

Who is 88 Acres?

88 Acres is a small and growing food brand based in Boston, Massachusetts. We make seed-based foods with simple ingredients in our dedicated bakery free of peanuts, tree nuts, gluten, dairy, eggs, soy and sesame.



How did the company get started?

Our co-founders Rob and Nicole are now married, but the history of the brand goes back to their fourth date when Rob had an allergic reaction to his meal that was contaminated with nuts. Rob thankfully survived, and Nicole immediately replaced all the nuts in her pantry with seeds. The first 88 Acres Seed Bars were baked in Rob and Nicole's apartment kitchen and were designed to fuel their triathlon training rides. Pretty soon, though, they were staying up all night baking bars to share with their fitness community in Boston. Fast-forward a few years and we're now creating a whole variety of foods made from seeds and sharing them all over the US.

Why seeds?

Seeds are inclusive by nature. Living with a food allergy can feel extremely isolating. Brands designed to be free-from food allergens can feel stigmatizing when they continually reinforce what foods a person with a food allergy is unable to eat. Beyond that, seeds are full of wonderful nutrition. They're the starting point for all the food that grows from the earth, and contain all the nutrients a plant requires to be resilient and thrive. All those nutrients are good for us, too. Seeds are as simply nutritious as it gets.

What products does 88 Acres create?

We have a line of Seed Bars that are baked with a blend of seeds and gluten-free oats, as well as creamy, spreadable Seed Butters. We also re-bake all of the edge pieces of our bars into a zero-waste, crunchy, loose granola we call Seed'nola.

Why did you start working with K-12 schools?

Our partnerships with K-12 schools began naturally. Schools were looking for new foods that met the needs of their students with food allergies and that improved the nutritional quality and integrity of their menus. Through our initial partnerships with forward-thinking school districts, we learned about how to best support the needs of USDA school nutrition programs and felt



that it was more than worth it to be a part of the movement towards better school food. Working with schools allows us to help cultivate a healthy relationship to food in growing students - one that is connected to food and where it comes from, and one that joyfully appreciates deliciously nutritious options.

How are you able to connect kids back to their food?

There are a few ways we are able to make sure kids stay connected to their food when they interact with an 88 Acres bar or seed butter. Initially, we want kids to learn about the ingredients we use. Whether a student is squeezing seed butter out of the pouch and onto a piece of fruit, or unwrapping a bar to enjoy at breakfast, our ingredients stand out. We use a mixing process in our bars that keeps all of the ingredients intact and visible - what you see is what you get! Our seed butters retain their beautiful natural colors - our pumpkin seed butter is green because we use green pepitas to make it. Teaching kids about the connection between the seeds inside the pumpkin and the butter in the pouch is always enlightening and exciting for students to realize.

Hands-on learning in the garden or in a classroom is priceless and allows students to more deeply understand the connection between seeds and the greater food system at work. It all starts with a seed, and we are thrilled to support seed-based programming and curricula.



Tell us about the 88 Acres foods that schools can serve. What makes them unique?

88 Acres' K-12 "Seedlings" line was designed to specifically meet the needs of USDA national school lunch and breakfast programs and Smart Snack standards for snacks in schools. Through conversations with our partner districts, we learned just how important it was to have a product that was not only nutritious, but also helped to create a full reimbursable meal. Our bars use the same quality of ingredients as our core line of products but were formulated to meet 1.0 and 2.0 ounce-equivalents of grains. In our 2-grain equivalent bar, we introduced some fun new seeds: millet and buckwheat!

Just like our core line of products, we also create upcycled Seed'nola from the edges of our Seedlings bars. The Seed'nola from our K-12 bars can be used as a grain-equivalent parfait topper, trail mix, or as a dry cereal served with milk.

The seed butters we serve in schools are the same butters you can find at your local grocery store or buy on our website. Each serving of our Pumpkin Seed Butter and Maple Sunflower Seed Butter credits as 1.0 ounce equivalent of meat-alternate, and has been used in recipes like a pumpkin seed pesto or in protein-style bento box lunches.



How does 88 Acres think about local food?

We source locally and domestically whenever possible. We are also super conscious of our role as a food company in the local food system, and want to cultivate sustainable jobs in our own community by building up our bakery team members and supporting their careers. We know food has the power to do more than simply fill us up when we are hungry, and we want to strengthen our local food

community as much as possible. To us, local stretches beyond just the square miles around our bakery and office - we consider our neighboring state and region to be a part of our local connection and we are thrilled to support the Connecticut community as a local partner.

What Connecticut districts have gotten involved?

East Hartford is an example of a partner district in Connecticut that has been a huge success in food programming and seed-based education. In collaboration with staff in East Hartford as well as FoodCorps service members and dietetic interns, we have been able to support seed lessons in many schools, all highlighted with our Dark Chocolate and Sea Salt Seed & Grain bar as a tested (and loved - see photo for evidence!) snack that reinforces the seed learning.



If a school is interested in working together, what can they do to get started?

Please reach out! We would love to get connected and learn more about how you hope to integrate seed-based programming into your school's menu and educational curriculum. If we can support breakfast or snack menus, gardening, taste tests, seed planting or even just a show and tell, we'd love to work together. You can start by emailing Nutrition Lead, Hannah Meier at hannah@88acres.com or calling (952)956-4907.