



FOOD DAY

OCTOBER 24, 2011

GUIDE FOR HOSTS

www.FoodDay.org



Dear Food Day Host,

We hope this guide enables you to create a successful Food Day event! Your event may be large or small. It may be in a home or in a public space, part of a series or a stand-alone function. Different as our events may be, each is a step towards improving America's food system.

No matter where your event falls on the spectrum, being a Food Day Host is sure to be a rewarding experience. You will meet great people and contribute to the food movement. This guide is a starting point. You will also have access to your local Food Day Coordinator and the staff at Food Day's national office. If you are an educator or student, please review the other guides available in the Resources section of our website. Don't hesitate to contact us at foodday@cspinet.org or 202-777-8392.

Much luck and thanks!

The Food Day Team
Center for Science in the Public Interest
1220 L St. NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20005

OUR VISION

Food Day is a grassroots movement made up of individuals and organizations passionate about promoting a healthy, sustainable, and just food system. Food Day 2011 will culminate on October 24th with thousands of events across the country that encourage action and celebrate food. Together we will generate media coverage in every corner the country, send thousands of signatures to Members of Congress supporting our national agenda, and most importantly, begin the millions of conversations that will lead to individual and systemic changes.

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EVENT PLANNING 101

Let's start with advice adapted from [Moving Planet's](#) terrific guide for organizing successful events. Later in the guide we discuss specific Food Day event ideas, but there are some general steps to hosting a successful event:

1. Bring together a team and register your event.

For larger events, get started by calling your [nearest Food Day organizer](#), friends, and leaders in your community. Host a meeting to get to know everyone, give people a basic overview of the ideas behind Food Day, and start brainstorming. You can also find [tools, materials, and support](#) online.

Whether you're hosting a house party or organizing a large public event, you need to [get on the Food Day map!](#) It's the official 'recognizer' of Food Day events and a great way to allow friends and neighbors to plug-in by signing up to attend events and searching existing events in their area.

2. Plan your event.

As you plan your event, ask:

Who will attend?

What do you want to achieve?

When do you want to hold the event?

Where will you hold the event?

Why are you doing it?

How will you make it happen on/by October 24th?

3. Organize the details.

If you're doing an event outside your home, you may have to deal with some logistics. Here are some key things to consider:

- 👉 Permits for using public spaces
- 👉 Finding recognizable co-hosts and speakers, if appropriate
- 👉 Sound, stage and other equipment
- 👉 Bathrooms

When you have all these details together, be sure to publish the key information publicly on the Food Day [website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), community calendar, and fliers. The key information to include would be start and end times, locations, and the names of exciting speakers.

4. Invite your leaders

If you want your local leaders to hear your message, invite them to your event! It's important to email an invitation and then call a few days later to follow up - do this at least several weeks in advance, preferably about a month, to accommodate busy schedules. A few ideas for engaging your leaders as a part of your event are a) asking them to speak in front of the crowd; or b) asking them to sign a pledge to take on your demands.

5. Recruit, recruit, recruit!

This step may be the most important! Set a goal for how many people you'd like to see at your event - and create a plan for reaching 4-10 times that number of people. Use schools, religious groups, community meetings, posters, email, listservs, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) (#FoodDay), public service announcements, and community calendars to get the word out.

6. Invite the media and BE the media!

You can amplify the impact of your event by inviting the media to attend. Identify reporters who cover food, health, or agriculture at the local paper and at radio and TV stations. Don't forget bloggers! Send an advisory 3-5 days before the event, followed by a call to make sure they've received it. Put a reminder advisory out the day before and have press releases at the event. Be sure to also send the release to press that could not attend. See the Food Day media guide for more information.

Not only are social media great for recruitment but they are powerful tools for telling the story of your event, so consider starting your own Food Day blog to share information, generate ideas, and recruit participants. With blogs and forums you have control over your message and the ability to reach niche segments of the population. Check out the great [Food Day blog](#) started by some of our participants in Connecticut!

Some popular free blog sites include [Wordpress](#), [Tumblr](#), and [Blogger](#). Don't forget to take pictures during the event, save programs and other documents, record audio and video, and take names and email addresses of attendees.

7. Report back and keep the movement rolling.

After all your hard work, celebrate with your team and send us photos, videos, and an event write-up. Upload photos and stories to [Facebook](#) and email us at foodday@cspinet.org. Schedule a follow-up meeting to assess what went well and what could have gone better so you can improve for the next action. Discuss what you have left to do to achieve your goals, and start planning your next steps for building the food movement—and for Food Day 2012!

GET ON THE MAP!

Use [FoodDay.org](#) to promote and collect RSVPs to your event. A Google Maps-powered system lets people find Food Day events by typing in a ZIP code or browsing via the map. It's an easy way to know how many people might be coming to your event.

Even if your event is full or will be closed to the public, listing your event on the publicity map helps show how many Food Day events are happening across the country—and may give other organizers helpful ideas.



Simply select “host an event” from the PARTICIPATE menu at [FoodDay.org](#). Listing your event as “private” means people won't be able to sign up to attend your event unless you invite them, but it also means it won't show up on the Food Day map. We recommend registering your event as “public” but closing the RSVP option. If your organization already has a Facebook page, you can also create an event page there.

EVENT IDEAS

Food Day Dinner

Bring friends and neighbors together to share a delicious, healthful, locally-sourced (when available) meal and discuss food issues. We've developed a house-party kit you can use that will be available in the fall. It will include:

- 👉 Invitations
- 👉 Petition cards
- 👉 Official Food Day recipes from famous chefs
- 👉 Movie and discussion guide or conversation cards

What's great about this simple event is that it's so adaptable. There can be one dinner or many that make up a larger event. A dinner can be small or large:

- 👉 Friends and neighbors sharing a meal in a home
- 👉 Neighborhood meal at a community center or park
- 👉 PTAs can organize an event at school and invite parents, students, and administrators
- 👉 Workplaces can bring together staff and decision makers responsible for workplace food choices (vending machines, cafeterias) for a Food Day lunch

A large-scale version of this event is an official dinner at city/town hall with dozens to hundreds of simultaneous dinners (or block parties). If your mayor has signed a Food Day proclamation, ask if he or she will ring the dinner bell at a prescribed hour to kick off the night.

If you don't utilize the house party kit:

- 👉 Choose one or more of the Food Day objectives as the dinner theme. Ask participants to visit FoodDay.org to learn about the issue and come prepared to discuss the topic and how it relates to your local community.
- 👉 Make your own conversation cards that serve as placeholders.
- 👉 Use the gathering to consider what the group can do to make a change in the food system.
- 👉 Take a concrete action and sign a petition or write a letter to producers, elected officials, or retailers.

Enjoy delicious, fresh, healthy food and advance the food movement – that's a winning event! Don't forget to document it!

Sugary Drinks Pledge

An event planned around CSPI's new campaign, the Life's Sweeter Challenge, would address several Food Day principles:

- 👉 Sweetened beverages promote obesity and related health problems
- 👉 Children are subject to persuasive beverage marketing campaigns and often lack healthier alternatives
- 👉 Sweetened beverages are often the cheapest and most prevalent option in food deserts, exacerbating the problem

Use Food Day to announce the beginning of the challenge drive and make it an event by recruiting volunteers and building a visual display. We recommend checking out the [Giant Bar Graph of Obesity](#) made from soda cans featured on Bethecatalyst.org.

Choose a location to distribute and collect pledges. For a community-wide pledge, the location could be a public space such as outside a supermarket or convenience store, at a school, or near a subway stop. Remember to use creative visuals, like the [obesity bar graph](#) or another type of giant display using soda cans, and to always serve healthful drinks and snacks at your event. This is a great event to work on with schools, the YMCA, hospitals, government agencies, and employers.

Challenge your target audience to:

- 👉 Drink fewer sugary drinks
- 👉 Not serve sugary drinks to children under six, and limit them for older children
- 👉 Provide fresh drinking water and stop selling sugary drinks and at schools, child-care settings, after-school programs, and other youth venues

Ask companies and institutions to pledge to:

- 👉 Stop or limit serving sugary drinks at meetings and events
- 👉 Remove sugary drinks from vending machines or set a higher price for those drinks
- 👉 Provide healthy drink alternatives and free access to drinking water, and educate employees on the negative effects of sugary drinks and the benefits of healthier choices
- 👉 Encourage public officials to mount programs to reduce consumption of sugary drinks

Grocery Store Direct Action

If you want your local grocery or corner store to stock more local produce, pay a better price to farmers, or stock healthier items, organizing a direct action may be for you.

The long and short of a direct action is creating a human petition. Since producers and retailers respond to consumer demand, this is a great way to encourage change. You are best served by talking with your ‘target’ before undertaking such an effort—a direct action doesn’t have to be confrontational. You can even partner with a nearby college’s health and marketing departments or a neighborhood organization to develop a community-wide campaign to build demand for better options.

Steps to take:

- 👉 Define your “ask”
 - What do you want the store to change? Examples include: stocking more leafy greens, citrus, or seasonal vegetables.
- 👉 Use your “covert-ops” training to find the target of your action
 - The target either has the power to make the change or influence over the change-maker
- 👉 Choose your tactic
 - Steady stream of advocates visiting the target over a defined time period
 - Mail campaign
 - Phone/Fax campaign
 - ‘Buy-in’ (based on the idea of a “sit-in”) where participants all buy the same product over a defined period of time and find a clever way to use receipts as a visual statement to your target
- 👉 Recruit
 - 4 to 10 times the number of people you think you need for maximum impact
- 👉 A leave-behind
 - Develop a uniform material to leave behind to remind your target how much support you demonstrated.
- 👉 Follow-up

Restaurant Rating

Long work hours and heavy family schedules have changed the way many Americans eat. Restaurants increasingly provide our meals; both eat-in and take-out. The average consumer eats restaurant-prepared food several times a week. Each time, decisions about the safety, health, and quality of the food are largely in other people's hands.

Use Food Day as the catalyst to create a rating system to allow consumers to make informed decisions. Think of it as a tailor-made Zagat Guide. Your grading system can focus on a single aspect—such as food safety—or can take local purchasing, nutrition, environmental sustainability, and more into consideration. Use the Center for Science in the Public Interest's report, [*Dirty Dining: Have Reservations? You Will Now*](#), as a reference.

You can easily turn this activity into a Food Day event by organizing an epicurean tour of all the restaurants that agree to voluntarily participate in the grading or working with chefs to create a food festival designed to build public support for your new campaign.

Steps for success:

- 👉 Decide on your criteria:
 - Local food procurement
 - Nutrition standards
 - Food safety
 - Humanely treated animal products
 - Etc.
- 👉 Ask area restaurants what they already do and look at national models
- 👉 Brainstorm engaging campaign tactics
- 👉 Connect with chefs and other staff at restaurants you love
- 👉 Educate the public on your issue
- 👉 Organize a fun event to kick off your campaign

Sample Score Cards



Farmers' Market Events

Farmers' Markets are a natural place to organize a Food Day event. If your area doesn't have a local farmers' market, think about how you could start one!

Here are the Farmers' Market Coalition's [resources](#) for how to begin. There are many other opportunities for market events:

- 👉 Host an on-site dinner or cooking demonstration using market ingredients
- 👉 Hold a festival with vendor tastings and a movie screening
- 👉 Partner with restaurants for a local food fair
- 👉 Bring affordable "satellite" farmers markets into food deserts on Food Day, or think about starting up a "[Veggie Mobile](#)" in your area

Below is a general guide to starting a new market. Be sure to utilize the Farmers Market Coalition's [resources](#). For the other events, follow the general planning guidelines at the beginning of the guide and work with market managers, vendors, and potential sponsors.

- 👉 Identify farmers interested in selling their produce locally. Depending on your resources, work with one or many farmers to establish the market. Consider the type of produce each farmer has to offer to ensure variety.
- 👉 Find a location for the market. You may want to choose a place that gets a lot of foot traffic (near a subway or bus stop, outside a library, in a downtown park) or near a school or community center. Your workplace may be an appropriate site for a small market. There's special need for fresh produce in areas known as food deserts--often located in inner-city areas--where access to healthy food choices is severely limited. Working to create a farmer's market in such an area could be particularly rewarding. Be sure to work with appropriate authorities to gain the permission necessary to establish the market at your selected location.
- 👉 Work with the local farmers to decide when to hold the market – once a week, twice a week, every other week. Let the community know when to expect to be able to buy fresh produce.
- 👉 Offer to recruit volunteers to help the farmers at the market. Students are a good resource; consider working with local high schools to gain community service credit for students who participate.
- 👉 Try to launch the market in the days leading up to Food Day. Consider holding a Food Day Dinner on Food Day itself and create a meal from market products.

'I Eat Real' Photo Campaign

Tell the world why you want, need, and deserve real food! By gathering thousands of these "photo petitions" you can send a strong visual message to college presidents and elected leaders.

How? First, create "I Eat Real" signs, or use small erasable white boards with "I Eat Real, because...(have participants write why)." Set up a table in a visible location—farmers markets, schools, religious institutions--and rove around and ask your folks to snap a picture with the sign.

Post the pictures at www.facebook.org/fooddayeatreal and use #FoodDay on Twitter to post pictures and generate buzz. The more pictures we collect, the bigger the message we send!

Movie Screening

Screen a movie about the food industry to educate your audience, start a discussion, and take action. Choose from one of the many movies about the food industry, such as [Food Fight](#), [Nourish](#), [Supersize Me](#), [The Garden](#), [What's Organic About Organic?](#), [Ingredients](#), or [Urban Roots](#).

- 👉 Pick a movie
- 👉 Lead a food and film discussion
- 👉 Decide on an action for guests to take
- 👉 Provide healthy snacks
- 👉 Have fun!

Use a discussion guide, conversation cards, or hold a mock debate where you assign pro/con roles at random to guests to create a memorable night. Ask guests to take a specific action (sign a petition, write a letter, etc.) and invite the media if it's appropriate.

Your film screening may be as simple as a group of friends and neighbors gathered in a living room with healthy snacks, or as elaborate as an auditorium of community members with an expert panel discussion. Consider a movie screening over lunch in a workplace, for students and faculty in high schools or colleges, sponsored by a PTA or other community organization for its members, or for the general public in a local auditorium.

There are many potential screening locations:

- 👉 Theaters
- 👉 Drive-ins (yes, they still exist!)
- 👉 Schools
- 👉 Farmers markets
- 👉 Restaurants
- 👉 The YMCA, JCC, community centers
- 👉 The side of a barn
- 👉 Your home

Remember that public screenings are subject to licensing fees. Food Day is working to sponsor and reduce the fees. We must ask that you respect the filmmaker's copyrights and the hard work that went into each film.

Community Food Assessments

The Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC), a Food Day partner organization, is a non-profit organization dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems. They encourage Community Food Assessments (CFAs) as a powerful way to tell the story of what is happening with food in a community, and to mobilize efforts to improve the food system.

Through such assessments, diverse stakeholders work together to research their local food system, publicize their findings, and implement changes based on their findings. Their [website](#) serves as a clearinghouse for food assessment-related tools and resources, including reports and information from numerous past and current assessments. Start by checking out [CFSC's guidebook](#) outlining the start-to-finish steps of conducting a community food assessment.

CFAs are a great Food Day activity but they will require a good amount of planning and organizing, and you will also need a reliable volunteer base. This activity is the perfect opportunity to partner with a school or college. Other likely partners include:

- 👉 Local or state departments of health, agriculture, and planning
- 👉 Religious institutions
- 👉 Hunger relief organizations
- 👉 Block/neighborhood groups

Depending on your resources, you may use Food Day to kick-off the CFA, conduct the assessment, or announce the results of a CFA.

CFA components can include factors such as:

- 👉 Effectiveness of the local infrastructure for delivering Federal food assistance programs.
- 👉 Adequacy of supermarkets, barriers to food shopping, modes of transportation, selection and price, and local markets.
- 👉 Income levels and number of persons in poverty, use of the emergency food system, and federal food assistance programs.
- 👉 Loss of farmland, farm startups, use of sustainable production methods, and availability of locally grown food in local stores.
- 👉 Number of community gardens, home gardens, farmers' markets, community supported agriculture programs; food coops or other alternative food production/distribution arrangements; and open space available for food production.
- 👉 Scope of food policies affecting the community and evidence of integration of food-related issues into the local planning process.

Plan a Garden

Become part of the food system! Because Food Day is at the end of October, it may not be the time to plant a garden in many parts of the country, but it can certainly be a day to announce the plan for a garden. This event could be organized around a community, a school, a college campus, or even a workplace. Team up with others to identify a location for a garden. Consider what you'd like to plant and where the produce should go—markets, food banks, schools, or to individual growers.

Through its [Operation Green Plant](#), the America the Beautiful Fund distributes free seeds to community planting projects. Since 1980, their reclaimed vegetable seeds have grown almost 2 billion pounds of food for the hungry. As a partner organization, the Fund will generously contribute seeds to other Food Day participants. Another great resource is Real Food Challenge's [Garden Guide](#).

Use Food Day as an opportunity to announce your garden. You can:

- 👉 Host an event on the site of the upcoming garden
- 👉 Take pictures of the site “before” and next year follow up with the “after” pictures
- 👉 Hold a class on vegetable gardening or on cooking to demonstrate meals that can be made with future crops from the garden

Use Your Imagination!

You can probably think of countless other ways to celebrate Food Day! Cook a special dinner just for your family and talk about where food comes from and why it's healthy. Get a vending machine company to donate an old machine for a smash-in. Gather unusual fruits, vegetables, and grains from an ethnic grocery store and host a tasting. The sky is the limit! Just be sure to have fun—and record your event so you can be an inspiration to others across the country for next year's Food Day and beyond!

