

The Omnivore's Solution

Food Celebration Project

To help culminate our unit on *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, we will have a pot-luck "brunch" in our class. This project involves a bit of research, some writing, and of course, cooking.

As Michael Pollan writes, food is much more than the stuff we put in our mouths everyday--it is the common thread that binds all of humanity, and it is meant to be celebrated and enjoyed. Food nourishes our bodies and connects us to the larger world.

Our goal is to make our potluck as "local and sustainable" as possible. This means that, to the best of our ability, we will try to find ingredients that are grown, harvested and produced as close to our homes as possible. Farmers Markets are a great place to start, and they are pretty easy to find, as almost every neighborhood now has one on a weekly basis. Some of us may even have gardens, or know people who have gardens, which would also be a good place to start. Chances are, we'll have to make a trip to the store to buy some ingredients. Most stores now carry organic groceries, and some, like Whole Foods, carry a wide selection of local organic food. Before you find your ingredients, you have to decide what you're going to make.

The Research

The first step is to find a recipe for a simple "dish" that you will bring to the potluck. Your dish should be something we can eat for brunch. Below are some suggestions:

- Main dish
- Side dish
- Salads
- Soups
- Sauces
- Beverage
- Dessert

After you decide on the dish, you will have to do a little research to discover a recipe. You can find your recipe from a family member, the web, or a cook book. Below are some suggestions for some good websites:

<http://www.ecoharvestgourmet.com/>

<http://www.sustainabletable.org/kitchen/recipes/>

and a cookbook: *Recipes from America's Small Farms* by Joanne Lamb Hayes and Lori Stein

When you decide on a recipe, you will need to make an ingredients list. Your dish should be enough to feed 3 or 4 people. (With 26 students, that's enough food to feed over 100 people!) The point is for everyone to have a sample of each dish. Make sure you pay attention to proportions in the recipe, we don't want to waste any food.

The Writing

When you decide on a recipe, you will type it up. Be sure to include the name of the dish, all of the ingredients, and directions for cooking. You will also answer the following questions. Write at least one paragraph for each question.

1. Why did you choose this recipe? Is it something you have eaten before, or is it a new dish?
2. What culture does this recipe originate from? (This may be a bit tricky, as many recipes come from many different cultures.) If your recipe does not come from a specific culture, you can write about the source where you found your recipe. If it's from a parent or family member, ask them how they learned the recipe. If it's from a website, describe the kind of recipes and information on the website. If it's from a book, describe the type of cookbook and how you found it.
3. What are the top three ingredients for your recipe (excluding water)? Where did these ingredients come from? If you bought them at a farmers market, simply ask the farmer where his or her farm is located. If you bought them from a store, you may need read the labels carefully or ask a store clerk. On average, how far did all of the top three ingredients have to travel in total?

Bring this typed sheet with you the day of the potluck. (Optional: You may want to include pictures of the food, or of you cooking).

The Cooking

Most dishes will need to be prepared the night before the potluck, or even the morning of. Make sure you set time aside with your family to help you cook the dish and clean up afterwards. Though your parents and family are encouraged to help, it is the student's responsibility to plan, organize and communicate. If you plan ahead and set time aside, cooking with your family should be a fun experience. Please bring your dish in a reusable container. I will provide all the plates, bowls, utensils and cups. Our goal is to make this a trash free celebration.

The Eating

The 8th grade Potluck will be on Wednesday November 16, from 9:00-10:00.

The 7th grade Potluck will be on Thursday November 17, from 9:00-10:00