

FALL NEWSLETTER 2023

FALL DIGEST

Welcome!

After a busy summer, the FPC is excited to share a family-friendly fall recipe, tips for a healthier diet, sustainability and more!

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About the Food Policy Council of Buffalo and Erie County (FPC)

The FPC envisions a healthy local food system that works for all people. To get here, we advocate for an equitable and sustainable food system for the people of Buffalo and Erie County. The FPC meets monthly using Zoom. Reach out to learn more about joining the FPC as a member or joining the meetings.

A RECIPE TO SHARE



Family Friendly Winter Squash

This family friendly winter squash recipe is an easy recipe. It takes about an hour and a half hours to prepare. The recipe can be served as a side dish or a meal depending on the amount of squash you have. The recipe can easily be adjusted for weekly meal prep or if you want left-overs. more squash, cheese or spice! The recipe is based on Mollie Katzen’s “Chilean Squash” from the Moosewood Cookbook (©1974). The optional egg and cheese are great sources of protein, while the [squash has Vitamin C, fiber and more](#). View the tailored recipe on page 4 of this newsletter. You can find some items from local farms and markets on the [Erie Grown Produce Finder](#).

Red and underlined text is a link. Click on the red text to be taken to the linked website.

PREVENTIVE CARE, DIET AND FUTURE HEALTH IMPACTS

Do you have a primary care provider? Talking about your health and dietary goals with your provider, dietitian, or health care team can improve your health now and in the future. Choosing some healthier options might be cheaper than you think. Cooking a few simple meals each week can save money and is usually healthier than eating out or pre-packaged meals. Limiting pre-packaged foods and sweetened beverages can reduce the risk of certain cancers. Learn more about nutrition and long term health effects from the [CDC](#). The [American Heart Association](#) has 9 shopping tips for an improved “heart healthy” diet. Websites like [Nutrition.gov](#) provide guidance for topics like [life-stage needs](#) or [health-based needs](#). These topics provide starting points to discuss with provider(s). If you do not have a provider, check out resources like [SNAPCAP WNY](#). View additional resources for eating a healthier diet while sticking to a budget on page 4.



CONNECT WITH US



FOOD POLICY COUNCIL
of Buffalo & Erie County

- www.erie.gov/fpc/
- Facebook: [@BuffaloErieFPC](#)
- Instagram: [@fpccbuffaloerie](#)
- fpc@erie.gov

URBAN FARM DAY 2023

Saturday August 26 was Urban Farm Day. This year over 15 farms had tours, talks, markets, and other activities. The event was a great way to learn about the local food system, community gardens and urban agriculture. Check out some video tours from this year’s participating farms [here](#). Find more garden events and stay tuned for information about 2024's Urban Farm Day from the [Gardens Buffalo Niagara website](#).

Find local products during other parts of the year, on [Erie Grown’s Site Locator Map](#) and [Erie Grown’s Local Food Finder](#)! Look for sites selling squash, beets, turnips, zucchini at this time of year. Locations selling pumpkins, offering hayrides and other fun activities are also featured.



Scan to receive updates in your inbox



UPCOMING EVENTS

[Children’s Garden Festival: October 8](#)



“Member’s Corner”

Our global food system is extractive. It depletes soil, generates excessive waste and perpetuates systems of oppression and inequality. It also accounts for roughly 20% of the planet’s greenhouse gas emissions. These emissions come from intensive agricultural activities, pesticide use, waste and deforestation. There are a few things to consider if you want to make better, sustainable choices: choose more fruits and vegetables, know your farmer, and plan ahead. See a full feature with resources about the food system and sustainability on the last page of this newsletter.

Submitted by Derek Nichols

HEALTHY COMMUNITY STORE INITIATIVE FEATURE



HCSI 4 prongs: Healthy Whole Grain
Healthy Packaged Produce
Healthy Drinks Healthy Snacks

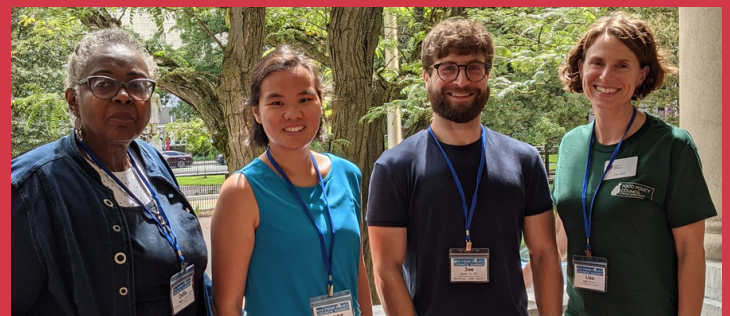
The Healthy Community Store Initiative (HCSI) is a collaborative effort of partners, with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County as the lead agency. The focus of HCSI is on healthy food access at local stores in the City of Buffalo. The first HCSI stores launched in 2016 to provide fresh produce at local corner stores. Since then, the program has grown with a community approach to offer a variety of resources designed to encourage healthy food access and healthier food consumption in local communities. The HCSI multiprong approach continues to provide many resources and engagement through community outreach, marketing, youth engagement, training, nutrition education/ information, and store enhancements referred to as Refresh Fund. Other resources, such as HCSI Health Bucks valued at \$5 – \$10 are distributed during community events and activities at HCSI locations and communities to promote the purchasing of healthier options. Health Bucks are redeemable at participating HCSI locations to purchase food items listed in the HCSI 5 Phases of Healthier Options (Fresh fruits and vegetables, Healthy Beverages, Healthy Snacks, Whole Grains, and Healthy Package Produce). For more information about the Healthy Community Store Initiative, please visit www.healthycornerstorewny.org.

Resource hub on website

Are you or your organization thinking of opening a food-service business? Check out the new resource on the FPC webpage to learn about topics like licensing and safety inspections for each of the 10+ categories including: retail store, urban agriculture, farmers and mobile produce markets, shared kitchens and home kitchens. Learn more [here!](#)

Want to offer nutrition benefits (e.g., SNAP or WIC) or participate in incentive programs (e.g., Double Up Food Bucks NY or Farmers Market Nutrition Program)? [Click here to learn more.](#)

Want to see a certain topic on the page? Email fpc@erie.gov. A resource for shoppers/ consumers is being developed and will be promoted in the new year!



The FPC was well-represented at the NYS Food Policy Council convening this August! The event took place in Syracuse and was a fun day of learning and networking with people dedicated to the food-system.

Sign up to receive updates from the FPC!
erie.gov/fpcupdates

INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium orange squash or pumpkin. Once cooked you should have 4-5 cups of scooped squash
- 2-3 cups total of chopped assorted vegetables such as:
 - onion*, celery*, or sweet bell peppers*
- 2 cups fresh, frozen or canned corn
- 2 eggs (optional)
- Spices to flavor such as:
 - 1 Tbsp cumin*,
 - 1 Tbsp chili powder*,
 - 2 cloves of garlic (or equivalent in powder)*
- Shredded cheddar or pepper jack cheese (enough to cover top of dish)

* Modify amounts to taste

You can find some items from local farms and markets on the [Erie Grown Produce Finder](#).

SQUASH RECIPE

Cooking the Squash

- Slice the squash in half from top-to-bottom (vertically). Scoop out the seeds.
- Place the pieces in a baking dish with the skin is face-up. Add water to the dish until it is approximately halfway up the side of the squash. Bake at 350°F (175°C) for about 1 hour. The squash should be soft when a fork is inserted.
- Scoop the squash out from the skin and place into a mixing bowl. Stir in the optional egg which “sets” the squash making it easier to serve. It will still taste great without the egg but might be like mashed squash

Preparing the other ingredients

- Chop other vegetables. In a light coating of oil fry the other vegetables and spices that you choose to use.
- Mix in with the squash

Baking

- Pour the squash and vegetable mix into a greased casserole or 13x9 inch baking dish. You can use a smaller pan if you have less squash.
- Sprinkle the shredded cheese on top.
- Cover with foil and bake at 350°F (175°C) for 40 minutes.
- Uncover and continue to bake.
- It will be finished baking when an inserted knife comes out clean.
- Let stand until cool enough to eat.

EATING HEALTHY & SUSTAINABLY ON A BUDGET



- Committing to one change from the list below can go a far way in improving diet and sustainability. Don't try to change everything at once.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal nutrition benefit program. Learn about the program from the [Erie County Department of Social Services SNAP website](#).
- Stretch your SNAP benefits at farmers markets, mobile markets and two Tops locations with [Double Up Food Bucks New York](#). These markets often sell locally grown produce allowing you to eat healthier and more sustainably.
- Meat is an expensive source of protein. Protein is found in other items. Examples include [eggs, cheese, yogurt, beans](#), along with [seeds, nuts or nut butter](#). These items also have dairy (vitamin D, Calcium), minerals, fiber and other nutrients you need. Over the course of a day, you might get enough protein from these other sources without additional meat. Learn about the information shared on nutrition labels from the [US Food and Drug Administration](#).
- Cooking recipes at home is one way to eat healthy and sustainably on a budget. Portioning meals and storing leftovers in reusable containers for lunch or another meal also helps cut down cost. [Learn more tips for eating healthy from HealthLine](#).
- Eat comfort food or meals with large portions in moderation. Freezing leftovers from dishes like lasagna or casseroles can save time and money. Read more about preserving comfort food and seasonal ingredients in [this article](#).
- Purchasing in-season produce is budget friendly and sustainable. Learn what is in-season on [Erie Grown Local Food Finder](#). Learn more ways to eat a diet that helps build a sustainable food system [here](#).

DEFINING A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

“Member's Corner

Submitted by FPC member Derek Nichols
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Our global food system is extractive. It depletes soil, generates excessive waste and perpetuates systems of oppression and inequality. It also accounts for roughly 20% of the planet's greenhouse gas emissions. These emissions come from intensive agricultural activities, pesticide use, waste and deforestation.

It can be very paralyzing to think about how we go about solving this problem in our own personal capacity. The scale of the problem is so large that it is hard to see how we, as individuals, can make an impact. If you are able, there are a few things to consider when making choices about the food you eat: choose more fruits and vegetables, know your farmer, and plan ahead.

When you look at the resources needed for raising animals versus growing plants, animals require much more “inputs” than plants. They require land to live on, water, feed, and also produce their own set of greenhouse gasses (methane) naturally. [Eating less meat has been shown to be better for you](#). Many Americans are already [eating over the daily recommended protein requirements](#). Adding in more fruits and vegetables also nourishes the body with important vitamins and minerals. Always opt for more plant-based foods.

Many people think that just eating foods that are grown locally will be better for the planet. That's not always the case. Locally grown foods can be grown unsustainably. This is why knowing your farmer is important. Talk to them about their growing practices. Their products might not have labels like “certified organic,” but they could still be grown using the same practices.

Lastly, planning ahead is important when thinking about food waste. Set aside a few minutes each week to plan out daily meals so you can get as close as your can to the exact quantity of food you'll need. [Americans are typically generate a lot of food waste](#), much of which comes from spoilage. Another thing to consider as you plan your meals- are there opportunities for you to bring a reusable produce bag or container for bulk foods? Really take inventory where you can use reusable products to transport food, and even do a mini waste audit to see how much plastic you are generating through your purchases. Creating plastics is energy intensive and not all plastics are recycled (or recycled correctly).

One final note, if you work for an institution, think about what you're procuring and commit to a system of values that upholds “good food.” The [Good Food Buffalo Coalition](#) is doing great work with partners across the state to implement the [Center for Good Food Purchasing Program's](#) purchasing standards of community health and nutrition, environmental sustainability, local and community based economies, valued workforce, animal welfare, equity, accountability and transparency. Familiarize yourself with these standards and see how you can use them as a lens for your organization's food purchases (from large bulk purchases like summer food programs to small purchases like staff lunches). Also keep advocating for policies that promote better quality of food, equity and access to resources for BIPOC and queer farmers, and farm worker rights. These policies will help lessen the impact on the environment of our food system.

Glossary

- **Extractive:** Using resources faster than they are replaced. Resources eventually run out.
- **Depletes:** Run out (or almost run out) of needed resources
- **Input:** resources needed for agriculture production such as fertilizer, water, animal feed, pesticide
- **Intensive Agricultural Practices:** Grow a lot of produce (usually in rows) or large number of animals of relatively small area of land.
- **Deforestation:** Removing forest areas; usually to replace with farmland
- **Sustainable growing:** raising animals or plants using methods that protect the environment
- **Know your farmer:** Learn about farming methods used
- **Plant based:** Food made from plants rather than animal product such as a black-bean burger.
- **BIPOC:** Black, Indigenous, People of Color