

Loco-vores

You aren't going to believe this one. Or, perhaps you will when I tell you where the event took place. It seems that some folks out in San Francisco, Calif. have started eating dirt. Yes, now in addition to scheduling wine and olive tastings on their weekends, California hipsters will have to add "soil tastings."

Although I was not there (gosh darn it) a group of foodies were invited to a new restaurant in Frisco for a "Taste the Earth" celebration where they tasted some of the nuances between soils from different "terroirs." If you try this yourself at home please be careful to avoid soils from sewage sludge terroirs, horse boarding terroirs and feedlot terroirs.

This is all part of the "locovore" movement, mostly a bunch of veg heads who believe that you should only eat foods grown within 100 miles from your house. I sympathize with all vegan locavores attempting to live in some parts of West Texas where your diet is going to be limited to beef, rattlesnakes and cottonseed hulls.

Get used to hearing the word locavore a lot. It was first coined during the 2005 World Environment Day in San Francisco (where else) by Jessica Prentice and in 2007 the Oxford American Dictionary named it their "Word of the Year." (I didn't even know there was such a thing!)

Locavores believe we should be celebrating our local "foodways" and "foodsheds," and they aren't talking about the smokehouse out back. As I understand it, a "foodshed" is the "terroir" where your food should come from and I get a funny feeling they aren't talking about a Tyson or JBS slaughterhouse.

The locavores say that, on average, the food we eat travels 1,500 miles before it gets to our plate. While I really like the idea of patronizing farmer's markets and eating more locally, I wonder if the locavores in Frisco have ever been out of the Golden State? It's one thing to live within shouting distance of Salinas, Napa and the Pacific Ocean where you can regularly dine on the four necessary food groups, salad, fish sticks, wine and beef, but quite another if you live

in Duluth, Minn.

If you order a locavore bacon lettuce and tomato sandwich in a Big Apple deli you can have everything on it except the bacon, lettuce and tomato. And hold the bread and mayonnaise too.

I'd imagine that being a locavore is a lot easier when you live in Florida or California where you can order anything on the menu 365 days a year, but how about the folks in South Dakota? Where are they going to get freshly squeezed orange juice in the middle of January? And leafy greens are a little sparse out Wickenburg way.

If you enjoy the occasional shrimp dinner and live in landlocked Nebraska you are either going to have to raise them in your salt water swimming pool or move to the left or right coast to satisfy your craving. I'd imagine a locavore in Alaska or the middle of the Mojave Desert is going to starve to death! If this idea catches on the good folks in Wyoming are going to wish they'd built more hot houses and fewer windmills. And folks waiting in Las Vegas buffet lines are sure going to be disappointed.

Just for fun I decided that I'd fix a locavore dinner for my wife just to see how hard it would be. First of all you can forget her favorite food, which is cheese, because there hasn't been a dairy within a 100 miles of my house for decades. Lamb was also out because the coyotes ate the last sheep in these parts in 1961, as was pork because the only hogs around here are wild ones. I take that back, 4-H and FFA kids have lambs and pigs and they'll become billionaires if we all become locavores.

Being a locavore is part of the sustainability movement and my American Oxford Dictionary defines the word "sustainable" as something that can go on indefinitely. How are New York locavores going to be able to "sustain" themselves in the middle of winter by eating locally raised food exclusively? They better take a page from the book of those kooks out in Frisco and get used to the scrumptious, yet gritty, taste of dirt.