



A Field Guide to Sustainable Food:

The LOWER EAST SIDE

EUGENE LANG COLLEGE THE NEW SCHOOL FOR LIBERAL ARTS

Acknowledgements

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A Field Guide to Sustainable Food:

THE LOWER EAST SIDE





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INTRODUCTION // NEVIN COHEN

In communities throughout the nation, people are working together to build sustainable food systems. These efforts encompass different but interconnected elements. In community gardens, neighbors grow fruits and vegetables. In farmers' markets and CSAs, city residents buy produce directly from farmers. Supermarkets provide affordable food while soup kitchens and food pantries work to combat hunger. Restaurants' chefs become famous for creatively cooking ingredients from regional farms and artisans make unique foods that honor ethnic traditions. And community organizations teach people to prepare healthy meals, redistribute excess food and recycle food waste into compost. Markets make good food affordable, processors and retailers use food to preserve heritage, restaurateurs make regional food command a premium price, farmers' markets supply these restaurants and low-income people, and community gardens allow people of limited means to grow their own food. These are parts of a whole web of techniques keep a food system sustainable in an economically diverse neighborhood. All these components of a sustainable food system

are evident in New York City's Lower East Side. A variety of ethnic food producers, processors, retailers and restaurants serve the neighborhood, some founded by immigrants who lived in the area's tenement buildings (and managed by those immigrants' families today). Vegetable gardens grow in lots that the city had written off to disinvestment and that neighbors reclaimed in the 1970s. A wide range of businesses, from conventional supermarkets to specialty grocers to farmers' markets, provide food to residents of diverse income levels. Many of these businesses support regional farmers. And upscale restaurants that attract trendy visitors promote higher prices for more nutritious food, which makes sustainable food production a more viable business. As Manhattan apartment prices have escalated, the web of connections in this food system has grown more complicated. So this guide serves as an introduction to how the Lower East Side's food system works after affluent residents have moved in alongside the working-class and low-income families who traditionally dominated the neighborhood. Farmer's markets sell both to users of food stamps and to chefs whose restaurants

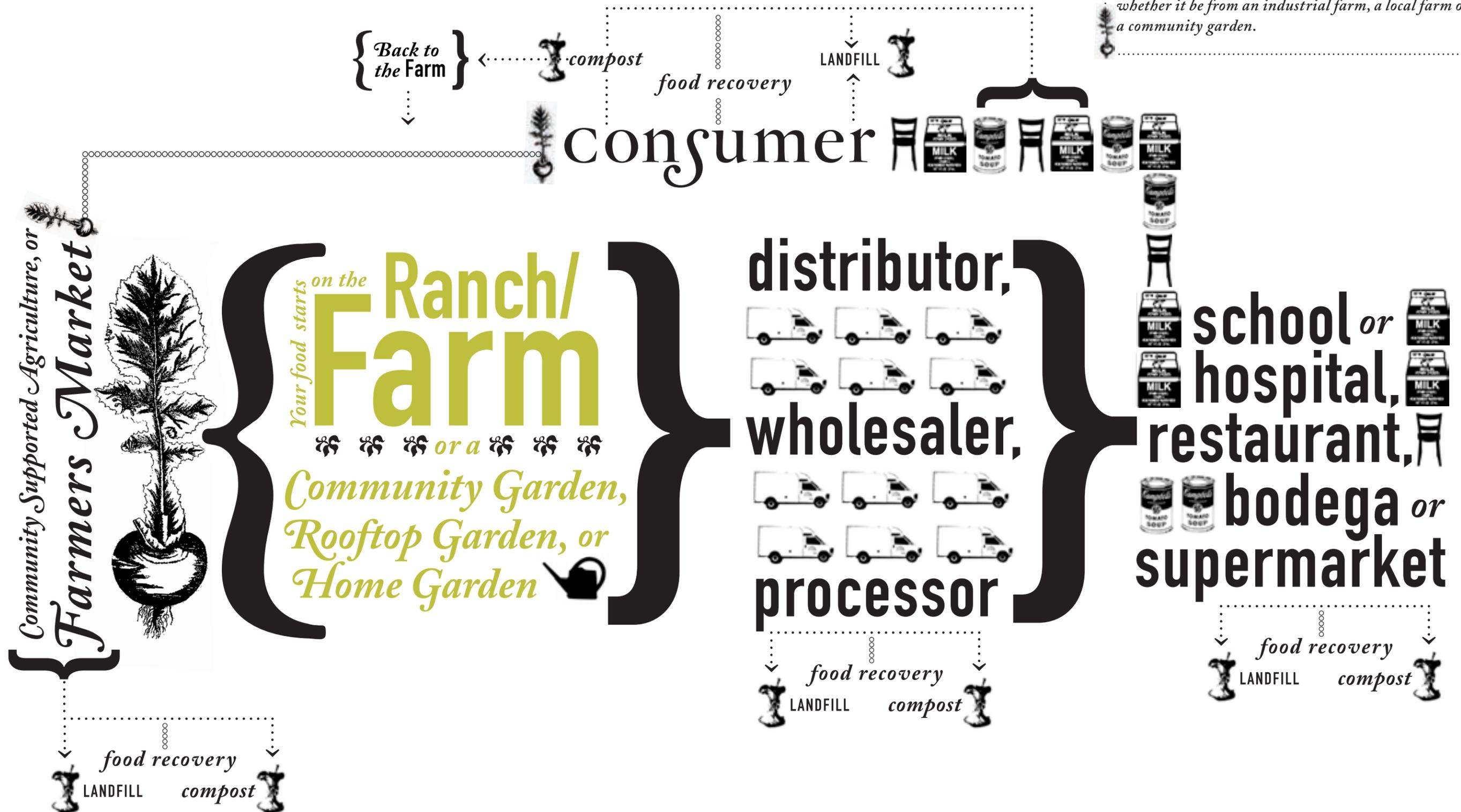
glamorize crops that locals have produced in community gardens for their own enjoyment. There are many complex economic relationships here. Markets that sell fresh, delicious, diverse, and nourishing food at a fair price add to the neighborhood's quality of life and provide health benefits to the poorest residents. Greenmarkets and small food businesses circulate dollars through the local economy. These markets and businesses also play a role in the regional economy by providing income to family farmers in suburban and rural communities. Businesses that source sustainably-grown food within the region help the environment by supporting ecologically friendly production techniques and preserving farmland. This field guide maps elements of the Lower East Side's food system that support social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Like a guide to the natural environment, it helps the reader identify and learn about parts of the system: the gardens, organizations, stores and restaurants. Some of the most significant and interesting of these may be hidden from view or simply blend into the surroundings. So this guide aims to help expose the highlights.

We laid out the guide to move through the stages of food's travel from production to processing, then to distribution and retail sale, and then to the management of all that is left over. This is not a linear path. In food systems, actors often are involved in more than one stage. Although quantifying the sustainability benefit of a particular entry is beyond the scope of this project, the field guide focuses on elements that contribute to social, economic, and environmental sustainability. The guide is not comprehensive. Its choices reflect the priorities of its authors, the students in a one-semester undergraduate urban food systems course. A city neighborhood, by its nature, is a place that people experience many different ways. We have undoubtedly omitted organizations and businesses that are operating sustainably and that some people cherish, and have merely listed others that would reward longer description. We hope that by showing the range of people, places, organizations and businesses in the Lower East Side that contribute to a sustainable food system, we help readers understand what comprises a sustainable food system in any community.

THE URBAN FOOD SYSTEM:

From the farm to the consumer

In an urban food system, your food can make its way to the table through many different pathways. The chart below shows the various ways that food travels. The starting point is always from the producer's hands, whether it be from an industrial farm, a local farm or a community garden.





URBAN FOOD PRODUCTION

Laura Silverman

URBAN FOOD PRODUCTION refers to all the methods people use to grow what they eat in a high-density environment. It includes the cultivation of food in community gardens, rooftop gardens, window boxes, urban farms and backyard chicken coops. While the overall American food system has globalized and standardized over the past few decades, tensions in the global food system are making urban food production more tenable- albeit at a much smaller scale. It is the decline in small and medium-scale peri-urban farming and the advent of industrial agriculture that makes urban food production more popular.

The reasons involve taste and external benefits. Where many small and medium-size farms once sold a variety of food products to nearby markets, today fewer large farms produce much bigger quantities of the same crops.¹ This food loses nutrients and flavor the farther it travels from the source. Growing food in cities provides an alternative. Growing food in urban settings also creates benefits for the public realm. Urban food production reinvigorates neighborhoods with green space, fresh food, and an environment for community activity, organizing, and education. These benefits are easy to see in community gardens, where a sizable portion of urban food production happens.

In New York City, many community gardens grew from the movement to reclaim and revitalize land that had been abandoned during the economic downturn in the 1970s.² Eventually the city stopped fighting the squatters who led this campaign and set up a program through the Department of Parks and Recreation called Green Thumb to support the creation of new gardens. Residents have created 600 community gardens with help from Green Thumb, growing enough fruits and vegetables in small lots throughout the city to feed 20,000 residents. Green Thumb organizes and funds educational workshops, plant sales, children's programs, food pantries, or community-building events like block parties. In its own words, GreenThumb aims "to foster civic part

ticipation and encourage neighborhood revitalization while preserving open space."³

Gardens can request deliveries of soil and lumber from GreenThumb. As noted above, the program intertwines an effort to provide healthy food with an effort to create neighborhood coherence. To this end, GreenThumb creates a network that lets community gardeners share resources and knowledge, reducing mistakes and frustration. As "payment," all GreenThumb gardeners open their doors to the public for a minimum of 10 hours per week.⁴ Other organizations, such as the New York Restoration Project Green Guerillas, and GrowNYC (formerly the Council on the Environment) support other gardens with slightly different rules. While this system is small in terms of overall food production, it creates a constellation of valuable social, environmental, and economic effects in addition to providing a substantial amount of fresh produce for the gardeners themselves. That's because community gardens are welcoming sites for education about health and food.

As families substitute more locally grown food for mass-produced food from supermarkets, valuable ecological benefits increase. Local food production has the potential to reduce the amount of natural resources and energy used to produce, package, repackage, and ship the food that most families eat. That reduction can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. So can increasing the amount of urban gardening through the growth of community gardens.

Indeed, many of the environmental benefits of growing food in cities are associated with creating and preserving green spaces. Green space improves air quality, increases biodiversity, improves soil quality, and absorbs rainwater that might otherwise contribute to overloaded sewer systems that empty their excess into the city's waterways.

Finally, community gardening can help communities confront the growing problem of obesity. Studies show that people who grow their own food tend to eat more healthily and know more about nutrition.⁵ Community gardening offers a comfortable, even fun setting in which people can learn to grow their own fruits and vegetables economically, in a space for face-to-face interaction between neighbors that can create social ties and strong communities.



Liz Christy Community Garden

East Houston Street
btw 2nd Ave & Bowery

Saturday 12pm-4pm
(All Year)

Sunday 12pm-4pm
(May - September)

Tuesday 6pm-dusk
(May - September)

Sunday Noon-4 PM
(May-Sept)



This narrow garden facing busy Houston Street has been operating for 37 years. In 1973, neighborhood resident Liz Christy founded the Bowery-Houston Community Farm and Garden with an activist gardener group called the Green Guerrillas. The group started the garden as part of an effort to “improve the quality and quantity of open green space in the city;” it also sought to address how the city’s fiscal mismanagement had led services and livability to deteriorate in many neighborhoods.⁶ The garden quickly became a place where other New Yorkers learned how to reclaim abandoned and vacant lots and transform them into community gardens and farms.⁷

Today, the garden (renamed to honor its founder) houses about 30 plots maintained by 20 garden members who plant whatever they choose. Some grow vegetables like spinach and kale in neat rows, while others grow strawberries and a variety of herbs. The rest of the garden is common space with pathways winding through planted beds. It has a wildflower area, a grape arbor, weeping birch trees, fruit trees, a dawn redwood tree, and a pond with year-round fish and red-eared slider turtles. A native plant collection started in 1985 under the dawn redwood. There is also a tool shed and a sheltered seating area with grills for events, garden fundraisers, and garden workshops. Garden workshops have included lessons in pruning plants, painting flowers and plants, and a hat-making workshop for children. Members and volunteers take

the lead in maintaining the shared areas. Donations help fund the cost of tools and other supplies. Green-Thumb, a program of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, also supports the garden. Gardeners, some of whom have had their plots for over 20 years, eat what they harvest and donate some crops to a local food pantry. The garden also composts debris and food scraps.

.....
Some grow vegetables like spinach and kale in neat rows, while others grow strawberries and a variety of herbs.

To become a member, anyone can stop by the garden when it is unlocked and start volunteering. After 20 hours, a volunteer gets a key to the garden. After 40 hours, a new member can begin to vote on issues concerning garden planning and plot distribution.



Three years after Liz Christy and the Green Guerrillas started their garden on East Houston Street, the city demolished three buildings further uptown in what locals call Loisaida. This was a fairly typical tactic as disinvestment left many properties abandoned in the city’s worsening financial crisis. Members of the 11th Street Movement, a group focused on neighborhood revitalization and community organizing, developed the 12th Street Garden Project to start a garden in the vacant lot after the demolition.⁸ In the summer of 1977, the garden opened with participation from about 40 community residents—most of whom had been living in the neighborhood for decades.⁹ As the name suggests, the garden affirmed these residents’ Puerto Rican and Dominican heritage, an important current in the area’s cultural life.

Today, there are trendy coffee bars down the block and affluent families in the nearby playground, but the garden has sustained its original purpose. Like most community gardens, this one is open when a member is there. All members have keys. Donations and Green Thumb help fund tools and other supplies. The distinctive metalwork fence attracts passers-by, as does a special side garden for children.

A member cares for one of 40 raised beds, choosing vegetables or flowers as a crop. Members also maintain shared areas, which include well-tended paths and a few benches, a picnic table and chairs. The garden hosts an annual summer solstice party for the public.

There is a composting operation in

the garden. To make it work efficiently, members must cut garden waste into three-inch pieces. As one member joked, though, “people get lazy. So members bought a wood chipper to make garden waste small enough to compost easily.

LISTINGS FOR GREENMARKETS & CSAS

Lower East Side Ecology Center Garden East 7th St, btw Ave B & C

This year-round garden houses a large compost operation and offers classes on how to compost at home. The garden also hosts an art program for kids and manages the haul from a citywide community compost drop-off at the Union Square Greenmarket.

Jardin de Paraiso East 4th St to East 5th St, btw Ave C & D

A garden/park meant to educate New Yorkers on sustainability by modeling seed saving, renewable energy, and composting. The park centers around two willow trees and a treehouse (designed by a local architect who has done commissions for Sting and other boldface names). How-to workshops and cultural performances are held on a regular basis.

9th Street Community Garden and Park Ave C, btw 9th and 10th St

Encompassing over an acre, this community space includes composting bins for gardeners and a brick path, pond and gazebo for the public. In the summer, the space hosts film festivals, food giveaways, concerts, and a daycare service. A variety of vegetables grown in the garden are donated to local soup kitchens.

6BC Community Garden 6th St, btw Ave B & C

This famous garden has appeared in many films, but its model emphasizes education. 6BC is open to the public May through October on Saturday and Sunday afternoons as well as on Wednesdays. The garden offers a large picnic table and small treehouse. The space holds open mic, art shows, and classes. Its horticulture tends to be more exotic than the lineup at other area gardens, as the immigrant families who keep it going favor plants native to Central America and the Caribbean.

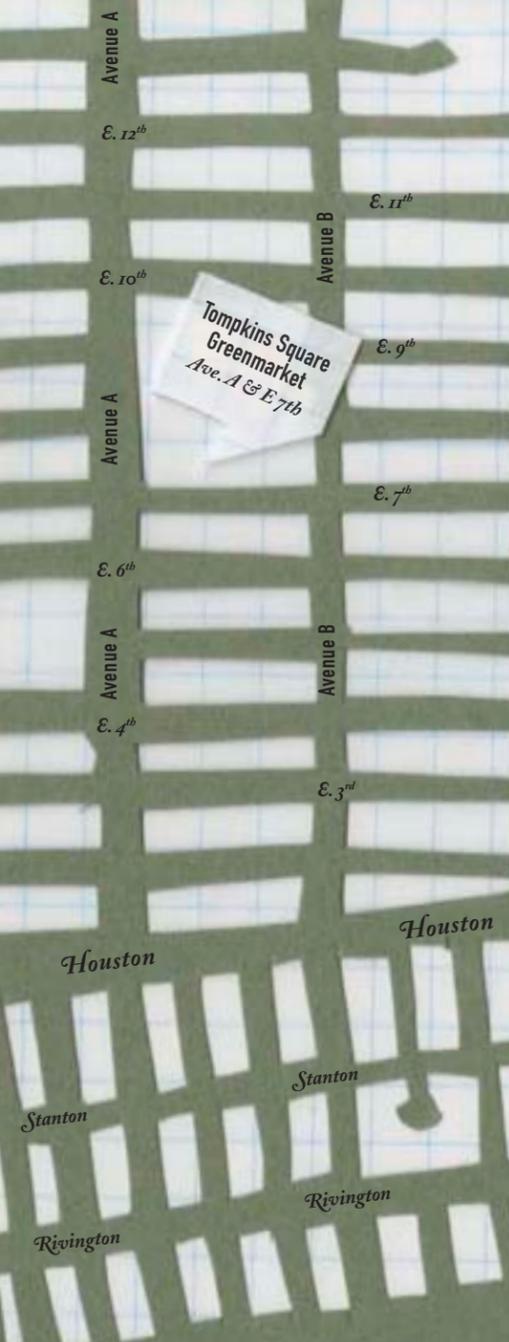


El Sol Brillante Community Garden

12th street btw
Ave A & Ave B

.....
Open anytime the gate is unlocked & a member is in the garden





GREENMARKETS & CSAs

*Cordelia Eddy
Elinor Mossop
Erica Shapiro-Sakashita*

WHILE COMMUNITY GARDENS PLAY A DEEP CIVIC ROLE,

each garden produces only a small amount of food. Greenmarkets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), by comparison, provide urban consumers with a much larger supply of fresh, healthy food from farms in a 200-mile radius of the city. CSAs and Greenmarkets foster friendly relationships between consumers and producers that can make consumers more knowledgeable about seasonal production of food, crop variety, and the difference in flavor between fresh food and the mass-distributed kind.

The different systems involve different economic relationships. At Greenmarkets, farmers (and their employees who run the market stands) sell fresh fruits, vegetables, meat, fish, dairy, and honey as well as artisanal products like cheese, pickles, preserves, wine, maple syrup and candies, apple cider, and baked goods. In a CSA, the customer purchases a share of a particular farm's fresh fruits, vegetables and other crops and receives weekly deliveries as they are grown and harvested. Anyone can shop at a Greenmarket however he or she chooses: to get food from a CSA, a person must become a member and accept the goods and amounts that the farmer decides to distribute.

Shoppers can come and go at Greenmarkets all over town, and farmers get licenses to sell at Greenmarkets from GrowNYC, a nonprofit organization. CSA members, usually from the same neighborhood, subscribe to a particular farm or organization of farms and commit to a share of a season's crop, typically paying an upfront fee for a season. Sometimes they agree to help the farm in other ways, such as harvesting, weeding, or planting. Farmers try to set fees to cover their costs and wages as a way of insuring income against unpredictable crop yields. That means CSAs uniquely share in farming's economic risk: if a farm experiences drought, the CSA member pays the full fee and gets less food. Even so, the CSA fee is manageable for most families: a seasonal fee typically

ranges between \$300 and \$600 for about six months' worth of crops, which can often feed most families through the week.¹⁰

CSAs also help low-income people access fresh produce, according to a local advocacy group called Just Food that organizes CSA programs. The group reports that several CSAs accept subsidized payments such as food stamps and EBT, and often implement a sliding scale payment system.¹¹ Just Food's CSA program has grown dramatically since 1994, with 30 farms added in the past year to make a total of about 80 CSAs in New York City. Four of these now serve the East Village and Lower East Side.¹²

CSAs deliver produce to residents of a neighborhood, and Greenmarkets set up in neighborhood hubs to sell produce to anyone. The Greenmarkets participate in a program the city began in 1976 to address to the bankruptcy of many local farms, the lack of fresh vegetables in the city, and the underuse of public spaces.¹³ What started as a small food grower's curiosity has blossomed to include 46 markets across the five boroughs. Greenmarket now has its own city-funded manager, GrowNYC, which licenses around 200 regional farms for a fee.

The standards for earning a Greenmarket license require farmers to maintain healthy soil and growing conditions (organic or otherwise), and to live on or near the farms.¹⁴ Every farm represents a small business relying on a direct relationship with consumers- in this case, on consumers who can come and go. According to GrowNYC, 80% of Greenmarket farmers would be out of business without the Greenmarket program.¹⁵

Farms that meet GrowNYC's criteria rotate among the 46 markets on different days of the week. Four of the markets currently are situated in walking distance from parts of the Lower East Side.¹⁶

The Greenmarkets on the Lower East Side do not attract a lot of tourists or high-end chefs, like the Greenmarket at Union Square does. Even so, they include popular vendors like Ronnybrook Dairy Farm and Norwich Meadows, an organic farm near Ithaca. And like CSAs, they provide a continuous supply of regional, fresh food with the comfort of knowing where the food was grown or raised and who grew it. Both greenmarkets and CSAs promote a sense of community between residents of the Lower East Side and their food producers.

Tompkins Square Greenmarket

Southwest Corner of Tompkins Square Park

.....
 Sunday 8am-6pm
 (Year Round)



The Tompkins Square Greenmarket, established in 1997, offers products from many local farms. It also offers an “exceptional neighborhood feeling that is missing from larger markets,” according to Zaid Kurdich of Norwich Meadows Farms, who has been selling at the market for nine years. Several vendors have been at the market since its inception, including Red Jacket Orchards, Toigo Farms, Stannard Farms, and Rock Hill Bakery.¹⁷

The loyal vendors reflect the richness of the 200-mile radius that GrowNYC requires Norwich Meadows, which is near Ithaca, sells alongside Ronnybrook from Columbia County and Consider Bardwell Farm from Rutland, Vermont – and Pura Vida fisheries, which anchors in Long Island. Like most Greenmarkets, Tompkins includes two vendors selling baked goods. Enforcing the 200-mile limit on baked goods has given GrowNYC some trouble since ingredients can come from factory farms, but Greenmarket is phasing out this exception. Another Greenmarket mandate- that farmers must personally work at the Greenmarket at least once a month- gives Tompkins customers a face-to-face relationship with the producers of their food.

And it’s possible to supply a week’s worth of meals entirely at the Greenmarket. Stannard Farms, located in Washington County, NY, sells leafy and root vegetables, orchard fruits,

meats, and plants. Dan Madura Farms sells vegetables, specializing in mushrooms. Norwich Meadows offers organic specialties like artichokes and purple asparagus (for \$4 per 8oz bunch).¹⁸ Hoosick River Poultry, from Rensselaer, NY, sells chicken and other meat: DiPalo Turkey Farms sells whole and processed birds. Ronnybrook sells milk, butter, ice cream, yogurt and sweetened yogurt drinks. Meredith’s Bakery and Rock Hill Bakery, of Ulster and Saratoga County respectively, sell bread and other baked goods, often sourcing New York State fruit. Andrew’s Local Honey, a popular vendor at the greenmarket, raises bees organically in order to produce raw, unpasteurized honey and honey-products. Andrew’s Local Honey has started a beekeeping project on the Lower East Side.

.....
Farmers working at the greenmarket at least once a month give Tompkins customers a face-to-face relationship with the producers of their food.

Tompkins Square Greenmarket does not currently accept electronic benefit transfer cards, although GrowNYC hopes it will in the near future.¹⁹ City Harvest, a program that collects excess food from a variety of businesses and redistributes it to more than 600 community food programs in the city²⁰, occasionally picks up unsold food. City Harvest trucks visit most regularly in the summer, when crops

and leftovers are most abundant. There is currently no compost dropoff site at the market, though the Lower East Side Ecology Center garden’s compost bins are two blocks away, but the GrowNYC hopes to add one. There is a textile-recycling stand at the market every week.

LISTINGS FOR GREENMARKETS & CSAS

Lower East Side Greenmarket
 Norfolk Street @ Grand Street, New York, NY 10038
 (212)-788-7476
 A smaller outpost of the Greenmarket, near Chinatown, which sells some vegetables popular in Cantonese cooking. Open Saturdays (July-November) from 8 a.m to 4 p.m. Accepts EBT.
<http://www.opengreenmap.org/pt-br/greenmap/nycs-green-apple-map/les-grand-street-greenmarket-2955>

St. Mark’s Church Greenmarket
 East 10th Street @ 2d Avenue, New York, NY 10003
 (212) 674-0910
 A small Greenmarket along a busy street that sells fresh produce from regional farms on Tuesdays (May-December) from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Does not accept EBT.
<http://www.opengreenmap.org/en/greenmap/nycs-green-apple-map/st-marks-church-greenmarket-2962>

6th Street Community Center CSA
 Pick-up location at 638 East Sixth Street (between Avenue B @ C), New York, NY 10009 USA (212) 677-1863
 A six-year-old CSA that provides members with over 200 varieties of vegetables and herbs from local farms during the growing season (May to November).
http://www.sixthstreetcenter.org/csa_index.html

Stanton Street Settlement CSA
 Pick-up location at M’Finda Kalunga Community Garden on Rivington Street between Chrystie @ Forsyth in Sara Delano Roosevelt Park
 A CSA that provides members with produce grown by Ted Blomgren of Windflower Farm in Valley Falls, New York.
<http://stantonstreetcsa.wordpress.com/>



Tuv Ha’Aretz CSA
 Farmer- Monkshood Nursery @ Garden in Stuyvesant, NY
csa@14StreetY.org

Neighborhood School CSA
 Farmer- Angel Family Farm in Goshen, NY
 Check with justfood.org

Grand Street CSA
 Farmer- Woodbridge Farm in Salem, CT
info@grandstreetcsa.org

Bluestocking CSA
 Farmer- The Ant Hill Farm in Honesdale, PA
 Check with justfood.org



AS THOSE BAKERIES AT THE GREENMARKET SUGGEST,

crops alone cannot make a sustainable food system. Processing food in special ways remains vital to the food system of the Lower East Side, which was once the pickling capital of the city. At the turn of the last century there were about 100 picklers in the neighborhood.²¹ Today, only the Pickle Guys and Rick’s Picks carry on the tradition, but the neighborhood economy thrives on many other food processing businesses.

Processing transforms raw plant or meat into food with a shelf life. It includes preserving, freezing, canning, baking, juicing, and roasting, as well as fermentation (e.g., pickling). Most food we associate with “comfort,” from hot dogs to muffins, is processed. But locally processed foods, in addition to bearing local economic value, are often fresher than mass-distributed ones and prepared in a unique style with fewer preservatives and chemicals. A local processor can bring (and teach) a distinct approach to a food –and can explain that approach to customers, who may develop loyal relationships.

These small-scale processors often need to charge more for their work than national processors, though, because they produce on a much smaller scale. So their food, usually labeled as luxury artisanal fare (even if it’s a pickle made from a 100-year-old recipe that began among poor immigrants), often fits an upscale niche. As a result, many legendary Lower East Side food processors sell primarily to upscale customers from inside the neighborhood and to gourmet stores beyond it. The Doughnut Plant, the Pickle Guys and Russ & Daughters all draw steady business from tourists, too. Nonetheless, these small-scale local producers contribute to the economic sustainability of the area by creating local jobs and increasing the odds that their proceeds will be reinvested in the local economy.

In a dense urban area like the Lower East Side, food processing is often

the step in the food system at which producer and consumer interact. The particularity of the cultural, social, and economic interactions around food products sold in a neighborhood provides meaningful opportunities for building a network of interconnected relationships. This kind of network can maintain strong economic and social ties that root an economy.

There are many unique processors on the Lower East Side. One of the newest is Roasting Plant, a coffee roaster and brewer, which roasts raw green coffee beans across town and grinds, brews and packages coffee blends on site at a small store near the Tenement Museum.²² Many bakeries provide the area with pastries, breads, and muffins, reflecting Chinese, Dominican and Jewish traditions. Kossar’s Bialys has been turning flour and freshly ground onions into legendary bialys for over 65 years. Babycakes, a vegan bakery, uses all natural, organic, wheat-free recipes to make its sweets.

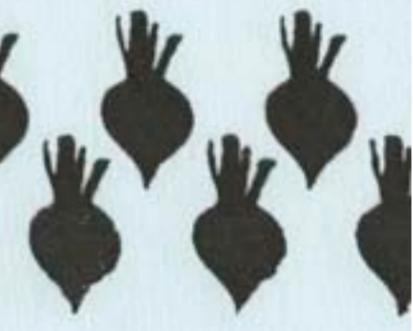
In the Essex Street Market, a covered market that served immigrants for many decades, a slew of upscale processors sell their goods. At the Organic Soul Café, for example, fruits are available for immediate and fresh processed juice. At Tra La La you can buy fresh baked scones, muffins, and pastries, as well as fresh juices and smoothies. La Tiendita, which is run by the Lower East Side Girls Club, sells cookies and cupcakes baked a few blocks away at the Girl’s Club’s Sweet Things Bake Shop.

**SPECIALTY FOOD
PREPARATION
& RETAIL**

*Abbie Gross
Emma Donnelly
Karen Deborah Isaacs*

Ricks Picks

195 Chrystie Street
212.358.0428



Rick Fields started making pickles in his home in Brooklyn in 1997, using a recipe from his mother and vegetables he purchased at the Prospect Park Greenmarket that came from small farms in Hudson Valley and the Catskills in upstate New York.²⁸ Since then, Rick has developed over a dozen varieties of pickles, with recipes inspired by pickling traditions from Japan, Poland, and Mexico.²⁹ Three of these varieties are now available in Whole Foods throughout the U.S.: Phat Beets, Smokra and Mean Beans.³⁰

Pickling began as a way to keep vegetables (and other foods) edible during the winter before refrigerators were common. Rick's Picks uses only seasonal ingredients: the first item it brings to market each year each year is asparagus. While he is not producing, Fields still gets his ingredients from the Greenmarket: tomatoes and dill flowers from Migliorelli Farm in Rhinebeck, beets from Frank Deglary, Luke George's green beans from near Albany and Rick Peterson's cucumbers from Seneca Castle.

Rick's makes four pickle flavors from cucumbers: Bee 'n' Beez, Kool Gherks, Spears of Influence, and Slices of Life.³¹ He makes all pickles with the hot-packing method, heating the brine to 190 degrees, then bathing the vegetables in hot water in Mason jars before sealing them and marinating for a few weeks.³²

Having outgrown the owner's Lower

East Side kitchen, Rick's Picks' pickling operation now happens in a facility in Poughkeepsie, New York called Foodworks, though the corporate office remains on Chrystie Street on the Lower East Side. While prices reflect the low supply and painstaking effort- \$10 for a jar, compared with \$6 or so for a 15-ounce supermarket jar- the process that produces Rick's Picks supports regional agriculture and local vendors.



Rick Fields started making pickles in his home in Brooklyn in 1997, using a recipe from his mother and vegetables he purchased at the Prospect Park Greenmarket

Saxelby Cheesemongers, a cheese shop in the Essex Street Market, offers a selection of American farmstead cheese as well as yogurt, crème fraiche, creamline milk, and butter. As the name implies, "farmstead" cheeses come from a farmer's dedicated herd: Anne Saxelby, the co-owner of the shop, builds relationships with the farmers and tries to "highlight the uniqueness of each cheese with respect to how and where it was produced."³³

Saxelby Cheesemongers celebrates the emotional benefits of sourcing locally: it sponsors field trips to some suppliers, and Saxelby herself chats with customers about the importance of a product's low "food miles." On average, food grown in the United States travels 1,300 miles from farm where it is produced to the store where it is sold to consumers.³⁴ Sourcing locally significantly reduces the greenhouse-gas impact of transporting food by requiring less fuel. Most of the cheeses sold at Saxelby Cheesemongers come from farms less than one day's drive away: the majority of cheeses are sourced from farms located on the east coast, especially from Vermont.³⁵ (She sells one cheese from Italy and one from Wisconsin.)

Over the three years Saxelby Cheesemongers has worked in Essex Street Market, the shop has gained a regular clientele as well as consistent new customers who appreciate the shop's



Saxelby Cheesemongers celebrates the emotional benefits of sourcing locally: it sponsors field trips to some suppliers, and Saxelby herself chats with customers about the importance of a product's low "food miles."



"local" ethic and high-quality cheeses. Bonneau Broyle, the co-owner, described the shop as "a community store" with opinionated, involved customers.³⁶ The majority of the customers live close to the shop, and a smaller portion of customers travel from further neighborhoods, like the Upper West Side, to support Saxelby's approach. The shop accepts electronic benefits transfer (EBT) payment, which makes its products more available to low-income shoppers.³⁷

Saxelby also sells to high-end restaurants and hotels in lower Manhattan, including Broadway East, The Ten Bells, Hotel on Rivington, and Gramercy Tavern.³⁸



Saxelby Cheesemongers

Essex Street Market
120 Essex Street
212.228.8204

Monday – Saturday:
9am–7pm



JEFFREY

Jeffrey's Meats

Essex Street Market
120 Essex Street
212.475.6521

Monday – Saturday:
8am-6pm

Jeffrey's Meats, a family business in its fourth generation, has been a part of the Lower East Side since the 1920's and part of the Essex Street Market since 1940. Jeffrey offers a wide selection of meats, both wholesale and retail, to restaurants, schools, and businesses throughout the city. But visitors to Jeffrey's counter get a distinct treat: the ponytailed, down-to-earth Jeffrey Ruhalter, who posts photos of himself with celebrities along a column. (Jeffrey's provided rabbits to the Martha Stewart Show for one of Martha's cooking classes.) As customers approach Jeffrey's, they may also notice the art displayed behind the counters, and the pictures of Jeffrey that accompany praise from local papers and customers. Along with the showcase he gives artists, Ruhalter offers a particularly entertaining oral history of the Lower East Side. The shop procures most of its products from Food Nation, a Brooklyn-based distributor, and a larger distributor called A & W Food. Jeffrey also has special contacts that can provide rare meats, like kangaroo, alligator, antelope, frog, elk, ostrich, and more. Although most of Jeffrey's meats are conventionally produced, he does offer a large menu of organic meats. Ruhalter takes pride in avoiding waste. Scraps are packed and sold, fairly inexpensively, for stews and soups. Ruhalter has also created a unique distribution business called "Who F***ed Up the Order" that provides meats on



short notice for restaurants and other businesses in short-term need. Jeffrey offers classes on butchering and preparing various kinds of meats.



Ruhalter takes pride in avoiding waste. Scraps are packed and sold, fairly inexpensively, for stews and soups.



La Tiendita is a baked goods and specialty gift shop run by the Lower East Side Girls Club, an organization started in 1996 to empower neighborhood girls. Members of the Girls' Club bake every cookie, cupcake, and "girl-power" bar at La Tiendita. (The "girl-power" bar, made from nuts and seeds, introduced healthy approaches to the repertoire.) The ingredients are simple, without any chemical additives, and the flour is often organic.



The bakery becomes a laboratory for leadership development, entrepreneurial training, financial planning, and civic engagement.

The venture serves the organization's mission to empower through education. Girls learn that baking can lead to valuable business, and girls who work at the Essex Street Market stall gain valuable experience with customers and inventory. The bakery becomes a laboratory for leadership development, entrepreneurial training, financial planning, and civic engagement. The Girls Club aims to raise 20 percent of its operating costs through business ventures,³⁹ so the revenues from La Tiendita support programs like science, wellness, nutrition, filmmaking, poetry, writing, and photography classes, as well as a radio station, an art gallery, and a girl-run

Farmers' Market on 9th Street and Avenue C. (The girls use fruit produced on the participating farms - like apples for their pies - in the bakery.) The club maintains a separate year-round bake shop at the farmers' market location. The shop also introduces selected non-baked goods into the local economy. Coffee, chocolates, and small gifts such as hand woven bags or hand made ornaments from places like Mexico and Nepal are FairTrade certified.^{40, 41}

La Tiendita

Essex Street Market
120 Essex Street
212.982.1633

Tuesday-Saturday:
10am-6pm





Rainbo's Fish

Essex Street Market
120 Essex Street
212.982.8585

Monday – Saturday
8am–6pm

Rainbo's Fish predates the revival of the Essex Street market but now operates two adjacent stalls within the market. Rainbo's owner, Ira Stolzenberg, also owns and operates Tra La La, a juice bar that sells prepared foods such as muffins and pastries, as well as fish sandwiches and seafood chowders. The fish and seafood sold at Rainbo's and Tra La La is purchased wholesale at the New Fulton Fish Market in Hunts Point, the Bronx, and cleaned, filleted, and prepared for sale at Rainbo's. Rainbo's sells both fresh and frozen product from farms and from the wild.

Rainbo's Fish accepts electronic benefits transfer (EBT) cards, which can make it easier for low-income families to purchase his products.

Ron Burdinas, Rainbo's buyer, purchases the amount of fish and seafood he expects the store to sell each day. In theory, this approach limits waste and ensures that the seafood is fresh. Rainbo's products are generally sold within 24 hours from when they are delivered. Since the business has operated since 1972, it has developed its own means of gauging demand among its customers.

According to Stolzenberg, about 90 percent of customers are regulars, and strong relationships are very important to his business. Face-to-face interaction with his customers allows



Stolzenberg to work with his buyer to determine which products are in demand and how much to purchase.

Rainbo's Fish accepts electronic benefits transfer (EBT) cards, which can make it easier for low-income families to purchase his products. The owner says that his prices are approximately one-third of what customers would pay at popular upscale New York City food markets.

Rainbo's does not specialize in local or sustainable seafood, selling salmon from Scotland, grouper from Vietnam, and sea bass from Chile. However, the market also sells Long Island mussels and fish from Massachusetts and Michigan. Signs in the shop clearly indicate the price and country of origin of each product.

Tra La La incorporates the fish and seafood products sold at Rainbo's Fish into its menu, in meals such as Tilapia sandwiches and seafood stew with scallops. And Stolzenberg's personal touch comes for free. One of Stolzenberg's customers describes him as attentive and personable, which helps create a lasting loyalty to Rainbo's Fish and Tra La La.⁴²



Sustainable NYC is a 1,300 square foot storefront across from Tompkins Square Park, built from 300-year-old lumber reclaimed from demolished NYC buildings. As the structure suggests, the store aims to make minimal impact on the earth. Its energy bills support renewable sources, its "neon" sign runs on solar power, and its café, Ciao For Now, serves all vegetarian freshly baked goods and organic Fair Trade coffees.

Both Ciao for Now locations donate leftover food and products to local schools and non-profit organizations.



Ciao For Now also operates a larger store on 12th Street between Avenue A and Avenue B. All of the goods sold at the Ciao For Now café are baked daily and served fresh at both locations. Ciao For Now uses organic food products as often as possible and provides vegan, wheat free, and sugar free items. Ciao For Now also offers a catering menu with organic food options. Both Ciao for Now locations donate leftover food and products to local schools and non-profit organizations. Non-usable food excess is composted.

LISTINGS FOR SPECIALTY FOOD PREPARATION & RETAIL

Russ & Daughters
179 E. Houston St.,
New York, NY 10002

Russ & Daughters is a family owned staple, serving premier smoked fish (known as "appetizing") since 1914. With many of the same selections that once marked special occasions for the Lower East Side's heavily Eastern European population, the shop specializes in bagel spreads, smoked fish, caviar, halvah and dried fruit. Recently, Russ & Daughters joined the Go Green! Cooking-Oil Recycling Program that collects used oil by restaurants and businesses, and converts it into biodiesel fuel.

Ely Live Poultry Market
198 Delancey St
New York, NY 10002
(212) 982-8609

Game birds and venison.

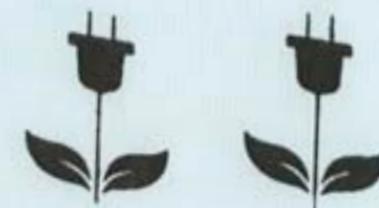
Sustainable NYC // Ciao for Now

139 Avenue A
212.254.5400

Monday – Friday:
8am–11pm

Saturday:
9am–11pm

Sunday:
9am–10pm





RESTAURANTS

*Katie Priebe
Drew Johnson
Lauren Markowitz*

ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE & THROUGHOUT NEW YORK CITY,

restaurants play a critical role in the food system. A restaurant can buy from growers who practice sustainable farming. It can sell healthy, fresh, and affordable food to neighbors who may lack appropriate kitchens or expertise. It can respect the environment by re-using and recycling supplies and using less energy. And it can create jobs and preserve cultural identity for the local community.

As buyers, restaurants may create significant sales for farmers at Greenmarkets or CSAs, as well as for nearby farms and even local community gardens. Steady revenue from restaurants helps keep regional farmers in business (and helps keep their farms agricultural rather than paved).⁴³ At the same time, sourcing locally cuts down on the distance between where food grows and where it's eaten. Fewer "food miles" in each dish can mean fewer greenhouse gas emissions from trucks carrying produce. Fewer food miles also mean shorter journeys from farm to table, which means food arrives fresher and tastes better.

The taste introduces a deeper element of sustainability. When customers eat food that is sourced locally, they tend to enjoy it and come back for more, thereby becoming more closely connected to the food system. In a culture that is increasingly isolated from the sources of the things we consume, this closeness is very valuable. It can lead consumers and restaurateurs to redefine how local economic development works by highlighting the local system's links.⁴⁴

For example, restaurants can market to consumers who want to support responsible growing practices. Some restaurants donate large amounts of uneaten food to programs like City Harvest.⁴⁵ Restaurants can also practice composting or food reuse, which support the community by reducing garbage and ensuring that low-income residents are fed, or in exemplary practices like green cleaning and energy-saving appliances and lighting.⁴⁶

More intangibly, restaurants can demonstrate how to build community. Farmers and chefs can work together to develop cuisines that draw on local agriculture.⁴⁷ Managers can provide space where people from different backgrounds can embrace other cuisines and culture. In a place as culturally diverse as Manhattan's Lower East Side, a diversity of restaurants creates many places for people to sample foods from other cultures. This cultural connection is central to creating common spirit on the Lower East Side, which has traditionally been home to various and discrete immigrant groups, from Italian and Jewish to Puerto Rican immigrants. How an owner chooses to run his or her business can support the community economically. A restaurant that pays fair wages and sources food and employees locally creates local economic development.⁴⁸ It also presents an alternative to environmentally wasteful farming methods that dissociate people from their food and its suppliers.



Back Forty

190 Avenue B
212.388.1990

Dinner :

Monday – Thursday
6pm–11pm

Friday & Saturday
6pm–12am

Sunday
6pm–10pm

Brunch:

Saturday
12pm–3pm

Sunday
11:30am–3:30pm

Back Forty is a casual place just north of Tompkins Square Park. Run on a “local is better” philosophy, Back Forty emphasizes seasonality and freshness. Owners like the ecological benefits of local sourcing, but also believe fresh local food just tastes better. The menu changes weekly (if not more frequently), depending on the produce and meats available at the Greenmarkets. The owners try to buy directly from local farms such as Flying Pig Farm, but will buy from distributors for specialty dishes. Even these distributors, though, buy from a network of local independent farmers.

.....
A separate company collects the used frying oil and redistributes it to be used as fuel for farm vehicles and equipment.

Accordingly, chefs plan the menu around seasonal peaks: for example, cauliflower appears on plates right after the last winter frost when cauliflower tastes its best. (Michael, the manager from Back Forty, explained that after the winter freeze the starches in vegetables like cauliflower turn into sugars.) A popular spring dish is the cauliflower gratin. In summer, the strawberry cocktail (which appeared with rave reviews in The New York Times) draws a following. Back Forty also bottles its own house wine from Long Island and has a variety of local beers on tap.

Back Forty relies on its food quality to draw loyal customers, but it also markets itself as ecologically conscious. It has arranged for the New York City Department of Sanitation to pick up kitchen compost and recycling on a weekly basis. A separate company collects the used frying oil and redistributes it to be used as fuel for farm vehicles and equipment. And it occasionally donates gift cards and meals to local charities and organizations. Most importantly, the restaurant’s devotion to local food and flexible approach to cooking makes waiters feel free to educate customers about what local food means and how great it can taste.

LISTINGS FOR RESTAURANTS

Little Giant
85 Orchard St. (at Broome St.), New York, NY 10002 212-226-5047

Little Giant is an American restaurant serving a weekly menu that emphasizes seasonal fresh market produce. The restaurant supports local small farmers and artisanal producers in and around the city – and its small space, with large windows and plush seating on a quiet corner, creates a sense of fixity on the Lower East Side.

Angelica Kitchen
300 E 12th Street btw 1st Ave & 2nd Ave

This restaurant has been cooking vegetarian meals since the 1970s and now does so with almost entirely fair-trade, organic, seasonal ingredients. The restaurant gets some of its power from renewable energy. Excess food goes to City Harvest, minimizing the amount of waste created.

Stanton Social
99 Stanton St New York, NY 10002
(212) 995-0099

Open Mon 12am–3am, 5pm–2am;
Tue 5pm–2am; Wed–Sat 5pm–3am; Sun 5pm–12am

Stanton Social is a pricey neighborhood restaurant with a global gimmick: its small plates refer to a mash-up of ethnic traditions. Since Stanton Social capitalizes on the Lower East Side’s trendy mystique, it should surprise nobody that its pickles come from the Pickle Guys on Essex.

Brown Café
61 Hester St New York, NY 10002
(212) 477-2427

Tue–Sat, 8am–11pm; Sun–Mon, 8am–6pm
Brown Café’s seasonal menu offers organic, locally grown produce and free range meats. The spot also sells artisanal meats, cheeses, and produce from Spain and Italy and serves as a gathering place for local art dealers who work the nearby galleries. In addition to a café and small grocery, Brown runs a catering business that uses free range, wheat-fed poultry from New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.

Dirt Candy
430 E. 9th St. New York, NY 10009

According to owner Amanda Cohen, Dirt Candy is an alternative name for vegetables. This small vegetarian restaurant claims to focus less on the politics of vegetarianism and more on cooking vegetables in a flavorful way. By using hydroponic produce, which is grown without soil, Cohen keeps her fare low in pesticides: by furnishing with mainly recycled materials, she conducts business in a chic, animal-friendly tone.



SUPERMARKETS

Laura Silverman
Lili Dagan



FARMER'S MARKETS HAVE ALWAYS EXISTED IN CITIES. Supermarkets, though many treat them as fixtures of the food system, have only played an economic role since the early twentieth century.⁴⁹ At their advent, they advertised convenience and consistent standards. By offering many different types of foods in one location, supermarkets provided an alternative to food stalls in open-air markets and to specialty bakeries and butcher shops. In many urban areas today, supermarkets offer nutritious foods at more affordable prices than farmers' markets or with better selection than bodegas. (This is true in suburbs too: over 80 percent of Americans buy their food in chain supermarkets.⁵⁰) Supermarkets can play a large part in sustaining the health of a community by providing access to fresh healthy foods. From upscale Whole Foods to discounters Fine Fare and C-Town, supermarkets furnish this service on the Lower East Side.

It is significant that Whole Foods has little high-end competition in the area. Large supermarkets often resist urban areas because high rent, limited parking and misperceptions about crime or isolation can make cities seem uneconomical.⁵¹ The decisions of several vendors can create "food deserts"—highly populous areas with few or no full-service grocers.

On the Lower East Side, a mix of discount and upscale markets prevent food-desert conditions, but the economics of supermarkets favor middle and upper income residents. Most supermarket chains are large corporations⁵² that vertically integrate purchases of food, distribution and logistics to many sites.⁵³ This scale can make supermarkets in urban locations more responsive: it gives managers the flexibility to introduce new products with less risk to the bottom line than an owner would face in a smaller independent store. This means a grocer like Fine Fare can stock items that appeal to newbie professionals in the neighborhood alongside kosher, Dominican and Chinese specialties that preserve the area's ethnic heritage.

On ecological grounds, supermarkets also give a mixed performance. They generally offer a consistent assortment of fresh products throughout the year. This can mean locally or regionally grown fruits and vegetables in season: some supermarkets highlight products' regional origins are highlighted with signs or labels. However, during the off-season, the product range is maintained by sourcing fresh fruits and vegetables from long distances and different climates.

There's a hidden ecological cost here. Supermarkets often source their produce from large-scale, conventional agricultural outfits that often use pesticides and chemical fertilizers, monoculture farming practices and indiscriminate fossil fuel. As it travels, food gets packaged and repackaged. While many consumers (and thus many supermarkets) willingly pay extra for certified organic food that uses fewer chemicals, not all consumers can afford the premium.

As this discussion suggests, there are a number of variations on the supermarket model in the neighborhood, including specialty gourmet and ethnic markets and one food cooperative. The following entries describe a variety of grocery stores in the Lower East Side.

Whole Foods

95 E. Houston St
212.420.1320

Open Everyday
8am-11pm



Whole Foods opened as a small natural grocery store in Texas in the late 1970's and since then has become a huge national corporate retailer of both conventional and specialty goods.⁵⁴ The Whole Foods in the Lower East Side, at 95 East Houston Street beside the F/V train, is one of the largest Whole Foods in the nation.

On ecological sustainability, this Whole Foods attempts to excel. Much of the food sold in the salad and dinner bar is cooked in store, and some is sourced locally. Some leftovers are either composted or donated to a local soup kitchen. The store has a meat counter that serves exclusively meat with a “vegetarian diet” of grain or grass (this can be misleading, since corn is both a grain and an unnatural diet for cows). The meat counter touts different practices with regard to meat, from “sustainable” to “in-house smoked.”⁵⁵ But finding out what these labels mean can be a project. According to Mark at the meat and poultry counter, all meats are smoked in-house, and employees do some on-site butchering from prime cuts. The smaller-scale butchering done at the Bowery cuts away some energy-intensive extra packaging that would come into play if the store bought pre-butchered cuts.

Whole Foods is not cheap. Chris, a manager at the Bowery Whole Foods, suggests that the store is for everyone—but most of the clientele is upscale and many of Chris' customers visit from Brooklyn or during tourist stays. Chris suggests that those on a budget should shop for generic brands and seek out special deals.



But Whole Foods' price premium reverses supermarkets' usual scale-related discounts. While you can get conventional tuna for 79 cents at the bodega next door, Whole Foods has a specialty organic brand, 365 Organic, that lists tuna for \$1.49. These price differences factor in the added costs of organic production, recycled packaging, fair trade labor, and so on.

The company has recently made an effort to source produce and specialty foods more locally. They carry a small selection of local foods, including mixed greens from Satur Farms in Long Island and hydroponically grown lettuce from Rhode Island. But this is inconsistent. While the interior features hanging signs that display brief descriptions of concepts like “recycling” and “reducing,” the company's definition of “local” is not obvious. Washington apples and tomatoes from Mexico can also be found in the produce section.

Comprehensive signage at the market is helpful in giving consumers access to information about their food and an ethical, environmental slant is central in labeling and advertising at Whole Foods. Almost all produce at the store is labeled with its country or state of origin and whether it is organic, making it easier for people to understand what they may be consuming. Items are labeled if they meet standards like “free-range”, “grass-fed”, “shade-grown.” The store is painted in earth tones, and many decorative signs and stickers are embellished with pictures of leaves. The store's set-up, however is a large-scale retailing model that relies heavily on “industrial organic” and on far-flung shipping, processing and packaging.



Key Food is a chain supermarket owned and operated in New York State since 1937. The Lower East Side Key Food branch features an extensive flower section along with a deli, meat counter, packaged and unbagged produce, and canned and packaged goods. According to the store manager, Edwin Rodriguez, the majority of the clientele live in the neighborhood.

The Key Food in the Lower East Side, like most Key Food stores, accepts Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards. The site, on Avenue A and 4th Street, sits near several rent-controlled and public-housing towers. According to the board of the store's community district, the neighborhood has over 164,000 people, of which 43,000, or 26%, need assistance.⁵⁶

Several processes, like processing and recycling, take place on-site. But according to Rodriguez, only salads are made on site. Most foods come from a central Key Food warehouse in Hatfield, Massachusetts, or from other large food distribution companies. This includes deli items such as chopped liver and sauerkraut, which workers repackage at the store.⁵⁷ The leftovers from the store, including the deli, are thrown out every night. Recycling on-site is limited to cardboard boxes that goods are shipped in, and a bottle return in the front of the store.⁵⁸ The produce section takes up about half an aisle, or 20 percent of the store's footprint. Many of the fruits and vegetables sold are packaged in Styrofoam and cellophane. Some are pre-cut. There is a small organic section, clearly labeled, that contains packaged produce including Earthbound lettuce, Driscoll's strawberries, and Earthbound baby carrots. These organic products are farmed at

a large scale, which keeps them more affordable than farmstand items.

One advantage to large-scale industrial organic farming is the removal of pesticide and petrochemicals from the agricultural process—on Earthbound farms, taking the land out of conventional farming reduced the use of pesticides by about 270,000 pounds and reduced the use of petrochemical fertilizer by 8 million pounds.⁵⁹ However, large-scale organic farming techniques remain energy intensive. Growing, refrigerating, transporting, washing, and packaging an organic boxed salad requires 57 calories of fossil fuel for every calorie of food.⁶⁰

Signs in the meat section state that all meats are USDA choice. The meat section has commercial deli meats, as well as a large section of butchered meats. Like most of the pre-packaged food in the store, these meats come parceled in Styrofoam and wrapped in plastic and labeled from Mendell Food in Bellrose, the local distribution center about twenty miles outside the city. The meat is not labeled otherwise with its diet or origin. Some of the meats are very inexpensive. Pork shoulders run as cheap as 79 cents per pound.

While the low price of meats gives low-income people in the neighborhood access to an affordable and popular protein, it does not reflect the external costs of soil erosion, chemical runoff from farms, and increasing human consumption of antibiotics in livestock.⁶¹ A supermarket like Key Food, while familiar and valuable to neighbors, is also part of a food system that fails to account for the costs we collectively pay for mass-produced food.⁶²

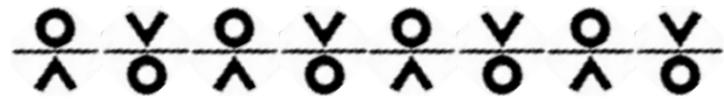


Key Foods

52 Avenue A
212.477.9063

Open Everyday
24 hours





Organic Avenue

101 Stanton St.
212. 334-4593

Monday – Friday
6am–8pm

Saturday & Sunday
10am–8pm



The New York Times has described Organic Avenue as a “vegan general store”.⁷⁵ Oh, no: Organic Avenue is a raw foodist’s general store. Raw foodists believe that heating food destroys naturally occurring enzymes that are essential to health. Technically, raw food is not heated above 160 degrees Fahrenheit in order to keep these enzymes intact. At Organic Avenue one can find fresh organic produce, freshly made juices, smoothies, nuts, seeds, vitamins, minerals, and raw snacks.

Organic Avenue processes and prepares much of the food that they sell on premises including raw food lunches, dinners, snacks, smoothies and juices. When raw, food must also be organic and 100% vegan, meaning no animal products including animal flesh, egg products, dairy products, and any other animal by-products are used. The store also carries specialty items such as oils, supplements, dried fruits, raw truffles, raw chocolate, and dried mushrooms. There is also a small selection of clothing and household products made from organic or eco-friendly materials such as hemp, and unbleached, organic cotton.

The primary customers of Organic Avenue’s products and services are people who are interested in an organic, vegan, or raw food diet and the health benefits attached to this lifestyle or its environmental impact. Activities Organic Avenue offers include raw food classes, gourmet raw dinners, healing retreats, and LOVE fast cleanses. Dur-

ing a LOVE fast, Organic Avenue prepares and delivers seven days’ worth of fresh juices to a customer along with instructions.⁷⁶

The store is geographically accessible to all parts of of the Lower East Side, but as the average cost of products and services in the store is quite high it is not economically accessible to the whole neighborhood. Upon asking whom the primary customers of the store are, Doug Evans, manager, replied, “I would describe most of the customers as affluent and aware. The store is pretty popular with athletes and models, people who make their health a high priority.”

.....
One can find fresh organic produce, freshly made juices, smoothies, nuts, seeds, vitamins, minerals, and raw snacks.

But these customers’ budgets are unusual. The raw chocolate bar sold at Organic Avenue touts many health benefits, but also costs eight dollars. A large agave-sweetened lemonade is six dollars, though the glass container it is sold in can be recycled in return for a 2 dollar deposit. Customers travel from all five boroughs to shop at Organic Avenue.⁷⁷ The store also has a large on-line presence, which serves a broader customer base. The store encourages customers to become members for a monthly fee of \$100. Members can get discounts on almost all items.

As this suggests, the store caters to a

lifestyle community more energetically than it serves a geographic one. Denise Mari, who opened the store in 2006, had the mission to create more fashionable options for those who choose the vegan lifestyle.⁷⁸ This fact essentially sums up the reaches of Organic Avenue’s sustainability. The food is nutrient rich, environmentally friendly, and supportive of the mind and the body...but it comes at an inaccessible price for many people in the neighborhood.

As this suggests, the store caters to a lifestyle community more energetically than it serves a geographic one. Denise Mari, who opened the store in 2006, had the mission to create more fashionable options for those who choose the vegan lifestyle . This fact essentially sums up the reaches of Organic Avenue’s sustainability. The food is nutrient rich, environmentally friendly, and supportive of the mind and the body...but it comes at an inaccessible price for many people in the neighborhood.

LISTINGS FOR SUPERMARKETS

Associated Supermarket

409 East 14th St at 1st Ave, 123 Ave C at 8th St
Associated Supermarket is a chain supermarket with locations in New York and New Jersey. Associated Supermarket prides itself on being a low-cost, one-stop shop. Some stores have organic meat and/or produce. The chain accepts WIC and EBT.

C-Town

188 Avenue C between 11th & 12th Sts.
Individually owned and operated , C-Town stores tailor low-priced foods to the needs of the community. Although the produce section is smaller than the one at Associated Supermarkets, the prices are a bit lower and the quality a bit nicer. The LES C-town accepts WIC and EBT and offers 5% off for seniors Tuesday and Thursday.

Commodities Natural Market

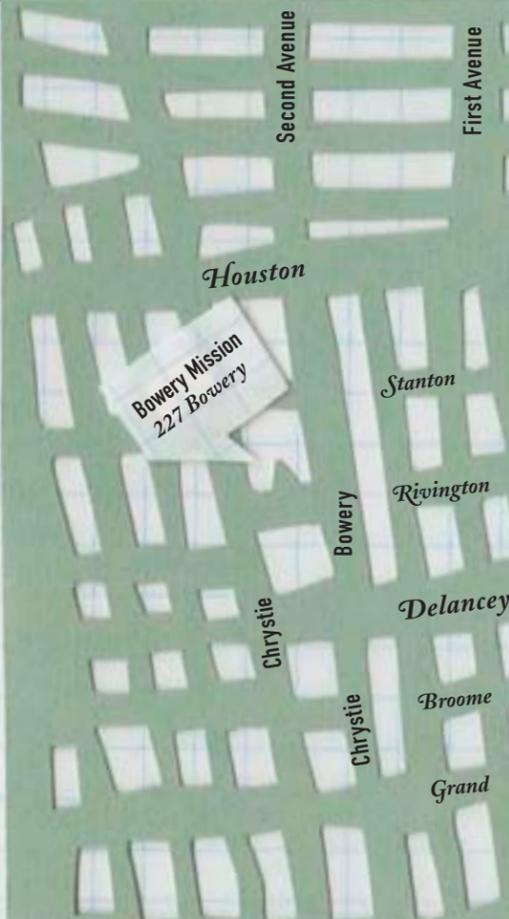
165 1st Ave Between 10th and 11th Sts
This organic market features produce (sometimes local), bulk dry goods, free-range meat and eggs, vegan goods and organic coffee and juice. Some pre-made convenience foods are available. Delivery drivers use alternative fuel delivery vehicles. The store participates in composting and biodiesel recycling programs.

Earthmatters Organic Market

177 Ludlow St Between Stanton and E Houston
A self-styled “spiritual” grocery store featuring fresh organic produce, organic groceries, vitamins and herbal supplements, environmentally-friendly household supplies, toiletries and cosmetics, and more. In addition, the store’s “juice bar” sells hot food, cold salads, sandwiches, smoothies and juices. A café offers free wireless Internet access.

Food Pantries

*Emilie Branch
Caleb Ferguson
Molly Osberg*



Soup kitchens and food pantries, while often absent from discussions of a sustainable city, play a vital part in an urban community's food system. The New York City Coalition Against Hunger estimates that 1.3 million New Yorkers- one in six- live in households without enough to eat. Soup kitchens serve warm, nutritious meals to the public for free anywhere from once a week to multiple times a day.

Most emergency food programs in New York, such as the Bowery Mission and Trinity's Services, are faith-based or religiously affiliated programs.⁷⁹ Often Soup Kitchen programs, like Graffiti Community Ministries on E. 7th St., offer additional services such as donated clothing.

Hunger can be chronic as well as acute, and often lack of food can keep even working families from achieving stability. Food pantries provide these families directly with groceries to provide balanced meals for two or three days. Both food pantries and soup kitchens receive food from public and charitable sources. Government programs such as the Emergency Food Assistance Program and the Food Bank of New York city offer discounted or free groceries to qualifying non-profits, and some organizations hold food drives or receive private donations. Sometimes food pantries supply to local soup kitchens, and occasionally the two use space in the same building, as at the Father's Heart Ministries on the Lower East Side.

Food pantries and soup kitchens also create a use for high quality food that would otherwise be discarded. City Harvest, a New York City non-profit, makes use of food that may otherwise go to waste by engaging in "gleaning," the practice of drawing food sources from locations with an unused abundance. City Harvest distributes these leftover and unused food items to kitchens and pantries all over New York City for free.

Soup kitchens such as Food Not Bombs also practice gleaning by approaching local businesses and gathering their expired or surplus foods. These practices help to balance the inequalities of food overproduction .

Socially, the most ambitious soup kitchens and food pantries refocus attention on society's failure to provide decent nutrition at affordable prices to people of limited means. While people often assume soup kitchens and food pantries serve the homeless, the New York City Coalition Against Hunger says that about 26 percent of the people served in pantries and kitchens are working adults. Many recipients of emergency food resources have homes, but lack food to cook in them.

The Lower East Side contains a number of soup kitchens and food pantries. Because of their small scale, these programs are community-oriented and often found in churches as part of larger support networks. By working with volunteers, activists, and businesses they bring together a diverse group of local residents to provide these resources.



The Bowery Mission provides services and care to homeless people, including overnight shelter, shower facilities and emergency food. Most of its clients are single men or women, but children also use its kitchen and other services. The Mission promotes a Recovery Plan, which seeks to transform lives through compassionate outreach to people who use its services.

Part of this promotion involves on-street assistance. An Outreach van travels to parks and streets to provide food to those who must choose between food and rent and to pick up people who are sleeping outside. On the Lower East Side, the van goes to Tompkins Square Park on Monday mornings, Tuesday afternoons and Saturday mornings. The Mission's main site on Bowery also distributes free groceries and serves breakfast, lunch and dinner six days a week (with no breakfast on Saturday). Staff allocates beds through lotteries for four-night stays on Mondays and for three-night-stays on Fridays.



An Outreach van travels to parks and streets to provide food to those who must choose between food and rent and to pick up people who are sleeping outside.

The Bowery Mission offers adults a transition program that combines shelter with career education. For children, its "Kids With A Promise" program in-

cludes afterschool counseling and activities and a summer camp called "Mount Lawn" in the Pocono region.

As this suite of life assistance suggests, the Bowery Mission measures success through its ability to sustain help to people trying to move from crisis to stability. The Mission receives about \$2.3 million in "in-house gifts" and government grants.

Bowery Mission

227 Bowery
212.674.3467

Meals Served:

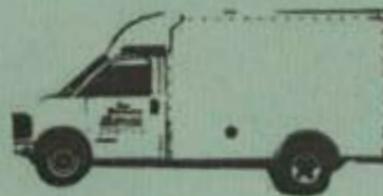
*Monday – Friday
6:30 am 12pm & 6pm*

Saturday

2:30 pm & 6:30 pm

Sunday

*8:30am, 2:30pm,
& 6:30pm*



LISTINGS FOR FOOD PANTRIES

Apple's Core Coffee House: Abounding Grace Ministries

9 East 7th Street
New York, NY, 10003

212.614.0370

Saturday Night: 7-10 pm.

Apple's Core Coffee House provides care services to the public, serving hot meals as well as clothing and showering facilities free of charge on Saturday nights all year. Apple Core provides necessary amenities and nutritious sustenance to members of the larger community through their services. http://www.agmin.org/ministries_acch.htm

Graffiti Community Ministries:

East 7th Baptist Church

205 East 7th Street

New York, NY 10009

www.graffitichurch.org

212.473.0044

Clothing: Thursday 10am-12pm

ESL Classes: Tuesday & Thursday 12pm-2pm

Meals: Wednesday 6pm- 7pm

Free Lunch in the Park: Saturday 1pm at 7th Street and Avenue B

Self-identifying as "a church that serves," the Graffiti Community Ministries was founded in the early 1970s to assist children in living healthier lives. It now runs a full list of programs including sandwich distribution in the park, GED courses, high school outings, and child-care. By providing both hot meals on Wednesdays and sandwiches on Saturdays, the church nourishes disadvantaged residents and creates community through anti-hunger awareness.

Cabrini Immigrant Services

139 Henry Street

New York, NY, 10002

212.791.4590

Cabrini Immigrant Services provides free immigration and citizenship services for families in the Lower East Side, funded mainly through grants. The agency works with local organizations and community members to advocate immigrant access to higher education and health care. It also assists immigrants in procuring such benefits as food stamps. http://www.mothercabrini.org/ministries/cab_imm_henry.asp

Complete Listing of Soup Kitchens and Food Pantries in the Lower East Side, from A Guide to Free Food Assistance, produced by the The New York City Coalition Against Hunger

SOUP KITCHENS

Free prepared meals in the Lower East Side, available on the times and days listed below.

The New York City Coalition Against Hunger recommends calling first to confirm schedule. Additionally, Some agencies may require a referral; call HRA Hunger Hotline at 866.888.8777 to learn more or visit one of the agencies below at the specific days and times.

Apple Core Coffee House (Abounding Grace)

9 East 7th St.

212.614.0370

Sat: 7 PM-9 PM

Bowery Mission

227 Bowery

212.674.3457

Breakfast: Mon-Fri: 7 AM, Sat 8 AM Sun: 10 AM

Lunch: Mon-Fri: 12 Noon, Sat & Sun: 2 PM

dinner Mon-Fri 6:15 PM

Dinner: Sat & Sun: 6 PM

Campo Misionero Sarepta

250 E. 3rd St.

212.473.8381

Mon-Fri: 9 AM-2 PM

The Father's Heart Ministries

545 E. 11th St.

212.375.1765

Sat: 10 AM-11 AM except 1st Saturday of each month

Food Stamps pre-screening available

Graffiti Community Ministries

205 E. 7th St

212.473.0044

Wed: 6 PM-7PM

Sat: 1 PM at Tompkins Square Park at the Corner of 7th &

Ave B-No Lunches 1st Sat of the month

Clothing Distribution: Thurs: 10 AM-12 PM starting May

15th. ESL classes: Tues & Thurs: 12 PM-1PM

Computer technology: Tues & Thurs: 10 AM-12 PM

Mary House

55 E. 3rd St.

212.777.9617

Tues-Fri: 12 PM-2 PM (Women Only)

St. Joseph House

36 E. 1st St.

212.254.1640

Tues-Fri: 10 AM-11:30 AM

St. George's Soup Kitchen

209 E. 16th St.

212.614.0842

Thurs: 12 PM- 1 PM

Trinity's Services and Food For the Homeless

602 E. 9 St

212.228.5254

Mon-Fri: 11 AM

Village Temple Soup Kitchen

33 E. 12th St.

212.674.2340

Sat: 1 PM

FOOD PANTRIES

Free groceries in the Lower East Side.

Cabrini Immigrant Services

139 Henry St.

212.791.4590

Tues & Thurs: 9:30 AM-12:30 PM

Calvary Food Pantry

277 Park Ave. South (between 21st and 22nd Sts.)

646.478.7506

Wed: 2:30 PM-3:30PM

Church of the Nativity

44 2nd Ave.

212.674.8590

2nd Tues of each month: 10 AM-11 AM

Dewitt Reformed Church

280 Rivington St.

212.674.3341

Mon and Thurs: 10 AM-1 PM

The Father's Heart Ministries

545 E. 11th St.

212.375.1765

Sat: 10 AM-11 AM, except 1st Saturday of each month

Food Stamps pre-screening available

Foundation House South

175 E. Houston St.

212.475.1200

Mon-Thurs: 10 AM-2 PM

Referral needed

Middle Collegiate Church

50 E. 7th St.

212.477.0666

Wed: 8 AM-9:30 AM

Our Lady of Sorrows

213 Stanton St.

212.673.0900

Mon, Wed, Fri: 2 PM-4 PM

Primitive Christian Church

209 E. Broadway

212.673.7868

Last Thurs of each month: 1:30 PM-3:30 PM

St. Mary's Church

28 Attorney St.

212.674.3266

Mon, Wed, Fri: 10 AM-1 PM

Referral needed

Trinity's Services and

Food for the Homeless

602 E. 9 St.

212.228.5254

Tue-Fri: 12:30 PM-1:30 PM

ID req for all family members





Residuals

*Caroline Wilson
Melissa Harrison
Peter Baumann*

As we saw in considering soup kitchens, a lot of food can go to waste in a complex place like the Lower East Side. Organizations in the neighborhood and around the city try to limit waste via donations, redistribution, and composting.

The scope of food waste is vast. Every day, the New York City Department of Sanitation collects 11,000 tons of garbage, with 26 percent of the total including organic materials such as yard, food, and wood waste.⁸⁰ With the increase of packaged goods and also the waste of unharvested crops, the quantity of waste is staggering.⁸¹ Re-imagining ways of converting residuals can divert some edible food from the waste stream and toward hungry people or turn what would otherwise be waste into ecologically productive uses.

City Harvest probably achieves the widest scale in this effort. It accepts edible donations from individuals, restaurants, and farmers markets and then reallocates the food to various community food programs throughout New York. In a similar spirit but with less organized methods, many people take up the taboo hobby of dumpster diving. Also called urban foraging, dumpster diving in New York City is a movement of people living off or simply using goods taken out of dumpsters and trash bins.⁸² City Harvest works on contract: dumpster-divers can sometimes approach grocers or restaurateurs to ask for leftovers, or can make literal jumps in Dumpsters. Some may claim these jumps are expressions of outrage over limited government attention to urban hunger.

For excess food not suitable for reuse, a host of local organizations teach or practice composting, the recycling of discarded organic matter into nourishing soil. The Lower East Side Ecology Center, one such group, collects food waste at the Union Square Greenmarket and composts it in a garden on East 7th Street. The compost it produces is easy to use in local parks, and by teaching composting to local residents, the organization has kept many pounds of food out of trashbins.



Since 1990, the Lower East Side Ecology Center has collected food waste at the Union Square Greenmarket and the Lower East Side Ecology Garden on East Seventh Street, though mounting use in 2009 led the Center to stop accepting scraps at the garden. The center's staff and volunteers collect fruits and vegetable peelings and pits, non-greasy food scraps and leftovers, rice, pasta, bread, cereal, coffee grounds with filters, tea bags, hair and nail clippings (animals or humans), and egg and nut shells. Cut or dried flowers, houseplants, and potting soil can be collected if kept separately. They reject meat, chicken, fish, greasy food scraps, fat, oil, dairy items, dog or cat feces, kitty litter, coal, charcoal, coconuts, and diseased or infested houseplants and soil. They do not work with businesses or restaurants because the Center says it cannot work at that scale, and because some private waste carting companies have set up composting pickup at a discounted rate. Once the Center collects food waste, it composts it at East River Park. The composting process requires both nitrogen, found in the food scraps, and carbon, provided by added carbon-rich sawdust donated from local. The program collects about 60 tons per year and composts about 15 tons every six months. During the warmer seasons, this finished material is bagged and sold by the pound as potting soil at the Union Square Greenmarket, or

at the Bowery or Union Square Whole Foods. All profits are used to aid in funding the composting project.

*.....
The composting process requires both nitrogen, found in the food scraps, and carbon, provided by added carbon-rich sawdust donated from local.*

Besides composting local food waste, the Lower East Side Ecology Center, in association with the New York City Compost Project, works in the Lower East Side to teach people how to compost at home. These free seminars, as well as discounted soil, raise local awareness and make it easier for families to start composting. Free information hotlines are available for those who need aid from experts and can be reached either through email at info@lesecolgycenter.org or on The Rot Line, whose number is 212.477.3155.



LES Ecology Center

*East 7th St
btw B & C*

212.477.4022

*Community Compost
Collection:*

*Monday, Wednesday,
Friday, & Saturday
(Union Square
Greenmarket)*

*Check the Garden
for other dropoff times*



LISTINGS



LIZ CHRISTY COMMUNITY GARDEN

*East Houston Street
btw Second Avenue and Bowery*

Open: Saturday 12pm-4pm (All Year),
Sunday 12pm-4pm (May – September),
Tuesday 6pm-dusk (May – September)
Sunday Noon-4 PM (May-Sept)

EL SOL BRILLANTE

*12th street between
Avenue A and Avenue B*

Open: Anytime the gate is unlocked
and a member is in the garden

TOMPKINS SQUARE GREENMARKET ENTRY

Southwest Corner of Tompkins Square Park
Open: Sunday 10-5 (Year Round)

PORTO RICO IMPORTING COMPANY

*Essex Street Market
120 Essex Street
212.677.1210*

Open: Monday – Friday 8am-7pm,
Saturday 9am-7pm

KOSSAR'S BIALYS

*367 Grand Street
1.877.4.BIALYS*

Open: Sunday – Thursday 6am-8pm,
Friday 6am - 2pm

RICK'S PICKS

*195 Chrystie Street
212.358.0428*

SAXELBY CHEESEMONGERS

*Essex Street Market
120 Essex Street
212.228.8204*

Open: Monday – Saturday: 9am-7pm

JEFFREY'S MEATS

*Essex Street Market
120 Essex Street
212.475.6521*

Open: Monday – Saturday 8am-6pm

LA TIENDITA

*Essex Street Market
120 Essex Street
212.982.1633*

Open: Tuesday – Saturday: 10am-6pm

RAINBO'S FISH MARKET

*Essex Street Market
120 Essex Street
212.982.8585*

Open: Monday – Saturday 8am-6pm

SUSTAINABLE NYC & CIAO FOR NOW

*139 Avenue A
212.254.5400*

Open: Monday – Friday 8am-11pm,
Saturday 9am-11pm, Sunday 9am-10pm

BACK 40

*190 Avenue B
212.388.1990*

Dinner: Monday – Thursday 6pm-11pm, Friday & Saturday
6pm-12am, Sunday 6pm-10pm
Brunch: Saturday 12pm-3pm, Sunday 11:30am- 3:30pm

ANGELICA KITCHEN

*300 East 12th Street
212.228.2909*

Open: Everyday 11:30am-10:30pm

DIRT CANDY

*430 East 9th Street
212.228.7732*

Open: Tuesday – Saturday 5:30pm-11pm

WHOLE FOODS

*95 East Houston Street
212.420.1320*

Open: Everyday 8am-11pm

KEY FOOD

*52 Avenue A
212.477.9063*

Open: Everyday 24 hours

4TH STREET FOOD CO-OP

*58 East 4th Street
212-674-3623*

Open: Everyday 11am-9pm

FINE FARE SUPERMARKET

*42 Avenue C
212.614.8401*

Open: Monday-Saturday 7 am -10 pm;
Sunday 7 am-8 pm

ORGANIC AVENUE

*101 Stanton Street
212.334.4593*

Open: Monday – Friday 6am-8pm,
Saturday & Sunday 10am-8pm

BOWERY MISSION

*227 Bowery
212.674.3467*

Meals Served: Monday – Friday 6:30 am 12pm, and 6pm,
Saturday 2:30 pm and 6:30 pm, Sunday 8:30am, 2:30pm,
and 6:30pm

GRAFFITI COMMUNITY MINISTRIES

*205 East 7th Street
212.073.0044*

Meals Served: Wednesday 6pm-7pm,
Saturday 1pm (at 7th Street and Avenue B)

LOWER EAST SIDE ECOLOGY CENTER

*Community Garden: East 7th Street
between Avenue B and Avenue C
212.477.4022*

Community Compost Collection: Monday, Wednesday,
Friday, & Saturday (Union Square Greenmarket, Check
the Garden for other dropoff times.

Sustainability Glossary



ANTIBIOTICS

Antibiotics are routinely mixed into livestock feed to prevent sickness. Administering antibiotics preventatively, before animals have an illness or infection, is called non-therapeutic or sub-therapeutic antibiotic use. The term “raised without sub-therapeutic antibiotics” describes practices in which only animals that have illness or infection are treated with antibiotics. Claims regarding antibiotics are not certified by any government agency or other organization.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Community organizing is the process by which people come together into organizations to jointly act in the interest of their communities or neighborhoods.

CONVENTIONAL AGRICULTURE

Conventional agriculture describes agricultural production that does not utilize organic practices, or other practices intended to reduce environmental impacts.

FAIR TRADE

Products that are labeled Fair Trade Certified must be certified by a third party; TransFair USA is the only certifier in the U.S. Fair trade practices are intended to support fair prices, equitable partnerships between producers and buyers, direct trade relationships, community development, and environmentally sustainable agricultural practice.

FOOD BANK

Food banks generally receive bulk donations of non-perishable items such as dried and canned foods. They store these donations in warehouses until they are distributed to emergency food service agencies soup kitchens, food pantries, day care and senior citizen centers, homeless shelters and other organizations.

FOOD MILES

Food miles refer to the total distance that food travels from where it is grown to the consumer’s plate. Food miles relate to carbon dioxide emissions released during transportation, but do not measure the carbon emission, or other environmental impacts, of food production and processing.

FOOD RESCUE

Food rescue refers to collecting excess food, which is usually prepared or perishable, from places such as restaurants, grocers, manufacturers, wholesalers, and farmers’ markets and making it available to emergency food service agencies like soup kitchens, food pantries, day care and senior citizen centers, homeless shelters and other organizations that use the donated food immediately.

FOOD SECURITY

The USDA defines food security as “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life” and measures food security with its annual Current Population Survey (CPS). Defini-

tions of community food security generally include uninterrupted physical and economic access to food that is safe, healthy, and produced in a way that is environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.

GRASS FED

Grass fed is a description, rather than a third party certification. It suggests that an animal was raised grazing on grasses rather than fed grains.

HORMONES

Synthetic hormones like Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH) and Recombinant Bovine Somatotropin (rBST) are used to increase milk production in dairy cows

LOCAL

Local food is produced and/or processed as close as possible to where it is consumed. There is not a certified or agreed upon distance that constitutes local. Some define local as within a set number of miles. All of the foods sold at New York City Greenmarkets are grown or prepared within 200 miles of New York City. Some prioritize regional production, for example by buying food that is grown or prepared within the Northeast regional of the U.S. Buying locally or regionally grown foods gives consumers access to fresh, flavorful foods and supports the area’s agricultural economy.

ORGANIC

National organic standards require that all foods that are labeled organic must be grown and/or processed by organic growers and handlers that

are certified by a USDA accredited agency. Organic foods are grown or raised without the use of most synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, antibiotics, synthetic hormones, genetically modified seeds, sewage sludge, or irradiation.

SEASONAL

Seasonal refers to the period when food is harvested in a particular region. This is the window of time when the food is freshest, ripest, and most abundant. Seasonal menu planning is an approach to creating recipes and menus that align with a geographic area’s harvest calendar,

TRACEABILITY

Traceability means that a food item in a grocery store, farm market, restaurant, etc. can be tracked back through the supply chain to identify the distributor, wholesaler, and/or farmer. Food traceability allows consumers to “know where their food comes from” and helps to identify the source of the problem when food safety is compromised.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability refers to meeting current needs using materials and methods that do not compromise the ability to meet future needs. Sustainability is often divided into three major dimensions: environmental soundness, economic viability, and social equity.

SOCIAL BUSINESS VENTURE

A social business aims to be financially self-sufficient, or profitable, in its pursuit of a social, ethical or environmental goal.

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