Secondly, money stays in the community and reinforces the strength and vitality of the neighborhood. Buying local food also protects the livelihood and integrity of those who have made the honorable commitment to cultivate the harvest of the land.

When we shop for local foods, we get the satisfaction of knowing that we are contributing to our local communities and economies⁴. Also, local food doesn't always cost more than food from other parts of the country or world. In some cases it can actually cost less because in-season foods are generally cheaper and travel costs are minimized.

How to Become a Local Food Advocate

Whether you live in an urban or suburban environment, there are many opportunities to buy local and to become part of the local food movement. The two primary facets of the local food movement are community supported agriculture (CSA), which primarily appear in urban locales, and the Farmers' market, which appears in both urban and rural locales.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

For those city dwellers who struggle to find good produce, community supported agriculture is a wonderful way to receive some of the finest fruits, vegetables, and other fresh items from local farmers. When you become a member of a CSA, you're purchasing a share of vegetables from a regional farmer. Weekly or bi-weekly, from June until October or November, your farmer will deliver that share of produce to a convenient drop-off location in your neighborhood. CSA is a great way to purchase delicious produce, while supporting the local food movement and the hard-working efforts of local farmers.

CSA also provides affordable options for people living in cities who struggle financially to find healthy food for themselves and their friends and families. The Biodynamic Association⁵ tells us that CSA gives consumers the chance to choose how their food is grown and to reconnect with rhythms of nature by eating produce when it is in season.

Farmers' Markets

No matter where you live, you can often find local farmers' and other local food artisans gathering together in a comfortable and informal

market atmosphere to sell their wonderful wares. Farmers' markets have established themselves in a diverse array of locations, sizes, and cultures, and they represent a fantastic expression of the value of our local communities. Farmers' markets are places where we can rediscover a sense of belonging to the places where we live and to our neighbors who live there with us.

The Farmer's Market Coalition⁶ tells us that "while some food retailers do carry local and organic products, not all of them can carry a variety of local foods, or ensure a fair price to the farmer. Shopping at a farmers market is a wholly unique experience that benefits farmers and producers directly (they go home with a greater share of the retail price than they would by selling wholesale, where the margins are, well, just that—marginal), offering you more unique products, more heirloom varieties, and more opportunities to build relationships and learn about healthy eating." The USDA has a helpful online resource available to help you find local markets in your community⁷.

1 <http://www.sustainabletable.org/254/local-regional-food-systems>

2 <http://www.eatlowcarbon.org/diet-tips/stop-flying-fish-and-fruit-dont-buy-air-freighted-food>

3 see Local Economy sub-topic

4 <http://www.greenlivingonline.com/article/benefits-buying-local-food>

5 <https://www.biodynamics.com/content/community-supported-agriculture-introduction-csa>

6 <http://farmersmarketcoalition.org/education/qanda/>

7 <http://www.ams.usda.gov/local-food-directories/farmersmarketstype>.



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