

Sustainable Choices:

10 BC Foods to help you eat like a champion in 2010

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We really do have it all here in BC: beautiful mountains, valleys, trails and beaches... and the weather to enjoy them all year round! British Columbia is also home to an abundance of healthy local foods to help fuel our active lifestyles. Eating locally is good for your body and the planet: food grown close to home helps to lower carbon emissions required for transport and keep BC beautiful!

Read on for a list of 10 "BC Grown" foods to help make this your healthiest year yet! Selected recipes are from *A Local Table: the Choices Markets Cookbook* by Desiree Nielsen RD and Antonio Cerullo.

1. Cranberries

- a. **Eat Like a Champion!** Not just for the holidays, cranberries are rich in proanthocyanidins which prevent bacteria from adhering to cell walls – drinking not-from-concentrate cranberry juice daily can help to prevent urinary tract infections, stomach ulcers and even gum disease. Anthocyanins help to squelch free radical damage caused by pollution, poor diet and physical activity – making them a great choice to decrease inflammation and support recovery.
- b. **Eat Sustainably!** Cranberries are one of the few fruits native to North America – 80 BC families produce 12% of the total North American cranberry crop. Cranberry fields include wetlands that provide natural habitat for wildlife.
- c. **A Local Table Recipe:** West Coast Strudel (pg 141)

2. Buckwheat

- a. **Eat Like a Champion!** Protein rich, buckwheat is not actually a grain but a fruit related to rhubarb. Gluten free buckwheat provides slow release carbohydrate for sustained energy and is rich in magnesium (86mg per cup) for healthy muscle function and blood pressure. Magnesium also contains the bioflavonoid rutin, calcium, manganese and vitamin E. High in fibre, buckwheat helps to lower cholesterol and maintain bowel health.
- b. **Eat Sustainably!** Buckwheat is grown in BC, making it a great local grain option. Growing buckwheat also helps support local bee populations. Locally grown buckwheat can be purchased from Fieldstone Granary in the Okanagan. Want more local grains? Consider joining a CSA: community supported agriculture where you buy "shares" in a harvest. Urban Grains is a local CSA providing Fraser Valley grains to its members.
- c. **A Local Table Recipe:** Buckwheat Crepes (pg 98)

3. Beets

- a. **Eat Like a Champion!** The jewel like hue of beets is your first clue that they are rich in anthocyanins – the cancer fighting, cholesterol lowering super antioxidants. A healthy heart star, saponins and soluble fibre in beets also help lower cholesterol and folate further protects against heart disease (136mcg in 1 cup cooked). Anti-inflammatory betaine helps to decrease the systemic inflammation that leads to chronic disease and impedes recovery.
- b. **Eat Sustainably!** Remember your grandmother's root cellar? Root veggies are essential to eating locally in BC year round. Not only are beets harvested well into the cooler months, root storage provides us with these nutritious gems until next year's harvest begins!

4. Herring & Sardines

- a. **Eat Like a Champion!** Enjoyed for centuries in Mediterranean and Scandinavian diets, herring and sardines are an excellent source of the long chain omega 3 fatty acids DHA and EPA. DHA and EPA are anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer – omega 3 fats directly limit cancer cells' ability to grow. Omega 3 fats are also important for healthy skin, heart, joints and mood support. With approximately 2 grams of EPA and DHA per serving these fish are a great protein choice. Sardines are also rich in iron to help oxygenate blood.
- b. **Eat Sustainably!** BC Herring and Sardines are small species with a short life cycle, making them less vulnerable to overfishing and a more sustainable alternative to salmon. Lower on the food chain, they are naturally low in contaminants such as mercury and PCBs. Pacific Herring and Sardines caught in BC are considered a sustainable choice by Sea Choice.
- c. **A Local Table Recipe:** Smoked Herring and Heritage Grains Salad (pg 81)

5. Rhubarb

- a. **Eat Like a Champion!** A new entry into the "superfood" category, rhubarb is not just a tasty pie filling – rhubarb contains lindleyin, which may help to ease menopause symptoms. Lindleyin is a phytoestrogen just starting to be studied in western medicine but rhubarb has been used in Chinese medicine for GI and menstrual concerns. Rhubarb is low in calories and rich in potassium and calcium; 1 cup cooked rhubarb contains the same amount of calcium as a glass of milk!
- b. **Eat Sustainably!** Well suited for our coastal climate, rhubarb is a hardy perennial plant that can produce for 10 – 15 years and can survive the odd dry spell or forgetful gardener. Try growing some in your backyard – it doesn't get more local than that!

6. Kale

- a. **Eat Like a Champion!** Kale is a member of the cabbage family, which was deemed “the vegetable of a thousand virtues” by Hippocrates. Kale certainly contains a lion’s share of nutrients: iron, vitamins A and C, folic acid and anti-cancer compounds. Kale boasts the most beta carotene, lutein and zeaxanthin of the greens. Kale also contains vitamin K and calcium for healthy bones.
- b. **Eat Sustainably!** Kale is the perfect start to a home garden...even if you have little more than a patio! Kale grows well in large pots and loves cool weather. A single pot can provide garden fresh greens all through the fall, when other local salads are just a memory.
- c. **A Local Table Recipe:** Winter Vegetable Stew (pg 113)

7. Garlic

- a. **Eat Like a Champion!** Anti-clotting, anti-oxidant and anti-fungal, garlic has been cultivated for more than 5000 years as part of the great medical traditions of the world. Garlic’s claim to fame is sulfur – when we cut or chew garlic, we release an enzyme that jumpstarts the production of several molecules, including diallyl sulfide (DAS) – DAS inhibits activation of carcinogenic compounds and helps our body flush them out.
- b. **Eat Sustainably!** Harvested from June to October, garlic is a readily available BC superfood. Garlic may even have farther reaching eco ambitions: one biotech company is developing a garlic based feed additive that may reduce atmosphere damaging methane output from cows.
- c. **A Local Table Recipe:** Pasta with Raw Tomato Sauce (pg 63)

8. Kabocha Squash

- a. **Eat Like a Champion!** Kabocha is a sweet winter squash that is popular in Japanese cuisine. Like all winter squash it is rich in anti-oxidant vitamins A and C to help squelch free radicals brought on by intense physical activity and support immune system health. There is also early evidence that squash may contain compounds that help reduce symptoms associated with enlarged prostate.
- b. **Eat Sustainably!** The hard outer rind of a Kabocha squash makes it well suited to survive long winter storage – making it a vital part of the locavore’s winter survival kit.

9. Lentils

- a. **Eat Like a Champion!** Lentils are packed with nutrients: one of the richest food sources of fibre on earth, lentils also contain slow release carbohydrates and high quality vegetarian protein. This combination of nutrients is ultra satisfying and helps to support a

healthy weight by keeping you full and keeping blood sugars stable. Early research also suggests another blood sugar helper in lentils called tyrosine kinase inhibitors. Rich in iron, lentils also help to support energy metabolism to help support your active life.

- b. **Eat Sustainably!** Eating lentils more often, instead of meat, helps to reduce your family's carbon footprint. Vegetable proteins require fewer energy inputs and less water to produce than animal proteins.
- c. **A Local Table Recipe:** Lentil Coconut Soup (pg 85)

10. Shiitakes and other wild mushrooms

- a. **Eat like a Champion!** Mushrooms have long been revered in Asia for their role in promoting health. Shiitakes in particular appear to have a few unique compounds with promising health benefits. Eritadenine may help to lower cholesterol, while lentinan is being studied for its immune boosting properties. Shiitakes may also have potential anti-cancer properties, thanks to antioxidants such as selenium and other compounds.
- b. **Eat Sustainably!** Eating vegetable proteins a few times a week goes a long way to creating a sustainable lifestyle. Mushrooms can also help you trim down: studies using mushrooms as replacement for meat helped reduce calorie intake while keeping bellies full.
- c. **A Local Table Recipe:** Tofu and Shiitake Stir fry (pg 33)