Good afternoon ... and thanks for joining us ... I'm Judy Simpson. We're in the kitchen for our occasional series of programs involving students in the University of Vermont’s Master of Science Dietetics Program. In this series, the students are cooking seasonal meals, using fresh local products.

Now, earlier this summer, two students visited a local farm stand and pick-your-own operation. Of course farm stands and farmers markets are found throughout the state, and offer the freshest local produce. Let’s join the students as they find all the ingredients they need:

Hi, I am Kelsey Gero and this is Lindsay Lawes and we are from the UVM Master of Science and Dietetics Program. Today we're at Paul Mazza’s berry farm in Colchester Vermont where we are here to pick berries and vegetables for our summer picnic. Let's go.

What are you going to do the berries Kels?

I'm going to use some to make a recipe later and the rest I will freeze. And save them for later in the season.

I like to stock up on berries too while they are ripe.

They're really easy to freeze too.

Great to for smoothies later on.

Did you know ½ C of blueberries is a serving? It counts towards your goal of 9 to 11 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. I could eat blueberries all day.

They are really good. But it’s also important to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables so you are getting all the colors in.

Fruits and vegetables that are deep in color, are bright, have more nutrients in them.

Lindsay what should we tell consumers when berry picking?

You want to make sure to look for the darkest purple ones; they offer the best flavor and most nutrients.
As you can see, not all these berries are quite ripe yet. There are dark purple ones and lighter green ones. As the season goes on these will turn ripe too.

What do you say we go get some raspberries?

Yes sounds good we need those for our dessert later.

Here we are at the farm stand we're going to gather some more ingredients for our summer picnic. Should we start with a salad?

We're going to make a mixed green salad. What kind of cucumber should we get? These are pickling cucumbers. Good for making pickles. And here's regular cucumbers. I like these for salads. Because they're fresh and local you don't need to peel the skin and they don't have the waxing on them like some of the store bought ones. I like to look for the skinnier ones because the seeds are little bit smaller.

Maybe we should grab some radishes to add some crunch, flavor and added color. Yeah I love to shave them and add them to salad. It's all about eating the rainbow. What kind of lettuce should we get--romaine red leaf or green leaf? Or we can do a mix. Let's mix. One of each.

We also need some tomatoes. Tomatoes are a great source of vitamin A and lycopene. What do you look for in a tomato? Let's make sure it's a deep red in color. Pretty firm.

Let's grab some squash and zucchini for our side dish. How do you know which ones to get? Well I usually look for the skinnier ones because they tend to have smaller seeds. But the big ones are really good for baking or shredding. You can do a lot of stuff with a zucchini; you can boil it, sauté it, or you can just grill it. We are going to grill ours. This looks good--nice and firm at the bottom. I'll grab a couple. Should we grab some summer squash too? I look for the nice yellow ones again make sure they're not rubbery and the smaller ones tend to have smaller seeds. That looks good. I think we have everything we need. Let's go.

Judy.: Lindsay and Kelsey with me now in the kitchen and first I want to thank you for joining me today. Tell me a little bit about shopping and farmers markets because there are lots of them across the state.

Lindsay.: We're really fortunate in Vermont there are farmers markets and farm stands all over the place. Farmers markets or more of a collection of farmers who come together and sell their produce and farm stands are usually just one farm that has all their produce available right there.

Judy.: What are you going to be making for us today.

Kelsey.: Today we're going to be making eggplant and tomato flat bread pizza. We're going to make a salad of mixed greens. We have some summer squash that were going to top off with a little Pesto and then we're going to finish with a fruity dessert.

Judy.: Nice let's talk a little bit about this pizza. Why did you choose this particular menu?

Kelsey.: We wanted to feature the produce that's in season right now and we want to provide a variety of texture and flavor. For the pizza we started with some eggplant that we baked. Then we sliced up fresh tomatoes and topped that off with feta cheese.

Judy.: Tell me a little bit about the crust because that looks pretty good.

Kelsey.: We actually bought the crust from the store but it's made with whole wheat and it's quick and easy for those people that are on the run and don't have time to make fresh pizza dough.
Judy.: Why is this combination good for you?

Kelsey.: The crust is high in fiber and eggplant is also high in fiber and potassium. The tomatoes have lycopene and then the feta cheese is high in calcium.

Judy.: Excellent what are we going to be making next?

Lindsay.: This is just a fresh green salad with freshly sliced cucumbers and this is some local dressing from Chester Vermont. Maple balsamic. It's quick and easy you can chop up whatever vegetables are available. Give it a little toss.

Judy.: Tell us about some of the vegetables and fruits people will be finding at farm stands now.

Lindsay.: Right now there's cucumbers available, corn, eggplant. We're about to get into winter squash, apples, berries you can still pick fall raspberries.

Judy.: Tell me a little bit about what we saw in the video talking about different vegetables and you mentioned eat the rainbow what does that mean?

Lindsay.: It's really nice to try to get a wide variety of colors into each of your meals because of the different nutrients they offer.

Judy.: Is it true the more color that's in a fruit or vegetable it's better for you?

Lindsay.: Yes the deeper the colors the more nutrients they have.

Judy.: We also hear the phrase local food tossed around a lot. What does that actually mean?

Lindsay.: The definition localvore is from state to state. In Vermont it means grown within the state or within 30 miles of where it sold.

Judy.: Can you talk a little bit about where people can get local produce?

Kelsey.: You can get it at farmers markets farm stands grocery stores like Hannaford’s Price Chopper Shaw's.

Judy.: There's also something called three squares Vermont which people can use to get fresh produce.

Lindsay.: Yes it used to be called the food stamps program and now some farmers markets and farm stands are accepting fruits and vegetable cards there.

Judy.: How can consumers locate a CSA. We talk about CSA's what does that mean and how can you find one?

Lindsay.: A CSA is community shared agriculture or community sustainable agriculture. By paying a fee in advance of the season you give the farmers some additional money and throughout the season you get a chance to have some of their local produce.

Judy.: Basically what it is you can pick up your box of produce depending on what's in season every week. Is that proving to be pretty popular with people?

Kelsey.: I think it's becoming more so popular.
Judy.: We had the salad which was a mixed greens and cucumber with a locally produced dressing on that. What do we have next?

Kelsey.: Next we have some yellow summer squash that we baked in the oven. Then we made some Pesto which is basil garlic a little olive oil salt pepper and lemon juice. To top those off and give it a little more flavor.

Judy.: Did you grow the summer squash ahead of time?

Kelsey.: We did yes.

Judy.: A lot of people don't think about using the grill to prepare vegetables why is it a good idea?

Lindsay.: It's very easy to do. You can chop up anything with little olive oil and salt and pepper adds great flavor and texture.

Judy.: What are some of the benefits of buying your food locally.

Kelsey.: I would say freshness. You're supporting local farmers. A lot of times buying produce in season it's at a cheaper cost than buying out of season.

Judy.: Also I know you said when you're shopping the cucumbers look great because they're nice and fresh and don't have the waxy exterior to them which I didn't stop to think about but that's true.

Lindsay.: They don't have to be shipped so they don't have to be preserved for quite as long.

Judy.: Of course there's also the pick-your-own option which is popular with folks. I know you went berry picking.

Lindsay.: This is our fruit parfait. Uses some local Cabot yogurt. It's very easy to do. And it's delicious. These are actually blueberries. It's not actually blueberry season anymore but you can pick them when it is blueberry season and they are so easy to freeze. Basically you layer berries and yogurt. And raspberries you can still get there are fall raspberries that are available.

Judy.: Oh they are I assumed raspberry season was over that's good to know.

Lindsay.: Again they're really easy to freeze.

Judy.: Tell me a little bit about what nutritionally we're getting in this dish?

Kelsey.: Raspberries and blueberries provide anti-oxidants are also high in fiber. Then the Vanilla yogurt is high in calcium and vitamin D.

Judy.: Tell me a little bit about vitamin D and what that does for you.

Kelsey.: It helps to absorb calcium.

Judy.: Which is good obviously.

Kelsey.: For our bones.

Judy.: You can get vitamin D through sunlight but usually it's probably not a lot and you want to wear sunscreen when you're in the sun anyway which is something to think about. What are some of
the other things people should be thinking about when they're shopping at the grocery store or planning a meal.

Lindsay: To eat the rainbow. That's the most important thing you want to do is balance nutrients.

Judy: If you're looking at your plate what should your plate look like as far as percentage of meat vegetables starches?

Lindsay: The USCA came out with their new food pyramid it's called my plate now. Basically take a plate divide in half and half of that you want to be filled with fruits and vegetables and the other half 1/4 it is a protein and 1/4 it is a starch.

Judy: As far as that's concerned do you think it's easier for people to plan their meals that way as opposed to trying to figure out I need this percentage of this kind of food or I'm not getting enough of this kind of vitamin.

Lindsay: I think it's a great visual to look at your plate.

Kelsey: It makes it simple.

Judy: What about recipes? What's a good idea when it comes to putting together some fresh produce and fresh vegetables when it comes to recipes?

Lindsay: Just encouraging a lot of different varieties, colors textures and flavors.

Judy: Do think that kids especially need to get this message? A lot of times it is easier to feed something that's package for frozen.

Lindsay: I think it's really important for children to learn at an early age the importance of fruits and vegetables and thankfully living in Vermont they can go berry picking and get the connection between where food comes from and how delicious it is.

Judy: As far as your plans I know you are students but what do you hope to do?

Kelsey: I'm all over the place wanting to do different things but I think I would like to work in a hospital one day. Clinical dietetics.

Judy: How about you Lindsay?

Lindsay: I think I want to work with little children. I don't think I want to work in the hospital setting but who knows.

Judy: As far as nutrition wise with kids?

Lindsay: Yes.

Judy: And what are some of the things you hope to do in that field?

Lindsay: I hope to encourage kids to start eating fruits and vegetables are younger age and getting a variety.

Judy: Let's go over some of the things that we've made with local produce. We have our salad, can you tell me in or about that?
Kelsey.: We used different types of romaine. We used cucumbers and the balsamic dressing is from Chester Vermont so it's made locally.

Judy.: And also our pizza you said you pre-bought the crust but if not it's pretty easy to make pizza dough. And grill it. Also tell me about the vegetables you chose for this.

Lindsay.: We used eggplant and fresh tomatoes and we cut the eggplant and baked it beforehand to get out some of the moisture. Then we chopped up the tomatoes and put it back in the oven.

Judy.: I think when people think about pizza they think about lots of cheese and there doesn't seem to be a lot of cheese and there doesn't seem to be a lot of cheese on that.

Lindsay.: Nope there's just some crumbled feta and some pepper and salt.

Judy.: Good and plenty of flavor.

Kelsey.: Yes.

Judy.: I will have to check that out later. Tell me a little bit about why you decided to go into this field Lindsay?

Lindsay.: I think food is everywhere and I think it's really important to establish some really good relationships with food from an early age. Like I said it's everywhere so every day your faced with a decision on what you're going to eat and put into your body.

Judy.: How about you Kelsey?

Kelsey.: I would say the same. Everyone needs to learn more about nutrition, food, and how it can benefit their health.

Judy.: Once again the best place for folks to purchase food obviously locally is from the farmers themselves? What's the farmers markets and CSA's.

Lindsay.: Yes but you can also find it in big chain stores as well.

Judy.: Just look for the locally produced label.

Kelsey.: Yup.

Judy.: Thank you so much for coming on and cooking for us it's a treat. That's our program for today I'm Judy Simpson we will see you again next time on Across the Fence.

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