

# RecipeSwap

Send your recipes or recipe request to:

Manitoba Co-operator  
Recipe Swap  
Box 1794,  
Carman, Man. ROG OJO  
or email: [lorraine@fbcpublishing.com](mailto:lorraine@fbcpublishing.com)

## Fair trade for your table

Manitoba Council for International Co-operation wants us to think about the benefits that come from fair trade product purchases

Lorraine Stevenson  
Crossroads Recipe Swap



Bridgehead coffee kept me awake for years.

Now that I'm out of university, I no longer need it to pull all-nighters when writing term papers due the next day.

But I still drink fair trade coffee. Today it's Kicking Horse, a brew sold by the B.C. company of the same name and one of many trying to get a better deal for the world's 25 million coffee farmers.

Annual coffee consumption worldwide is around 400 billion cups — that's 12,000 cups per second — but the financial return for growing the labour-intensive crop is often meagre.

A fair trade approach means paying a guaranteed minimum price and also entering into longer-term trading relationships that provide other benefits to farmers.

This month, the Manitoba Council for International Co-operation (MCIC) is reminding us what the impact of switching our purchases to fair trade products can have.

Its 'Fair Trade Challenge' asks Manitobans to sign up for 30 days and commit to consuming products certified as 'Fairtrade' in a 'core challenge' (coffee, tea and chocolate for 30 days) or a school challenge (be 'fair aware' for three minutes a day). There are also office, holiday and baker challenges.

About 1,000 Manitobans have signed up for one or more of the challenges. The baker challenge has been especially popular, with nearly 90 people committed to using the fair trade ingredients in their home baking.

More fair trade products are now available to more people so this is a good way to raise awareness about it, said MCIC director Janice Hamilton. Your local co-op likely stocks certified fair trade coffee

and chocolate nowadays. Other fair trade products such as sugar, spices, cocoa, dried fruit, and olive oil are also now available either online or through stores committed to local products. Vita Health and some Mennonite Central Committee thrift shops carry fair trade products, as do chains such as Costco, Safeway and Sobeys.

Demand for fair trade products is growing because more people appreciate their impact, said Hamilton.

"It's when people become aware of the difference it can make in the producer's life, that they are more interested in doing it, even if it costs a little bit more," she said. "People send their kids to school when they have a little more money."

When the appalling use of child labour in cocoa harvests of the Ivory Coast was exposed in the early 2000s, a lot of us started to think twice about a simple purchase of a chocolate bar, for example. Fairtrade-certified alternatives now available include chocolate from the U.K. company Green & Black's; Camino, a Canadian brand; and the Fairtrade-certified Dairy Milk line from Cadbury.

Companies must register with Fairtrade Canada in order to use the Fairtrade logo on products sold in this country. The certification ensures that products are coming from suppliers that meet specific standards around labour law, environmental sustainability and business governance.

The 26 Fairtrade-certified wines available through Manitoba Liquor Control Commission stores, for example, come from wineries where employees share in the profits and have input into the company's decision-making. Liquor Marts have been recognized twice by Fairtrade Canada for its commitment to carrying these products, and so has Fresh Carrot in Gimli and Ten Thousand Villages in Winnipeg. Gimli, by the way, is one of 17 official fair trade towns in Canada, which means its local council uses Fairtrade-certified products and supports other fair trade initiatives in the community.

MCIC's Fair Trade Challenges wrap up at month's end. But the seasonal spend-a-thon called Christmas is beginning. It's a good time to be thinking about how our dollars can make a difference in other farmers' lives.



### Want to learn more?

- [www.fairtrademanitoba.ca](http://www.fairtrademanitoba.ca)  
You can learn more about the Fair Trade Challenge and other activities in Manitoba at this site.
- [www.FairTradeCanada.ca](http://www.FairTradeCanada.ca)  
You'll find more product info, a fair trade finder, and recipes on this site. It also explains the certification process in detail.
- [www.cftn.ca](http://www.cftn.ca)  
This is the website for the Canadian Fair Trade Network.
- [www.lasiembra.com/camino/](http://www.lasiembra.com/camino/)  
This website belongs to Camino, a Canadian brand of fair trade products. You can find baking products to shop online for at this site.

Shorter days and colder temperatures mean it's time to eat hearty. This dish is easy to make and works for supper, breakfast or brunch.

### Beefy Huevos Rancheros

If you prefer a smoky, fiery version, add a teaspoon or so chopped canned chipotle peppers.



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| 1 lb. extra-lean or lean ground sirloin | 1 large onion, diced   |
| 1 large sweet pepper, diced             | 2 tbsp. chili powder   |
| 1 tsp. ground cumin                     | 1 can (28 oz./796 ml) diced tomatoes                             |
| 1 can (14 oz./398 ml) tomato sauce      | 1 can (19 oz./ 540 ml) kidney or black beans, drained and rinsed |
| 1-1/2 c. frozen corn kernels            | 6 eggs   |
| 1 c. shredded mild cheddar cheese       |  |

Cook beef, onion, sweet pepper, chili powder and cumin in large deep skillet or sauté pan over medium-high heat for eight to 10 minutes or until meat is thoroughly cooked and any liquid has evaporated. Drain if necessary. Stir in tomatoes, tomato sauce, beans and corn. Cook over medium-high heat until boiling. Reduce heat to medium; simmer, covered, for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Spread into a 9x13-inch baking dish. Make 6 to 8 wells in meat mixture; gently break an egg into each; sprinkle cheese over top. Bake in 400 F (200 C) oven until chili is bubbling and until egg whites are set, about 25 minutes.

Source: Canada Beef Inc. ([www.beefinfo.org](http://www.beefinfo.org))

PHOTO: THINKSTOCK