

This excerpt from Barbara Kingsolver's book *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* is meant to work as an appetizer for you. It shows that it is possible to start caring for our environment and becoming less consumerist right around the kitchen table. For us, young people participating at the project called Green & Healthy: Try and share, it was the activities of this exchange which let us taste, try and experience how it feels to walk, travel by bus and train, talk to people in the streets about health, let them suggest how to improve the city environment, discuss topics of sustainability with secondary school students and last but not least, learn first hand about new cultures and get inspired by that. To share all these with you, we have created this simple photo brochure documentary. Take it as a nudge – and we hope to meet you in the near future as a pro active and smart young person, ready to do a project together.

And where can you find us? If you are from the Czech Republic, contact us on: [info@dynamia.org](mailto:info@dynamia.org). Otherwise, use contacts of our partners from your country which you will find inside. Research sites of the Youth in Action programme too. There is a National Agency in many countries, just goggle yours.

There is plenty of interesting stuff and the whole young community in reach.



The seven-day multilateral youth exchange "Green & Healthy: Try and share" was organized and hosted by DYNAMIA, a Czech NGO. It took part in the natural reserve of Moravian Karst, [www.moravskykras.net](http://www.moravskykras.net).

The project was funded by the Czech YIA National Agency, [www.mladezvacki.cz](http://www.mladezvacki.cz) and co-funded by the city of Brno.



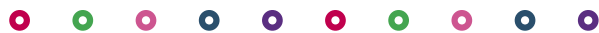
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On a Sunday in early April we sat at the kitchen table putting together our shopping list for the coming week. Normally we all just penciled our necessities on to a notepad stuck on to the fridge. The problem now was that **we wanted to be different...**



And whose idea this whole thing was in the first place, I'm pretty sure. Camille: our redheaded teenager, who currently hates all stereotypes.



And Lily: the earnest, dark-pigtailed persuader and politician of our family.



**Cucumbers, in April? Nope.** Those would need passports to reach us right now. Even salad dressing was problematic because of all the ingredients – to get them to a salad factory, and then to us, increases ecological footprint too much. "Salad dressing is easy to make," I said.



With the shopping list, I shifted tactics. Instead of listing what we can't have, I said, we should outline what we knew we could get locally. Vegetables and meat would be available in some form throughout the coming year. We had met or knew of farmers in our country who sold pasture-fed chicken, turkeys, beef, lamb and pork. Many were producing vegetables. Our town holds a farmers' market twice a week from mid-April to October. Soon our garden would also be feeding us.



Then we came back to the most difficult demand: **"Fresh fruit, please!!!"** At the moment, fruits were only getting ripe in places

where people were wearing bikinis. Putting on our swimsuit would not make it happen here. "Strawberries will be coming in soon," I enclosed. The question remained: what about now? "Look," I said, **"the farmers' market** opens this Saturday. We'll go see what's there."



Only eight vendors had turned out, surely the bravest agricultural souls in the county. What would they have this early, anyway – the last of the last year's potatoes?



I made up my mind to buy something from everyone here, just to encourage them to come back next week. Charlie, a wiry old man who is self appointed comedian of our market did have green onions. We bought six fat bundles of them. From Mike and Paul, at the next two stalls, we bought turkey sausage and lamb. At the next, the piles of baby lettuce. Next down the line we found black walnuts.



I pushed on to the end, where Lula sold assorted jams and honey. There's where I spotted the rhubarb. Big crimson bundles of it, loaded with vitamin C and sour sweetness and just about screaming, **"Hey, look at me, I'm fruit!"** I bought all she had, three bundles.



Rhubarb isn't technically fruit, but it's a fine April stand-in. "Rhubarb," a renowned recipe writer says in her book, "is the vegetable bridge between the tree fruits of winter and summer." Later, at home, we took the last package of our frozen Yellow Transparent apple slices from last summer and made together an apple-rhubarb cake to celebrate the beginning of what turned to be a year spent **eating only local food.**



## Reduce your Food Footprint

Eat more local, organic, in-season foods. Plant a garden- it doesn't get more local than that. Shop at your local farmer's market or natural foods store. Look for local, in-season foods that haven't travelled long distances to reach you.

Choose foods with less packaging to reduce waste. Going meatless for just one meal a week can make a difference- greenhouse gas emissions are associated with meat consumption.

**Experience from the exchange:** Visit a goat farm in Moravian Karst and taste their fantastic products: [www.sedlakkozy.cz](http://www.sedlakkozy.cz)



## Go sustainable and become more fit

Use soft and sustainable transport: walk, cycle and use public transport as much as possible. Push local municipality to improve infrastructure/build cycle lanes.

Learn as much as possible to be able to protect your natural environment. Damaging nature while doing outdoor sports is easy – get advice from professionals and enjoy challenge without harm. Google world wide community supporting sustainability – get inspired by good practice and become active too.

**Experience from the exchange:** Book a rock climbing session with GO-UP and you will never fall down: [www.go-up.cz](http://www.go-up.cz)



## Do an international project and help local community

You can change the world by doing something useful! Establish your own project group and apply for funds.

Get as much project practice as possible – look for the programmes for young people, such as Youth in Action. Alternatively, contact youth organizations that can support you and take part in projects they run:



In the Czech Republic: [www.dynama.org](http://www.dynama.org)

In Estonia: [www.vihasoo.ee](http://www.vihasoo.ee)

In Sweden: [www.nbv.se/mittsverige](http://www.nbv.se/mittsverige)

In Turkey: <http://eng.aksaray.edu.tr>

**Experience from the exchange:** Groups from Estonia, Sweden, Turkey and the Czech Republic did a survey on local needs with Brno citizens. They took great pictures of them with fruit and veggies. Look at great documentary pictures on Dynama's site, the Green & Healthy: Try and share section.

