

Local Food



HOW TO FEATURE LOCAL IN YOUR MENU PLAN

- DEFINE:** Any food grown (or value-added) within 100 miles (160 km) of your location is considered local. If you cannot find an ingredient within this boundary, consider looking for it first within the Columbia Basin and then within BC borders before sourcing from beyond.
- FIND:** Identifying locally-produced food in the Columbia Basin can be a challenge. Fortunately, some resources exist to help with this. Reach out to local food initiatives (CentralKootenayFood.ca/basin-foods), ask your local farmer's market manager for suggestions (visit bcfarmersmarkettrail.com for more information on local markets), and use the CentralKootenayFood.ca Farm and Food Directory.
- SEASON:** Seasonality can be a challenge for procuring produce year-round in the Basin. Consider storage crops like cabbage and squash, and greenhouse items, like sprouts and salad greens. But remember to think outside the market basket; lots of local foods don't have a season and are available year round, like flour, grains, lentils, preserves, animal products and beverages! Get inspired at CentralKootenayFood.ca/seasonal-guide.
- FEATURE:** Due to the generally higher cost of sourcing local ingredients, promote them on the menu and meet your budget constraints by incorporating other lower cost ingredients. And remember that local food is not just fresh produce.
- PROCURE:** Delivery of small orders may not be feasible for some farmers. Some ideas to offset this are: 1) Ask the farmer what order volume makes it worthwhile to make the delivery. 2) Pick up the delivery yourself: this gives you an opportunity to see where your food comes from! 3) Ask the farmer if perhaps their product is available at local stores or markets. It is important to begin the procurement process early as finding the best solution may take time.



**TIMING:**

The key here is to start earlier than you normally would. Many of the local suppliers you might work with will be small- and medium-scale food producers. There may not be a “one-stop-shop” for all your ingredients. Instead, you have the opportunity to connect directly and build relationships with local farmers and food processors in your own area. It will take more time initially but will serve you well for future local sourcing and the development of fresh and creative menus. Identifying local, in-season ingredients, sourcing farms which have the right stock, initiating communications, placing orders, and procuring product could take upwards of 4 weeks in total, so be sure to plan accordingly.

**DIETARY
RESTRICTIONS:**

It may be necessary to adjust menus to accommodate dietary restrictions related to health, religion or choice. This can mean avoiding animal products, grains that contain gluten, or nuts and seeds, among others. The top allergens in Canada include shellfish, egg, fish, dairy, mustard, peanuts, sesame, soy, tree nuts and wheat.

**CONTRACTUAL
CONSTRAINTS:**

Some venues, businesses or organizations, such as hotels or school districts, have contracts with distant food suppliers that may limit options for sourcing locally. It is important to confirm whether the selected venue has these limitations before committing to local producers and your menu.

**FOOD SAFETY
CONSIDERATIONS:**

Some foods have higher levels of government oversight due to higher risk to human health if not handled or prepared properly. This applies to most animal products (meat, dairy, eggs) as well as other raw ingredients and can prevent sourcing directly from farms where the product has not been through an approved or inspected facility. Public Health Officers or Health Dieticians at the Health Authority are great food safety resources.