



# Montana Crunch Time

Celebrate National Farm to School Month and local food in Montana by crunching into any locally grown or raised food on **October 19, 2022!** Montana Crunch Time is state-wide event where students, teachers, farmers, community members, and local food enthusiasts come to together and bite into any locally grown or raised Montana food. We encourage all Montanans to join the tenth year of this crunch! This year, we are expanding the crunch beyond apples. Crunchable foods include apples, carrots, chickpeas, beef jerky, and more! Get creative, grab your local food to crunch, colleagues, family, or friends, and join us for this year’s Crunch Time!

Why crunch? This collective crunch encourages healthy eating and supports “farm to school” and “buy local” initiatives throughout the state. Crunch Time is a great way to introduce kids to fresh, local produce and foods in a fun way! Montana Team Nutrition’s Program, in collaboration with the Montana Farm to School Leadership Team Partners, have created this guide to help every Montanan crunch into delicious produce this October!

Share your story by tagging a photo or video with **#MTCrunchTime** on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media sites.

Montana is participating in the Mountain Plains Crunch Off along with Colorado, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming! Join preschools, schools, colleges, businesses, organizations, and individuals across Montana in celebrating local food and National Farm to School Month by crunching into locally and regionally grown foods! Help Montana win the Crunch Off crown by registering your crunch by October 31 at:

<https://www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool/mt-crunch-time.html>

## Crunch Time Guide Contents

Steps to Get Started	2
Finding Local Foods	3
Virtual Crunches	4
Crunch Time at School	5
Littlest Crunchers	8
Make a Bigger Crunch Ideas	10
Fun Sheet	11
Recipes	14
Community Celebrations	16
Promoting Your Event	17
Crunch Bytes Form	19
Additional Resources	20



## Steps to Get Started



**Register!** If you would like to host a Crunch event, register your event here: <https://www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool/mt-crunch-time.html>. You must register to be counted!



**Create a Crunch Team!** Find a group of individuals who are excited about local food and farm to school. Consider including students, teachers, food service staff, administrators, PTA members, and community members to help you plan and promote your event.



**Decide what you will crunch and where you will get it from!**

Refer to the list of crunch suggestions below or visit the [MT Crunch Time webpage](#), refer to the State-specific resources to help you source local foods provided upon registration, or reach out to Aubree Roth, [aubree.roth@montana.edu](mailto:aubree.roth@montana.edu)



**Create your Crunch plan!** You may choose to have a school or organization-wide Crunch in a large assembly, individual classrooms, during breakfast or lunch, with individuals at different locations all at the same time, or at some other time and place.



**Promote your Crunch event!** Share your event on social media, print media, school announcements, newsletters, etc. There are template press releases and social media posts at the end of this guide for your use. Be sure to use #MTCrunchTime when posting on social media.

### Crunch Suggestions

- Apples
- Beets
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cherries
- Green beans
- Broccoli
- Peppers
- Winter squash
- Jerky
- Grain products
- Roasted lentils or chickpeas
- Pickles
- Any other crunchable locally grown or raised food!



## Get Your Local and Regionally Grown Food

One of the first steps in coordinating your Montana Crunch Time event will be to explore your options for getting locally grown or raised foods. Local foods such as apples, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cherries, cauliflower, pumpkins, jerky, grains, and more! If crunching at home, in the office, or over Zoom with friends, shop around at your local grocery stores or farmers markets to purchase local foods. Check with your distributors for local food options.

Finding a local grower:

- Locate an Orchard Near You: [Montana Apples](#)
- Find a Farmers Market Near You: [Montana Department of Agriculture](#)
- Find producers, businesses, farmers markets, and more: [Abundant Montana Directory](#)
- Locate a [Local Pumpkin Patch](#)
- Montana [U-Pick Farms](#)

### Schools and Institutions

Make sure you connect with the food service manager and/or head cook at your school to see if they are interested in being involved and can help order for your Crunch Time!

If your school qualifies, use your Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) money to purchase fresh produce for the Montana Crunch Time event. If crunching during the school day, consider crunching during a meal time so your Crunch qualifies as a reimbursable component for National School Lunch Program or National School Breakfast Program. Consider using Supply Chain Assistance and Local Food for Schools funds to purchase eligible crunchable foods. Learn more about these funding sources at: [OPI Supply Chain Assistance for Schools](#)

For **procurement information**, including **food safety information** and regulations:

- [Farm to Cafeteria Manual for Montana](#)
- [Garden to Cafeteria Toolkit](#)



Poly Drive Elementary takes a big crunch in 2021.

## Virtual Crunches

If your community isn't ripe for large gatherings this year, consider the following alternatives!

- Encourage kids and parents to crunch at home. Help them find local produce and send home worksheets that they can complete.
- Schedule a Zoom, Google Hangouts/Meet, Microsoft Teams or other technology platform for everyone to crunch together virtually. If possible, build this into learning time or the business day.
- Encourage the submission and compilation of selfies, of everyone crunching simultaneously but separately.
- Use hashtags – such as #MTCrunchTime and #MountainPlainsCrunch – to post and collect images from social media.
- Promote crunches in the classroom or in other small groups as allowed.
- Join the Montana Office of Public Instruction in a virtual crunch on **October 19 at 2pm** at the beginning of the Webinar Wednesday that will feature Montana Harvest of the Month as well! Join the virtual crunch via Zoom at 2pm MST: <https://mt.gov.zoom.us/j/5731799849?pwd=aVlyREhKd0tsT1ltTWVFRE1VV0d3Zz09>



Montana Team Nutrition, OPI staff, and folks from around Montana participated in a virtual crunch in 2021.

### Sample Announcement to Families for Remote Crunches

Dear Families,

This year \_\_\_\_\_ (school/center/organization) will be participating in the Montana Crunch Off on October 19, 2022. Given the challenges imposed by Covid-19, this year's will be a \_\_\_\_\_ (virtual/individual) Crunch.

We encourage you to review the sample lessons/complete the sample activities we have sent home. At \_\_\_\_ (time), all children are encouraged to crunch into their choice of local produce. Please send a picture of this crunch to us at \_\_\_\_\_ (contact information).

**OR**

At \_\_\_\_ (time) please have your child log into their class's \_\_\_\_\_ (technology platform name) and have his/her food ready. We will all conduct our Crunch Off together as a group, virtually.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name)

# Crunch Time at School

## Increase Involvement

The more groups and individuals you can get involved with your Crunch Time event, the more successful (and fun) it will be! Recruiting volunteers can increase participation while simplifying the Crunch Time countdown. Parents and other helpers can pick up food items at a central location in the school to deliver to classrooms and assist with classroom activities. The food service staff can be a valuable resource for this project. Be sure to ask if they have the time and space to help with receiving, washing, and preparing the food to be crunched.

## Organizing an Assembly

Rally support and increase excitement for Crunch Time by holding an all-school assembly. See how loud your crunch can be when everyone crunches together!



## Crunch in the Cafeteria

Incorporating the crunch food into a school meal or snack and crunching in the cafeteria during the designated meal time is an easy way to reach students and cover the cost. Make it more than a component of the meal by decorating the cafeteria, having prizes for crunching, taking photos, etc. Be sure to find ways to allow students who bring meals from home to be included in the crunch fun.

## Crunch Time Leaders

You can appoint Montana Crunch Time champions. An elected student from each classroom can pick up crunch food from the school office or cafeteria for their classroom and help lead Crunch Time activities. A student club or sports team could take the lead in promoting the event and coordinating the distribution of food. You could assign Crunch Time “buddies,” putting older students in charge of delivering food and helping to lead activities with younger students to make Montana Crunch Time a school-wide celebration.

## Take Photos and Videos

Don't forget to appoint a parent, teacher, or student to act as a photographer and capture all the action of Montana Crunch Time! Share on social media using #MTCrunchTime!

## Connect to the Classroom

Crunching into that crunch-worthy food is just one part of the Montana Crunch Time experience. Activities in the classroom will help connect the event to current subject matter. Feel free to use and



adapt the [Montana Crunch Time Fun Sheet](#) for your classroom! The Montana Harvest of the Month videos on [YouTube](#) are available publicly and are a great way to provide fun facts and a connection to Montana agriculture.

### **Lower Elementary (Grades K-3) Activities**

For younger elementary students, crunchy produce can be incorporated into writing, reading, math, science, and art activities. Consider these lesson ideas:

- [Exploring Apples: How They Grow, Taste, Nutrition Facts, Activities, and More!](#)
- [Writing About Fruits and Vegetables](#)
- [Pumpkin Exploration: Introducing Pumpkins and How They Grow](#)
- [Bean/Lentil Mosaics](#)

Try incorporating reading a comic, completing a crossword, learning about legumes, and singing a song, about chickpeas, peas, and lentils, in the classroom. Use this link for lesson plans and activities:

- [USA Pulses](#)
- [Lentil Song](#)

### **Upper Elementary Education (Grades 4-6)**

For older elementary students, challenge students to observe, problem solve, and experiment. Students can perform basic science experiments and practice making connections to the fruits, vegetables, and foods grown locally and regionally in their lives. Consider these lesson ideas:

- [Farm Field Trip Lesson Plans – Apples, Corn, Grains, Pumpkins, Seeds, and More!](#)
- [Eating in Season Lesson Plan](#)
- [Ag in the Classroom](#)
- [Grow Lentil Sprouts](#)

Teach students about bison, the Blackfeet, and Buffalo Jump Park with this lesson plan while crunching on local bison jerky!

- [OPI MT First Peoples Buffalo Jump State Park Lesson](#)

### **Middle School and High School Education**

Montana Crunch Time is an opportunity for middle and high school students to explore their local food system. Students can calculate how far their crunchy fruits, or veggies traveled to get to their plate. This demonstration is a great kickoff to any agriculture, conservation, or food system lesson. The following links can assist with lesson planning:

- [Food Miles Lesson](#)
- [FoodSpan Teaching the Food System from Farm to Fork](#)
- [Ag in the Classroom Files and Lesson Plans](#)

Middle school and high school students can also make beef jerky while observing what changes when drying meat. Try this lesson plan with your students:

- [Beef Jerky Food and Fun](#)

### Connect With Your Community

Montana Crunch Time is an opportunity to reach beyond the school walls and connect with the entire community. Schedule a visit to a local farm so students can see firsthand what it takes to grow produce and raise livestock. Alternatively, invite a local farmer to visit your school and share their farming experiences. Invite a food producer to come eat lunch with students or help hand out the crunchy foods they grew.

Ask a local dietitian or doctor to share the benefits and importance of eating fruits, vegetables, and local food products. Nutrition or health professionals can share why and how produce fits into a healthy, balanced diet. Local college students involved in nutrition or agriculture programs would be great guest speakers or activity leaders as well.

Invite several local community leaders to celebrate Montana Crunch Time with you. Contact your local chamber of commerce to connect with local business owners or invite members of the school board to your Crunch Time event. Let local newspaper and television reporters know about your event by sending a press release (see below) and invite them to come join in the fun. Who will be your “crunch celebrity?”



Bozeman Elementary students bite into Swanson’s Mountain View Orchards apples in 2017.

## Littlest Crunchers

### Early Childhood Care and Education Activities

For young children, try using activities that help students identify new fruits and vegetables. Students associate vegetables and fruits with visual imagery, feel, smell, and taste. Connecting fruits and vegetables to fun activities is a great way to engage students and support development. Check out these resources and activities:

- [Colorful Plate Spinners](#)
- [Taste and Tales](#)
- [Preschool Plan It](#)



Students and teachers at Moore School crunched into local apples in 2020.

### Books

*What Grows in My Garden: Apples Grow on Trees.* Rooney, Anne. QEB Publishing, 2012.

*Apples A to Z.* McNamara, Margaret. Scholastic, 2012.

*Rah, Rah, Radishes.* Sayre, April. Simon and Schuster, 2011.

*Two Old Potatoes and Me.* Coy, John. Random House Children's Books, 2013.

### Taste Testers

Gather and cut up samples of two or three different locally grown or raised foods, such as apples, chickpeas, carrots, and grain products and let the children, adults, and volunteers share experiences between the foods. Try blindfolding to challenge their senses or have them close their eyes.

Do they feel different? Do they smell different? Is one sweeter, crunchier, or more sour than the other? Which is their favorite?

### Story Time

Try reading [The Very Hungry Caterpillar Visits Montana](#), a book written by Eric Carle and adapted for Montana, with your students! Have a local farmer, businessperson, or guest speaker come in to read to the students.



### Sprout a Beet!

Supplies

- Beet (with root and stems)
- Bowls or saucers
- Soil
- Water

Directions

- Cut the root and stems of the beet so a 1/2 inch remains of each.



- Press the remaining crown of the beet, root facing down into the soil with the stems up, into damp soil in a saucer or container.
- Place the bowl or container in a window with good light and water, and have the students observe the growth of the leaves over time.

*Resource from [VT Harvest of the Month](#)*



## Montana **Crunch Time**

### Make a Bigger Crunch!

#### COOK!



Guide a cooking lesson using locally and regionally grown or raised food ingredients.

#### TEACH!



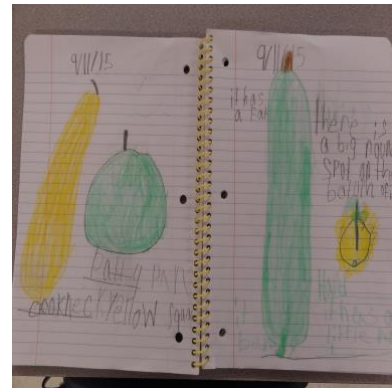
Teach about local and regionally grown or raised foods!

#### FIELD TRIP!



Take a trip to a local ranch or farm!

#### ACTIVITIES!

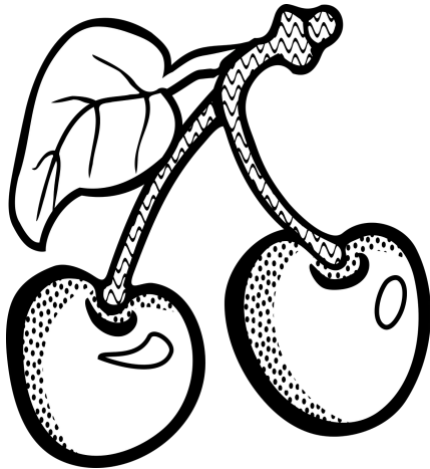


Have activities to engage participation!

# Montana Crunch Time Fun Sheet

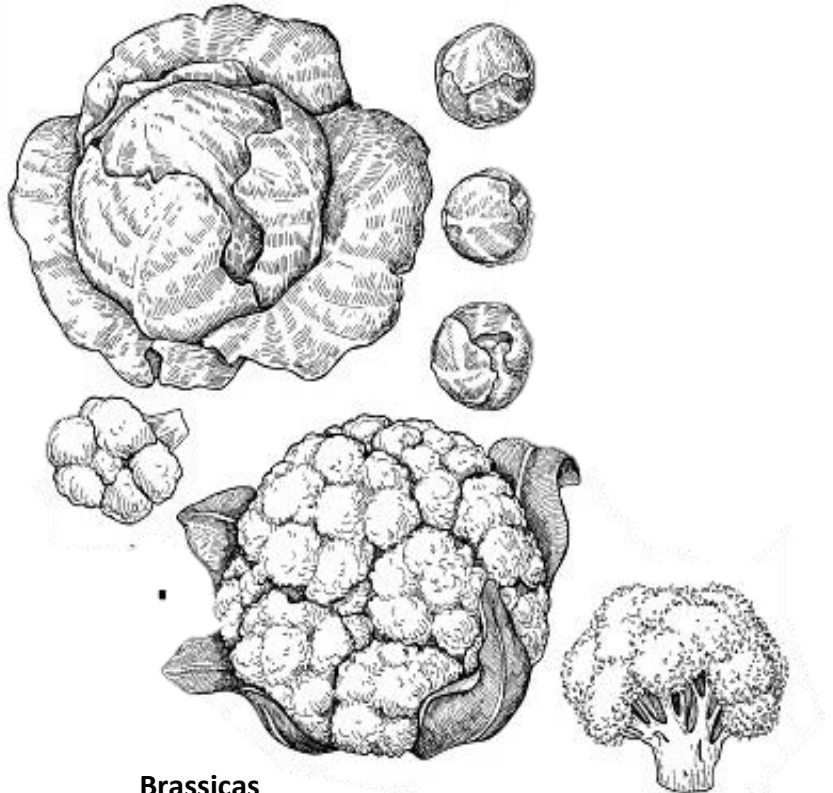
## Color Your Favorite!

Color your favorite crunchy Harvest of the Month product on this page.



### Cherries

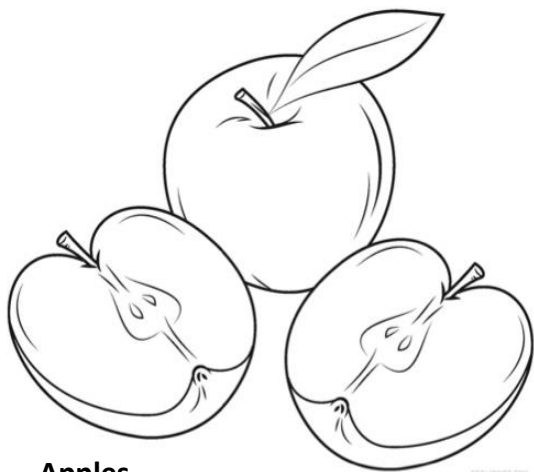
Did you know on average, Montana growers produce two million pounds of



### Brassicas

There are 3700+ species of Brassicaceae, or the Brassica plant family, ranging from cauliflower to kohlrabi!

**October is National Farm to School Month! How are you celebrating?**



### Apples

Over 2,500 varieties of apples are grown in the United States. They come in shades of red, green, yellow, and more!

**NATIONAL  
FARM to  
SCHOOL  
MONTH**

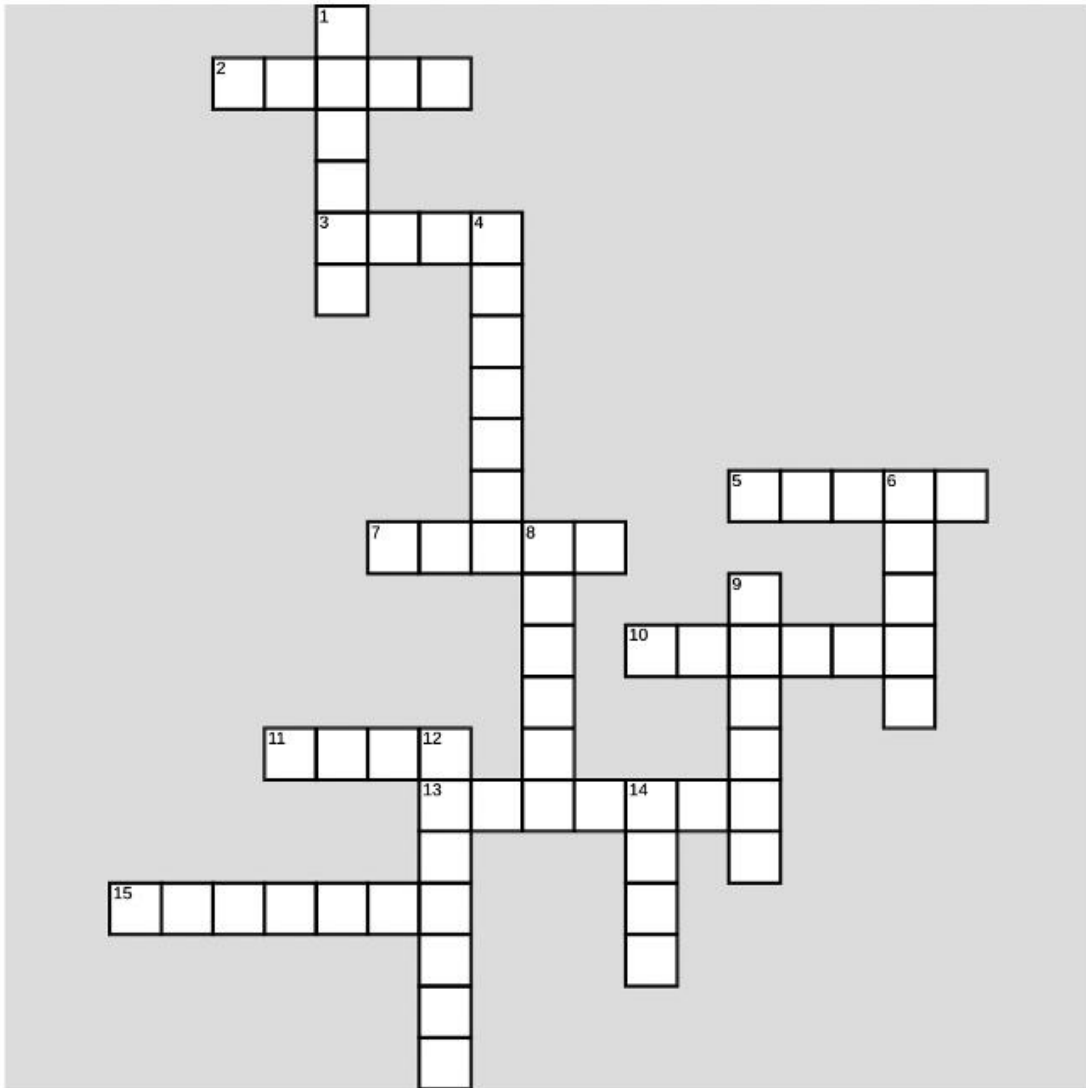


## Harvest of the Month

The Montana Harvest of the Month program features a different Montana grown food in Montana schools and communities each month.

Learn how to become part of this fun program at [mtharvestofthemoth.org](http://mtharvestofthemoth.org)

## Montana Crunch Time Crossword



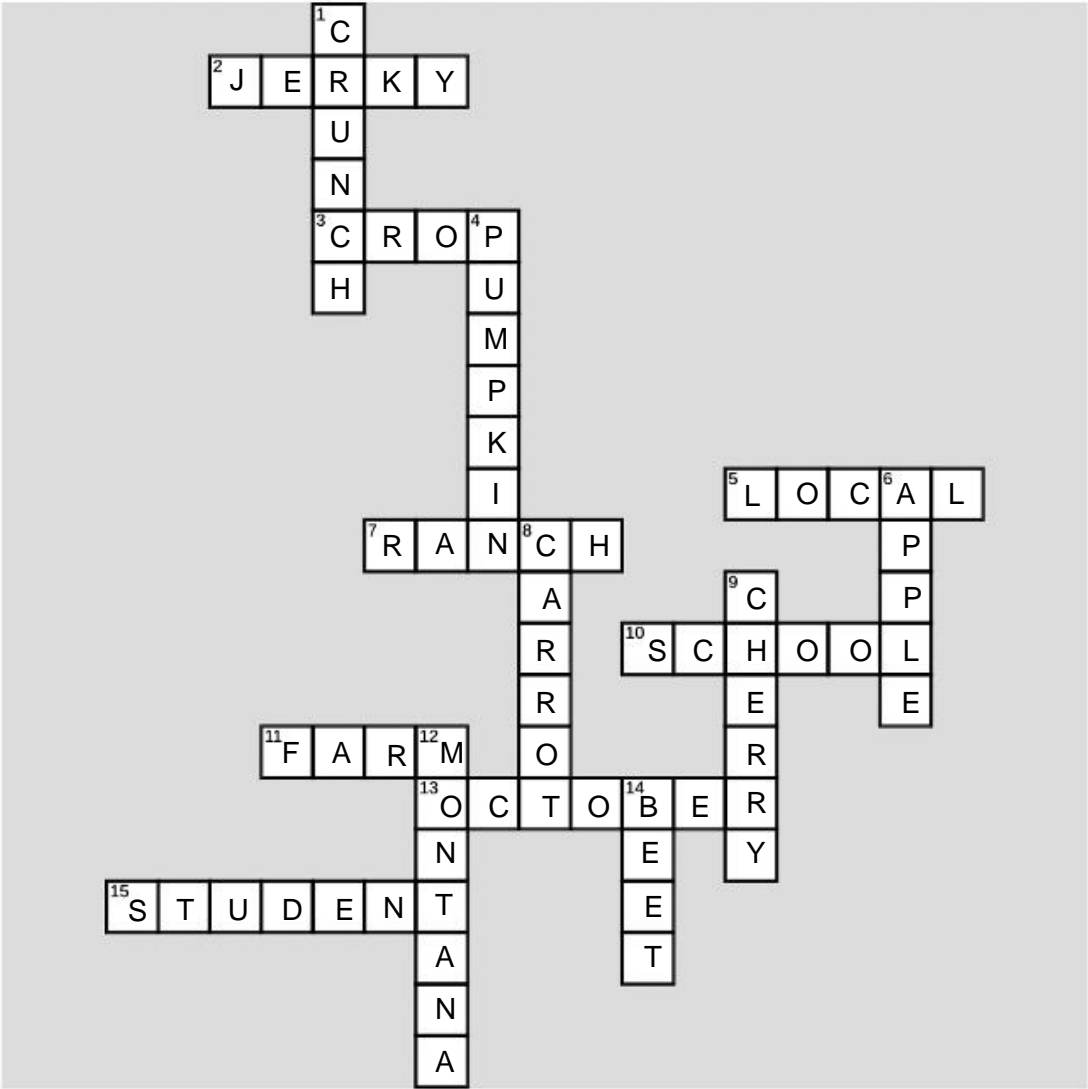
### Across

- 2 A dried meat product
- 3 Plants grown as food, especially a grain, fruit, or vegetable
- 5 From the area; in a particular region
- 7 A large farm where cattle or other animals are bred and raised
- 10 A place where children go to receive education
- 11 An area of land used for growing crops
- 13 National Farm to School month
- 15 Someone who receives education

### Down

- 1 Lound sound when biting into food
- 4 Orange-fleshed with lots of seeds and often carved in October
- 6 A fruit with red or yellow or green skin and sweet to tart crisp, pale flesh
- 8 An orange root vegetable
- 9 Popular in the Flathead region, a dark red fruit with a small pit
- 12 The state you live in
- 14 Dark red colored root vegetable

**Crossword Answers**



**Across**

- 2 Jerky
- 3 Crop
- 5 Local
- 7 Ranch
- 10 School
- 11 Farm
- 13 October
- 15 Student

**Down**

- 1 Crunch
- 4 Pumpkin
- 6 Apple
- 8 Carrot
- 9 Cherry
- 12 Montana
- 14 Beet



## Recipes

Here are some ideas on how to celebrate Montana Crunch Time in the kitchen with tasty snacks!

### Silly Apple Bites

Have fun while making these happy treats!

Serves 8 (1/4 cup portions)

#### Ingredients

2 apples, each quartered

Sunflower butter or other nut butter

Sunflower seeds

#### *Optional:*

2-3 strawberries, sliced

1-2 raisins per apple bite



#### Preparation

1. Cut the middle out of each quarter of the apple to create a mouth.
2. Coat the inside of the cut gap with a filling of nut butter.
3. Place 4 sunflower seeds on the top of the 'mouth' for the teeth. If you are not using strawberry tongues, add more to the bottom of the 'mouth'.

#### *Optional:*

4. Place 1 sliced strawberry inside the mouth for a tongue.
5. Use nut butter to paste on two raisins for eyes.

*Source: Fork and Beans*

## Roasted Munching Chickpeas

Great crunchy snack packed with protein.

*Developed by: MSU Extension Nutrition Education Program*

Serves 6

### Ingredients

1 ¼ cups dry chickpeas

1 tsp olive oil

¼ tsp salt

¼ tsp cumin

¼ tsp paprika

¼ tsp garlic powder



### Preparation

1. To cook chickpeas ahead of time: using a colander, rinse dry chickpeas with running water. Add chickpeas to a medium-large bowl and add 3 ½ cups of water. Cover bowl and leave chickpeas to soak for about 16 hours. After soaking, drain off chickpea water and add chickpeas to a large pot along with 3 1/2 cups of water. Bring to a boil on the stovetop and reduce to a strong simmer for 1 1/2 - 2 hours. Taste test a couple chickpeas to check if they are done. Chickpeas should no longer be mealy, but not yet mushy either.
2. Drain the chickpeas, shaking off as much water as possible.
3. Preheat oven to 375°F.
4. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and pour the chickpeas onto the sheet, making sure they are spread out.
5. Pat dry with a paper towel.
6. Bake for 30 minutes total. Halfway through baking time, shake the pan so the chickpeas turn over. The peas should sound like rocks rolling when they are well roasted.
7. Mix dry seasonings into a large bowl.
8. As soon as the chickpeas are done baking, pour into large bowl, add olive oil.
9. Shake the bowl so all the chickpeas are coated with oil.
10. Pour chickpeas into the bowl with the seasonings.
11. Shake the bowl so all the chickpeas are coated with seasonings.
12. Serve immediately at room temperature, or store in a covered container.

*Source: Montana Harvest of the Month*

## Community Celebrations

Montana Crunch Time isn't just for students and schools, everyone can participate! Across Montana, individuals, healthcare facilities, colleges, workplaces, businesses, community groups, and more will be celebrating healthy, local food with a synchronized crunch.

- To get involved, use the modifiable Crunch Time flyer to spread the word.
- Post the flyer at your workplace or community center.
- Email it to coworkers or other potential participants.
- Announce Crunch Time at a work meeting or gathering.
- Share Crunch Time information on your website, social media pages, and or e-newsletter.

Once you have an event scheduled, be sure to share the information with your local media (see press release template below), and also with us! Register your crunch at <https://www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool/mt-crunch-time.html> by October 31<sup>st</sup> and send us photos and video of your crunching crew.

## Promoting Your Event

Promote your event and Montana Crunch Time throughout Montana! Use the following sample press release/announcement below to invite others to join in your celebration. Download a modifiable [Montana Crunch Time Flyer](#) to post in your workplace, school, and community. Consider inviting your local representative, an elected official, sports team, service clubs, or other individuals to join in your celebration.

### Sample Press Release/ Announcement

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT**

{NAME}

{SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION}

{PHONE}

{EMAIL OR OTHER CONTACT}

October 19, 2022

**It's Montana Crunch Time, {TOWN/SCHOOL NAME}**

{TOWN/SCHOOL NAME} is joining schools, preschools, individuals, and businesses across Montana in celebrating National Farm to School Month by crunching into {FOOD ITEM} from {FARM, RANCH, BUSINESSES NAME OR TOWN} on Wednesday, October 19th for *Montana Crunch Time*!

{PROVIDE A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR EVENT, ACTIVITIES, LOGISTICS, HOW PEOPLE CAN BE INVOLVED}

This collective crunch encourages healthy eating and supports farm to school and Buy Local initiatives throughout Montana. {DESCRIBE HOW IT CONNECTS LEARNING OR OTHER RELATED EFFORTS AT YOUR ORGANIZATION}.

For more information, or to crunch with us, please contact {CONTACT NAME} at {CONTACT PHONE AND/OR EMAIL}.

The Montana Farm to School Leadership Team and partners have created a guide to help every Montana child crunch into a healthy or local food of your choice this October! For more information about Montana Crunch Time, to register and receive your guide, visit [www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool](http://www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool).

-end-



Montana Crunch Time is sponsored by the Montana Farm to School Leadership Team and partners. Learn more about the Montana Farm to School Leadership Team and the member organizations at: [www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool/leadership-team/index.html](http://www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool/leadership-team/index.html)

Join preschools, schools, colleges, and individuals across Montana in celebrating National Farm to School Month by crunching into any locally grown or raised food on

**October 19<sup>th</sup>**

For more information about Montana Crunch Time, to register and receive your guide, visit:

**[montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool](http://montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool)**

Share your “crunch byte” (video and photos) on social media with

**#MTCrunchTime**



Scan here to get crunching!

## Social Media

We want to see and hear students from across our Big Sky State crunch into a Montana grown or raised food at the same time (2 p.m.)! Get out your cameras, video cameras, or phones and take a *crunch byte* from your school to share with others across the state! Be sure to share your story, photos, or videos on social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) by using the tag **#MTCrunchTime**.

“ \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of group/school/business) is participating in Montana Crunch Time. We will be crunching into \_\_\_\_\_ (local food) at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) on October 19 at \_\_\_\_\_ (location). If you want to join us \_\_\_\_\_ (add instructions for joining if relevant).... #MTCrunchTime

“We encourage you to join \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of group/school/business) in crunching into \_\_\_\_\_ (local food) at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) on October 19. Snap a crunch byte via your \_\_\_\_\_ (device/video/photo) and post on \_\_\_\_\_ (social media: Facebook/Instagram/Twitter) and tag #MTCrunchTime!



## Promotion Images

Use these images when promoting your crunch or create some of your own with the logos provided!



## MONTANA CRUNCH TIME

**Crunch into a  
into locally and  
regionally  
grown food to  
celebrate  
National Farm  
to School  
Month!**



## Crunch Byte Photo Release Form

Help us gather crunch bytes (videos, photos, etc.) to share on social media and in future Montana Crunch Time resources by sending your crunch bytes to Aubree Roth, [aubree.roth@montana.edu](mailto:aubree.roth@montana.edu) and by filling out the Montana Team Nutrition [Photo Release Form](#).

## Additional Resources

Download the following resources to help extend your Crunch Time celebration!

[Montana Crunch Time Fun Sheet for Kids](#)

[Montana Crunch Time Flyer](#)

[Montana Crunch Time Logo](#)

[MPRO Logo](#)

## For More Information

Aubree Roth

Farm to School Coordinator, Montana Team Nutrition Program

Phone: 406-994-5996

Email: [aubree.roth@montana.edu](mailto:aubree.roth@montana.edu)

Learn more about farm to school in Montana at [www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool](http://www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool)

Resources and ideas about National Farm to School Month in October: [www.farmtoschoolmonth.org](http://www.farmtoschoolmonth.org)

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for

Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442;  
or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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