

Welcome

to the Transition Black Isle



Highland Food Challenge!

www.transitionblackisle.org

The Transition Black Isle (TBI) Highland Food Challenge is a 3 month challenge, which you can take up at any point between now and the beginning of January, 2011, giving you a chance to learn about, discover and enjoy the great food produced and grown in the Highlands. The aim of TBI and the Challenge is to take action as a community to meet the joint challenges of peak oil and climate change and live more sustainably.

To do this we'd like households to sign-up to the Challenge and try as much as possible to

Eat Local, Eat Organic, Eat Seasonal and Eat Vegetable

You can do this by using the **Local Food Directory** to shop on the Black Isle, come along to the **Community Markets**, **grow your own**, **use the TBI website and forum to swap ideas and recipes** and participate in **TBI food events**.

If your household chooses to sign-up, we'd like you to use the recording sheets in this pack to let us know how you get on. At the beginning of April 2011, when everyone's completed the Challenge, we'll announce the highest scorers on the TBI website and award **15 prizes** to the winning households. 14 runners up will win a specially commissioned HFC mug from **Cromarty Pottery** with the overall winner receiving a teapot and two mugs!



Examples of Cromarty Pottery's work. Prizes may be of a different design.

For more information on the 4 main challenge areas, how to sign-up and use the scoring system, read on.

Good Luck and Good Eating!

Eat Local

Why?

- By buying local produce you **lessen the need for your food to be transported and therefore the oil used and carbon emissions produced**. The transportation of food consumed in the UK is accountable for 2.3% of all UK green house gas (GHG) emissions. Transporting perishable foods also requires **energy-intensive refrigeration**, which along with home refrigeration contributes 3-3.5% of UK GHG emissions. Most of this is unnecessary and can be avoided by eating local food.
- Buying local food is a **great way of supporting local producers and retailers**, potentially providing more employment opportunities in the Highlands in the long-term.
- Going shopping in your local area whether it's at the shops or one of the markets is a **good way to keep up with what's going on in the area and meet the people who make your food**.
- The further food has to travel the longer it takes to get from the field to your fork. **Local food is often fresher** than imported produce.



How?

- Try **shopping at community markets and local shops or sign up to a local vegetable box scheme**. You'll find lots of these listed in the **Local Food Directory**.
- **Eat more wild food**. There's nothing like going foraging in the autumn and the Highlands play host to lots of tasty treats like wood sorrel, fat hen, nettles, chanterelle and bolete mushrooms, blaeberrries and raspberries. Be sure not to eat anything if you're not 100% certain it's edible and try to avoid foraging along roadsides or taking too much from one site. It's a good idea to take along a comprehensive foraging book.
- **Grow your own**. You can't get more local than food you've grown in your own garden, on the windowsill or even in hanging baskets. It needn't take lots of time and space and the Community gardens at Culbokie and Loch na Mhoid are a great place to get into gardening with other like-minded and friendly folk. Our Grow North classes and the TBI website forum are a good place to pick up tips on what grows well locally and how to do it!



Why not try...?

- If you have kids who do the shopping with you, why not keep them entertained by asking them to pick an item from your shopping list and then try to find the most local version of it they can.
- If there's a food that you love or eat a lot of and don't want to give up that just won't grow in the UK, why not challenge yourself to find the nearest source.

Eat Organic

Why?

- Organic food production often reuses animal and plant manures and as a result **doesn't depend as heavily on oil-based fertilisers and pesticides.**
- Organic agriculture also **avoids the environmental impact of transporting and producing oil-based fertilisers and pesticides.**
- Organic agriculture **ensures soil health and biodiversity for future generations.**
- It also **locks up larger amounts of carbon in the soil, reducing its impact on the climate.**
- The Soil Association recently reported that **a saving of 3.2 million tonnes of carbon a year could be made if all UK farms converted to organic practices.** That's the **equivalent of taking almost one million cars off the road.**



How?

- **Signing up to a local vegetable box scheme** that uses organic growing methods is an easy way to make sure you're eating something organic every week.
- **Look out for the symbols on the right of this page when you're shopping.** The first is the EU organic symbol, which it will be mandatory to display on all pre-packed organic food produced and sold within the EU from the 1st of July this year. The second and fourth indicate UK organic certification and the third is used for biodynamic produce, which is grown in a way that has similar benefits to organic production.
- **Growing your own fruit, vegetables and herbs without chemicals** is a particularly satisfying way of upping the organic produce in your diet.



If you'd like to learn more about organic and biodynamic agriculture the following websites may worth a browse

- www.biodynamic.org.uk
- www.soilassociation.org

and for help and advice on growing organically

- www.organicgarden.org.uk



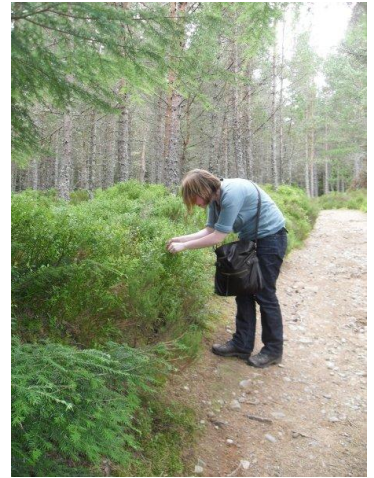
Why not try...?

- If you're not used to buying organic produce or are finding it difficult to remember to check labels, why not try focusing on switching a few staples (tea, eggs, milk, potatoes, carrots etc.) each week and building up slowly.
- If you're concerned about the cost of organic produce try comparing prices on some of the basics the next time you're out shopping. You might be surprised.

Eat Seasonal

Why?

- Food that's in season in our climate requires **less transport and refrigeration during travel** therefore has less of an impact on the climate.
- Food produced naturally and in-season **doesn't rely on artificial lighting and heating** as out of season produce does and therefore **uses less energy**. For example tomatoes grown out of season under artificial conditions in the UK actually use more than those grown in season and transported from Spain!
- Eating this way lets us **enjoy the changing of the seasons** and allows us to look forward to summer strawberries, salads and peas, autumn squashes and raspberries and winter roots etc **at their best**.



How?

- Food **from local gardens, allotments and farms** is likely to be in season, so shopping locally and growing your own is a good way to make sure that most of what you're eating is in season.
- **Wild and foraged food** is the ultimate seasonal food and can turn a walk in the woods into a real foodie treasure hunt. Please follow the guidelines given in the local food section before going foraging.
- If you want to enjoy local produce out of season or have a glut of something in the garden why not **preserve it**, by turning it into jams, chutneys and pickles or by bottling it, which is a more energy efficient way of **storing food**. This may help you to avoid buying imports in winter.



For information on what's in season in the UK and when check out

- www.eatseasonably.co.uk
- www.eattheseasons.co.uk

Why not try...?

- If you're unsure of what's in season, why not ask your local shopkeeper or market stallholders to recommend one thing each time you go shopping that they think is the best of what's available that season.
- Go on a nature walk, but take along a wild food book instead of a wild life guide.
- If you're unsure where to start with preserving, why not ask friends and neighbours if they have experience. There are usually at least a few people in each village who are renowned for their jams, chutneys or pickles and most people are happy to pass on these skills.



Eat Vegetable

Why?

- Almost all agricultural **methane emissions** can be attributed to livestock farming, which the UN's 2006 'Livestock's Long Shadow' report also estimates is responsible for 18% of annual global GHG emissions.
- In the UK population growth and demand are set to **double meat and dairy consumption by 2050**.
- A plant based diet uses **a third of the land and water** required to produce a conventional Western diet.
- You don't have to go vegetarian or vegan to make a difference. **Giving up meat and dairy one extra day a week reduces carbon emissions by 0.18 tonnes per person annually**.



How?

- Try having a **meat and/or dairy free day** once a week.
- If you're a confirmed carnivore try **reducing your meat portion size, bulking up on vegetables and grains and switching to organic**.
- When you're planning meals, why not **build your meal around seasonal vegetables and local grains** and think of meat and dairy as a way of enhancing their flavours.
- A lot of **the food you already eat may be vegetarian or vegan** without you thinking about it. Do you have favourite vegetable soup, stew, pasta or pizza recipes?
- **Look out for the symbols on the right hand side of this page** that indicate vegetarian and vegan food in the shops.



For recipes and nutritional advice on eating a more plant-based diet try visiting:

- www.vegsoc.org
- www.vegansociety.com



Why not try...?

- If you haven't got the time to wade through recipe books, why not ask friends, family and neighbours for their vegetarian or vegan recipes. If you like them, we'd love you to share them with everyone else on our forum.
- If you're more comfortable cooking meals based around meat and dairy, why not try ordering the vegetarian option the next time you're out for a meal



Myth Busting!

We've given you lots of good reasons to get involved, but understand that there are a few common concerns about eating this way. So, here come the TBI Myth Busters to put your mind at rest.

1. **It's expensive.**

Eating this way doesn't need to be expensive and depends mostly on what you eat. Seasonal local produce is often less expensive than out of season produce which has to be flown or shipped into the country. Meat is often one of the most expensive food stuffs we buy, so by eating less or making it go further you may find that your weekly shopping costs less.

2. **I don't have the time to cook everything from scratch.**

Salad and an omelette can take a matter of minutes to rustle up and we welcome submissions of recipes that can be made quickly to the TBI recipe forum. By batch cooking things like soups and sauces and using them for a couple of meals during the week you can half your time.

Eating local doesn't have to mean lots of cooking. There are a number of local businesses offering good quality local ready meals listed in the directory.

3. **It's not as convenient as popping to the supermarket.**

The community markets are a good solution to this as a one-stop shop where you can pick up baked goods, fresh fruit and veggies, meat and dairy all under one roof. When these aren't on, businesses like MacCulloch's Food Marketing offer an on-line ordering and delivery service and many of the shops in the directory stay open after 6pm.

4. **I can't live without...**

Though it's called the Highland Food 'Challenge', we want this to be fun. It's not about self denial and if you can't live without chocolate, coffee, tea, bananas or oranges then don't deprive yourself! Why not challenge yourself to find your favourite food, but from the closest possible country or set your own target (for example 70% local and 30% other).

5. **I don't have the time or space to grow my own food.**

We understand that not everybody has an endless rolling garden and whole weekends to devote to carefully cultivating courgettes! Herbs and salad leaves can be grown on a windowsill, tomatoes and strawberries work well in hanging baskets and container gardening might be a good solution if you're short on space. Grow North and the TBI forum are a great place to pick fellow gardeners' brains about what might work for you. If you want to get a bit more stuck in, why not come and lend a hand at the community gardens where the work and the produce is shared.

6. **A local and mainly vegetarian diet may not meet all my nutritional needs.**

Fresh food which has not travelled a long way or been preserved often has more nutrients and is likely to have less salt and saturated fat than many processed foods. The main concern in the Highland region is getting enough vitamin D over the winter months as we don't get enough sun for our bodies to make sufficient quantities and it's hard to get enough from food. It may be a good idea to take supplements. It may also be difficult to get enough Omega 3 oils. There is a lot of this in oily fish, so try including some of this in your diet. Look out for the fish van or try checking the Vegetarian Society website for vegan alternatives (see the Eat Vegetable section for website addresses).

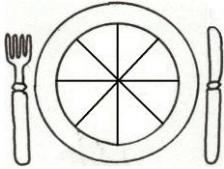
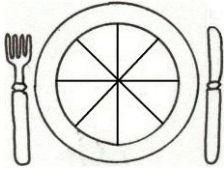
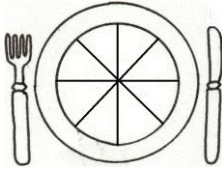
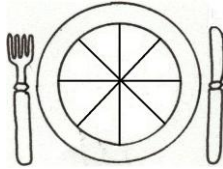
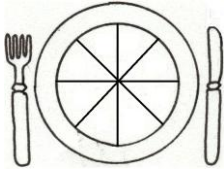
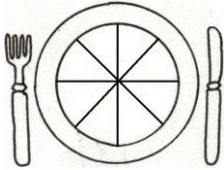
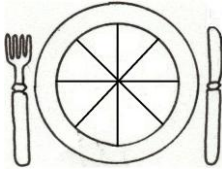
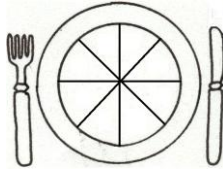
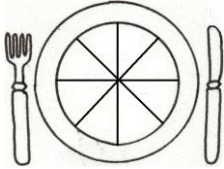
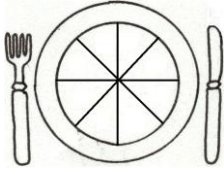
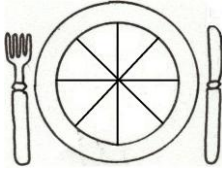
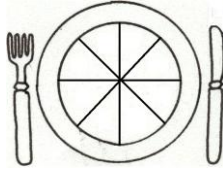
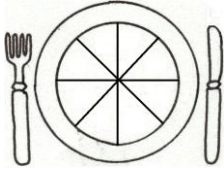
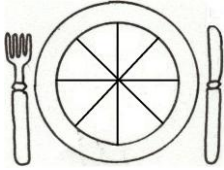
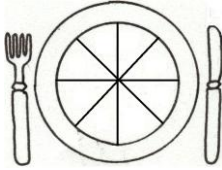
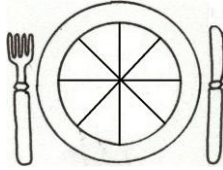
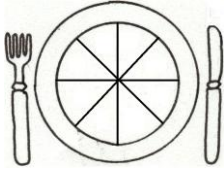
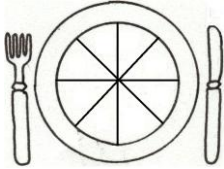
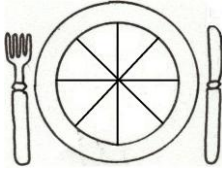
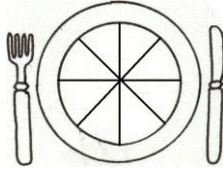
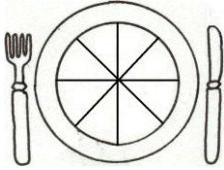
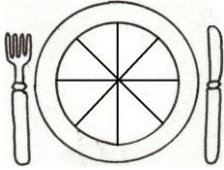
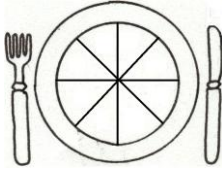
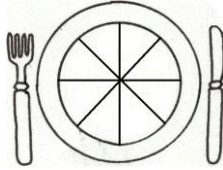
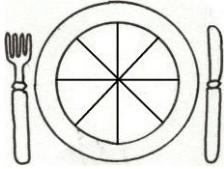
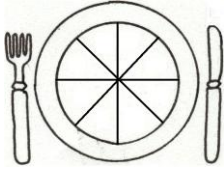
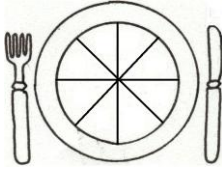
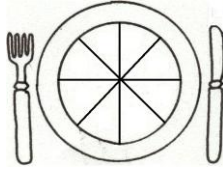
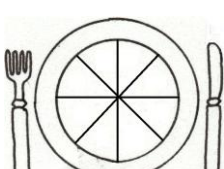
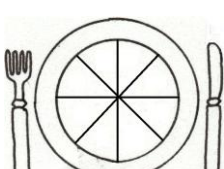
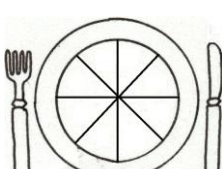
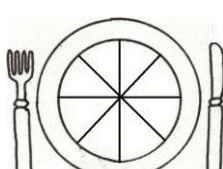
Signing-up and recording your efforts

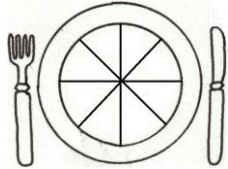
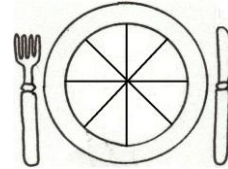
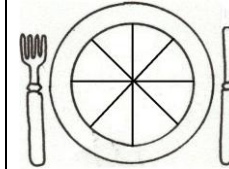
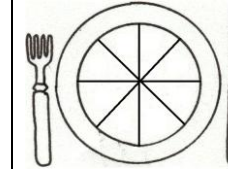
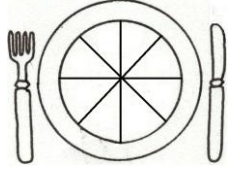
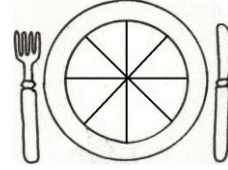
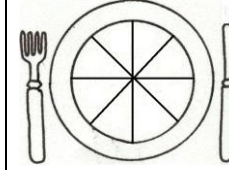
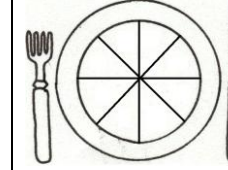
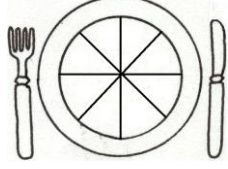
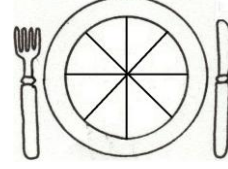
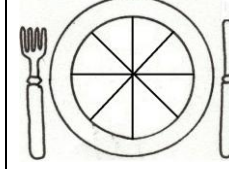
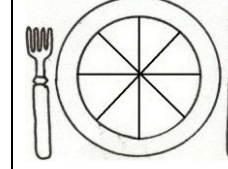
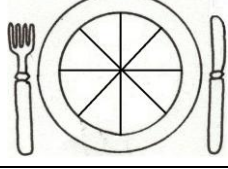
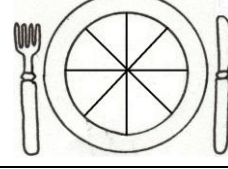
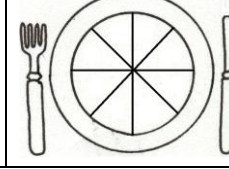
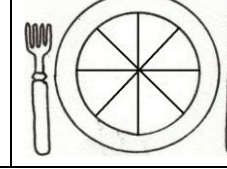
1. To sign-up, **e-mail highlandfoodchallenge@transitionblackisle.org and a household ID and link to the start-up survey will be sent to you.** This is also a good time to join the TBI forum on our website www.transitionblackisle.org. To do this, just visit the website and click on the 'forum' tab. This will take you to a page with the option to register as a user and guide you through the steps to do so. The forum is a great place to discuss the challenge with other participants and swap tips, but entirely optional.
2. Once you have signed-up and completed the survey, we would like you to complete 1 record sheet for 3 days to give us an idea **of how you ate before undertaking the Challenge.**
3. To do this, at breakfast, lunch and dinner, for 3 days, look at the food on your plate and estimate what proportion of it is from the Highlands and write H in the appropriate number of segments, for food from Scotland write S, for food from the UK write UK and leave the remaining segments blank. For the organic plate, shade in the amount of food on your plate that is organic. Shade in the proportion of your food that is seasonal on the seasonal plate. For the vegetable plate, please shade in the proportion of your food, which is plant-based rather than meat and dairy.
4. Please include additional starters and desserts in your plate for each meal. If you find it difficult to estimate proportions with these included, please use the tick sheet provided. The tick sheet can also be used to make a note of snacks and drinks you have had during the day and to work out proportions for these if you find this difficult to estimate.

For example, if you were entering a roast dinner with local non-organic meat, organic Scottish potatoes and seasonal organic vegetables from the UK, it would look like this:



5. Please fill in the box on the second page to let us know what you've found it hard to source and if you've attended any TBI food events, as each event will gain you 5 bonus points.
6. After the first sheet is completed, please fill in one a month for 3 months. You are welcome to fill in more, but only the 4 sheets outlined above will be valid for scoring.
7. At the end of 3 months post your sheets to TBI c/o. Glachbeg, Allanglach Wood, North Kessock, IV1 3XD or pass them to Freya at the North Kessock Community Market (on the last Saturday of each month).
8. Scoring will be as follows: each shaded segment in the organic, seasonal and vegetable categories will receive 5 points as will Highland segments in the local category. A Scottish segment in the local category will be awarded 3 points and UK segments will be allocated 2 points. You can keep a record of your points as you go along if you like, but we will confirm your overall score and the percentages of your diet that have been local, organic, seasonal and vegetable by e-mail after you have returned your score sheets as well.
9. The highest scoring household will win a teapot and two mugs from Cromarty Pottery and 14 runners-up with the next highest scores will each receive a Cromarty Pottery mug.
10. Winners will be announced on the Transition Black Isle website at the beginning of April 2011 after all signed-up households have submitted their results and prize winners will be contacted by e-mail or post at this time.

	Local	Organic	Seasonal	Vegetable
Day 1 Breakfast				
Day 1 Lunch				
Day 1 Dinner				
Day 1 Snacks and drinks				
Day 2 Breakfast				
Day 2 Lunch				
Day 2 Dinner				
Day 2 Snacks and drinks				

	Local	Organic	Seasonal	Vegetable
Day 3 Breakfast				
Day 3 Lunch				
Day 3 Dinner				
Day 3 Snacks and drinks				

Please let us know what you've found difficult to source this week and in which category. For example could you find porridge oats that are organic and produced in the UK or Scotland, but not from a Highland source? This will help us work out how the local area can better meet our food needs.

Did you attend any TBI food events or a community market this month? If so, which was it? Do you have any comments to add about it?



Who We Are and What We're Doing

Transition Black Isle (TBI) is an unincorporated not for profit association with around 65 members that was established in 2009. The association was formed with the purpose of **'learning and taking actions as a community to live sustainably in response to the challenges of peak oil, climate change and other limits on growth'** and is part of the ever expanding global Transition Towns movement (www.transitionnetwork.org).

Last year, the association undertook an awareness raising campaign which included public film screenings, climate change debates and a very successful Greening Homes and Gardens day. This event, which opened energy efficient homes to the public, was a great success and TBI will be holding another Greening Homes and Gardens event on the 11th of September, 2010 (for more information visit www.transitionblackisle.org/greeninghomesandgardens.asp).

Ongoing food group projects include the **Highland Food Challenge**, the **Community Market in North Kessock with cookery demonstrations** and **Grow North**, which provides advice and training sessions on growing your own produce at the **Culbokie and Loch na Mhoid TBI community gardens** as well as a Fortrose site. The energy group are, in addition to **Greening Homes and Gardens**, also providing interested households with advice and **Smart Meters** to monitor and reduce energy use.

TBI is an open and inclusive organisation that recognises that there's strength in numbers and welcomes anyone with an interest in learning more about the twin challenges of peak oil and climate change or a desire to participate in work we're undertaking to come along to events or join as a member.

For more information, visit our website: www.transitionblackisle.org

e-mail: info@transitionblackisle.org

address: Transition Black Isle, c/o. Glachbeg, Allanglach Wood, North Kessock, IV1 3XD

telephone: 01463 731572



Membership form – Transition Black Isle

We are so glad you wish to join us in the transition to a low carbon economy.

Please fill in the form below.

Full name

Address.....
.....

Postcode Date

Telephone number/s

Mobile

Email address

Date of birth (if under 15)

Please tick if you are interested in any of our sub groups – it’s often creative and fun.

- | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> | Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Food | <input type="checkbox"/> | Transport | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Heart and Soul | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

If you tick one of the boxes a member of that group will contact you informally to discuss how you might like to be involved.

Do you have any particular skills or interests that you would like to share?

Are there things you would like to learn more about?

We encourage members to donate at least £5 per year to help with our costs. However if you feel able to set up a monthly standing order, regular income like this really helps us plan our initiatives effectively. If you would like a standing order form let us know. Our bank details are - Sort code 08 92 99 Account no 65352285. Cheques payable to Transition Black Isle.

Are you happy for your details above, including your email address, to be shared with other members? This is purely to allow us all to easily keep in touch with one another.

Yes I’m happy my email
No, please do not disclose

We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting – check on our website for the date:-
www.transitionblackisle.org

Please hand to one of our members or return to:-
Mary Bowers, Membership Secretary, 4 High Street, Cromarty IV11 8UZ