

LAST BITE

WHAT'S YOUR 'LOCAL'?

At the Woodstock Farmers Market we embrace two almost opposing definitions of "local."

First and foremost is the common meaning of "from nearby," a geographically vague term that encompasses an area of a few hundred square miles in which our store sits at the center. When we buy products from within this space, we often know the people who grow, produce or manufacture them. We know them by name, communicate by phone or email, visit when we can and have them come to our store to sample to our customers. We love supporting these local producers because they are our friends, and because these relationships strengthen both of our businesses as well as the wider network of agriculture and small business here in our region.

For our store's 20th anniversary we teamed up with some favorite local businesses to create products just for us. Rock Art Brewery in Morrisville made a special batch of "Farmer's Brown" ale, which we are selling at our store and is on tap at a number of restaurants in our area. Then we brought some of the beer to Vermont Farmstead Cheese in South Woodstock, and they incorporated it into their aged Windsordale, yielding a delicious, sharp, beery "Farmers' Brown Windsordale." Finally, we brought some of our brew to Green Mountain Smokehouse in Windsor, where they mixed us up a batch of Farmers' Brown Beer Bratwurst. We sell these in our meat case and also as a sandwich in our deli—topped with our cheese. What a great illustration of our food community on a plate!

The other meaning of "local" that we promote is the idea that a product comes from, and expresses, a particular *locale*. That is to say, traditional hand-rolled couscous from the amazing Majid Mahjoub in Tunisia and grassy green olive oil from a friend's grove in Greece are their own kind of local because they are made by actual people whose hands and hearts and all their five senses went into making a food that is truly special and representative of their region. And we have met these people, or we have met people who have met them, so we can tell you their stories as you taste their food. Majid called this "short channel" food when we met with him this summer, meaning that there is only a person or two between the producer and consumer.

We love traditional handmade foods from around the world, and we love to teach others about them. We feel that the more we know about people and cultures in other countries, the more understanding and compassionate we will become. There are few better ways of getting to experience another culture than through its food and food ways; coming together over a meal is a great way to learn how other people live in their own regions with their own "local" foods.

Most importantly, we believe that "local" expresses a relationship and a responsibility between the producer and consumer. Each of us depends on and supports the other, whether we live next door or on the other side of the globe. 🍷



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