

# HUNGRY FOR CHANGE: FOOD, ETHICS AND SUSTAINABILITY



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By



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# INTRODUCTION

You are what you eat.

For many of us, this saying brings nothing more to mind than cartoon images of human-sized bananas with arms and legs, or smiling, anthropomorphized versions of broccoli and tuna fish. But “you are what you eat” can have a much more profound meaning than that.

Most elementary school children can tell you that in order to get a seed to grow into a plant, you need to expose it to water and light. These are vital to its survival, growth, and eventual development into a food source. But the plant also needs to be nourished by minerals and nutrients in the soil. If a seed is planted in nutrient-poor soil, the seed will require inputs (fertilizers) to grow. Organic gardeners and permaculturists tell us to feed the soil and invest in a long-term way to feed the world, instead of feeding a plant with artificial fertilizers that run off into our waterways and cause imbalances in ecosystems.

When we harvest the fruit of the plant’s hard work and then eat it, our bodies break down the cells of the plant and harvest the nutrients it’s accumulated. These nutrients not only feed our bodies the calories we need to work and play — they are the building blocks of our skin, our eyes, our brains. Our food choices affect our weight, our abilities, our strength and endurance, the diseases we face, and even the intelligence capacity of our children.

We create ourselves by what we choose to feed ourselves. And, as you can see, not only are we what we eat, we are also what our soil eats.

On the other hand, you could say that we create the world by what we choose to eat. Our food choices affect ecosystem health, how harvesters and factory workers are treated, the health of farm workers, which foods are grown and sold, how humanely animals are treated, and even how much carbon dioxide and methane are released into the atmosphere.

*Hungry for Change: Food, Ethics and Sustainability* explores the interconnections of our food systems and our relationship to and responsibility in these systems. This course challenges us all to look at our roles as not only as consumers of food, but also as creators — of food, of

systems, and of the world we live in.

With six sessions designed for weekly discussion, *Hungry for Change* offers an opportunity to dig deeper into the complex issues surrounding food. Each session includes readings, questions for the group, a “Putting It into Practice” list of suggested actions and “Further Readings and Resources.”

Each week as you meet with your discussion group, we invite you to bring your own experience and critical thinking to the process. The readings are intended to invoke meaningful discussion. Whether you agree or disagree, you will have an opportunity to clarify your views and values.

The course also includes weekly Action Plans to guide you in making change. Each week, group members will choose one action from their Action Plans to implement during the following week. During the next group meeting, participants share the actions they tried to implement and the successes, challenges, and inspiration they might have experienced. We also suggest sharing your long-term goals with your group during the optional Celebration session. This last session is encouraged as a way for your group to celebrate the completion of the course, share goals and progress and consider ways the group might continue to work together.

For resources to get a discussion group started, go to [www.nwei.org](http://www.nwei.org) and visit the “Course Resources” page for flyers, organizing guides and press releases. Included on pages 6 of this guide, “How to Start a Discussion Course” provides further information about organizing a course. You may also contact our office at (503) 227-2807. To become a member of NWEI and support the sharing of this work with others, please visit [www.nwei.org/join](http://www.nwei.org/join) or complete “Become a Member of NWEI” on page 127 of this guide.

Thank you for participating in the Northwest Earth Institute’s discussion course, *Hungry for Change: Food, Ethics and Sustainability*. On behalf of the thousands of organizations, workplaces and volunteers who are involved in promoting Northwest Earth Institute programs, we trust that your experience with this course will be of deep value.

# How to Start a Discussion Course

Thank you for your interest in the programs offered by the Northwest Earth Institute. The following tips are for those of you who would like to organize NWEI discussion groups.

We are thrilled that you have taken the initiative to order this course book for small-group discussion. While this course book has tremendous standalone value, please keep in mind that it was designed to be used with others in a group dialogue setting. As such, we ask that you consider inviting others to participate with you. You can find steps for doing so below. If you have any questions about the process please visit our website ([www.nwei.org](http://www.nwei.org)) or contact any member of NWEI's Outreach Team at (503) 227-2807, or by email at [contact@nwei.org](mailto:contact@nwei.org). If you have joined an already formed group, please consider organizing future courses. We hope you benefit from participating in this course.

## **STEP 1: FORM GROUP(S) — IDEAL SIZE IS 8-12 PEOPLE.**

In certain regions, a local NWEI representative may be available to assist you in getting started. Visit [www.nwei.org/n\\_american\\_network](http://www.nwei.org/n_american_network) to see a list of regions where NWEI representatives may be available to mentor new groups and offer introductory presentations on NWEI's work and mission.

### **TIPS FOR STARTING YOUR NWEI COURSE:**

- Invite others to join your course via newsletters, email networks, personal invitations or the media. Download NWEI program flyers at [www.nwei.org](http://www.nwei.org). Include location information, times and dates for the entire program. Set clear registration deadlines for signups.
- Order any remaining materials from NWEI and get course books to participants before the date of the first group meeting.
- Call a noontime meeting or host a brown bag lunch in a workplace to offer an informal presentation on NWEI programs and how they work.
- Host an introductory group meeting at home, your community or faith center, local library or municipal office.
- Visit [www.nwei.org/course\\_resources](http://www.nwei.org/course_resources) to download the Course Organizer's Guide for additional tips and resources..

## **STEP 2: BEFORE THE FIRST SESSION**

- Get course books to participants well in advance of the first meeting. Make sure to ask participants to complete the first reading/action plan assignment before they come to the first session.

- As the course organizer, you should plan to serve as the facilitator for the first session.
- Recruit one of the course participants to serve as the first session opener.

## **STEP 3: FIRST SESSION — GETTING STARTED**

**TAKE THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS WITH YOU TO THE FIRST SESSION:** 1) Course book, 2) Course schedule on page 7 for participants to sign up for opener, facilitator, and notetaker roles for the remaining sessions.

**HAVE A ROUND OF INTRODUCTIONS.** Introductions serve several important functions, even if the group is already well acquainted. Participants begin to know each other on a personal level and have an opportunity to “get each person’s voice into the room.” A person who has spoken and been listened to early in the session is more likely to participate in the rest of the session. Ask participants to say their names and something personal about themselves. As the organizer of your group, you should give your answer first to model the length and content.

**DESCRIBE THE GROUP PROCESS.** NWEI programs are designed to encourage discussions that clarify personal values and attitudes. Consensus is not the goal, and the group should not seek to reach agreement at the expense of diversity of opinion. Most groups meet for an hour to an hour and a half for each meeting. Each session will be led by a facilitator from the group. Point out the “Guidelines for the Session Facilitator” on page 8.

**DISTRIBUTE THE REGISTRATION FORM** to ensure you have complete and current contact information for all participants. Once the registration form is complete, please scan and send to NWEI at [contact@nwei.org](mailto:contact@nwei.org) (or see the registration form on page 11 for our mailing address). You may wish to keep a copy for future correspondence with participants.

### **CALL ATTENTION TO THE EVALUATION FORM.**

Encourage participants to fill out the evaluation form on page 9 and share their feedback with NWEI.

**FILL OUT THE COURSE SCHEDULE** (found on the next page). This gives different group members an opportunity to sign up to present an opening, to facilitate, and to take notes. Information on opening, facilitating and note-taking is included at the beginning of each course book.

## **STEP 4: FIRST SESSION — DESCRIBE/PRESENT THE OPENING**

Please reference Guidelines for the Facilitator, Opener and Notetaker located on page 8.

## STEP 5: FIRST SESSION — FACILITATING THE DISCUSSION

**EXPLAIN THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR, OPENER AND NOTETAKER.** Tell the group that you will help keep the discussion personal, focused, and balanced among the participants. Show them the “Guidelines” on page 8. Encourage each person to review these before taking their turn at facilitation, opening or note-taking.

**CIRCLE QUESTION.** Following the opening, the first step is for each person to answer the Circle Question found at the beginning of each session. The question provides a focus for the day’s discussion.

## STEP 6: FIRST SESSION — CLOSING

Watch the time, and stop discussion a few minutes before the session is scheduled to end. Note whether the Course Schedule is completed. If it is not, work with participants to complete it. Confirm the time and place for the next meeting. Be sure to end the class on time. This shows respect for the participants, and demonstrates that their time commitment is predictable.

## STEP 7: DURATION OF NWEI PROGRAM

Your group will meet four to six times, depending on how many and which sessions your group uses and on the meeting dates set by participants. Each session will be led by a rotating member of the group. Note the “Putting It into Practice” and “Further Reading” lists at the beginning of each session for ideas on further educational opportunities as well as tips for applying the learning into your life.

## CLOSING

**FINAL SESSION — CELEBRATION.** The final session in each discussion guide is an optional celebration, and is an opportunity to:

- Celebrate the completion of the program and evaluate your experience.
- Discuss options for continuing as a group, reflect on actions taken during the course and consider goals and action items to implement.
- Consider organizing other NWEI programs in your community, workplace or organization.

**Don’t hesitate to contact NWEI for assistance with questions.**

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## COURSE SCHEDULE FOR HUNGRY FOR CHANGE: FOOD, ETHICS AND SUSTAINABILITY

This course schedule may be useful to keep track of meeting dates and of when you will be facilitating or providing the opening.

Course Coordinator : \_\_\_\_\_ Phone : \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor (if applicable) : \_\_\_\_\_ Phone : \_\_\_\_\_

Location For Future Meetings : \_\_\_\_\_

| CLASS SESSION         | DATE  | OPENER | FACILITATOR | NOTETAKER |
|-----------------------|-------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| The First Bite        | _____ | _____  | _____       | _____     |
| Politics of the Plate | _____ | _____  | _____       | _____     |
| A Healthy Appetite    | _____ | _____  | _____       | _____     |
| Just Food             | _____ | _____  | _____       | _____     |
| Eating for Earth      | _____ | _____  | _____       | _____     |
| Hungry for Change     | _____ | _____  | _____       | _____     |
| <b>PLANNERS</b>       |       |        |             |           |
| Celebration*          | _____ | _____  | _____       | _____     |

\*After the last regular session, your group may choose to have a final meeting and Celebration. This meeting celebrates the completion of the course, and may include a potluck lunch or dinner. It is an opportunity for evaluation and consideration of next steps.

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# GUIDELINES

## FOR THE FACILITATOR, OPENER AND NOTETAKER

For each session of this course, one participant brings an “opening,” a second participant facilitates the discussion, and a third participant takes notes. The roles rotate each week with a different group member opening, facilitating and taking notes. This process is at the core of the Northwest Earth Institute’s culture — it assumes we gain our greatest insights through self-discovery, by promoting discussion among equals with no teacher.



### FOR THE SESSION FACILITATOR

As facilitator for one session, your role is to stimulate and moderate the discussion. You do not need to be an expert or the most knowledgeable person about the topic.

Your role is to:

- Remind the designated person ahead of time to bring an opening.
- Begin and end on time.
- Ask the questions included in each chapter, or your own.
- Make sure your group has time to respond to the action-oriented discussion questions — it is a positive way to end each gathering.
- Keep discussion focused on the session’s topic. A delicate balance is best — don’t force the group into the questions, but don’t allow the discussion to drift too far.
- Manage the group process, using the guidelines below:

A primary goal is for everyone to participate and to learn from themselves and each other. Draw out quiet participants by creating an opportunity for each person to contribute. Don’t let one or two people dominate the discussion. Thank them for their opinions and then ask another person to share.

Be an active listener. You need to hear and understand what people say if you are to guide the discussion effectively. Model this for others.

The focus should be on personal reactions to the readings — on personal values, feelings, and experiences.

The course is not for judging others’ responses or problem solving. **Consensus is not a goal.**

The facilitator should ensure that the action item discussion:

- allows each person’s action item to be discussed for 1-2 minutes;
- remains non-judgmental and non-prescriptive;
- focuses on encouraging fellow group members in their commitments and actions.

### FOR THE SESSION OPENER

- Bring a short opening, not more than five minutes. It should be something meaningful to you, or that expresses your personal appreciation for food or the natural world.. Examples: a short personal story, an object or photograph that has special meaning, a poem, a visualization, etc. You can be creative.
- The purpose of the opening is twofold. First, it provides a transition from other activities of the day into the group discussion. Second, since the opening is personal, it allows the group to get better acquainted with you. This aspect of the course can be very rewarding.

### FOR THE NOTETAKER

At the end of each session, each participant will commit to one action item they will complete before the next meeting. They will share their action with the group, and it is your responsibility as notetaker to record each person’s commitment to action.

Each week the notetaker role will rotate. During the portion of discussion focused on action items, the notetaker from the previous meeting will read aloud each person’s action item, and group members will have the opportunity to share their successes and struggles in implementing their actions. The new notetaker for that week will then record each person’s commitment for the next meeting.

**For more information on the NWEI process and organizing a course, see “How to Start a Discussion Course” on page 6.**



# EVALUATION

**PART 1. PLEASE FILL OUT WEEKLY**, while your thoughts and opinions are fresh in your mind. We suggest removing this page to use as a bookmark as you read through the course. Rate the six sessions. You may also complete an online evaluation at [www.nwei.org](http://www.nwei.org) on the “Hungry for Change” page.

|                          | POOR CHOICE -----EXCELLENT |   |   |   |   | COMMENTS: |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|-----------|
| 1. The First Bite        | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |           |
| 2. Politics of the Plate | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |           |
| 3. A Healthy Appetite    | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |           |
| 4. Just Food             | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |           |
| 5. Eating for Earth      | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |           |
| 6. Hungry for Change     | 1                          | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |           |

**Were the following resources helpful? Circle “Y” if we should use the resource next time or “N” if we should look for better material. Leave blank if you didn’t use it or have no opinion.**

|  | COMMENTS: |   |
|--|-----------|---|
| 1. Gardening as Politics .....   | Y         | N |
| The Working Mom’s Eating-In Challenge .....                              | Y         | N |
| The Indignity of Industrial Tomatoes .....                               | Y         | N |
| What Do You Eat in January? .....  | Y         | N |
| The Ecology of Food .....  | Y         | N |
| Most Good Least Harm .....   | Y         | N |
| Putting Down Roots .....   | Y         | N |
| 2. The New Geopolitics of Food .....                                     | Y         | N |
| Feeding the World: It’s Not About Quantity .....                         | Y         | N |
| Food is Cheap at Market... ..  | Y         | N |
| Aquacalypse Now: The End of Fish .....                                   | Y         | N |
| Can Organic Farming Feed the World? .....                                | Y         | N |
| US Farming Subsidies Cost US Taxpayers Billions.....                     | Y         | N |
| Food Rebellions: Seven Steps to Solving the Food Crisis ...              | Y         | N |
| The Paradox of Hunger .....  | Y         | N |
| 3. Food Science’s Golden Age .....                                       | Y         | N |
| How to Save a Trillion Dollars .....                                     | Y         | N |
| Is the Rise of Food Prices All Bad? .....                                | Y         | N |
| Still No Free Lunch .....  | Y         | N |
| What We Know — and Don’t Know —<br>about the Safety of Eating GMOs ..... | Y         | N |
| The Dark Side of Soy .....   | Y         | N |
| Brain Food for Kids .....  | Y         | N |
| The Aborigine in All of Us .....   | Y         | N |

- 4. What's Wrong With What We Eat ..... Y N
  - Fear Factories ..... Y N
  - Joel Salatin: How to Eat Animals and Respect Them, Too.... Y N
  - Fair Trade..... Y N
  - Child Slavery ..... Y N
  - The Price of Tomatoes ..... Y N
- 5. Factory Farms and Air Pollution ..... Y N
  - Is Your Cheese Killing the Planet? ..... Y N
  - Assault on Nature: CAFOs and Biodiversity Loss ..... Y N
  - Water: Will There Be Enough? ..... Y N
  - The Lowdown on Topsoil: It's Disappearing..... Y N
  - Perennial Solution ..... Y N
  - How Fertilizers Harm the Earth More than Help Your Lawn.. Y N
  - Global Warming and Food Choices ..... Y N
- 6. A Planetary Crisis Is a Terrible Thing to Waste ..... Y N
  - The Environmental Impact of Overconsumption..... Y N
  - Help the Planet: Stop Wasting Food..... Y N
  - Growing Power in an Urban Food Desert ..... Y N
  - A Better Fish Farm..... Y N
  - Transforming Our Tastes..... Y N
  - Three Pillars of a Food Revolution ..... Y N

Please send your completed evaluation to NWEI, 107 SE Washington Street, Suite 235, Portland, OR 97214. Thank you for your feedback!

**PART 2. PLEASE COMPLETE AT THE END OF COURSE.**

Has the course made a difference in your life? Yes No Please describe what actions you are taking or you plan to take in response to this course. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please list other articles, books or other resources that should be included in the course. Identify chapter(s)/page(s) and the session where they should be included. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is the Action Plan a helpful tool for you? Why/why not? What would improve it? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is the information "How to Start a Discussion Guide" on page 6 helpful? Why/why not? What would improve it?

\_\_\_\_\_

What has been the most valuable aspect of this course?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# Course Participant Registration Form

**PLEASE RETURN ONE FORM PER GROUP TO NWEI FOLLOWING YOUR FIRST SESSION.** Why does NWEI need this information? In order to keep accurate participant records and for grant reports. **This information is for NWEI use only, and is not shared with any other organization.**

The Course Organizer should have everyone in your group add their information, and return the form to NWEI after your first session. You can return the form via mail, email or fax — see below. Thank you!

COURSE ORGANIZER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE (H): \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (W): \_\_\_\_\_  
 E MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE (H): \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE (W): \_\_\_\_\_  
 E MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

COURSE START DATE/FIRST MEETING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 MEETING TIME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 COURSE NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 MENTOR (IF APPLICABLE): \_\_\_\_\_  
 TYPE OF GROUP [HOME, COMMUNITY, BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT, NON-PROFIT]: \_\_\_\_\_  
 NAME & ADDRESS OF MEETING PLACE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to NWEI 107 SE Washington St., Suite 235, Portland, OR 97214;  
 fax to 503-227-2917 or scan and email to [contact@nwei.org](mailto:contact@nwei.org).**

Thank you very much for helping us accurately track participation in NWEI programs.  
 We greatly appreciate your prompt attention in returning this form as soon as possible after your course begins.



---

 S E S S I O N 1
 

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# THE FIRST BITE

*"If you send it halfway around the world before it is eaten, an organic food still may be 'good' for the consumer, but is it 'good' for the food system?"*

— GARY PAUL NABHAN

---

## SESSION GOALS

- To get acquainted, set a schedule for future meetings, and identify volunteers to facilitate each session.
- To introduce the interconnectedness of food, including the interconnections of politics, health, environment, ethics and justice.
- To explore our roles and relationships to the above mentioned aspects of food.
- To gain resources for future use and learning.

## SESSION BACKGROUND

The global food web has become increasingly more complicated with the industrialization and globalization of our world. The readings in this session explore the interconnectedness of food and our relationship to it, and preview the topics that will be addressed in the rest of the course.

## SUGGESTED GROUP ACTIVITY

### Where I'm From: My Food Heritage

Before you meet for the first time, consider your food story and how your experience with food has shaped you. Using the guidelines and examples at [www.nwei.org/hungryforchange/resources](http://www.nwei.org/hungryforchange/resources), write a short reflection or poem about your food heritage to share with the rest of your group as the opening for your first meeting.

## Circle Question

### **What is your motivation to care about food?**

Circle questions should move quickly — each member responds briefly without questions or comments from others. Facilitator guidelines are on page 8.

#### **SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How could gardening (or agriculture) help restore America?
2. Which issues mentioned in “The Working Mom’s Eating-In Challenge” are similar to ones you face?
3. What was your reaction to *The Indignity of Industrial Tomatoes* article? What, in your opinion, makes today’s tomato indigent?
4. Barbara Kingsolver describes her pantry in January. What do you eat in January? Is it any different from what you eat in June?
5. What would be the hardest for you to give up, if you were to only eat what is in season locally?
6. What is one food choice that you make, or could make, that would do more good and less harm?
7. What “seeds” could you or do you plant for a more just and sustainable world?

#### **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE**

- Get to know your grocer. If you do not have a farmer’s market, CSA, or farmer, then talk with your produce grocer to learn more about your food.
- Try a new grain, fruit, and vegetable!
- Consider the ways you can garden: a plot of land? a patio container? hanging basket? windowsill gardens?
- Consider keeping a food journal for the week or entire course! Track things like what foods you eat, where they come from, where you buy them, questions that you have about them, etc.

#### **DEFINITIONS OF TERMS**

- **Agribusiness:** In the agriculture industry, agribusiness is a broad term for various businesses involved in food production. When used by critics of industrialized agriculture, agribusiness is synonymous with large-scale, industrialized, corporate farming.
- **Locavory:** A lifestyle in which a person purposefully chooses to eat only locally sourced food as much as possible.

#### **FURTHER RESOURCES**

Interested in finding out more on the topics presented in this session? Visit our website for further readings and resources: [www.nwei.org/hungryforchange/resources](http://www.nwei.org/hungryforchange/resources)

Join our Facebook page to continue the discussion online:

[www.facebook.com/northwestearthinstitute](http://www.facebook.com/northwestearthinstitute).





## GARDENING AS POLITICS: DIGGING THE FOUNDING GARDENERS

By Andrea Wulf

As America's gardeners dig, plant, weed and grow lettuce, beans and tomatoes in their vegetable plots this summer, they are part of a tradition that harks back to the beginnings of the United States. Just by working on a compost pile this weekend, you'll be in good historical company.

The first four presidents of the United States — George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison — were all utterly obsessed with manure and recipes for compost. Adams even jumped into a stinking pile when he was America's first "minister plenipotentiary" to Britain in London in 1786. Teasing apart the straw from the dung (clearly not minding the muck on his hands), he declared with glee that it was "not equal to mine."

Washington, Adams, Jefferson and Madison regarded themselves first as gardeners and farmers, not politicians. They wove their passion for gardens and nature into the fabric of America; it was aligned with their political thought.

Agriculture would be the foundation of the new republic, they believed.

"Cultivators of the earth," Jefferson wrote, "are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous." The greater the proportion of husbandmen, Madison believed, "the more free, the more independent and the more happy must be the society itself"

There is a pivotal moment at the beginning of the revolution that sums up their passion. In the summer of 1776, just after the colonists declared independence, New York faced 30,000 British troops, the largest enemy force that had ever arrived on America's shores. As he prepared for the first and largest battle of the Revolutionary War, Washington pondered not only his military strategy but also the voluptuous blossom of rhododendron, the sculptural flowers of mountain laurel and the perfect pink of crab apple.

One evening, just a few days before the battle, he wrote a long letter to the estate manager at Mount Vernon, his plantation in Virginia. Washington instructed that these trees and shrubs should be planted in groves next to his house. Even more remarkable than his timing was his choice of plants, for he made it clear that only native species would do. Facing the mighty British army, Washington decided that Mount Vernon was to be an American garden where no English trees would be allowed to claw their roots into the soil. It was his horticultural Declaration of Independence.

Into their speeches, their letters and their diaries, the founders brought metaphors drawn from the natural world. Jefferson described the blood of patriots as the "natural manure" for the tree of liberty, and Washington called the young nation after the war a "goodly field" that needed to be "judiciously cultivated." They used their gardens as canvases to paint (or to grow) political statements, and they saw in America's rugged wilderness a transcendent symbol of a unique New World nation. Jefferson commissioned a drawing of the Natural Bridge in Virginia, a spectacular granite formation on his land, so that he could present "to the world this singular landscape, which otherwise some bungling European will misrepresent."

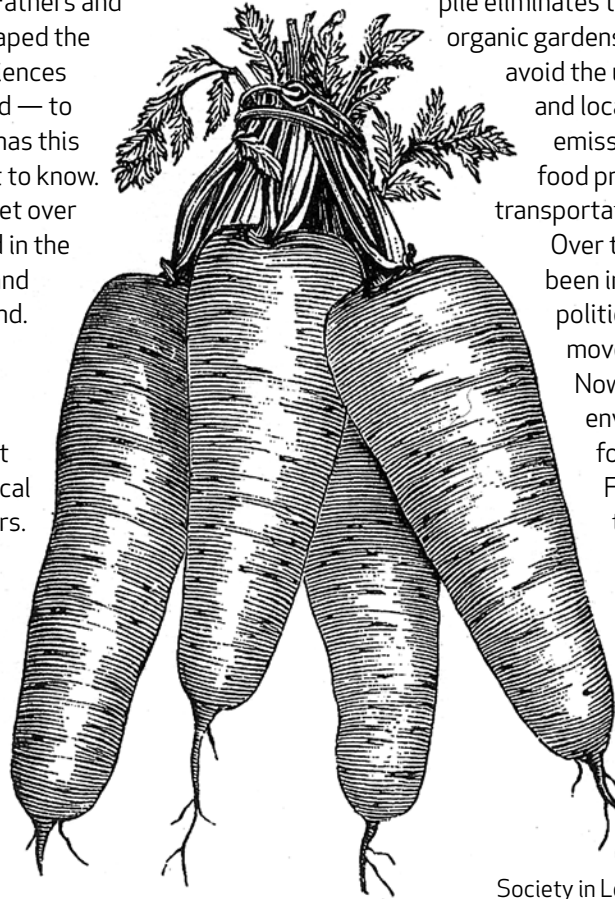
Maybe most extraordinary — given the current miserable state of America's efforts to curb emissions and its failure to ratify international climate treaties — is that the birth of the environmental movement in this country can also be traced back to the Founding Fathers. In an 1818 speech, Madison said the protection of the environment was essential for the survival of the United States. He condemned Virginians for their ruthless exploitation of the soil and the destruction of the forests, and he talked about the "balance of nature." Man had to give back to nature what he took from it: "Vegetable matter which springs from the earth," he said, must "return to the earth" — radical views at a time when most still believed that God had created plants

and animals entirely for the use of humankind.

Over the past months I have given almost 40 lectures across the U.S. about the Founding Fathers and how their attitude toward nature shaped the American nation. Over and over, audiences have been surprised — and delighted — to hear about Madison's speech. "Why has this been ignored for so long?" they want to know. Many of the gardeners that I have met over the past months are deeply invested in the environment. Working with the soil and plants, they feel connected to the land. It gives many an understanding and ownership of the world around them (and the threat to this environment).

Most people today, however, don't regard gardening as an overtly political act, as it was for the Founding Fathers. But it can empower people and local communities. The rise of urban farming and gardening across the country in the past decade and the increasing interest in local produce is one example — it gives Americans control over their food and its production, which for the most part is in the hands of industry and huge conglomerates.

In big cities like Los Angeles, if you grow vegetables on "edible" food-producing wall panels and on roofs, or subscribe to weekly boxes of fresh produce



from local farms, or even plant drought-tolerant frontyards, you're making a political statement. Keeping a compost pile eliminates the need for chemical fertilizers; organic gardens that invite useful insects avoid the use of harmful pesticides; and local produce can reduce carbon emissions associated with industrial food production and long-distance transportation.

Over the years, the founders have been invoked by almost every politician and every political movement across a wide spectrum. Now it's time for the gardeners and environmentalists, who are already following in the footsteps of the Founding Gardeners, to claim their stake in the ideals and the heroes that formed the nation.

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This article originally appeared in a May 2011 edition of the *LA Times*. Andrea Wulf is the author of *The Brother Gardeners*, winner of the American Horticultural Society 2010 Book Award. She has lectured to audiences at the Royal Geographical Society and Royal

Society in London, the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, Monticello and the Missouri Botanic Garden amongst many others and is currently working on her fourth book.

"Cultivators of earth are the most vigorous,  
the most independent, the most virtuous."

— THOMAS JEFFERSON



## THE WORKING MOM'S EATING-IN CHALLENGE

By Lisa Bennett

I was in Trader Joe's frozen food aisle when I remembered the *Huffington Post's* "Week of Eating In" challenge. Did I really want to do this? I wondered. More to the point, could I? It seemed disconcertingly likely to expose me as a great green hypocrite.

I work for the Center for Ecoliteracy, which, for nearly 20 years, has advocated for improving school lunches; using gardens as a way to encourage kids to eat healthy foods; and teaching young people about the connections between food, health, and the environment.

This past year, we also developed a teacher's discussion guide to the Academy Award nominee, *Food, Inc.*, which, as the promotion says, will make you never look at dinner the same way again.

Professionally, in short, I understand food as a green issue. But personally, I find that living it is a very different story.

As the working mother of a 5- and a 10-year-old, I often absentmindedly pull something together for dinner while helping my oldest with his homework and trying to keep my youngest from filling up on crackers. My boys are hungry, tired, and cranky at the end of the day, and this does not always lend itself to fine dining — or, for that matter, even healthy cooking. So, in addition to roasted chicken and homemade burritos, there's a Trader Joe's lasagna or some other prepared food on the table at least once or twice a week.

Realizing this didn't even make my family particularly happy, I decided to take on the Eating In challenge to see if I couldn't adopt at least a few good new habits.

Things started out a little tougher than they should have; having been away the weekend before, I never got to the weekly food shopping. So on day one, I resorted to eggs and potatoes, with a few sliced apples and cheese. Lame, but the kids liked it.

On day two, I decided to stop in a new neighborhood produce market to pick up the ingredients for a stir-fry. Owned by a family that came to California by way of Yemen, it had a good selection and surprisingly reasonable prices. I found that I liked shopping there more than the usual places I frequent; I also enjoyed cooking and eating that night's meal more than usual. The challenge made me feel just a bit more mindful of what I was doing.

It also inspired me to get a little more ambitious. Thinking ahead about rice and lentils for day three, I soaked a cup of lentils for an hour after dinner before



planning to simmer them for several more. Then I got distracted by baths, books, and bedtime — and forgot the lentils entirely until the next morning, when I found my now-mushy beans still soaking.

That's when I realized that to truly match my actions to my principles and my intentions, I would have to get smarter about this. I'd have to really plan ahead. Cook on the weekend. Get a pressure cooker. Find recipes that are quick, easy, and healthy. Aim for leftovers. Involve the kids. And, most important, I'd have to take this on not as yet another thing to do, but because it felt good in and of itself.

As Michael Pollan wrote in the Center for Ecoliteracy's *Big Ideas: Linking Food, Culture, Health, and the Environment*: "If we all understood that how and what we eat determines to a great extent the use we make of the world and what is to become of it, we would eat with a fuller consciousness of all that is at stake."

Living according to that fuller consciousness — not only about the implications of our food choices but also about the pleasures of the process — is what inspires me now.

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Lisa Bennett is the communications director for the Center for Ecoliteracy and is a former fellow at Harvard University's Center on Press, Politics, and Public Policy in the John F. Kennedy School of Government. Her writing has appeared in many newspapers, magazines, and blogs, including *The New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Chronicle of Higher Education*.



## THE INDIGNITY OF INDUSTRIAL TOMATOES

By Barry Estabrook

My obituary's headline would have read "Food writer killed by flying tomato."

On a visit to my parents in Naples, Fla., I was driving I-75 when I came up behind one of those gravel trucks that seem to be everywhere in southwest Florida's rush to convert pine woods and cypress stands into gated communities and shopping malls. As I drew closer, I saw that the tractor trailer was heavy with what seemed to be green apples. When I pulled out to pass, three of them sailed off the truck, narrowly missing my windshield. Every time it hit the slightest bump, more of those orbs would tumble off. At the first stoplight, I got a closer look. The shoulder of the road was littered with green tomatoes so plasticine and so identical they could have been stamped out by a machine. Most looked smooth and unblemished. A few had cracks in their skins. Not one was smashed. A 10-foot drop followed by a 60-mile-per-hour impact with pavement is no big deal to a modern, agribusiness tomato.

If you have ever eaten a fresh tomato from a grocery store or restaurant, chances are good that you have eaten a tomato much like the ones aboard that truck. Florida alone accounts for one-third of the fresh tomatoes raised in the United States, and from October to June, virtually all the fresh-market, field-grown tomatoes in the country come from the Sunshine State, which ships more than 1 billion pounds every year. It takes a tough tomato to stand up to the indignity of such industrial scale farming, so most Florida tomatoes are bred for hardness, picked when still firm and green (the merest trace of pink is taboo), and artificially gassed with ethylene in warehouses until they acquire the rosy red skin tones of a ripe tomato.

Beauty, in this case, is only skin deep. According to figures compiled by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Americans bought \$5 billion worth of perfectly round, perfectly red, and, in the opinion of many consumers, perfectly tasteless fresh tomatoes in 2009 — our second most popular vegetable behind lettuce. We buy winter tomatoes, but that doesn't mean we like them. In survey after survey, fresh tomatoes fall at or near the bottom in rankings of consumer satisfaction. No one will ever be able to duplicate the flavor of garden-grown fruits and vegetables at the supermarket, but there's a reason you don't hear consumers bemoaning the taste of supermarket cabbages, onions, or potatoes. Of all the fruits and vegetables we eat, none suffers at the hands of factory farming more than a tomato grown in the wintertime fields of Florida.

Perhaps our taste buds are trying to send us a message. Today's industrial tomatoes are as bereft of nutrition as they are of flavor. According to analyses conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, fresh tomatoes today have 30 percent less vitamin C, 30 percent less thiamin, 19 percent less niacin, and 62 percent less calcium than they did in the 1960s. But the modern tomato does shame its 1960s counterpart in one area: It contains 14 times as much sodium.

A couple of winters ago, I brought some supermarket tomatoes home. I accidentally nudged one and watched as it rolled off the counter and fell on our newly refinished pine floor with the solid thud of a baking potato. I bowled the fruit through the kitchen door, across the dining room, over a wooden threshold, onto the tile floor of the sunroom, where *The Tomato That Would Not Die* crashed against the door. No damage done.

The best way to experience true tomato taste is to grow your own. Little wonder that tomatoes are by far the most popular vegetable for home gardeners, found in nearly nine out of 10 backyard plots. Both *The Tomato That Would Not Die* and the heirloom Brandywines in my Vermont garden are of the species *Solanum lycopersicum*, and both are red. But the similarity ends there. My Brandywines are downright homely — lumpy, deeply creased, and scarred, they look like badly sunburned Rubens derrieres. Nor are they made for travel. More often than not, one will spontaneously split during the 25-yard stroll from garden to kitchen. But there is no better-tasting tomato than a garden-ripe Brandywine. With sweetness and tartness playing off each other perfectly, and juices that burst into your mouth in a surge that forces you to abandon all pretext of good table manners and to slurp, a real tomato's taste is the distilled essence of sun, warm soil, and fine summer days.

Not everyone can grow a garden or head out to a neighborhood farmers' market in search of the ideal tomato.

But we all have an alternative to the sad offerings of commercial agriculture. At a lunch spot in the town where I live, a handwritten notation appeared on the blackboard one afternoon. “Dear Customers, we will not be putting tomatoes on our sandwiches until we can obtain ones that meet our standards. Thanks.” With that small insurrection, the restaurant’s proprietor had articulated a philosophy that more of us should embrace: Insist on eating food that meets our standards only, not the standards set by corporate agriculture.

Organic, local, seasonal, fresh, sustainable, fair trade — the words have become platitudes that skeptics associate with foodie elitists who can afford to shop at natural food stores and have kitchens that boast \$5,000 ranges. It’s easy to forget that those oft-repeated words do mean something. Florida’s tomato fields provide a stark example of what a food system looks like when all elements of sustainability are violated.



If it were left up to the laws of botany and nature, Florida would be one of the last places in the world where tomatoes grow. Tomato production in the state has everything to do with marketing and nothing to do with biology. Florida is warm when the rest of the East and Midwest — within easy striking distance for a laden produce truck — is cold. But Florida is notoriously humid. Tomatoes’ wild ancestors came from the coastal deserts of northern Peru and southern Ecuador, some of the driest places on Earth. ... When forced to struggle in the wilting humidity of Florida, tomatoes become vulnerable to all manner of fungal diseases. Hordes of voracious hoppers, beetles, and worms chomp on their roots, stems, leaves, and fruit. And although Florida’s sandy soil makes for great beaches, it is devoid of plant nutrients. To get a successful crop, they pump the sand full of chemical fertilizers and can blast the plants with more than 100 different herbicides and pesticides, including some of the most toxic in agribusiness’s arsenal.

Workers are exposed to these chemicals on a daily basis. The toll includes eye and respiratory ailments, exposure to known carcinogens, and babies born with horrendous birth defects. Not all the chemicals stay behind in the fields once the tomatoes are harvested. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has found residues of 35 pesticides on tomatoes destined for supermarkets.

All of this might have a perverse logic to it if tomato growing were a highly lucrative, healthy business. But it isn’t. As large as most of them are, Florida’s tomato companies are struggling, always one disaster or disappointing year away from insolvency. Cheap tomatoes from Mexico stream across the border during the winter months. Advances in hydroponic technology have enabled greenhouse tomatoes from Canada and the northern states to eat into Florida’s

market share during the spring and fall.

An industrial tomato grower has no control over what they spend on fuel, fertilizer (which requires enormous quantities of natural gas in its manufacture), and pesticides, but they can control what they pay the men and women who plant, tend, and harvest the crops. This has put a steady downward pressure on the earnings of tomato workers. Those cheap tomatoes that fill produce sections 365 days a year, year in and year out, come at a tremendous human cost. Although there have been recent improvements, a person picking tomatoes receives the same basic rate of pay they received 30 years ago. Adjusted for inflation, a harvester’s wages have actually dropped by half over the same period. Florida tomato workers, mostly Hispanic migrants, toil without union protection and get neither overtime, benefits, nor medical insurance. They are denied basic legal rights that virtually all other laborers enjoy. Lacking their own vehicles, they have to live near the fields, often paying rural slumlords exorbitant rents to be crammed with 10 or a dozen other farm workers in moldering trailers with neither heat nor air-conditioning and which would be condemned outright in any other American jurisdiction.

Paid on a “piece” basis for every bushel-sized basket they gather, tomato pickers are lucky to earn \$70 on a good day. But good days are few. Workers can arrive at a field at the appointed time and wait for hours while fog clears or dew dries. If it rains, they don’t pick. If a field ripens more slowly than expected, too bad. And if there is a freeze as there was in 2010, weeks can go by without work and without a penny of income. Unable to pay rent, pickers slept in encampments in the woods. The owners had crop insurance and emergency government aid to offset their losses. The workers had nothing.



All of this is happening in plain view, but out of sight, only a half-hour’s drive from one of the wealthiest areas in the United States with its estate homes, beachfront condominiums, and gated golf communities. Meanwhile, tomatoes, once one of the most alluring fruits in our culinary repertoire, have become hard green balls that can easily survive a fall onto an interstate highway. Gassed to an appealing red, they inspire gastronomic fantasies despite all evidence to the contrary. It’s a world we’ve all made, and one we can fix. Welcome to Tomatoland.

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Barry Estabrook is a James Beard Award-winning journalist and a former contributing editor at *Gourmet* magazine. He now serves on the advisory board of *Gastronomica*, *The Journal of Food and Culture*, and writes for the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *TheAtlantic.com*, *MarkBittman.com*, *Saveur*, and *Men’s Health*. *Tomatoland* was published in 2011 by Andrews McNeel.



## WHAT DO YOU EAT IN JANUARY?

By Barbara Kingsolver

"January brings the snow . . ." began the well-thumbed, illustrated children's book about the seasons that my children cleaved to as gospel, while growing up in a place where January did nothing of the kind. Our sunny Arizona winters might bring a rim of ice on the birdbath at dawn, but by midafternoon it would likely be warm enough to throw open the school bus windows. Tucson households are systematically emptied of all sweatshirts and jackets in January, as kids wear them out the door in the morning and forget all about them by noon, piling up derelict sweatshirt mountains in the classroom corners.

Nevertheless, in every winter of the world, Arizona schoolchildren fold and snip paper snowflakes to tape around the blackboard. In October they cut out orange paper leaves, and tulip in spring, just as colonial American and Australian school children once memorized poems about British skylarks while the blue jays or cockatoos (according to continent) squawked outside, utterly ignored. The dominant culture has a way of becoming more real than the stuff at hand.

Now, at our farm, when the fully predicted snow fell from the sky, or the leaves changed, or tulips popped out of the ground, we felt a shock of thrill. For the kids it seemed like living in storybook land; for Steven and me it was a more normal return to childhood, the old days, the way things ought to be. If we remembered the snow being deeper, the walks to school harder and longer, we refrained from mentioning that to any young person. But the seasons held me in thrall.

And so those words from the Sara Coleridge poem, "January brings the snow," were singing a loop in my head as I sat at the kitchen table watching the flakes blow around in one of those featherweight boxing match snowstorms. It was starting to drift at bizarre angles, in very odd places, such as inside the eaves of the woodshed. The

school bus would likely bring Lily home early if this kept up, but at the moment I had the house to myself. My sole companion was the crackling woodstove that warms our kitchen; talkative, but easy to ignore. I was deeply enjoying my solitary lunch break, a full sucker for the romance of winter, eating a warmed-up bowl of potato-leek soup and watching the snow. Soon I meant to go outside for a load of firewood, but found it easy to procrastinate. I perused the newspaper instead.

We newspaper readers all have our pet vexations. Somewhere in one of those sections is the column we anxiously turn to for the sole purpose of disagreeing with the columnist. Volubly. Until family members, rolling their eyes, remind us it's a free country and you don't have to read it every time. My own nemesis is not in the World or Op-Ed sections; it's the food column. While I am sick to death of war, corporate crime, and science writers who can't understand the difference between correlation and causation, I try to be open-minded. And yet this food writer has less sense than God gave a goose about where food comes from.

I'd worked on our relationship, moving through the stages of bafflement, denial, and asking this guy out loud, "Where do you live, the moon?" I knew the answer: he didn't. He was a local fellow writing just for our region of bountiful gardens and farms, doing his best I'm sure. But no one was ever keener on outsourcing the ingredients. The pumpkins of his world all grow in cans, it goes without saying. If it's fresh ingredients you need, you can be sure the combinations he calls for won't inhabit the same continent or season as one another, or you. On this cozy winter day when I was grooving on the snow that stuck in little triangles on my windowpanes, he wanted to talk pesto.

To lively up anything from pasta to chicken, he said, I should think about fresh basil pesto this week. How do I make it? Easy! I should select only the youngest, mildest flavored leaves, bruising them between my fingers to release the oils before dumping them in my blender with olive oil to make a zingy accompaniment to my meal.

Excuse me? The basil leaves of our continent's temperate zones had now been frozen down to their blackened stalks for, oh, let's count: three months. Sometimes at this time of year the grocery has little packages containing approximately six leaves of the stuff (young and mild flavored?) for three bucks. If I hauled a big bag of money out to my car and spent the next two days on icy roads foraging the produce aisles of this and the neighboring counties, I might score enough California-grown basil leaves to whip up a hundred-dollar-a-plate pesto meal by the weekend. Gee, thanks for the swell idea.

Okay, I know, it's a free country, and I'm a grouch. (Just two weeks later this chef took off for other work in a distant city where he remains safe from my beetle-browed scrutiny.) But if Arizona children have to cut out snowflakes in winter, maybe cooking-school students could be held to a similar standard, cutting out construction-paper asparagus in springtime, pumpkins in the fall, basil in summer. Mightn't they even take field trips to farms, four times a year? In our summer garden they'd get a gander at basil bushes growing not as a garnish but a crop. When the leaves begin releasing their fragrance into the dry heat of August, we harvest whole plants by the bushel and make pesto in large batches,

freezing it in pint-sized bags. At farmers' markets it starts showing up by the snippet in June and in bulk over the next two months: fresh, fragrant, and inexpensive enough for nongardeners to put up a winter's supply.

Pesto freezes beautifully. When made in season it costs just a fraction of what the grocery or specialty stores charge for pestos in little jars. It takes very little space when frozen flat in plastic bags, then stacked in the freezer like books on a shelf. A pint bag will thaw in a bowl of warm water in less time than it takes to boil the pasta. Tossed together with some pecans or olives, dried tomatoes, and a grind of Parmesan cheese, it's the best of easy meals. But the time to think of bruising those leaves with our fingers to release the oils would be August. Those of us who don't live in southern California or Florida have to plan ahead, not just for pesto but for local eating in general. That seems obvious. But apparently it isn't, because in public discussions of the subject, the first question that comes up is always the same: "What do you eat in January?"

I wish I could offer high drama, some chilling tales of a family gnawing on the leather uppers of their Birkenstocks. From childhood I vividly recall a saga of a family stranded in their car in the Mojave Desert who survived by eating the

## GETTING IT WHILE YOU CAN

By Camille Kingsolver

When our family first started our local food project, I was daunted. How ironic, I thought: while most parents are harping on their kids to eat more fruits and veggies, my sister and I are being told to give up the juicy pleasure of a fresh peach or pear all winter. I tried to picture how I would get through the months when there are no apples, no plums, and the strawberries of spring seem light-years away. This may sound dramatic, but fruit is my favorite food.

I was forced to get creative. The first step, shopping, is actually easier. When you peruse the farmers' market for fresh produce, the options are clear. You don't miss what's not there, either, like Skittles placed at a third-grader's eye level in the checkout. No wailing kids or annoying tabloids (omigod . . . is Brangelina really over?!). Just wonderful, fresh things to eat. As the seasons change, different fruits and vegetables come and go, so as a shopper you learn a get-it-while-you-can mentality.

The first strawberries showed up at our farmers' market in late spring, on a day when I'd stopped in alone

on my way home from a morning class. When I saw giant boxes of strawberries piled on the tailgate of a farmer's truck, I didn't waste ten seconds asking myself the questions I would mull over in a conventional grocery: "Hmmm, do I really want berries today? Are these overpriced? Are they going to mold the minute I get home?" I power-walked past other meandering shoppers and bought a bucket load. I drove home daydreaming about the creations I could cook up with my loot.

The key to consuming enough produce and reaping maximum nutritional benefits is planning meals around whatever you have.

This presents opportunities to get inventive in the kitchen and try new things, like stuffed zucchini. How many spinach dishes can you have in one week without getting sick of it? When working with fresh ingredients, the answer is, a lot!



Camille Kingsolver graduated from Duke University and is an active advocate for the local-food movement, speaking to young adults on navigating food choices in a difficult economy. She lives in Asheville, N.C., and grows a vegetable garden in her front yard. This reading was excerpted from *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* (2007).

children's box of Crayolas. I hope in those days crayons were made of something yummy like rendered lard, rather than petroleum. In any case, my childish mind fretted for years about the untold *bathroom* part of the tale. Our family's story pales by comparison. No Chartreuse or Burnt Sienna for us. We just ate ordinary things like pasta with pesto, made ahead.

In the winter we tended more toward carnivory, probably in answer to the body's metabolic craving for warm stews with more fats and oils. Our local meat is always frozen, except in the rare weeks when we've just harvested poultry, so the season doesn't dictate what's available. A meat farmer has to plan in spring for the entire year, starting the Thanksgiving turkeys in April, so that's when the customer needs to order one. But the crop comes in, and finishes, just as vegetables do. When our farmers' market closed for the winter we made sure our freezer was stocked with grass-finished lamp chops and ground beef, crammed in there with our own poultry. And we would now have fresh eggs in every month, thanks to Lily's foresight in raising good winter layers.

People who inhabit the world's colder, darker places have long relied on lots of cold-water ocean fish in their diets. Research on this subject has cracked open one more case of humans knowing how to be a sensible animal, before Little Debbie got hold of our brains. Several cross-cultural studies (published in *Lancet* and the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, among others) have shown lower rates of depression and bipolar disorder in populations consuming more seafood; neurological studies reveal that it's the omega-3 fatty acids in ocean fish that specifically combat the blues. These compounds (also important to cardiovascular health) accumulate in the bodies of predators whose food chains are founded on plankton or grass — like tuna and salmon. And like humans used to be, before our food animals all went over to indoor dining. Joseph Hibbeln, M.D., of the National Institutes of Health, points out that in most modern Western diets "we eat grossly fewer omega-3 fatty acids now. We also know that rates of depression have radically increased, by perhaps a hundred-fold."

In the long, dark evenings of January I had been hankering to follow those particular doctor's orders. We badly missed one of our imported former mainstays: wild-caught Alaskan salmon. We'd found no local sources for fish. Streams in our region are swimming with trout, but the only trout in our restaurants were the flying kind, we'd discovered, shipped on ice from Idaho. And we weren't going to go ice fishing. But instead of plankton eaters our local food chain had grass eaters: pasture-finished beef has omega-3 levels up to six times higher than CAFO beef; that and Lily's egg yolks would get us through. Steven threw extra flax seeds (also rich in Omega-3s) into his loaves of bread, to keep the

troops happy.

Legumes were one of our mainstays. Our favorite meal for snow days starts with a pot of beans simmering all afternoon on the woodstove, warming the kitchen while it cooks. An hour before dinnertime I sauté a skillet of chopped onions and peppers until they sweetly melt; living half my life in the Southwest won me over to starting chili with a *sofrito*. Apart from that, my Kentucky chili recipe stands firm: to the bean pot I add the sautéed onions and peppers, two jars of canned tomatoes, a handful of dried spicy chilies, bay leaves, and a handful of elbow macaroni. (The macaroni is not negotiable.)

Winter is also the best time for baking: fruit pies and cobblers, savory vegetable pies, spicy zucchini breads, shepherd's pies covered with a lightly browned crust of mashed potatoes. The hot oven is more welcome now than in summertime, and it recaptures the fruits and vegetables we put away in season. We freeze grated zucchini, sliced apples, and other fillings in the amounts required by our pie and bread recipes.

So many options, and still that omnipresent question about what local fare one could possibly eat in January. I do understand the concern. Healthier eating generally begins with taking one giant step back from the processed-foods aisle. Thus, the ubiquitous foodie presumptions about fresh-is-good, frozen-is bad, and salads every day. I've enjoyed that program myself, marking it as progress from the tinned green beans and fruit cocktail of my childhood era when produce aisles didn't have so much of everything all the time.

While declining to return to the canned-pear-half-with-cottage-cheese cookery I learned in high school Home Ec, I've reconsidered some of my presumptions. Getting over the frozen-food snobbery is important. The broccoli and greens from our freezer stand in just fine for fresh salads, not just nutritionally but aesthetically. I think creatively in winter about using summer when the ingredients were rolling us over. Chard and kale are champion year-round producers (ours grow through the snow), and will likely show up in any farmers' market that's open in winter. We use fresh kale in soups, steamed chard leaves for wrapping dolmades, sautéed chard in omelets.

Another of our cold-eater saviors is winter squash, a vegetable that doesn't get enough respect. They're rich in beta-carotenes, tasty, versatile, and keep their youth as mysteriously as movie stars. We grow yellow-fleshed hubbards, orange butternuts, green striped Bush Delicata, and an auburn French beauty called a *potimarron* that tastes like roasted chestnuts. I arranged an autumnal pile of these in a big wooden bread bowl in October, as a seasonal decoration, and then forgot to admire them after a while. I was startled to realize they still looked great in January. We would finally use the last one in April. I've become a tad

obsessive about collecting winter squash recipes, believing secretly that our family could live on them indefinitely if the world as we know it should end. My favorite so far is white beans with thyme served in a baked hubbard-squash half. It's an easy meal, impressive enough for company.

With stuff like this around, who needs iceberg lettuce?

Occasionally we get winter mesclun from farming friends with greenhouses, and I have grown spinach under a cold frame. But normal greens season is spring. I'm not sure how lettuce specifically finagled its way, in so many households, from special-guest status to live-in. I tend to forget about it for the duration. At a January potluck or dinner party I'll be taken by surprise when a friend casually suggests, "Bring a green salad." I'll bring an erstwhile salad of steamed chard with antipasto tomatoes, crumbled goat cheese, and balsamic vinegar. Or else everybody's secret favorite: deviled eggs.

In our first year of conscious locavory (locivory?) we encountered a lot of things we hadn't expected: the truth about turkey sex life; the recidivism rate of raccoon corn burglars; the size attained by a zucchini left unattended for twenty-four hours. But our biggest surprise was January: it wasn't all that hard. Our winter kitchen was more relaxed, by far, than our summer slaughterhouse-and-cannery. November brought the season of our Thanksgiving for more reasons than one. The hard work was over. I'd always done some canning and freezing, but this year we'd lain in a larder like never before, driven by our pledge. Now we could sit back and rest on our basils.

"Driven" is putting it mildly, I confess. Scratch the surface of any mother and you'll find Scarlett O'Hara camping on that gnarly beet she'd yanked out of the ground. "I'll never go hungry again" seems to be the DNA-encoded rallying cry for many of us who never went hungry in the first place. When my family headed into winter months my instincts took over, abetted by the Indian Lore books I'd read in childhood, which all noted that the word for February in Cherokee (and every other known native tongue) was "Hungry Month."

After the farmer's market and our garden both closed for the season, I took an inventory of our pantry. During our industrious summer we'd canned over forty jars of tomatoes, tomato-based sauces, and salsa. We'd also put up that many jars of pickles, jam, and fruit juice, and another

fifty or so quarts of dried vegetables, mostly tomatoes but also soup beans, peppers, okra, squash, root vegetables, and herbs. In pint-sized freezer boxes we'd frozen broccoli, beans, squash, corn, pesto, peas, roasted tomatoes, smoked eggplants, fire-roasted peppers, cherries, peaches, strawberries, and blueberries. In large ziplock

bags we froze quantities of our favorite snack food, whole edamame, which Lily knows how to thaw in the microwave, salt, and pop from the pod straight down the hatch. I do realize I'm lucky to have kids who prefer steamed soybeans to Twinkies. But about 20 million mothers in Japan have kids like that too, so it's not a bolt out of the blue.

Our formerly feisty chickens and turkeys now lay in quiet meditation (legs-up pose) in the chest freezer. Our onions and garlic hung like Rapunzel's braids from the mantel behind the kitchen woodstove. In the mudroom and root cellar we had three bushels of potatoes, another two of winter squash, plus beets, carrots, melons, and cabbages. A pyramid of blue-green and orange pumpkins was stacked near the back door. One shelf in the pantry held small, alphabetized jars of seeds, saved for starting over — assuming spring found us able-bodied and inclined to do this again.

That's the long and short of it: what I did last summer. Most evenings and a lot of weekends from mid-August to mid-September were occupied with cutting, drying, and canning. We'd worked like wage laborers on double shift while our friends were going to the beach for the summer's last hurrah, and retrospectively that looks like a bum deal even to me. But we had taken a vacation in June, wedged between the important dates of Cherries Fall and the First of Tomato. Next summer maybe we'd go to the beach. But right now, looking at all these jars in the pantry gave me a happy contented feeling, as if I had roots growing right through the soles of my shoes into the dirt of our farm.

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This reading was excerpted from *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* (2007), winner of the James Beard Award. Barbara Kingsolver has written thirteen books and is a Pulitzer Prize finalist, a recipient of the National Humanities Medal, and was named one of the most important writers of the 20th Century by *Writers Digest*. She lives with her family on a farm in southwestern Virginia where they raise free-range chickens, turkeys, Icelandic sheep, and an enormous vegetable garden.

