

The 11th annual Boston Local Food Festival returns to the Greenway Sunday

By [Diti Kohli](#) Globe Staff, Updated September 17, 2021, 3:43 p.m.



The Boston Local Food Festival hosted over 80 vendors on the Greenway in 2019. SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS NETWORK

Farmers' market fans, get excited.

The 11th Boston Local Food Festival takes over the Rose Kennedy Greenway Sunday with its annual offering of sustainably-sourced food and specialty goods. The free, outdoor event brings together New England farmers, fishermen, food trucks, and restaurants dedicated to healthy fare.

Chefs from Mela Indian Restaurant, Double Chin, Koy, and R&S Jamaican Restaurant will be among the nearly 60 participating vendors, local food program coordinator

Christina Solazzo said. Treats such as Heiwa Tofu, Popzup Popcorn, and Barry's Hot Sauce are up for sale, too. (See the full vendors list at bostonlocalfoodfestival.com.)

It's all thanks to the Sustainable Business Network, the Massachusetts trade association that first hosted the festival in 2009.

"We have a longstanding history in the community for being a leader in conversations about sustainability," said Solazzo, who joined SBN in July. "And having an interest in where your food comes from is certainly something that's increased over the years."

The Globe reported in May 2020 that community-supported agriculture saw "explosive growth" after the pandemic first hit.

SBN organizers hosted the event virtually in 2020 because of COVID-19 safety concerns. This year, they scrapped the cooking demonstrations, seafood throwdown, and face-painting sessions from the schedule as the pandemic endures. But Solazzo said between the Family Fun Zone and New England Village, there are activities aplenty.

Mary DeBartolo is hauling an assortment of Cape Cod Pops to the festival from her Orleans ice cream shop, Local Scoop. The homemade delicacies come rolled in local goods: a salted caramel pop with McCrae's Caramel, a rum-raisin pop soaked in South Hollow Spirits Rum, and a brew pop adorned with chocolate malt ice cream, made with Cape Cod beer. Some flavors — mango, strawberry, watermelon lemonade, and cucumber lime — are dairy-free.

By using an organic base and regional ingredients, "our money goes back to areas we want to see grow," DeBartolo said. "Then when people visit us, it completes the circle, supports the whole community."

The "farm-to-scoop" advocate pursued her dream of opening an ice creamery eight years ago after founding the Slow Food Chapter on Cape Cod. Sunday marks her first time at the Boston fest.

"I'm going to get to meet so many other food artisans and farmers [and] connect about our philosophies," DeBartolo said.

The festival is also hosting educational initiatives on the sustainable food industry. A presentation on composting will teach attendees how to return food waste to the earth, Solazzo said. And World Farmers, the Lancaster nonprofit that supports immigrant and refugee farmers, will touch on the devastating impacts of flooding.

The group provides 354 small farmers with the necessary space and infrastructure. Each year, World Farmers send participants to the festival to sell their harvest. But after the rain-heavy summer of 2021, “there are no crops to bring,” said Henrietta Nyaigoti, the World Farmers’ sales manager and a farmer herself.

Downpours oversaturated land with water, and hurricanes like Henri and Ida added to the damage. Nyaigoti said that they “need to use this example to show people how the effect climate change is having on New England.”



World Farmers’ Flat Mentors Farm (above) heavily flooded this year. WORLD FARMERS

Following city and state recommendations, organizers are strongly recommending attendees to wear masks, except while eating or drinking. Face coverings are required for vendors and unvaccinated guests.

The Boston Local Food Festival will snake down five blocks of the Greenway from State Street to Atlantic Street. It runs from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Diti Kohli can be reached at diti.kohli@globe.com. Follow her on Twitter @ditikohli_.