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## ARE YOU UP FOR THE CHALLENGE?

Next week, July 17-24, is The Buy Local Challenge. Started in 2007 by the [Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission](#), the group has extended the invitation to all Maryland citizens by asking them to pledge to eat at least one thing from a local farm every day during the week.

According to the Buy Local Challenge website <http://www.buy-local-challenge.com> there are many benefits to Maryland's economy and environment:

**Buying local is good for you, good for the local economy and good for the planet!** In addition to providing food that's fresh and nutritional, buying from local farms promotes cleaner air and water and reduces our carbon footprint on the planet. In Maryland, if every household purchased just \$12 worth of farm products for eight weeks (basically the summer season), over \$200 million would be put back into the pockets of our farmers.

**You'll Get Exceptional Taste and Freshness:** Local food is fresher and tastes better than food shipped long distances. Local farmers can offer varieties bred for flavor rather than for long shelf life.

**You'll Support Independent/Family Farms and a Stronger Local Economy:** There's never been a more critical time to support your farming neighbors. With each local food purchase, you ensure that more of your money spent on food goes to the farmer. Buying local food keeps your dollars circulating in your own community.

**You'll Enhance Your Family's Health and Safety:** Locally grown food retains more nutrients and is less likely to cause foodborne illnesses than food that is shipped from far away. Buying local enables you to choose farmers who may avoid or reduce their use of chemicals, pesticides, hormones, antibiotics or genetically modified seed.

**You'll Help Protect the Environment:** Green areas that farms provide help to recharge our aquifers and cleanse the air. Buying from a local farm cuts down on the distance food travels. This reduces the consumption of oil and carbon emissions nationwide.

This campaign is gaining momentum across the state due to support from Governor O'Malley and our local schools. Since 2008, Frederick County public schools, have served locally grown apples as part of the new Farm-to-School program. The program brings more Maryland grown produce to school lunches and educates students about where their food comes from.

Having spent my career encouraging people to eat healthy foods I am overjoyed to see the Buy Local movement. Foods grown by our local farmers support optimal health. These unprocessed foods are rich in vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants and naturally taste delicious. Perhaps it takes genuine concern for the environment and our local economy to change human behavior.

Frederick County has a vested interest in the movement since it is the largest agricultural county in Maryland, accounting for 10% of Maryland's total farmland. Local farmers produce almost \$130 million of agricultural products annually. The Frederick County Office of Economic Development has long supported our local farmers and is the place to go to find out about local products. Their website <http://www.discoverfrederickmd.com> provides links to the 2010 Farm Guide, Virtual Farmer's Market, and Wineries. Within miles you can find fruits, vegetables, milk and dairy products, beef, pork, poultry, eggs, wine, and many specialty products.

Take the challenge by logging onto <http://www.buy-local-challenge.com/challenge.asp> and enjoy these recipes provided by the Eat Local Challenge.

### **PASTA ESTIVI**

This is another of the really light and healthy meals that match hot summer evenings. Estivi celebrates really good tomatoes and fresh basil or other herbs.

#### **Ingredients:**

1 pound box capellini, fettuccini, linguini or other pasta of your choice  
Boiling salted water  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
1 to 2 tablespoons olive oil  
4 cloves garlic, chopped  
1 bag Genoa basil or herbs of Provence, chopped  
2 pints rainbow cherry tomatoes, halved, or 3-4 cups cubed heirloom tomatoes  
On the side: grated Romano, Parmesan, or Asiago cheese

Cook the pasta and drain. While still very hot, add salt, pepper, oil, and garlic; toss. When at about room temp, add the basil and tomatoes. Taste for final seasoning, and consider adding a splash of wine or balsamic vinegar.

### **BURGERS FROM LOCAL FREE-RANGE BEEF WITH HERBS AND GARLIC**

1 pound ground beef from local farm  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
2-3 cloves fresh garlic, minced  
2 tablespoons fresh local onion, minced  
Optional: 1 teaspoon chili powder, 1/4 teaspoon cumin, 1 tablespoon fresh cilantro, chopped

Mix all together. Form into patties. Grill or fry to taste. Serve on crusty bread

### **SOUTHERN MARYLAND OYSTER SOUFFLE ON THE HALF**

The Chesapeake Bay offers the best seafood around. While traveling south or to the Eastern Shore pick some up and try this recipe provided by *Café des Artistes, Leonardtown, MD*

**Recipe & Prep Summary:** Prepare Crab Imperial; Steam, shuck & garnish Oysters; Make Velouté & Soufflé; Top & Bake

**CRAB IMPERIAL:**

3 ounces Roux (1/4 pound melted butter & 6 ounces flour: mix together to form paste)  
1 cup Mussel or Clam Juice  
1/2 cup cream  
4 ounces Swiss cheese (shredded)  
4 ounces Parmesan cheese (shredded)  
1 tablespoon butter  
6 Shallots (peeled & chopped)  
1 cup local white wine  
1 teaspoon each (minced) - Thyme & Garlic  
1 pound Fresh Back fin crabmeat (cartilage removed)  
1/2 cup Mayonnaise  
Juice from one lemon  
1 cup Panko Japanese Bread Crumbs  
Salt & Pepper to taste

Make Roux. In separate pan, reduce mussel juice by half over high heat. Reduce heat to medium and add Roux to thicken. Stirring constantly, slowly add cream, Swiss & Parmesan cheeses. Set aside.

In medium skillet, combine butter & shallots; sauté until translucent. Add white wine, thyme & garlic; reduce by half. Add crab meat and continue cooking until dry. Stir crab mixture into cream mixture. Cool; stir in mayonnaise, lemon juice, Panko, salt & pepper. Set aside.

**STEAM OYSTERS:**

Place 12 'Circle C' Oysters in baking pan with one minced shallot, 1/2 cup white wine, one sprig of fresh thyme and cracked black pepper. Cover with aluminum foil, place over high heat for 10 minutes. Remove from heat & allow to cool. Open oysters and reserve juice for velouté.

**OYSTER GARNISH:**

1 tablespoon butter, 1/4 pound sliced shitakes, 6 slices chopped pancetta, 1 pound fresh spinach. Sauté spinach mixture then equally top each oyster. Set aside.

**VELOUTÉ:**

Oyster Juice, 2 ounces Roux, 3 ounces shredded Swiss Cheese, 1/4 cup cream  
Reduce the reserved juice by half (over high heat). Add remaining ingredients; Reduce until thick, set aside.

**SOUFFLÉ MIX :**

6 egg whites, 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro, 1 tablespoon each – lemon juice & parmesan cheese  
In large bowl, add a pinch of salt to the egg whites & beat until firm. Fold in velouté mix, cilantro, lemon juice, & parmesan. Equally top each oyster with soufflé mix. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes

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