

Date and Time: 23 July, 9 a.m.

Jamie moved to Lakeview 14 months ago with her fiancé who works for the Forest Service. They joke about how her job at the Extension Office has been more of a career advancement for her than moving here for her fiancé's job has been for him. I stayed with them over the weekend and interviewed Jamie in her office.

Allegra Gordon: So what's one of your favorite foods?

Jamie Davis: Favorite food? I would have to say is tacos.

AG: I think we've had taco-themed things a couple times already.

JD: Exactly, so that would explain it.

AG: How often do you normally eat tacos?

JD: Probably once a week at least, yeah. Some form of Mexican food I guess once a week, yeah.

AG: What about one of your least favorite foods?

JD: Least favorite food... Ohh definitely chili or some kind of casserole for the most part. Anything that's a random mix of food. I like to know what I'm eating.

AG: Do you ever eat that kind of stuff or how often?

JD: I don't. I don't like chili, I don't like goulash or anything like that, yeah.

AG: What did you eat for your evening meal yesterday?

JD: Tacos.

AG: So here in Lakeview, what are some things that you appreciate about the food system?

JD: Anything? I enjoy, I think we have some good restaurants and I do like the chain of Subway as we talked about before. And, that's probably it. OH, also, I enjoy that we have our meat lockers here, that is locally raised meat.

AG: Do you get meat there a lot?

JD: I do, yeah.

AG: What about things that you don't appreciate so much?

JD: I think that's most things. Um, probably produce here. Getting things, um, everyone always says that we get what's ever left on the truck, at the end, because we're in the middle of nowhere, so, it's very inconsistent? One week there could be a certain thing at the grocery store and the next week it won't be there, so. What you see at the Safeway as like delivered to your house are not at our store.

AG: So how do you get your food? Do you buy all of it, do you grow anything, do you ever hunt or fish?

JD: Yeah, well, for the most part I buy most of it and I do actually get most of my food in Lakeview. Um, I get all my meat at the lockers, but most of my other products I get here in town at the Safeway or Stewarts. I am starting to grow some more stuff, and hopefully we'll learn how to can food because I think that will be a good thing for produce cause it's not that great here, but if I grow my own and can it, it'll kinda compensate for that. Um, Kevin does hunt, he's not a very successful hunter, so [laughs] no, we don't really live off our food that we hunt, for sure.

AG: Do you ever face any challenges getting the food you want? Aside from produce.

JD: Yeah, I actually do think so. If, sometimes [pause] I [pause] I think we have basically everything that you need. It's just as far as we don't have as many choices as maybe quantity or the size of product you want. Price is a lot more expensive here I think, which if you're willing to pay the price you can get it, but there are still a lot of organic foods that somewhere in Bend or Portland you would have, but you don't have here.

AG: What is the history of you or your family's involvement with food in the past? Any making food or selling food or anything like that?

JD: Well, I'm originally from a farm or a farming community, and so we, my grandpa started the farm and grew corn and soy beans, everything like that, so as far as producing that way. With my parents we really didn't garden, as far as vegetable gardening. It was never something we really did. They did can, so most of it was store bought and things, and (pause) yes it was a very, yeah we didn't, we didn't make a whole lot of special food.

AG [4:25]: Do you have any family stories relating to food?

JD: Well, I think I always thought about what my mom always talked about growing up. They raised beef and her best friend raised chickens, and mom always said it was a huge treat to go over to her friend's house to have chicken for dinner, and her best friend loved coming over to have beef. And so I always thought that was interesting, because my parents kinda moved us away to the city and we didn't really experience that kind of thing. Um, my, both my families are, my parent's families are really large. My dad had [pause] 11 brothers and sisters so there's about 12 kids, so even listening to my grandma talk about how she would feed 'em, and 10 of them were boys there were only two girls, and they would have their own milk machine that would get filled a couple times a week, and everything like that cause the boys were in such proximity in age. So it's interesting as far as listening to their stories with food. I mean, I think when I grew up, we, my parents, we ate out quite a bit. So it was just, I mean my parents still do now too, they weren't really into cooking, so that's kind of my story.

AG: So are there any special family recipes they do cook?

JD: Yeah, we do, um, I, for a lot of things, for like Thanksgiving and Christmas we do have some weird recipes that I've actually taken to Kevin's, my fiancé's, parent's house, and they're like, 'This is kind of good, but I've never ever heard of this,' but I think a lot of things are like, we're very German, so things come from heritage.

AG: What kind of things do you make?

JD: Well, I don't know if there's really a name, I always call it Cranberry Salad, but it had crushed up Saltine crackers, cranberries, and Cool Whip, and it was layered. It really sounds different, but I love it. Um, and then eating like a lot of lefsa and making that, it's the thin potato bread, and stuff like that was kind of our thing, our traditions.

AG: Do any of the groups you belong to eat together? Like work?

JD: We [pause] I, sometimes we have potlucks for, um, the Master Gardener Association, and as far as, that was probably the only group that I belong to that ever has, like, social dinners. I meet friends and go out to eat and that's about it, or have people over. I like to cook for people and stuff. Barbeque a lot.

AG: Do you ever offer meals to others?

JD: I usually, I love to have people over, to cook out and grill and that kind of stuff I guess is my favorite thing. I do like to have people over to the house to eat.

AG: So how do you think that farmers and ranchers are faring in the community? I don't know if you have any experience with that? Do you think they're doing well?

JD: I think, it's been a bad year as far as we didn't have the snow pack as far as watering for hay this year, so I think the ranchers are kind of hit hard by that, and some of them had to compensate by selling their cattle. Bry would be, our office manager, would be a really good one to ask about this because she is a rancher and she could probably tell you pretty straight. Um, I think some people are still doin' good, I mean, with anything in agriculture there's gonna be highs and lows. Um, so that's pretty much all I know about that.

AG: Do you know anything about the low-income people in the community or elderly or disabled and how they get their food?

JD: Um, I've sat on a few of the, the Food Pantry groups, and then they were, through the Extension Office we're also having a little demonstration once a month that they cook for them and everything, so I sat back and kinda visited with some of those meetings, so it was really interesting that, basically, how many people in this community actually qualify for food assistance is just amazing, because of the income level. And, how many people actually out of those only utilize it. And so. But I know around Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter time, they have a lot of people that actually go to the Food Pantry to get food. Um, and I think that involves some of the elderly. It's a very very tight knit community and even my neighbor down the road, every night she cooks for an elderly man. So, she goes over to his house, she makes this food, and I think there are a lot of people in this community that tie together in that way and make meals for each other, and that kind of thing.

AG: Do you know where the foods come from that people eat here? Aside from the meat locker?

JD: Canning is huge here. Really really big, I mean, as far as that they grow their own food and canning it for themselves. I mean, even meat and all that kind of stuff. It's, it's really interesting how many people's houses I've been to and they have set-ups in their garage, or, cause it gets really hot when you can, so different places and they're completely set up for it. I was never exposed to that before, so people are a lot more sustainable here and self-efficient than a lot of different areas, probably because Lakeview is a little more old school, and we're a little more rural and they have to be a little more independent from our food source. And then besides that, I think a lot of people, a lot of families, go probably to either ShopCo in Medford, or, is it ShopCo? One of the big stores over there, the bulk stores in Medford, or they go to Klamath Falls, like to Walmart and get food once a month, and make the trip there and it's worthwhile. Me, only having two people to make dinner for, it's not really worth me driving over there to get food.

AG [10:28]: So when you're going to start canning, do you know how to do that already?

JD: No. I have absolutely no idea how to do that. Um, Bry has the equipment and she has agreed to loan it to me, because it is kind of involved, and I don't want to get the stuff if I know I'm gonna be like 'hey I don't like this.' So it is quite involved with all the things, the pressure cookers and everything you need. I'm definitely going to need someone to teach me how to do that. I do know this. Um, and I hope I can do it, um, so I'm definitely not going to rely on that for my food source because there's a good possibility that I might screw up, so [laughs].

AG: That will be a good back-up.

JD: It will.

AG: Do you eat any local food that's grown here? Or meat from here?

JD: Yep, of course from the lockers a lot of the meat comes here. Um, I think, there's probably a lot of people who eat local meat here because of the 4H market sale. A lot of people in the community buy either like a quarter of beef or something like that and have it in their freezers, a lot of people have big freezers here. And, I guess growing vegetables is food from here.

AG: Does anyone sell their vegetables anywhere?

JD: Well, we had the Farmer's Market which kind of fell through this year. I think we talked about that earlier, but it's not really happening, but they used to. I know in Cedarville, which is in California, but our close neighboring town, being an hour away, but it's so close, they sell, um, vegetables there and they still have a Farmer's Market. I know there's some produce that's sold at the lockers cause they have a lot of fresh stuff, and I think, she, and I think someone locally grows that, I'm pretty sure. And that's along with, there is a Heart Mountain Bakery, who, I think she's out in Plush, which is east of here, and makes a lot of baked goods, and she's very successful cause she hauls things into here and sells 'em at the lockers too.

AG: You said something about how Subway has, tends to have kind of fresh vegetables and stuff like that. Why do you think, where do they get it?

JD: I have no idea and it does make me mad because I go in there, and I will just go in there to, instead of making a salad at home or getting the ingredients at the grocery store, I'll just go buy a salad there and then Kevin'll eat a salad as we would eat a side salad with a meal, just because I think there're such better vegetables there and it's a lot cheaper because, every time I get produce here, I cut up a tomato, and it's bad. And so then I go to the next one. (Like the corn the other night) Yep, exactly, like the corn. It's just, it's like an everyday thing, but at Subway everything's like open, fresh, chopped up, and you know it's good. So, that's kinda how I feel about that, and I don't know why it is. I'm thinking Subway must have a system, and, you know, their produce all comes from the same place, and they buy it in such large quantities and it gets shipped in. I don't know.

AG: It's weird that Subway has that and Safeway doesn't.

JD: So I go to Safeway, or I go to Subway to get my vegetables.

AG: Is there anything you'd like to see changed with the food system or that you can see as changeable or fixable?

JD: Well, I don't, you know, I don't know if, I think it's their own fault. I honestly think it's the citizens who live here. What happens is a lot of people go out of town to buy their groceries. Therefore, if we have specialty items here, people will still go out of town and get them at a cheaper price and so they sit on the shelf here, and they don't sell, and then they're like 'Well we're not going to carry this' because it doesn't sell. So, I really don't know if it can change. And, I would like to see things change as a bigger variety, you know, as far as having a better produce selection and everything like that, but I understand why we don't. I think a lot of things we bring it on ourselves, and businesses close here because we're going out of town to get things cheaper. It's just a vicious cycle.

AG [14:54]: Do you think everybody just settles for it?

JD: Well, I don't know. It's, you have a lot of different people with differing opinions. A lot of younger people, who I would say are in their 30s that have families, it's like how can you afford to shop in town for groceries? But then you have a lot of the old timers who are just feeding themselves, and of course you know, you don't eat as much, and they're like "Oh no, it's not worth my time going out of town." So it's really differing, I don't know.

AG: Do you think people are concerned about their health here?

JD: Um, n- I think that's a pretty interesting question. I, I think there are people, because there's a lot of people with organic gardening and everything like that. And, but, I think it's, it's hard to eat healthier here? As far as fresh things, but you can always get frozen vegetables and it's the same, and they're good, frozen vegetables are good for you too. But, um, I don't think it's as easy to be healthy here. I've know, you know, Sharon's daughter was a vegetarian and she just didn't like it in Lakeview because of course there's nothing catered to a vegetarian here. I didn't eat red meat when I came here, and I just knew, I'm like, there was just no way, that I was going to be able to be ok being a, you know, that. So, you know, I wasn't stuck to it, it was just a phase I went through, so. I think it is a little harder to eat healthy here.

AG: Is there anything else about the food system that you can think of that I should know?

JD: Not so much. I think I've pretty much covered everything. I never realized how much I actually thought about this until you asked me these questions, but I'm like, I had answers for everything and it's stuff I've talked about before, so it kind of put things in perspective.

AG: Do you think that's you as kind of a new comer thinking about it or do you think it comes up in the community? Do you think other people think about these things as much as you do?

JD: Probably not. I think if they've been here and they always grew up and had just a Safeway and Stewarts and everything like that, they probably don't think about it as intensely as I do. But being from a big place, and I actually worked in a grocery store when I was in high school and everything, I have this, a different idea. And then being exposed to fantastic Safeways and Fred Meyers and stores near Portland, it's just a huge shock and difference here. So, I don't think, I think I'm, uh, yeah. I think I think a little too deeply about things. It's just the produce that really gets me I guess.

AG: So where do you see Lakeview in 20 years?

JD: In 20 years? Well, sadly, I mean, I, since I've been living here there's been a couple businesses that have shut down. And, I really, that makes me nervous as far as, I mean a couple of restaurants and then there's Thornton's Drug Store that was just down here on the right that now has all the paper and says "Closed." They were open a week and a half ago and closed now, and I didn't even see it coming. So, I think more businesses will shut down. But it's really interesting because the population's growing, especially with the prison and everything like that, and, all the government jobs. So... It doesn't make sense to me, but I think people just know they have to travel to Klamath Falls or Bend to get things.

AG: Do you think you'll be here in 20 years?

JD: I? You know what? That's a good question. I could see myself either way on that one. It'll be interesting to see if, yeah. I don't know. I could, but I couldn't. I could go either way.