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Green dining in the Emerald City

ACRL's 14th National Conference, March 12–15, 2009

When attendees of the ACRL 14th National Conference arrive in Seattle, March 12–15, 2009, there's no telling what sort of weather will greet them. Serene and calm with spectacular views of the evergreen trees surrounding the "Emerald City," gray days full of mist, a dusting of snow, or gusty spring showers? It's hard to say. Average March temperatures in Seattle vary from 53 to 39 degrees Fahrenheit. Seattle's early spring days, however, are rarely average—they can be anywhere from wintry to summery.

Seattle weather come March may be a mystery, but the fresh foods of the season are easy to predict. Spring will be just around the corner, and, in the Pacific Northwest, that means a variety of delicious ingredients from the nearby farms, forests, and waters. In local restaurants and markets, the featured seasonal foods will include leeks, pasture-raised lamb, Pacific halibut, rhubarb, fiddlehead ferns, morel mushrooms, and other locally grown and harvested items. Indeed, the Northwest's "enticing indigenous ingredients" help define the region's cuisine, according to Braiden Rex-Johnson, author of *Pacific Northwest Wining and Dining*.¹ But Pacific Northwest cuisine is not so local that it ignores the global. As Rex-Johnson describes it, Northwest cuisine "begins with the freshest local ingredients foraged or grown in season. These are prepared using traditional cooking techniques, many attributed to Native Americans—smoking, grilling, broiling, and steaming. A mixture

of European cuisines (Scandinavian, Mediterranean), often spiced with Pacific Rim flare (Chinese, Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese, Mexican), gives Northwest cuisine its enticing top notes."²

This article provides a few suggestions for sampling Pacific Northwest cuisine, especially locally sourced ingredients, while attending the conference in Seattle. Inspired by the new ACRL Green Committee (see the "Six Steps" sidebar), we believe that eating local, seasonal food is a delicious way to reduce one's carbon footprint³ while sampling the flavor of the Emerald City. For more choices of places to dine, visit the ARCL wiki,⁴ which lists many food and drink options regardless of the ingredients' provenance.



Near the convention center

Seattle's neighborhood farmers' markets (www.seattlefarmersmarkets.org) are the best places to sample local food, such as heirloom apples and homemade scones. Pike Place Market (85 Pike St., www.pikeplacemarket.org) is the closest market to the convention center—just a short walk or bus ride away. Seattle's 100-year-old farmers' market offers visitors the chance to browse colorful pro-

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duce from nearby farms, fresh seafood, locally made jam and cheese, and many other tasty treats from the Puget Sound area. The farmers' market bounty also appears in several restaurants near the market. The Pike Brewing Company (1415 First Ave., pikebrewing.com) features a pub menu with local produce, fish, meats, and handcrafted beer. One of Seattle's



most famous chefs, Tom Douglas, showcases the region's seafood at Etta's (2020 Western Ave., tomdouglas.com/ettas). Chez Shea (top floor, Corner Market building, 94 Pike St., chezshea.com) offers a French approach to market-fresh ingredients, and Steelhead Diner (95 Pine St.,

steelheaddiner.com) serves diner-inspired Pacific Northwest haute cuisine.

Many other downtown restaurants offer local, seasonal food. Just steps from the convention center is Organic To Go (601 Union St., Suite 224A, organictogo.com, open Monday-Friday, 6:30 a.m.-4 p.m.), which has an entirely organic and partially local menu. Brasa (2107 3rd Ave.,

brasa.com) serves up a Mediterranean take on Northwest ingredients. In the Elliott Bay Bookstore, Elliott Bay Cafe (101 South Main St., elliottbaybook.com/about/cafe), features a local-focus menu recently revised by Tamarra Murphy, the chef at Brasa. Union Square

Six steps to greening your ACRL 14th National Conference experience

The Green Conference Planning Committee for the ACRL National Conference has been working hard to build environmentally sustainable practices into this year's conference in Seattle. Here are six ways to make this your greenest ACRL ever.

1. Take the pledge. Earlier this year the Green Committee surveyed ACRL members to find out what mattered most in greening our conference. We used the results to draft the Green Pledge.

The pledge asks all conference participants to make sustainability a priority throughout the conference. Participants who take the pledge agree to learn, inform, think, and act sustainably in the months leading up to and during the conference.

Some suggested pledge activities are walking or using public transportation, accessing handouts through ACRL's virtual conference space, recycling paper handouts (or not using them in the first place), consulting the ACRL interactive conference map for local and green restaurants

and businesses, and using the conference program to learn which vendors provide sustainable services and practices. You can review the Green Pledge at tinyurl.com/greenpledge.

The committee urges everyone to accept the Green Pledge when registering for the conference. Your participation in the Green Pledge effort will be reflected by a green leaf on your registration badge.

2. Get green giveaways. All conference participants will receive green giveaways this year: a bag made of 51 percent recycled fabric and matching badge holder, and a corn plastic, BPA-free mug.

You can make your giveaways even greener by recycling your badge holder before you leave the convention center—look for the drop box in the registration area.

You'll also have the opportunity to enter a drawing to win one free registration for the 2011 ACRL conference in Philadelphia. If you miss us there, you can enter the drawing at the Green Speaker program, as well.

Grill (621 Union St., unionsquaregrill.com) and the restaurant at the Seattle Art Museum, TASTE (1300 1st Ave., tastesam.com), both rely heavily on Puget Sound-area ingredients for their “New American” meals. Farestart (700 Virginia St., farestart.com, open Monday-Friday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and Thursdays 6-8 p.m.), a nonprofit that provides culinary training for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, puts local, seasonal food on the lunch table during the work week, and brings in premier local chefs for often sold out “Guest Chef Nights” on Thursday evenings.

Pacific Northwest cuisine elsewhere in Seattle

Those willing to venture beyond the urban core will find many options for sampling Pacific Northwest cuisine in Seattle’s neighborhoods. Seattle’s public transportation system is not as robust as it will be soon, with a light rail system scheduled to debut sometime in 2009, but most of these restaurants

are a bus or taxi ride from downtown. Cabs can be hailed from most downtown hotels or requested by calling the local cab service (206-622-6500). Bus trips can be planned using Metro’s online Trip Planner (tripplanner.metrokc.gov) and by using other online tools (transit.google.com, busmonster.com, mybus.org, or onebusaway.org).

Popular neighborhood restaurants that seek out the bounty of nearby farms and artisans include Pair (5501 30th Ave. NE, pairseattle.com), Lark (926 12th Ave, lark-seattle.com), Stumbling Goat Bistro (6722 Greenwood Ave. N, stumblinggoatbistro.com), and Volunteer Park Café (1501 17th Ave. E, alwaysfreshgoodness.com). “Sicilian soul food” made with local ingredients is the specialty at La Medusa (4857 Rainier Ave. S, lamedusarestaurant.com) in the Columbia City neighborhood. Succulent steak frites and other European dishes can be found at Fremont’s 35th Street Bistro (709 N. 35th St., 35bistro.com). Also in Fremont is Tilt (1411

3. Hear a great green speaker. The committee is delighted to present a featured Green Speaker. Robin Chase is cofounder and former CEO of Zipcar, the largest car-sharing company in the world. She is currently CEO of GoLoco, an innovative online ridesharing community. Chase has revolutionized the way people travel by combining transportation with social networking. Attend Chase’s session from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. Sunday, March 15.

4. Learn how to green your own conference. For those interested in learning more about what it takes to green a conference, the Green Committee will offer a panel session from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 14. We’ll talk about drafting the green survey and the corresponding pledge, strategies for greening a convention center, how to investigate green hotel practices, lessons learned along the way, and more.

5. Visit the Green Committee. Don’t forget to look for the Green Committee’s table in the convention center’s registration area.

We’ll answer your questions about “behind-the-scenes” greening efforts (recycled pipe and drape, anyone?) and help you enter to win some great prizes. We’ll also have a recycling station for your paper handouts. If you haven’t already done so, you can take the Green Pledge there, and we’ll give you a sticker for your badge.

6. Help spread the green. Because this will be ACRL’s first green conference, there’s a lot of excitement about coming together to lessen our environmental impact in Seattle. There are already plans underway to carry this initiative forward into the future of ACRL conference planning. The Green Committee is looking to all of ACRL membership to help make our first green conference a success!—*Juliet Kerico is science and health sciences librarian at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, jkerico@siue.edu, and Karen Munro is head of the UO Portland Library and Learning Commons at the University of Oregon, kmunro@uoregon.edu*

N. 45th St., tilthrestaurant.com), which has earned organic certification and was one of the nation's top ten new restaurants of 2008, according to a *New York Times* critic.⁵ Just down the street from Tilth is a popular new dessert spot, Molly Moon's Homemade Ice Cream (1622 1/2 N 45th St., mollymoonicecream.com), which relies on local organic farms for its milk, strawberries, and unique ingredients such as lavender. At Poppy (622 Broadway E, poppyseattle.com), *Seattle Magazine's* "hottest table in town,"⁶ Chef Jerry Traunfeld applies the traditional Indian "thali" dining concept, in which several dishes are served to each diner all at once, to the bounty of the Northwest. Occupying a small, unassuming storefront, Sitka & Spruce (2238 Eastlake Ave. E, sitkaandspruce.com) is devoted to celebrating local foods, such as the porcini mushrooms often found under Sitka Spruce trees.

Those who prefer vegetarian or vegan dining will have many choices, including Café Flora (2901 E. Madison St., cafeflora.com) in Madison Park, Carmelita (7314 Greenwood Ave. N, carmelita.net) in Phinney Ridge, and Chinese food at Bamboo Garden (364 Roy St., bamboogarden.net) near the Seattle Center. Several vegetarian choices can be found in the University District, such as Araya's Veg-

etarian Place (1121 NE 45th St., arayasplace.com), Hillside Quickies Vegan Sandwich Shop (4106 Brooklyn Ave, hillsidequickie.com), and Chaco Canyon Café (4757 12th Ave. NE, chaco-canyoncafe.com).

For people who take the opportunity to experience once-in-a-lifetime special meals when traveling, the Seattle area does not disappoint. Restaurants that provide an exceptional dining experience, showcasing the freshest foods from the area, local wines, and world-class chefs, include The Corson Building (5609 Corson Ave. S, thecorsonbuilding.com) in Seattle's Georgetown neighborhood; Canlis (2576 Aurora Ave. N, canlis.com), which overlooks Lake Washington; Café Juanita (cafejuanita.com) across Lake Washington in Kirkland; and the well-known Herbfarm (theherbfarm.com) in further-afield Woodinville.



Fiddlehead ferns and lemon slices. Photo credit: Michael Porter (libraryman.com).

Locally produced treats to enjoy and take home

While visiting Seattle, be sure to enjoy some of the foods produced and manufactured nearby. Starbucks and Seattle's Best Coffee may be the largest local coffee companies, but many other specialty coffee roasters may be found in Seattle. The region also produces exceptional teas, such as Teasophy, Tazo and Market Spice Tea, and more recently, soft drinks were added to its beverage repertoire with the advent of Jones Soda and Dry Soda. Conference attendees with a sweet tooth should sample the sumptuous smoothness of a truffle from Dilettante Chocolates, taste a Gold Bar at Fran's Chocolates, try a confection from Fremont's Theo Chocolate (the only organic, Fair Trade Certified roaster of cacao in the United States), or experience the classic crunch of Brown and Haley's Almond Roca. Those who prefer fruit will enjoy Aplets and Cotlets from Liberty Orchards or any of the dried fruit products from Chukar

What to wear in Seattle

It's always a good idea to dress in layers in Seattle in the spring, so that clothing can be adjusted when moving between indoors and outdoors, and as the weather changes during the day. A raincoat or umbrella might be a good option to throw into the suitcase too, as Seattle has, on average, 17 days of snow and/or rain in March. Seattle is notoriously casual, and almost anything goes when it comes to style.



Latte at Stumptown in Seattle. Photo credit: Mason Bryant.

Cherries. Biringer Farm and the Maury Island Farm make local jams, jellies and preserves, which capture the sweetness of summer in every bite.

Wild salmon and other fresh or smoked seafood is available from Pike Place Fish, Pure Food Fish, and SeaBear.

Welcome to Seattle!

These are, of course, just a few of the many wonderful restaurants, foods, and products

that the Puget Sound region has to offer. Dining in the Northwest is an opportunity to explore, engage, and extend one's palate.

We hope you'll join us in "pushing the edge" at the ACRL 14th National Conference in Seattle!

Notes

1. Braiden Rex-Johnson, *Pacific Northwest Wining and Dining: The People, Places, Food, and Drink of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2007), xii.
2. *Ibid.*, xiii.
3. Diane Cole, "Eating Green," *National Geographic*, September 2008.
4. tinyurl.com/acrlwiki.
5. Frank Bruni, "Coast to Coast, Restaurants that Count," *New York Times*, February 27, 2008 (www.nytimes.com/2008/02/27/dining/27count.html).
6. Brangien Davis, "Best of 2008," *Seattle Magazine*, December 2008, 82. *zz*

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