



What's the story of your food?

A WORLDLINK INITIATIVE  
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## ACTIVITY TWO

# SEASONAL, LOCAL FOOD

**The story of food includes where it is grown and how far it travels.**

## ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

In this activity, students research what produce grows in their area and in what season, and learn about the advantages and disadvantages of eating locally grown food. They create a seasonal circle and a resource booklet for obtaining local produce to share with their families.





# SEASONAL, LOCAL FOOD

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How does eating locally grown and seasonal food benefit the health of people and the environment?

## BACKGROUND

When we consider the story of our food, one important dimension is how far it travels to get to us. In the past, people grew their own food or gathered it from the local area. Today, our food may come from halfway around the world.

When fruits and vegetables are shipped, flown, or trucked long distances, they must be picked before they are ripe so that they can survive the journey. As a result, this produce is often less nutritious and less tasty, uses more fuel, and causes more pollution than locally grown produce.

There are many benefits to eating locally grown foods in season. Doing so supports the local economy, reduces the amount of pollution caused by transportation and storage, and provides fresher, tastier, and more nutrient-rich foods.

While eating locally grown foods has many benefits, it is not always practical to eat just those foods. In many regions, there is a limited variety of foods available at certain times of the year. A healthful and balanced diet may require whole, nutritious foods grown elsewhere.

## MATERIALS

- Copies of Seasonal Circle and Local Food Resources student pages
- Food samples (see Preparation)
- Toothpicks and napkins
- Copies of a local or regional map (see Preparation)
- Geometry compasses
- Paste or glue
- Colored pens or markers
- Scissors



# SEASONAL, LOCAL FOOD

## MATERIALS (CONT.)

Paper brad fasteners  
Stapler (optional)

## ESTIMATED TIME

One 50-minute class period, plus time for research

## VOCABULARY

in season, local, radius, foodshed, community supported agriculture (CSA)

## PREPARATION

- Bring in two different food items to show students: one that is in season locally, and one that is not in season and has traveled a great distance to your local market. If there are currently no food items in season where you live, use a local stored food such as a potato, an onion, or an apple.
- (Optional) Prepare samples of a local, seasonal food for students to taste, such as wedges of apples and honey, fresh strawberries and cream, slices of carrots, or whole sugar snap peas.
- For each food item you bring in, find out from the Internet or a farmer how it is grown, whether it is grown locally or elsewhere, and when it is in season.
- Get a state or regional map that encompasses an area at least 150 miles in all directions from your school or town. Make copies of the map for students, including the legend or mileage scale. If possible, size the copies so that the 150-mile circle is smaller than the circles on the Seasonal Circle student pages.
- Make a copy of the two Seasonal Circle student pages for each student and several copies of the Local Food Resources student page for each team in step 6.



# SEASONAL, LOCAL FOOD

## ACTIVITY

1. Ask students to define what it means when we say a food is “in season.” Show students the foods you brought in (see Preparation) and ask them where they grow and what time of year they are in season. Discuss where and how each food is grown, when it is in peak season, and the differences between in-season and out-of-season produce.
2. If you have brought samples to taste, have students wash their hands and then use a clean toothpick to take a sample. Ask them to come up with as many adjectives as they can to describe the food's taste and texture.
3. Remind students of the Café 150 described in the film, and ask them what might be included in an area 150 miles around your town. Give students a copy of the map (see Preparation), and have them use a compass to draw a circle with a 150-mile radius around their town or neighborhood. Use the map to talk about what we mean by “local.”
  - Explain the concept of a foodshed. Is “150 miles” a good definition of a foodshed? Why or why not?
  - What towns, agricultural areas, waterways, or other landmarks are included within the 150-mile circle?
  - What factors might influence what and when things grow there?
  - What would be the benefits and challenges of eating locally grown food?
  - How might time and distance from farm to market affect the taste and nutritional value of food?
4. Explain to students that they will make two different resources to help them and their families find local, seasonal food in your community. One will be a seasonal circle that shows what is in season locally, and the other will be a resource book that describes the importance of eating locally grown, seasonal foods and lists community sources for local food.
5. For the seasonal circle, hand out copies of the Seasonal Circle student pages. Challenge students to find out what crops and other farm products (like honey, milk, or eggs) grow locally in your area and when they



# SEASONAL, LOCAL FOOD

are in season. They might start with the Eat Local ([www.simplesteps.org/eat-local](http://www.simplesteps.org/eat-local)) or Field to Plate ([www.fieldtoplate.com/guide.php](http://www.fieldtoplate.com/guide.php)) websites, both of which link to seasonal calendars by state.

For each crop or product they find, have students draw and label it on the circle in the months or seasons it is available. They may also cut out the 150-mile map from step 3, and glue it onto the back of the bottom circle. Instruct them to assemble the circles by inserting a paper brad fastener as indicated on the student page. Excellent examples of local food wheels can be found at Local Foods Wheel ([www.localfoodswheel.com](http://www.localfoodswheel.com)).

6. For the local food resources booklet, ask students to think of general categories of places where people could get local, seasonal food (like farmers' markets, community gardens, CSAs, stores, or restaurants). Divide the class into teams, with each team researching nearby places in one of the categories. Teams may check out the Local Harvest ([www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)) or Eat Well Guide ([www.eatwellguide.org](http://www.eatwellguide.org)) websites.

Give teams copies of the Local Food Resources student page to list the best resources they find. Ask for volunteers to draft 2–3 paragraphs on the importance of eating local and seasonal foods. Assemble the completed student pages into one booklet. Make stapled copies of the booklet for students to take home, or post it on your school or class webpage.

## ASSESSMENT

Use students' Seasonal Circles and their Local Food Resources booklet to assess their understanding of what is local and seasonal. Did they find foods available in your area and place them in the appropriate months or seasons? Did they sufficiently identify sources of local food in your area?

## EXTENSIONS

- Invite students to find a recipe that appeals to them using a local, seasonal food. Encourage them to try out the recipe at home or at school and then share their experience and a tasting with classmates.



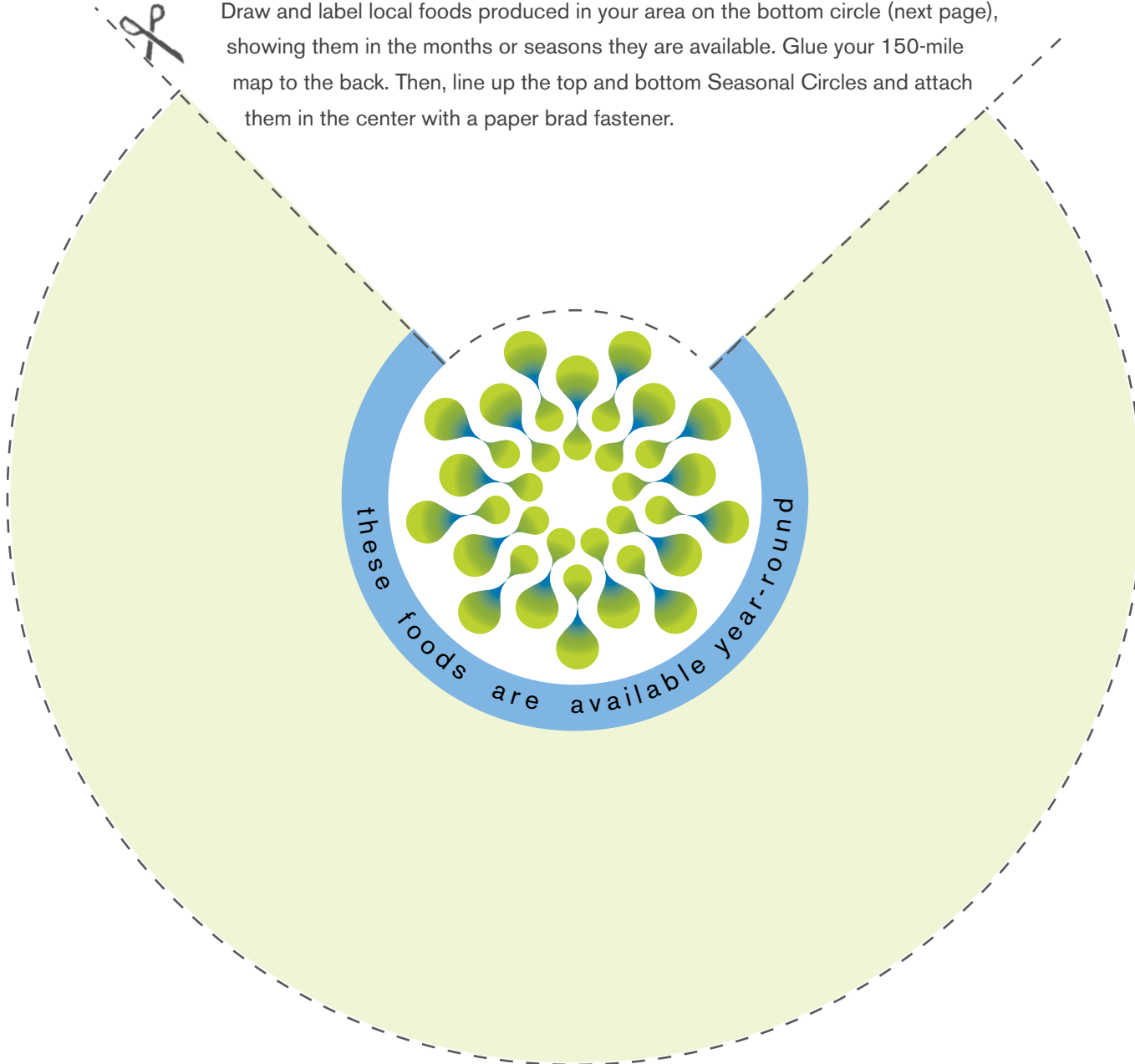
## SEASONAL, LOCAL FOOD

- Using the Seasonal Circle for inspiration, have students plan and (if possible) prepare a 150-mile meal like Café 150 in the film, or create a lunch menu using one or more locally available foods.
- Challenge students to draw a garden plan using plants suitable for the current season. They would research the growing requirements of different vegetables and fruits, and then use this information to sketch a map of the garden area, showing the location of each plant.
- Use Google Earth or Google Maps to see how much land in your area is developed, undeveloped, and farmed.
- Visit a local farm or farmers' market to talk to growers about how local foods travel from farm to customer.

## SEASONAL CIRCLE

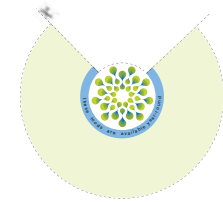
On the shaded space indicated, draw and label local foods that are available year-round in your area. Then, cut out the circle and wedge on this page as marked.

Draw and label local foods produced in your area on the bottom circle (next page), showing them in the months or seasons they are available. Glue your 150-mile map to the back. Then, line up the top and bottom Seasonal Circles and attach them in the center with a paper brad fastener.

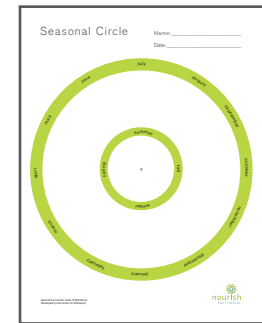


### TO ASSEMBLE

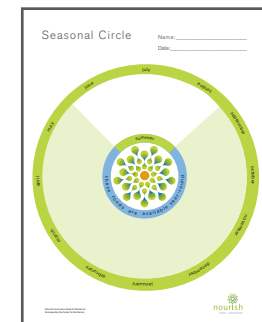
1. Cut out this circle.



2. Place it on top of this circle and line it up.



3. Fasten the two circles together with a brad fastener to make this:

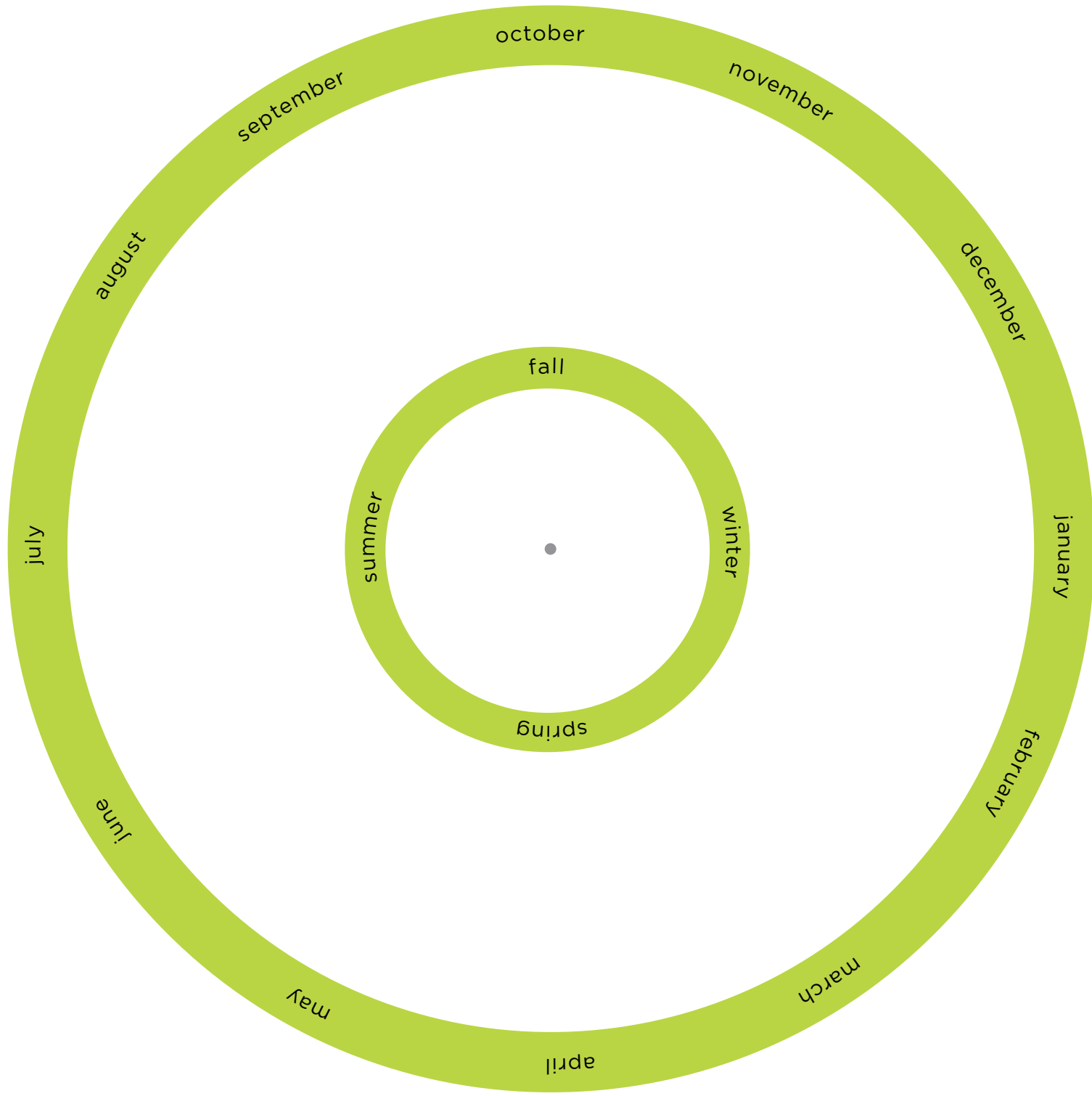




# Seasonal Circle

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# LOCAL FOOD RESOURCES

**NAME:**

**CATEGORY:**

**DESCRIPTION:**

**ADDRESS:**

**PHONE NUMBER:**

**WEBSITE:**

**NOTES:**

**NAME:**

**CATEGORY:**

**DESCRIPTION:**

**ADDRESS:**

**PHONE NUMBER:**

**WEBSITE:**

**NOTES:**

**NAME:**

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**DESCRIPTION:**

**ADDRESS:**

**PHONE NUMBER:**

**WEBSITE:**

**NOTES:**



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food + community

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Developed by the Center for Ecoliteracy

## ABOUT THE CENTER FOR ECOLITERACY

The Center for Ecoliteracy is dedicated to education for sustainable living. Through its initiative Smart by Nature™, the Center offers expertise, inspiration, and resources to the sustainability movement in K–12 education, including the book *Smart by Nature: Schooling for Sustainability*, which showcases inspiring stories about school communities across the nation. The Center offers a seminar program, consulting services, curriculum development, and a publishing imprint that produces *Big Ideas: Linking Food, Culture, Health, and the Environment*, a conceptual framework for integrated learning, and the Rethinking School Lunch Guide, a downloadable planning framework that offers creative solutions. Learn more at [www.ecoliteracy.org](http://www.ecoliteracy.org)

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WorldLink is an Emmy Award-winning media and design group dedicated to education for sustainability. WorldLink produces PBS television programming, digital media, museum exhibitions, curriculum resources, professional development seminars, and youth summits to engage and inspire a new generation of change agents. Recent national initiatives include Power Shift: Energy + Sustainability and Nourish: Food + Community. The purpose of Nourish is to open a meaningful conversation about our food system that moves people from understanding to action. Learn more at [www.goworldlink.org](http://www.goworldlink.org) and [www.nourishlife.org](http://www.nourishlife.org)