

The Wooden Monkey
1685 Argyle Street
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Lil MacPherson
www.thewoodenmonkey.ca



Introduction

Since its opening in 2004, The Wooden Monkey has been dedicated to providing Haligonians with a healthy, organic, locally grown dining experience. As owner Lil MacPherson states, The Wooden Monkey is spreading the word about environmentally conscious dining and is setting trends that she hopes will catch on in Halifax and across the Maritimes. Although the costs of running a sustainable restaurant are high, Lil gets the big picture when she says “you have to eat the costs because the cost to the environment is more important”.

The Sustainable Menu: Local and Organic

A menu “based on organic, macrobiotic, and locally grown fresh ingredients,” is sustainable in more ways than one. By choosing to support local farmers The Wooden Monkey cuts down on the fossil fuels used to transport foods and, at the same time, boosts the local economy by supporting the local farms. When choosing where to get their food, The Wooden Monkey gives local farmers priority. If the food supplies are not available in the provinces, the restaurant will then make purchases outside of Nova Scotia with the goal of keeping distances minimal. As a last resort The Wooden Monkey will order from the United States and abroad. Unlike most restaurants that have one or two suppliers, The Wooden Monkey sources their orders and depends on 35 to 40 suppliers to ensure that the majority of their ingredients and supplies are local.

In addition, a sustainable menu not only supports local farms but is more nourishing as well. Organically grown foods are chemical-free and there is no risk of consuming Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO’s). Lil and the rest of The Wooden Monkey staff are working hard to demand labelling of GMO’s in grocery stores and are fighting to have them outlawed. The European Union demands labelling, why can’t Canada?

Embodied Energy

As for the actual building, The Wooden Monkey is found in a 17th-century historic building downtown. As much as possible of the original 2000² foot building has been left intact and any renovations have been done with recycled and re-used material found locally. For example, the wood flooring is made from trees that fell during Hurricane Juan.





Sustainable Transportation

As mentioned above, supporting locally grown agriculture reduces green house gases caused by transporting food long distances. The convenient location of The Wooden Monkey also contributes to sustainable transportation, encouraging people to walk or use public transportation rather than driving into the downtown core.

Biodegradable Take-out

The Wooden Monkey even takes ‘green’ initiatives when it comes to their take-out packaging. Instead of Styrofoam or plastic, The Wooden Monkey sends food out in biodegradable packaging complete with biodegradable cutlery. They also use cloth napkins, biodegradable cleaning products, recycled toilet paper and paper towel.

Efficient Appliances

The energy costs of running a restaurant have been cut back by making small changes, such as upgrading to an energy-efficient fridge and setting the dishwasher to use the rinse water of the previous wash to do the next wash. They have also installed energy-saving light bulbs throughout the building.

Future Initiatives

Lil has dreams of running The Wooden Monkey out of a totally green building complete with solar panels and a roof top garden to grow their own produce but for now she says they’ll have to be satisfied with installing a 4L toilet.

