

Good Local Food Tour is May 12

Plant, grow, share what you know

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Getting fresh food to market in North Central Illinois is not a lot different from Wisconsin. So why not learn from each other? Gateway Services and From the Ground Up are co-sponsoring two vans of people from Bureau, Putnam and LaSalle counties for one full and entertaining day of stimulating discussions, problem solving and ideas. Here's a fun, delicious way to be inspired.

The tour departs from the Princeton Amtrak Depot at 7:30 a.m. or Rural King at 1350 38th St. in Peru at 8 a.m. Thursday, May 12. The cost is \$25 for the entire day and includes round-trip transportation, \$10 coupon for brunch and products at Bushel & Peck's, educational materials and access to follow-up.

Throughout the day, you will meet CSA leaders, farmers' market managers, organizers of co-op groceries, commercial food kitchens and incubators, artisanal food producers and food entrepreneurs. You'll see innovative community gardens and organic farms and get tips on financing and distribution for food-related businesses.

You'll also eat great food. Brunch is included in the tour.

Sign up and bring a friend. Limited spaces are available. First come, first served.

Register today at <http://goo.gl/forms/F48u99MVFB>. First come, first served.

Tour stops:

- Bushel & Peck's Market, Cafe, Commercial Kitchen in downtown Beloit. "We make and market artisan, agricultural goods for those who seek high-quality, environmentally sound, handcrafted products. Our preservation kitchen, store and restaurant supports a local economy and connects consumers directly to farmers, craftsmen and women. Each food product we provide shares the story of its artisans, neighbors, tradespeople and friends. Bushel & Peck's and our affiliated producers are experts in their fields who believe in the future of a hand-crafted economy." For information, see <http://www.bushelandpecks.com/>.
- Yahara River Grocery Cooperative. Started in 2008, this downtown Stoughton cooperative struggled in its first years but has grown to more than 1,000 members and an important role in the local food system. It's a downtown gathering place as well as grocery; an excellent example of what can be done in a rural community by committed local residents. From Fair Trade coffee and bulk products to fresh produce and ready-to-eat meals, this little store offers a remarkable selection of unique goods and services.

- FairShare Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Coalition. One of the oldest CSA organizations in the country, for over 20 years FairShare (formerly Madison Area CSA Coalition, MACSAC) has been linking people who care about what they eat to local farmers who grow top-quality food for their local communities. FairShare's USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program project, Expanding CSA Markets: Increasing Consumer Demand Through CSA Networks and Targeted Marketing, funded in 2016, is now producing four marketing toolkits on farm to business (workplace CSAs), CSA Outreach fundraising and promotions, and health insurance rebates. For information see www.csacoalition.org/.
- Troy Gardens/Community GroundWorks. Community Groundworks runs a CSA, community gardens and farms, a five-acre research farm, farm stand, a statewide school gardening education network, kids' gardens, workshops and home garden consulting. It also created a co-housing community and research farm. We will learn about public/private partners and co-sponsorships, land trusts, school and community relationships. For information see <http://www.communitygroundworks.org/>.
- Food Enterprise & Economic Development. (FEED) Kitchens. This non-profit facility has five commercial kitchens, with specialized equipment for baking, produce preparation and processing, deli prep and meat processing. Available for rent by the hour so food businesses and individuals seeking to sell food to the public can have a legal place to prepare their food. Also available is a training kitchen for non-profit groups and cooking teachers to use to teach food service and preparation skills. The training kitchen can be used by anyone who wishes to do personal cooking or baking on a larger scale, such as holiday baking with friends, canning and preserving produce, or making meals in bulk.
- Willy Street Co-op. Founded in 1974, Willy Street is now one of the nation's largest grocery co-ops, with 32,000 owners and two stores. It specializes in natural, organic and local foods, and addresses the needs of its members through owner-only sales, reduced prices for classes and many other owner benefits including individual nutrition consultations, a full schedule of educational and community events, a monthly newspaper and outreach services. For information see <https://www.willystreet.coop>.