

## Cycling: Try a taste on cycling farm tour

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Every August, the Slow Food Cycle Tour draws many people from near and far to Agassiz and Chilliwack.

When my husband and I participated last year, in the Agassiz tour, we had so much fun that we decided to go again this year.

It's a family friendly bike tour along 25 kilometers of mostly flat and quiet rural roads.

It's a wonderful outing for the whole family, a great way to explore the beautiful countryside, and to meet some of the farmers that grow and produce food locally in the region.

There's quite a variety of farms that participate with the tour.

There are great cheeses to sample and tasty, tender, juicy organic chicken, and you can see how a dairy farm is run.

It's pretty cool to bike right through the hazelnut orchard after sampling the flavoured hazelnuts.

There are so many details to take in, including heavenly coffee made with the beans that are expertly roasted in an antique flame roaster.

They also have lovely antiques and collectibles, chickens, garlic, and a beautiful garden.

One farm grows pea shoots. I've had them stir fried before, but I really enjoyed the crisp tender pea shoots in a delicious salad.

It was interesting, too, to see how they're grown.

At the UBC Dairy Research Centre, there was more interesting stuff to learn.

Part of the fun of these events is meeting super nice people. It gives both farmers and city folk a chance to connect and for people to learn about the importance of supporting our local food growers.

With the changing climate and weather patterns world-wide, and the worsening drought issues in California and other regions that produce much of the food that we eat, we may well have start relying much more on our own region to feed ourselves.

I was amazed at the number of young kids that I saw along the way. Some were even riding bikes with training wheels.

It's so awesome to give kids these kinds of experiences.

The entire distance was probably too far for some of them, but it was obvious they were having a wonderful time and their parents were definitely giving them precious memories that will last a life-time.

Pedaling their own bikes gives these kids the really empowering feeling of independence that they don't get when strapped into a car seat. Many of their parents and grandparents still had the privilege to enjoy that important part of growing up as a kid. It's also surprising how many kids have no clue these days where the food comes from that they get on their plates every day and these kinds of tours are a valuable learning experience that no class room will provide.

Every year, hundreds of people participate with these Slow Food Cycle Tours.

Last year, Tourism Harrison counted around 800 people for the Agassiz tour alone.

Tours like these help promote local agriculture in the region and lead to more visits by tourists, as well as foodies the rest of the year too.

Last year, the Golden Ears Community Co-op and HUB organized our own little Bike to Farms tour in Maple Ridge. Even though our tour was on a way smaller scale, those who came along for the ride told us it was great fun.

So we will be organizing our second Bike to Farms tour on Sunday Sept. 7, and we hope to grow the event this year.

Participating this year will be Red Barn Plants and Produce, Brookfield Farm and Lorea McCready, who does an amazing job of feeding her family pretty much year-round with home grown vegetables.

We can't wait to include Golden Ears Cheese Crafters, again.

Hopefully next year, once the planned multi-use path has been constructed along that section of 128th Ave., so that we can drop by for a visit safely.

- To take part, e-mail [jchow23708@yahoo.ca](mailto:jchow23708@yahoo.ca).

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