Uh-oh, Spaghetti-O!
Part 2: Let’s Eat

Purpose of Activity: To learn about the benefits of local food.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes:
By actively participating in this activity, participants will:

- Learn some facts about “eating local” and its impact on the environment.

Materials Needed:

- Fresh basil raised by residents
- Organic pasta sauce
- Pasta
- Locally baked bread—organic if possible. Also, it doesn’t have to be a small, locally owned bakery (while that is preferable). The Safeway bakery bread is still locally baked when compared to the frozen garlic bread you can buy instead
- Beverages
- Pots, colander, cutting board, knife, and kitchen utensils
- Have residents bring their own bowls, forks, and cups
- Optional—butter for bread

Facilitation Guide:

- Heat sauce
  - Rinse and chop fresh basil finely. Add to sauce
- Boil water and follow spaghetti package instructions
- Warm bread in oven
- Combine and enjoy!

Discussion:

Over dinner, explain that there are even more benefits to eating local food than eating organic.

You too can become a “locavore,” or someone whose first choice is local food. Generally speaking, they try to only eat food produced within 100 miles of their residence. The government considers “eating local” to be anything produced within the same state.
I. Why Local?

1) More money in the local economy—According to a study by the New Economics Foundation in London, a dollar spent locally generates twice as much income for the local economy. When businesses are not owned locally, money leaves the community at every transaction.

2) Locally grown produce is fresher—While produce that is purchased in the supermarket or a big-box store has been in transit or coldStored for days or weeks, produce that you purchase at your local farmer's market has often been picked within 24 hours of your purchase. This freshness not only affects the taste of your food, but the nutritional value which declines with time.

3) Local good just plain tastes better (ever tried a tomato that was picked within 24 hours? Enough said)

4) Locally grown fruits and veggies have longer to ripen—Because the produce will be handled less, locally grown fruit does not have to be "rugged" or to stand up to the rigors of shipping. This means that you are going to be getting peaches so ripe that they fall apart as you eat them, figs that would have been smashed to bits if they were sold using traditional methods, and melons that were allowed to ripen until the last possible minute on the vine.

5) Eating local is better for air quality and pollution than even eating organic—there are fewer food miles.
   a. **Food miles** is a term which refers to the distance food is transported from the time of its production until it reaches the consumer. Food miles are one factor used when assessing the environmental impact of food, including the impact on global warming. It includes getting the products everywhere from the grower, to the shipper, to the processor, to the packager, to the distributor, to the store itself, and even home to your room.

II. What Can I do about Eating Local?

1) Farmers Markets around the city—see [www.sustainabetucson.org](http://www.sustainabetucson.org) for more information

2) Easy things to buy include:
   a. Hickman’s Eggs—Arizona company sold in virtually all grocery stores
   b. Shamrock Farms dairy—based out of Phoenix
   c. When you eat in-season produce, you are 88% more likely to be eating from a local source than buying out of season produce. It might not be labeled local, but eating in season is one of the easiest things you can do to increase your chances of getting local food anywhere. Check out [www.fillyourplate.org](http://www.fillyourplate.org) for a seasonal produce guide from the Arizona Farm Bureau
3) Eat at the Cellar Bistro—they have a large selection of locally grown meats and fishes. See their menu for details

III. Wap-up

Some final thoughts:

1) While you may not be in a place to be a locavore just yet (either financially or spatially—you don’t have a kitchen of your own), understand the importance of trying to incorporate local foods into your diet

2) According to the Center for Environmental Education, Currently, 9% of America’s energy consumption is used to produce, process, and transport our foods.

3) When you move into a house with a yard, consider growing your own herbs and vegetables—do your part!