

= The 100 @-@ Mile Diet =

The 100 @-@ Mile Diet : A Year of Local Eating (or Plenty : One Man , One Woman , and a Raucous Year of Eating Locally) is a non @-@ fiction book written by Canadian writers Alisa Smith and J.B. MacKinnon . In the book , the authors recount their experiences , including motivations and challenges , on restricting their diet , for one year , to include only foods grown within 100 miles of their residence . Beginning in March 2005 , with little preparation the urban couple began only purchasing foods with ingredients they knew were all from within 100 miles . Finding little in grocery stores , they relied on farmers ' markets and visits to local farms . Staples in their diet included seafood , chicken , root vegetable , berries , and corn . They lacked cooking oils , rice , and sugar . They preserved foods for use in the winter but ended with extra supplies .

The couple first wrote about the experience in articles for the online magazine The Tyee . The popularity of the articles led to a book deal . In the book , Smith and MacKinnon each write alternate chapters , 12 in total . The first chapter is written by MacKinnon and focuses on the first month of their experience . They write in the first person as a memoir that explores their own dietary experiences and personal feelings .

In the Canadian market , the book spent five weeks on Maclean 's nonfiction bestseller list . The book spent 20 weeks on The Vancouver Sun 's nonfiction bestseller list . The authors won the Roderick Haig @-@ Brown Regional Prize from the British Columbia Booksellers Association for the best contribution to the enjoyment and understanding of British Columbia . The 100 @-@ mile diet concept , along with advocates of local food , were covered by media across North America . In 2009 , Food Network Canada aired The 100 Mile Challenge , a television series co @-@ created by MacKinnon and Smith and based on the book .

= = Background = =

Alisa Smith and J. B. MacKinnon 's idea of local eating began while visiting their cabin in northern British Columbia in August 2004 . Their food supplies were nearly exhausted so to feed their dinner guests they scrounged the surrounding land for food . Their dinner of Dolly Varden trout , wild mushrooms , dandelion leaves , apples , sour cherries , and rose hips , along with potatoes and garlic from the garden , so impressed the couple that once back home , in their Kitsilano apartment in Vancouver , they pursued the idea of eating only local food . They eventually decided to try a diet consisting of eating food , for one year , grown within 100 miles of their home . They began the diet symbolically on the first day of spring , March 21 . Beginning in June , they wrote articles for The Tyee about their experience . The couple , both in their 30s , each had experience in writing : Smith as a freelance journalist who had taught non @-@ fiction writing , and MacKinnon as the author of the award @-@ winning historical non @-@ fiction book Dead Man in Paradise and a past editor of Adbusters magazine .

They were overwhelmed by the response , first from other locavores and then from local and international news media . Eleven articles were published in the The Tyee series over the year , plus an additional four articles afterwards , between August 2006 and May 2007 . They launched an independent website , 100milediet.org , in April 2006 and began writing the book . Random House published the hardcover version on 12 March 2007 in Canada as The 100 Mile Diet : A Year of Local Eating and on 24 April in the United States as Plenty : One Man , One Woman , and a Raucous Year of Eating Locally . The trade paperback was released in Canada by Random House 's Vintage Canada imprint on 2 October and in the United States by the Three Rivers Press imprint on 22 April 2008 .

= = Content = =

The book consists of twelve chapters , plus an Epilogue and an Acknowledgements section at the end . Smith and MacKinnon individually write alternating chapters , each of which covers one month from March 2005 to February 2006 . In the first chapter MacKinnon tells how his idea for the 100

@-@ mile diet began and Smith agrees to try it for one year . They begin symbolically on the first day of Spring , March 21 , and define ' local ' as 100 miles , a convenient radius that would include the Lower Mainland , the southern half of Vancouver Island , and Whatcom County and Skagit County in Washington State . Their exceptions to this rule include meals eaten while traveling , meals prepared by friends , and business lunches . Their initial month was expensive as they scoured grocery stores for whatever they could find . In the second chapter , Smith describes her and MacKinnon as an unwed urban couple in their early thirties with no children and living in a rented apartment . They recount how eating impacted their relationship before and after the diet , the anonymity of prepackaged foods , the traceability of their diet , and the diets of the Coast Salish .

The farmers ' market opens in May and they are able to buy local honey to replace sugar . Seafood from the Strait of Georgia becomes a staple in their diet . The couple spend August at their cabin in northwestern BC where they fish the Skeena River , pick wild berries , and eat whatever grows in their garden . Back in the Lower Mainland , the September harvest provides them with melons , peppers , eggplant , grapes , and tomatoes . To prepare for winter they preserved corn and tomatoes , made jam from berries , collected herbs from their community garden , and bought many potatoes .

During the fall , each write on the troubles in their relationship . David Beers , the founder of the Tyee , hosts a 100 @-@ mile Thanksgiving dinner for Smith while MacKinnon was away . In November , during a family emergency , MacKinnon travels to Kamloops where he suspends his 100 @-@ mile diet a few days . They finally find a source of flour when they discover a farmer on Vancouver Island who grows his own fruits , vegetables , meats , and wheat . In December , Smith travels to Edmonton where her grandmother feeds her microwaved pasta which she accepts .

In January they find a restaurant that specializes in local cuisine and , previously vegetarians , they cook and eat beef for the first time in years . Working in Malawi , MacKinnon is struck by the contrast between their western diet and that of the poor country 's : there is ample food supplies in Malawi but most is exported to Canada and the United States who buy the food they do not require . The couple learn about Mexican and Maya cuisine while in Merida , Mexico for a wedding . The book ends with an epilogue , written by both Smith and MacKinnon six months after their one year diet . They make a symbolic journey to Bamfield , within their 100 @-@ mile radius , to collect sea water for its salt and prove they could obtain their own salt supply .

= = Style and genre = =

The book uses a first person memoir style with Smith and MacKinnon taking turns writing each chapter . The authors purposely avoided writing a self @-@ help book in favour of the memoir style , saying , " We wanted to show readers that process , and how it affected us and let them see it through our eyes . " The topics sometimes go beyond the motivations and challenges of the diet into more personal relationship issues . Prior to writing the book they created a general plan on where the narrative would lead . They took turns writing so they could monitor each other 's progress . As the two alternate there are shifts in perspectives , though the overall theme of " traceability " persisted . The general tone has been described as charming , innocent , and sometimes funny . Smith 's chapters have been said to demonstrate more honesty and vulnerability , while MacKinnon 's were more " show pieces , little tours de force " . The final chapter was authored together by Smith and MacKinnon writing as a disembodied third @-@ person narrator to summarize and conclude the book .

= = Reaction to the book = =

In the Canadian market , The 100 @-@ Mile Diet debuted at # 10 on Maclean 's nonfiction bestseller list on May 14 . It spent five weeks on the list , peaking at # 4 . In the Vancouver market , the book spent 20 weeks on The Vancouver Sun 's nonfiction bestseller list , peaking at # 5 . At the British Columbia Booksellers Association 's BC Book Prizes , in April 2008 , the book was short

@-@ listed for the Hubert Evans Non @-@ Fiction Prize , while the authors won the Roderick Haig @-@ Brown Regional Prize , awarded to the authors of the book that best contributes to the enjoyment and understanding of British Columbia .

The book has been called engagingly written , wisely researched , and honestly told . Critics admired the wit and humour . The book reviewer for The Globe and Mail admitted he grew impatient with the grand and repetitive statements about the changing global food system and the authors ' hyperbole regarding their modest culinary discoveries . Compared to Kingsolver 's *Animal , Vegetable , Miracle* , The 100 @-@ Mile Diet was found to be more compelling and easier to read , with Smith and MacKinnon more relatable and sympathetic than Kingsolver .

= = Reaction to the diet = =

While the concept of only eating locally grown food is not new , the book coincided with the emerging popularity of the locavore movement and farmer 's markets . Media outlets in North America examined the feasibility of only eating food produced locally , local food @-@ themed events , and locavore groups . During World Food Day in 2006 , playing off the popularity of Smith and MacKinnon 's articles in *The Tyee* , the Vancouver City Hall held a 100 @-@ mile themed breakfast . Locavore groups have held local @-@ only dinner parties and week @-@ long challenges . Some restaurants and caterers offered 100 @-@ mile menus , one being The Herbfarm Restaurant in Woodinville , Washington . Some farmers , gardeners , or regional food producers began offering subscription services to deliver produce or urban farming or gardening services . The 100 @-@ mile diet spawned many variations to allow for various circumstances and motivations . Examples include the allowance of a few non @-@ local items , like Barbara Kingsolver chose to include spices into her local diet , or expanding the geographic area to more convenient boundaries , like the economic region , or the entire state or province . A ' made @-@ in @-@ Manitoba ' diet challenge led to a government Manitoba Food Charter recognizing and encouraging local food markets .

In 2014 , the American writer Vicki Robin published *Blessing the Hands That Feed Us* which described her experiment to eat food sourced within a ten mile radius of her home in Washington State .