

Local Foods Dinner Planning Questions and Ideas

1. Where should the event be held?

Indoors, outdoors, on a farm, in a home, in a church, etc.

2. When should the event occur?

Season of the year will determine the menu.

3. Who will cook the food?

Hosts do cooking, hire chef or caterer, have guests bring food for a potluck.

4. Which farmers can provide food?

Refer to the Stewardship Food Network in the Sept/Oct 2000 *Land Stewardship Letter* or at www.landstewardshipproject.org in the Food and Farm Connections section for ideas on farmers who serve your area. Make sure to let your guests know where their food came from. If possible, invite the farmers to attend.

5. How many people should we plan for?

You will probably need to invite many more people than will attend. For example, to have 10 people attend, expect to invite 40.

6. What should the menu be?

Recipe ideas can be found in the Food and Farm Connection section at www.landstewardshipproject.org.

Cookbooks that feature seasonal produce or local meats are:

- *From Asparagus to Zucchini: A Guide to Farm-Fresh Seasonal Produce* available for \$18.50 (includes shipping) from the Madison Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition. MFAI W2493 County Road ES, East Troy, WI 53120 or call 414-642-3303
- *Rolling Prairie Cookbook* available for \$17.95 (includes shipping) from Spring Wheat Nutrition Education Services at 1198 N 700 Rd. Lawrence, KS 66047.
- *The Whole Chicken Cookbook* available from Patrick Slattery, Sweet Ridge Farm, W692 Hwy. 33, Rockland, WI 54653, 608-486-2605 transportation details.

7. How will the food be served?

Buffet, outdoor picnic or BBQ, family style, potluck.

8. What kind of program should we have?

Invite local musicians to perform or local artists to display their work. Invite one of the farmers who is providing the food to talk about their farm or set up a display. Provide activities for children, etc. Staff of the Land Stewardship Project are often available to speak at events. Call the office nearest you to check on availability.

- Twin Cities Metro office in White Bear Lake, MN: 651-653-0618
- Policy office in Minneapolis, MN: 612-722-6377
- Southeast Minnesota office in Lewiston, MN: 507-523-3366
- Western Minnesota office in Montevideo, MN: 320-269-2105.

9. How much should we charge?

For a small event, the hosts may choose to pick up the costs, or they may ask for a small fee to cover the costs of the food. You might consider asking participants to cover the costs of one of the food items. The Land Stewardship Project has charged between \$10 and \$20 per person for its local foods dinners.

10. How do we promote the event?

Personal invitations to people you know work best. If you send invitations by mail, plan on following up by phone to get the best response. If you are planning a larger gathering, consider flyers, advertising the event in newsletters, local newspaper, selling tickets ahead of time, etc.

11. Who else do we know who could help with the event?

- Consider co-hosting the event with a friend or with the farmer/farmers who provide the food.
- Have two or more congregations or community groups co-sponsor an event to ensure a better turn-out and provide additional people for planning and organizing the event.

12. Other ideas:

- Hold a chili cook-off using grass fed beef.
- Have a potluck and give an award for the meal whose ingredients traveled the least distance.
- Have a progressive supper, traveling from home to home for each course.
- Have the guests bring one sustainably raised food item and challenge the host to find a way to create a meal out of what people bring.