

What are Locavores?

Lately it has become trendy to think about food in a decidedly old-fashioned way. While plenty of gourmands still explore the bounty of exotic fruits, vegetable and spices available from around the world, others are sticking closer to home.

Locavores are people committed to eating only foods that have been grown and produced locally. They are at the forefront of the local food and Slow Food movements, and they restrict their diets for environmental, economical and gustatory reasons. Some like the challenge of cooking with seasonal foods, others say food that goes from field to plate in one day just tastes better.

The definition of locavore, however, isn't as strict as it sounds. Locavores set their own radius for what they consider "local." That can limit them to 100 miles from home or be as broad as the entire state. Some locavores also make exceptions for mainstays that aren't local to most places such as sugar, salt, coffee and olive oil. (Although in the Santa Ynez Valley we now have a thriving olive oil production.)

The movement sounds expensive but its actually in keeping with slow economic times—locavores sometimes supplement their food with produce from their own garden. After all, it doesn't get any more local than your own backyard or balcony garden.