

# Grape jelly from England?

I was sitting at the breakfast table the other day with a piece of toast on my plate.

With that barren piece of toast in front of me, I suddenly had an urge to cover it with grape jelly.

The Sidekick had her nose stuck in the refrigerator the moment this urge struck, so I said, "We got any grape jelly in there?"

Now when I say grape jelly, I really mean Welch's, or some of that great homemade stuff created by my Martha-Stewart-clone daughter.

Rattling through the jars in the door shelves, "I found some!" she announced, and passed a little glass jar in my direction.

It was one of those tiny little jam jars one receives in a gift basket, you know, when someone can't think of anything else to buy for you.

The 'best-before' date on it was June 2009, so I figured it couldn't kill me. I twisted it open, and spread the table-spoon-sized glob of grape jelly on my toast.

It was a bit rubbery but had a semblance of grape in the taste. The one-shot jar was empty after I covered one piece of toast.

As I sipped my coffee, I read the label on the little jar— produced by Nelson's of England, it contained 1.5 oz. of jam.

It occurred to me— what in hell was I doing eating jam produced in England, packaged in a 1.5 oz bottle? The bottle and label alone were worth more than the dollop of jam, and that's not factoring in the cost of it crossing the ocean to get here.

It was ludicrous at best.

There's been a social movement lately, as people strive to buy their food within 100 miles of their home. Many have been prompted by the book *The 100-Mile Diet: A Year of Local Eating*, (written by Canadian authors Alisa Smith and J.B. MacKinnon.) The book advocates consuming only locally-grown food (within 100 miles, by the book), thereby eating a healthier diet from known sources.

It also can reduce our 'carbon footprint' since the cost of fuel that transports food around the globe increases every year.

Supporting that trend, I've read sever-

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al magazine articles suggesting the small family farm might enjoy a resurgence, benefiting from the high cost of fuels, simply because they can be more competitive selling at 'the farm gate,' since the product isn't being shipped around the globe.

Personally, I gave up buying food that wasn't grown or raised in Canada or the U.S. a few years ago, but for another reason.

The regulations governing the use of pesticides and herbicides in many South American countries are not anywhere near as stringent as what we have here in Canada.

Along the same lines, I recently chatted with a lady who is member of a group of like-minded folks who have been doing their bit to buy from local sources, simply by working as a group.

Using word-of-mouth, they pass on information about local food and produce around Halton Hills. One member may find a deal on local farm-fresh eggs, while another might find a local source of grain-fed beef and share the info on to the others, thereby allowing all members to shop locally.

It's a win-win situation— the consumers have the peace of mind of eating local food they trust, and the local farm producers have sold their product at the farm gate, eliminating transport costs in the process.

Driving along country roads, I see more and more farm gate stands popping up, with an honesty box to collect the cash for their goods.

I think it's a great thing— it forges a mutual respect between urban and rural, by supplying the urbanite with healthy food.

And, in the process, it provides the farmer with an equally healthy market.



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