

Food Miles Relay

Activity for Peel Children's Water Festival 2025

Objective of the Activity:

Help children understand how the distance food travels impacts the environment and why eating local Canadian foods can reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Materials Provided:

- A large print map of Canada
 - Laminated cards with pictures of various foods (for example: bananas, apples, salmon, maple syrup, potatoes, chocolate, etc...)
 - A "food miles chart" (cheat sheet for volunteers) listing approximate distances these foods travel to Canada (includes local Canadian foods and imported ones)
 - Two buckets: one labeled "LOCAL FOODS" and the other "IMPORTED FOODS"
 - Cones to mark a relay track
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Activity Setup:

1. Place the map of Canada on a table (marked with provinces known for specific foods (e.g. British Columbia for salmon, Quebec for maple syrup)
 2. Place the food cards at the beginning of the relay, that is the designated "grocery store" area
 3. Set up the relay track leading to the two baskets
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How to Play:

1. Explain the Game -

"People often see food on a grocery store shelf and don't think much about how it got there but, between farm and fork, many of the stages our food goes through can be quite damaging to the planet. Some foods travel a long way to get to Canada, and this creates a lot of pollution called greenhouse gases. Today, we're going to learn how choosing local Canadian foods helps protect the planet!"

Briefly describe *"local foods (grown or made in Canada) versus imported foods (from outside of Canada)"*

2. The Relay -

- Divide the children into two teams.
- On *"go,"* the first child in each team runs to the grocery store, picks a food card, and brings it to the baskets.
- They decide if the food is "Local" or "Imported" and place it in the correct basket.
- The next child in line repeats the process.

3. Wrap-Up Discussion -

- Check the baskets together. Discuss any mistakes and share fun facts about Canadian-grown foods (e.g., Canada is a top producer of maple syrup!).
- Highlight how eating local foods like apples, potatoes, and salmon helps reduce food miles and greenhouse gas emissions.

"A typical meal contains ingredients from five foreign countries, and even Canadian grown produce travels an average of 2,400 kms before it is sold. Buying locally can help reduce the pollution and energy use associated from transporting, storing and refrigerating this food—that's especially true for food that is imported by aeroplane, including perishables such as cherries, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, tomatoes, bell peppers, and asparagus."

- *Spring & Summer bring sweet berries, juicy tomatoes, and crunchy cucumbers.*
- *Fall is apple season—plus pumpkins and colorful squash!*
- *Winter is perfect for cozy foods like carrots, potatoes, and greenhouse-grown greens.*

"Eating food that's in season means it's fresher, tastier, and packed with nutrients. Plus, it helps local farmers and the environment by reducing the need to ship food from far away. So next time you grab a snack, think about what's growing near you—it might be your new favorite treat!"

Key Canadian Content:

- Focus on foods iconic to Canada: maple syrup, salmon, potatoes, apples, wheat, etc.