Class Description: Tour local food facilities to discover how grains are milled, cheese made, fish caught, and vegetables raised and stored. Work with a nutritionist to learn all about these foods and how they impact our diets. Enjoy hands-on cooking classes working alongside professional chefs, learning not only basic cooking skills, but also exploring creative preparations for these products. Nongraded.

Class Outline:

Week 1: Visit the Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Portland Fish Exchange, to explore the plight of commercial fishing and how technologies have both hurt and are now helping fish stocks. Explore the question, what is the outlook of commercial fishing in Maine for the future?

Nutritionist will discuss different types of fish, what they provide for dietary nutritional value, the benefits and diseases associated with fish, risk from mercury in fish, and how to have a healthy relationship with fish.

Chef will lead a sampling of different seafood, the different cuisines from which they originate, and demonstrate how to prepare fish in a variety of ways, including as side dishes, salads and main courses.

Week 2: Kennebec Cheese tour of small commercial cheese operation and goat farm. Learn about raising goats commercially and see how cheese is made. Receive information on different types of cheese, natural versus processed cheese, and the importance of cheese making in Maine.

Nutritionist will discuss different types of cheese and dairy products, explain what they provide in nutritional value, review the benefits and diseases associated with dairy products and how to have a healthy relationship with them.

Chef will demonstrate cooking with different types of cheese, explain where the different types of cheese originate, and how to prepare them in a variety of ways, including side dishes, salads, main courses and pairings.

Week 3: Visit Lakeside Family Farm. Explore a commercial cold storage facility for root vegetables and storage crops that utilizes Maine's cold weather to hold crops for use throughout the winter. Discuss the state of farming in Maine today and the resurgence of the family farm.

Nutritionist will discuss different types of winter vegetables, what they provide for dietary nutritional value, the benefits and diseases associated with them and how to maintain a healthy seasonal diet.

Chef will discuss seasonal menu planning and the creative use of seasonal vegetables, cooking and sampling a variety of dishes and preparations utilizing seasonal crops.

Week 4: Visit Maine Grains Somerset Grist Mill. Tour of a local stone ground mill with information on different types of milling, natural versus processed grains, the importance of grains to Maine and how milling has evolved for better and for worse.

Nutritionist will discuss different types of grains, what they provide for dietary nutritional value, the benefits and diseases associated with grains and how to have a healthy relationship with them.

Chef will demonstrate how to cook with grains, lead a discussion and sampling of different types of grain, review the different cuisines from which they originate, and how to prepare them in a variety of ways, including baked products, side dishes, salads and main courses.