FOOD SYSTEMS SCAVENGER HUNT

Discover your community’s food system and strengths and weaknesses with a walking tour scavenger hunt.
Food Systems Scavenger Hunt

Discover your community’s food system and strengths and weaknesses with a walking tour scavenger hunt.

About the Activity
The food we eat often comes from all over the country and across the world. But what happens if food can’t get from one place to another? In this activity you will go on a scavenger hunt to find out about your community’s food system and its strengths and weaknesses — and see just how resilient your community’s food system is in case of an emergency.

Supplies
These simple supplies are all you’ll need for this activity.

• Downloadable scavenger hunt list
• Printer
• Pen or pencil to mark the scavenger hunt list

Grades: 7-10
Topic: Food Systems, Civic Engagement
Time: 1 to 2 hours
Activity Steps
It’s important to know how food resilient your community is in case of emergency. In this activity, you will go on a scavenger hunt to uncover the different levels of food systems in your immediate surroundings. You can use this knowledge to help show your friends and family how they can become more food resilient.

1. First, let’s get familiar with the different levels of food systems, meaning the decisions we make about how we obtain our food — from household to global — of our food.

   - **Individual:** A personal decision about food based on experience, culture, preference, or finance. The decisions depend on the situation and can change over time.
   - **Household:** A group of people that live together may eat together, share a food budget, and affect one another’s eating behaviors — for example, parents’ influence on children.
   - **Local:** Direct-to-consumer markets such as farm stands, farmers’ markets, and community supported agriculture (CSA) as well as direct-to-retailer sales such as convenience stores, supermarkets, and restaurants.
   - **Regional:** A food system at this level tries to be self-reliant within a state or a cluster of states such as the Northeast, Southwest, West, Southeast, and Midwest.
   - **National:** Farm labor, food safety, pesticide use, and product labeling are all guided by federal regulations. Market agreements for commodities affect supply and prices on this level.
   - **Global:** This level relates to imports of agricultural products, movement around the planet, and food security of the world’s population. It has a significant influence on our diets, economies, environmental quality, and policies of all levels of the food system.

DID YOU KNOW?
COVID-19 had a huge impact on food supply chains around the world, including farmers, food service distributors, food service producers, food packaging companies, and grocery retailers. You may have even experienced this if you went to the grocery store and saw certain items out of stock.

2. Now, let’s get down to it! Print out (or view on your computer or phone) the downloadable scavenger hunt list for this activity.

DID YOU KNOW?
In 2005, Hurricane Katrina severely hit the city of New Orleans, Louisiana. The floods caused by the hurricane damaged many food retail stores in the city. Roads and communication infrastructures were also damaged, making food transportation difficult. As a result, residents had difficulty accessing fresh food and faced food shortages.

3. Determine how food resilient your community is by:

   - Calculating the total number of food sources from each level of the food system that you found in your scavenger hunt. Consider how much you depend on food that you eat that is grown or transported from places that are not part of your region.
   - Taking a closer look at other non-food things you found in your scavenger hunt (number 5, 9, 10, 15, and 16). How will they affect the ability of your community to supply food locally.
   - Considering your access to food in an emergency situation such as COVID-19 lockdown, natural disasters, severe weather, etc.

DID YOU KNOW?
The United States produces very limited amounts of its own bananas, mainly in Hawaii and Florida. Most of the bananas sold in U.S. stores are imported from Central American countries including Guatemala, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Columbia, and Honduras.
Test Your Knowledge

See how much you’ve learned about Food Systems!

Visit [https://4-H.org/FoodSystemsScavengerHunt](https://4-H.org/FoodSystemsScavengerHunt) to put your knowledge to the test with an interactive game.

Reflection Questions

Bonus questions to inspire wonder.

• Where would you get food from if all the stores in the area were closed?
• Name two things that can disrupt food from traveling to your grocery stores.
• What are the things you like to eat that are NOT commonly grown in your region?
• What are some things you could do to be more food resilient?
Investigate & Explore

Take what you’ve learned to the next level to learn more and explore the possibilities.

Not all foods grow naturally in every region the whole year ‘round. Think about strawberries, for instance: their typical season is spring through early summer. But you can buy them the whole year because they are often grown in hot houses and trucked all over the country — if you’re eating strawberries from the supermarket in December, that’s almost certainly how they got there.

As you eat and buy fruit throughout the year, ask yourself (and do your own research on the internet or by asking people who know), is this something that grows locally? Consider the implications of eating fruit that is naturally out of season, and whether or not you want to do that.