

Food Day Canada highlights local products

BY ANITA STEWART

Anita Stewart is the force behind Food Day Canada, a showcase of her life's work and years of hard core, on the road research. The annual celebration in praise of Canadian farmers, fishers, researchers, chefs and home cooks was held on Saturday, August 3. The website foodaycanada.ca is a comprehensive resource that highlights cooking and shopping Canadian, made-in-Canada plants and fruit trees as well as restaurants that feature local food. Learn more about Canada's food in the following summary and see the following pages for lists of all-Canadian food and drink and check out the Food Day Canada website.

So you want to Shop Like A Canadian? I do too and for a whole lot of reasons. Local food is better for the planet and keeping our producers and processors in business. Reviving the entire sector which, for a number of years, seemed to have been on life support is actually fun.

It whets our culinary curiosity and defines who we are as Canadians. We are very proud of those culinary nationalists who care enough to risk being in the food business either as a grower, a processor or as a manufacturer.

Before beginning, we needed to find out about the rules around labeling. There are dozens, both at the federal and provincial levels.

It's like sifting wheat from chaff to find out how to read them.

Product of Canada is the one that holds the most weight. It's grown and processed in Canada. This is why this list is such fun ... and why it's so important.

According to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, a "Product of Canada" label means that all, or nearly all, of the food, processing and labour used to make the food is Canadian. These foods were grown or raised by Canadian farmers and prepared and packaged by Canadian food companies.

Note that a food can still be labeled "Product of Canada" if it contains small amounts of imported

food, such as spices, food additives, vitamins, and flavourings.

Made in Canada is where it could get confusing and unless you carry a magnifying glass to the grocery store, a few manufacturers would like to keep it that way. But it's also where makers of gorgeous jams, for instance, cannot call what they create Product of Canada because the bulk of the preserve is sugar from outside the country. The chaff-sifting continued.

The words "Made in Canada from domestic and imported ingredients" on a food label mean that a Canadian company was involved in some of the preparation of the food. These foods also contain some food grown by Canadian farmers, and some food that's been imported.

The words "Made in Canada from imported ingredients" on a food label means that a Canadian company was involved in some of the preparation of the food; and the contents of the food were imported.

A Maple Leaf on the Label often is a decoration more than an origin stamp. Check the "Made in" status. This is what we call Canada-washing.

Now what does "local" mean on a label? We think it's pretty intuitive but the CFIA has had to adopt a policy, albeit interim, on Local Food

Claims, which recognizes "local" as food produced in the province or territory in which it is sold, or food sold across provincial borders within 50 km of the originating province or territory.

With all that taken into consideration we have a healthy understanding that the following list is only a beginning.



Searching out made-in-Canada brands and products of Canada is one way of supporting homegrown businesses. Another is to shop locally and support local merchants, growers, makers and manufacturers. Watch for the "Shop Georgetown, Buy Canadian" window decals displayed at local businesses that also support your local newspaper. The patriotic promotion is aimed at encouraging residents to consider the local economy in their purchasing decisions.

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