

A photograph of a pair of hands holding a small green lentil plant. The plant has several stems with small, pinnate leaves. The roots are visible, and the soil is dark and moist. The hands are cupped around the base of the plant, with some soil on the fingers. The background is dark and out of focus.

LENTIL UNDERGROUND

PROJECT REPORT

Created By Heather Richardson

In 2011, a UC Berkeley PhD student from Montana came to visit David Oien, Co- Founding Farmer and CEO of Timeless Natural Food, at his family farm in Conrad, Montana. From that initial conversation, a story unfolded, a story so insightful and powerful that the student spent the next five years working with David and his growers to research, write, and share it. Who would guess that in central Montana, a low-income region prone to drought, a group of dedicated farmers had spent thirty years developing sustainable crop rotations? That they'd put together the processing infrastructure, distribution partnerships, and marketing relationships to support them?

On January 2015, this story was published by the Gotham imprint of Penguin Random House as a general audience book, *Lentil Underground*. But the project didn't end there. Both the author — now Dr. Liz Carlisle — and the subjects of this book hoped to see it serve as a vehicle for something bigger. We wanted to honor important work that had already been done, in Montana, to create a healthier, more sustainable food system. But we also wanted to connect with our kindred spirits in other places. And we wanted to inspire future food system leaders. We wanted to reimagine what a dissertation could be, what a book tour could be, what a partnership between researchers, farmers, and food system advocates could look like. Here is a glance back at our first year.

Map of Lentil Underground Tour Stops



Bay Area Book Release



In early February, the Montana farmers featured in *Lentil Underground* traveled to the Bay Area for a weeklong book release tour. Highlights included an event with Michael Pollan at UC Berkeley, a farm-to-table dinner at San Francisco's Greens Restaurant showcasing the grains and lentils featured in the book,



and stops at the Petaluma Seed Bank and Stanford Educational Farm. Chef Claudia Galofre-Krevat and her daughter Gaby supervised a volunteer crew at Oakland's Kitchener, preparing

hundreds of lentil tamales and cups of "Renegade Ragu."

(Michael Pollan interviews Liz Carlisle and farmer David Oien, at a special *Lentil Underground* book release event at UC Berkeley)



Montana Book Release

In Late February, the book tour came home to Montana, with stops at the University of Montana in Missoula, Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell, Helena's Real Food Store, and the Conrad Public Library. In Bozeman, Montana State University hosted a "Lentil Rush," complete with a lentil tasting, panel discussion, and farm-to-table dinner prepared by Chef Claudia Galofre-Krevat and MSU Dining. The highlight of the evening was the honoring of retired MSU professor Jim Sims, whose tireless work as a "renegade researcher" has been critical to the development of ecological cropping rotations in Montana and across the northern Great Plains.



(Liz Carlisle and Jim Sims)

Lentils on Campus

During 2015, author Liz Carlisle and main character David Oien (Co- Founding Farmer and CEO of Timeless Natural Food) visited over twenty college campuses, giving public talks, engaging students in class discussions, and visiting student farms and teaching kitchens.



(David, University of Minnesota)



(At Michigan State University, the Ecological Food and Farming Systems Specialization co-sponsored a special Lentil Underground event)

Lentils in the Dining Hall

At several campus stops, the *Lentil Underground* tour partnered with innovative campus dining programs, which not only aim to serve healthy and sustainable food, but also to serve as a hub for “edible” education.



(Tara Peters at Oregon State University Dining sampled out dozens of lentil wraps)



(Chef Scott Pampuch from University of Minnesota Dining shows off his plateful of lentil and heritage grain creations, including a red lentil dessert)



(For a seminar talk that Liz and David gave at the University of British Columbia, Chef Steve Golob joined in, with a rousing legume and heritage grain demo)

Organic Trade Association Policy Conference

Liz Carlisle and David Oien joined U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Senator Jon Tester as featured speakers at the [annual policy summit for the organic industry](#), and Liz met with several members of Congress to discuss the importance of organic agriculture as a means of sustainable rural development.



(Liz Carlisle joins organic farmers, manufacturers, and certifiers for a visit to US Senator Dianne Feinstein)



(While in DC, Liz and David teamed up with the Food and Environment Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists for an event at Busboys and Poets)



(David Oien speaks at the Organic Trade Association Policy Conference)

Cooking Classes

It wasn't just the chefs in the kitchen, either! At Stanford, Claudia Galofre-Krevat taught a cooking class at the university's new Teaching Kitchen. At Harvard, Liz Carlisle and David Oien taught 20 students and staff how to make Ethiopian lentil stew, partnering with the campus's Food Literacy Project. And at the University of San Francisco, Liz taught this same recipe to 20 students in a Community Garden Outreach class, focused on growing and cooking food to nourish those in need.



(Claudia, with her students in the Teaching Kitchen at Stanford)



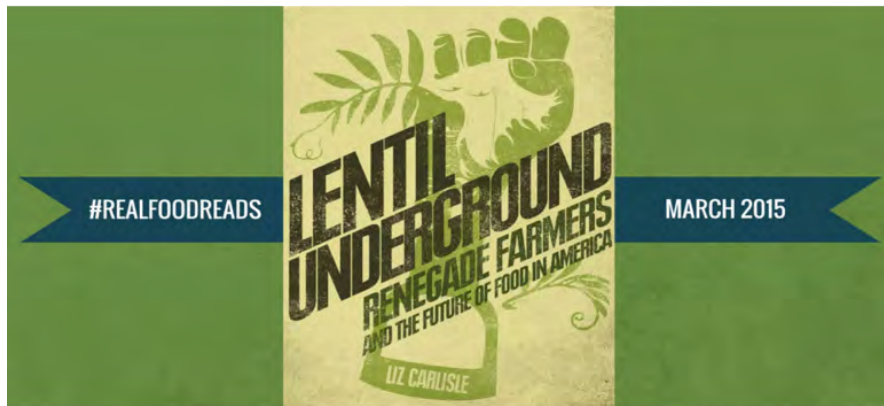
(The chefs from Harvard University Dining Services came by to sample the food and gave us the thumbs up)



(Liz, with the Community Garden Outreach class at the University of San Francisco)

Book Clubs

Lentil Underground has also been a favorite for book clubs. Featured in March as the book of the month for Anna Lappe's [#realfoodreads](#), the book was also selected by this book club in San Francisco's East Bay, which invited the author to join them for a lentil potluck!



Farm to Table: Working with Restaurants

More than a dozen stops on the *Lentil Underground* tour included special farm-to-table meals, hosted by restaurants with a commitment to sustainable sourcing and a passion for building community through food.



(David Oien surveys Chef Ethan Pikas' take on Black Kabuli Chickpeas just before a special Earth Day dinner at Cellar Door Provisions in Chicago)



(Black Beluga Lentils a la Chef Tyler Demora, Local 121 Restaurant, Providence, Rhode Island)

Bookstore Visits

More than 25 local, independent bookstores stepped up to partner with the *Lentil Underground* tour, hosting Liz Carlisle and David Oien for readings and discussions and bringing books along to off-site events.



(David Oien speaks at a Room of One's Own, in Madison, Wisconsin)



(Liz and David were greeted by a sitting-room-only crowd at Powell's Books in Portland)



(Liz signs books at Town Hall Seattle)

Community Partnerships

One of the primary objectives of the *Lentil Underground* tour has been to connect with kindred spirits in other places, to share stories and highlight the important work being done in local communities across the community, by people committed to a healthier, more sustainable food system.



(Liz Carlisle teamed up with Neil Thapar (of the Sustainable Economies Law Center), Carrie Bennett (of the Ecology Center) and Dan Beringhele (of Berkeley Public Library), for a special event on sharing seed.)



(Liz and David teamed up with the Upper Valley Coop in White River Junction, Vermont for a lentil potluck and honoring of co-op stalwart Kye Cochran, a shareholder in Timeless Seeds, and a key member of the Lentil Underground during the years she lived in Montana.)



(Liz shares stories and lentil soup with members of Food Corps Des Moines, at the Wallace Center's Food for Thought Dinner Series)

Heirloom Seed Exposition

In September, featured speaker Liz Carlisle and Chef Claudia Galofre-Krevat joined Vandana Shiva, Gary Paul Nabhan, and hundreds of other real food enthusiasts at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds for [this festive and informative annual event](#).

Alternative Energy Resources Organization Keynote Address

Also in September, author Liz Carlisle came home to Montana for the annual meeting of the [Alternative Energy Resources Organization](#), the nonprofit at the center of the story of the *Lentil Underground*. After delivering the closing keynote of the conference, Liz was greeted with a standing ovation.



Montana Book Festival

And in yet another highlight from September, author Liz Carlisle returned to her hometown of Missoula for the [Montana Book Festival](#), where she engaged in a lively panel discussion (Bears, Dams, and Lentils: Where Nature Meets Culture) with fellow authors David Brooks and Michael Dax.



Eat Real Festival

On the main stage of the popular [Eat Real Festival](#), held in Oakland's Jack London Square, Liz Carlisle moderated a panel entitled "Wonders of Legumes!" featuring David Oien, along with Minh Tsai (Hodo Soy), Steve Sando (Rancho Gordo), and Dr. Lawrence Kushi (Nutritional Epidemiologist, Kaiser Permanente) Offering up lentil and tofu samples, this interactive panel



discussed the role of legumes in a sustainable food system, sharing the secret of how these plants make their own fertilizer and explaining why this may be the single most effective way to lower the carbon footprint of the average American diet.

Green Book Festival Winner



In June, *Lentil Underground* was named winner in the General Nonfiction category at the [Green Book Festival](#). This Festival honors "books that contribute to greater understanding, respect for and positive action on the changing worldwide environment."

Book Trailer

Marcus Hockett, a graduate student at Montana State University, created a beautiful trailer for the book, featuring original music by Chris Houston and narration by Liz Carlisle. The book trailer can be found on the home page of the [Lentil Underground website](#).



Chef Claudia



Throughout the year, the *Lentil Underground* has partnered with “renegade chef” [Claudia Galofre-Krevat](#) of Bozeman, Montana, who has not only provided food for many tour events, but has developed dozens of recipes, inspired by cuisines around the globe, featuring the lentils



and heritage grains grown by the farmers in the book. A tireless ambassador for these healthy, sustainable, and ancient crops, Claudia applied for and won a grant from the Red Ants Pants Foundation to take her “Lentil Caravan” on the road, bringing cooking classes to underserved rural Montana communities. Watch for Chef Claudia’s forthcoming cookbook!



Lentil Underground T Shirts

Missoula-based artist Lynne Carlisle, known for her classic T-shirt designs for the Wilma Theater and Freddy’s Feed & Read, created original T-shirts for the *Lentil Underground*, in both a 100% organic cotton unisex style, and a junior ladies style (manufactured from 50% organic cotton and 50% recycled pop bottles). Special edition tote bags with this design, made from recycled T-shirts, have also been popping up at recent *Lentil Underground* events! And yes, Lynne is Liz’s mom. Order your T-shirt at <http://lentilunderground.com/tshirt/>.



Op-Eds in National Newspapers

The New York Times

The Downside of Eating Too Locally

By LIZ CARLISLE NOV. 26, 2014

Times, *LA Times*, and *San Francisco Chronicle*. Calling attention to the importance of thinking beyond local food, supporting water-wise crops, effectively developing the next generation of farmers, and addressing diet-related disease, these op-eds have been praised and circulated on social media by Michael Pollan, Mark Bittman, and other leading thinkers in the food movement and beyond.

Beginning with a Thanksgiving Day op-ed in 2014, Liz Carlisle has published four *Lentil Underground*-related opinion pieces over the past year, in the *New York*

2015 Tour Stops

- Jan 23rd: Book Signing at Eco-Farm Conference in Pacific Grove, CA
Feb 3rd: Petaluma Seed Bank Presented by Copperfield's Books in Petaluma, CA
Feb 4th: Book Passage in San Francisco, CA
&
Greens Restaurant Presents Dinner with the Lentil Underground in San Francisco, CA
Feb 5th: UC Berkeley in Berkeley, CA
Feb 6th: Stanford University Dinner in Stanford, CA
&
Stanford University Talk and Book Signing in Stanford, CA
Feb 20th: Montana State University "Lentil Rush" in Bozeman, MT
Feb 21st: Real Food Market and Deli in Helena, MT
&
Helena Community Gardens in Helena, MT
Feb 23rd: Conrad Public Library and Folklore Coffee in Conrad, MT
Feb 24th: University of Montana Dept. of Environmental Studies in Missoula, MT
Feb 25th: Flathead Valley Community College in Kalispell, MT
March 3rd: Town Hall in Seattle, WA
March 4th: Village Books in Bellingham, WA
March 5th: University of British Columbia in Vancouver, BC
March 9th: Powell's City of Books in Portland, OR
March 10th: Willamette University in Salem, OR
March 11th: Oregon State University in Corvallis, OR
&
Grass Roots Books & Music in Corvallis, OR
March 12th: Standing Stone Brewing Company Lentil Night in Ashland, OR
&
Bloomsbury Brooks in Ashland, OR
March 24th: North Carolina State University Center for Environmental Farming Systems in Raleigh, NC
March 25th: Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA
March 26th: University of Kentucky in Lexington, KY
April 6th: University of Vermont in Burlington VT
April 7th: Dartmouth Sustainability Solutions Café in Hanover, NH
&
Upper Valley Coop Meet and Greet in White River Junction, VT
&
Coolidge Hotel Dinner and Book Release hosted by Upper Valley Coop in White River Junction, VT
April 8th: Harvard University Food Literacy Project in Cambridge, MA
April 9th: Brown University Environmental Studies Seminar in Providence, RI
&
Symposium Books in Providence, RI
&
Lentil Underground Dinner at Local 121 in Providence, RI
April 10th: Yale Sustainable Food Program in New Haven, CT
April 13th: The Graduate Center, City University of New York in New York, NY
April 15th: Organic Trade Association Policy Conference in Washington DC
&
Busboys and Poets in Washington, DC
April 20th: University of Michigan Sustainable Food Program in Ann Arbor, MI
April 21st: Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI

April 22nd: Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, IL
 &
 Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL
 &
 Lentil Underground Dinner at Cellar Door Provisions in Chicago, IL
 April 23rd: Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee, WI
 April 24th: University of Wisconsin Community and Environmental Sociology Collective in Madison, WI
 &
 A Room of One's Own in Madison WI
 April 27th: Macalester College in St. Paul, MN
 April 28th: Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture in Minneapolis, MN
 April 29th: Iowa State University Sustainable Agriculture Colloquium in Ames, IA
 April 30th: Food for Thought Dinner at Wallace Centers of Iowa in Des Moines, IA
 May 23rd: Berkeley Public Library in Berkeley, CA
 June 4th: Red Lodge Area Food Partnership Council in Red Lodge, MT
 July 13th: Rising Trout Café and Bookstore in Lewistown, MT
 July 14th: Northern Plains Resource Council in Billings, MT
 July 15th: Wheatgrass Saloon in Livingston, MT
 July 16th: Shakespeare and Co. Books in Missoula, MT
 Aug 21st: National Lentil Festival in Pullman, WA
 Sept 8th: National Heirloom Seed Exposition in Santa Rosa, CA
 Sept 12th: Montana Book Festival in Missoula, MT
 Sept 20th: Eat Real Festival in Oakland, CA
 Sept 26th: Alternative Energy Resources Organization Expo and Annual Meeting in Great Falls, MT
 Oct 17th: Lit Crawl in San Francisco CA
 Oct 26th: NODA: Association for Orientation, Transition and Retention in Higher Education in Denver, CO
 Nov 19th: UC Davis Plant Breeding Center in Davis, CA
 Dec 5th: Montana Organic Association Conference in Bozeman, MT

Radio Appearances

In 2015, author Liz Carlisle appeared on over 35 public radio programs, including the syndicated NPR show, The Splendid Table.

List of Radio Appearances

- KWMR, Point Reyes 90.5 fm, 8 July 2015, "Turning Pages."
- KZYX, Mendocino 90.7 fm, 12 May 2015, "The Ecology Hour."
- HeritageRadioNetwork.com 13 April 2015, http://www.heritageradionetwork.com/category_posts/1209-Lentil-Underground
- Home Ground (Montana Public Radio, Yellowstone Public Radio, Regionally Syndicated), 12 April 2015, http://www.ypradio.org/programs/local/home_ground.html
- The Write Question (Montana Public Radio, Regionally Syndicated), 19 March 2015 <http://mtpr.org/post/lentil-underground>
- The Splendid Table (NPR, Syndicated), March 2015, <http://www.splendidtable.org/story/lentil-underground-an-alternative-to-the-industrial-farming-system-in-montana>
- KBOO, Portland 90.7 fm, 15 March 2015, "The Food Show," <https://kboo.fm/foodshowon4152015>
- KEXP, Seattle 90.3 fm, 14 March 2015, "Mind Over Matters,"
- KGEZ, Kalispell, MT 600 am, 23 February 2015, "Morning Show."
- WSFG, South Florida, 12 February 2015, "Food and Wine Talk," <http://www.southfloridagourmet.com/index.php/radio/food-a-wine-talk-wsfg/2239-2014-07-24-23-42-05.html>
- WLRN, Miami 91.3 fm, 9 February 2015, "Topical Currents," <http://wlrn.org/post/lentil-underground-renegade-farmers-and-future-food-america>
- KCRW, Los Angeles 89.9 fm, 31 January 2015, "Good Food Show,"
- The Thom Hartmann Show (Syndicated), 27 January 2015, <https://www.freespeech.org/video/thom-hartmann-program-january-27-2015>
- WCBQ, Raleigh 1340 am, 27 January 2015, "Morning Show."
- WHTX, Youngstown, OH 1570 am, 27 January 2015, "Brainfood from the Heartland."
- KCBS, San Francisco 106.9 fm, 27 January 2015, "Morning Show."
- KFNN, Phoenix 99.3 fm, 27 January 2015, "Business for Breakfast."
- KMA, Omaha 99.1 fm, 27 January 2015, "Morning Show."
- KKUP, San Francisco 91.5 fm, 27 January 2015, "News."
- WBSM, Providence 1420 am, 27 January 2015, "Morning Show."
- The Bill Martinez Show (Syndicated), 27 January 2015.
- WHOM, Portland, ME 94.9 fm, 27 January 2015, "Perspectives."
- WNEW, Washington, DC 99.1 fm, 27 January 2015, "News."
- KRSN, Albuquerque/Santa Fe 107.1 fm, 27 January 2015, "Morning Show."
- KFRU, St. Louis 1400 am, 27 January 2015, "Morning Show."
- WMNF, Tampa 88.5 fm, 27 January 2015, "Radioactivity."
- KEVT, Tuscon 1210 am, 27 January 2015, "The Jim Parisi Show."
- Kentucky Focus (Regionally Syndicated), 27 January 2015.
- KORN, Mitchell, SD 1490 am, 27 January 2015, "Let's Talk."
- The Allan Handelman Show (Syndicated), 27 January 2015.
- Food and Wine with Chef Jamie Owen (Syndicated), 27 January 2015.
- KDSU, Fargo 91.9 fm, 27 January 2015, "Main Street."
- WSVA, Harrisonburg, VA 92.1 fm, 27 January 2015, "Late Afternoon."
- KAHI, Sacramento 950 am, 27 January 2015, "Poppoff Radio Show."
- KHHT, Los Angeles 92.3 fm, 27 January 2015, "The Community Review."
- KCPW, Salt Lake City 105.3 fm, 27 January 2015, "The Mountain Life"

Reviews

"What does it take to farm sustainably—and make a living? Liz Carlisle tells the engrossing story of the 'audacity rich, but capital poor' Montana farmers who thought lentils were the answer and stuck with them until proved right." **Marion Nestle**, professor of nutrition, food studies, and public health at New York University and author of *Food Politics*

"Liz Carlisle's new book is an absolute treasure—actual stories of real farmers in a part of Montana, some of whom found that their industrial farming practices were a 'losing game' and some who discovered that locally adapted organic farming could be resilient and economically successful. It is a must read for anyone interested in the future of food in America." **Frederick Kirschenmann**, author of *Cultivating an Ecological Conscience*

"All of civilization rests on agriculture, and so it follows that real revolutions begin in the soil, which is why the stories of real revolutions must be reported from the ground up, as Liz Carlisle has done so competently in *Lentil Underground*. Read it, engage the real revolutionaries and begin to understand why their work is so vital to all of us." **Richard Manning**, author of *Against the Grain: How Agriculture Hijacked Civilization*

"Who'd have thought that a book about lentil farming could be a page-turner? With a voice as clear and powerful on the page as it is on stage, Liz Carlisle writes the struggles of Montana's farmers as an epic. Their battles with food, finance, healthcare and modern capitalism are both inspiring, and a timely reminder that populism needn't be a dirty word." **Raj Patel**, author of *Stuffed and Starved*, Research Professor at the Lyndon B Johnson School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin

"Take a chance on this dive in to an eccentric niche of the American farm industry—it has a strange

attraction, especially for foodies, business innovators and entrepreneurs A nimble story about how one man's revolutionary ideas changed the way we eat." **Kirkus Reviews**

"The book has everything. A group of Montana farmers turning one at a time away from "conventional" ag to organics. The saga of what it's like to be a renegade in your own community. How political affiliation loses meaning in the face of sharing common difficulties." **Evan Kleiman**, Host of *Good Food on KCRW*

"Carlisle is a clear and vivid writer ... an important contribution to the sustainable agricultural genre." **Hannah Wallace**, for the *San Francisco Chronicle*

"These farmers demonstrate how to build democracy and build soils at the same time. What a deal!" **Frances Moore Lappé**, author of *Diet for a Small Planet* and *EcoMind*

"Clear, vivid storytelling ... alive to the ordeals and satisfactions of change as people struggle to create new facts on (as well as in) the ground." **Chris Walters**, for *Acres*

"In Carlisle's capable hands, this story of how a few renegade farmers bucked the prevailing culture of Big Ag is riveting and inspiring." **Kristen Galles**, for *Shelf Awareness*

"This combination of serious academic research and authentic human interaction is perhaps what makes *Lentil Underground* not only an important book but a great read. Carlisle introduces us to Oien and a plethora of other members of the *Lentil Underground* in a way that is accessible, personal and compelling. The writing is top notch and the reader is allowed to make his or her own conclusions about the information presented." **Doug Mitchell**, for *Montana Magazine*

"An in-depth profile of family farmers who are willing to take on corporate consolidation to build a better food system." **Naomi Starkman**, for *Civil Eats*

"In an increasingly polarized era when differences and disagreements dominate the headlines, Carlisle's narrative provides an optimistic case for a renewed commitment to the little things that bring us together." **Alexis Shusterman**, for *Berkeley Science Review*

The Next Chapter:

Paperback Edition

Coming in February 2016, Watch for the paperback edition of *Lentil Underground*, with its own original cover design and a foreword by Frederick Kirschenmann of The Stone Barns Center and Iowa State University's Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

Japanese Translation

In January 2016, Tsukiji Shokan will publish a Japanese version of *Lentil Underground*. We had a great experience working with translator Naoko Miki, and we look forward to connecting with Japanese readers.

Wonders of Legumes

Following on this year's panel at the Eat Real Festival, Liz Carlisle and David Oien continue their "Wonders of Legumes" partnership with Minh Tsai (Hodo Soy Beanery), Steve Sando (Rancho Gordo) and Dr. Lawrence Kushi (nutritional epidemiologist, Kaiser Permanente). This year's plans include a series of Earth Week events at 18 Reasons in San Francisco, Good Earth Natural Market in Marin, and the Hayward Book-to-Action Program. The UN has declared 2016 the International Year of Pulses, and we are celebrating!

Hayward Book-to-Action

Our first partnership with a major common reading program has been confirmed for Earth Week 2016! Hayward Book-to-Action is a partnership between California State University-East Bay and the Hayward Public Library, which engages both students and the public in reading the same book and participating in discussions and related community service. Plans for this year include a panel discussion and service work with local food and farm organizations in the Bay Area.

Common Reading

With the paperback coming out, Penguin Random House is now highlighting *Lentil Underground* for use in college's common reading programs, in which incoming first-year students read the same book over the summer and participate in related programming when they arrive on campus. Liz Carlisle had the opportunity to speak to an annual meeting of university staff who direct such common reading programs, this past October in Denver. Stay tuned!

