

# Menu for the Future

A SEVEN-SESSION DISCUSSION CIRCLE FOR THE HOME, FAITH CENTER OR WORKPLACE

## Purpose

∞ To explore food systems and their impacts on culture, society and ecological systems.

∞ To gain insight into agricultural and individual practices that promote personal and ecological well-being.

∞ To consider your role in creating or supporting sustainable food systems.

*“Food is our common ground, a universal experience.”*  
– James Beard



## Session Themes

**1. What's Eating America?:** Given the array of food choices and advice, eating in modern industrial society can be wrought with confusion, contradictions and anxiety. Session One considers the effects of modern industrial eating habits on culture, society and the Earth.

**2. Anonymous Food:** Session Two traces the historical shift from family farms to industrial agriculture to present day questions surrounding GMOs and industrial organics. The session examines the ecological and economic impacts that have accompanied the changes in how we grow and prepare food.

**3. Farming for the Future:** Session Three explores emerging food system alternatives, highlighting sustainable growing practices and the benefits of small farms and urban food production. The session considers how individuals can make choices that lead to a more sustainable food supply.

**4. You Are What You Eat:** Session Four explores food systems from a human health perspective. The session considers the influences that shape our choices and food policies from the fields to Capitol Hill, and the implications for our health and well-being.

**5. Toward a Just Food System:** The readings in Session Five examine issues of hunger, equity, and Fair Trade. The session considers the role that governments, communities and individuals can play in addressing these issues to create a more just food system.

**6. Choices for Change:** Individuals and communities are discovering the benefits of choosing local, seasonal, and sustainably grown and produced foods. Session Six offers inspiration and practical advice in taking steps to create more sustainable food systems.

**7. Call to Action—Wrap-Up**

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**Simplicity Matters Earth Institute**  
Simple living for a sustainable future

[www.simplicity-matters.org](http://www.simplicity-matters.org) | [contact@simplicity-matters.org](mailto:contact@simplicity-matters.org) | 301-432-8721

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## Readings and Excerpts

**1. What's Eating America.** "Organic, Local, and Everything Else" by Zoë Bradbury ♦ "Navigating the Catch of the Day" by Daniel Duane ♦ "The Anxiety of Eating" by Michael Pollan ♦ "Sunday Dinner" by R.W. Apple Jr. ♦ "Inheritance" by Sue Browning ♦ "Gathering Indigo" by Aleria Jensen ♦ "Appetite" by Maxine Kumin ♦ "The Pleasures of Eating" by Wendell Berry

**2. Anonymous Food.** Food Awareness Exercise ♦ Excerpt from "On Trial: Industrial Agriculture" by James E. Horne and Maura McDermott ♦ Food Counts compiled by Lena Rotenberg ♦ "Your Food Doesn't Come From the Store" by Tom Philpott ♦ "Irrigation" by Ling Li ♦ "The SUV in the Pantry" by Thomas Starrs ♦ "What's Happening to the Bees?" by Moises Velasquez-Manoff ♦ "Rethinking the Meat Guzzler" by Mark Bittman ♦ "The Price of Life" by Steven Hopp ♦ "Mean or Green?" by Liza Featherstone ♦ "Paying the Price of Low Prices" by Steven L. Hopp ♦ "Big Organic, Inc." ♦ "The Potato" by Michael Pollan

**3. Farming for the Future.** "Can Organics Save the Family Farm?" by Eliot Coleman ♦ Excerpt from Deep Economy by Bill McKibben ♦ "Lawn to Farm" by Wylie Harris ♦ "High Priest of the Pasture" by Todd S. Purdum ♦ "What's Permaculture" by Toby Hemenway ♦ "Why Don't We Have Gardens Like This?" by Jennifer Cockrill-King ♦ "Making Food Deserts Bloom" by Brian Halweil ♦ "Cultivating the Urban Scene" by Fred Pearce and Orjan Furubjelke ♦ "Look Mommy, There's Our Farmer" by Frances Moore Lappé and Anna Lappé

**4. You Are What You Eat.** "Additives in Your Kitchen Exercise" ♦ "Unhappy Meal" by Marco

Visscher ♦ "Meet Free-Range Eggs" by Cheryl Long and Tabitha Alterman ♦ "First, Do No Harm" ♦ "The Illusion of Safe and Clean" by Anna Lappé and Bryant Terry ♦ "Pesticide Protection" ♦ "Five Easy Ways to Go Organic" by Tara Parker-Pope ♦ "What's in Your Milk?" ♦ "Food Without Thought" by Heather Schoonover and Mark Muller ♦ "Making Informed Food Choices" by Marion Nestle

**5. Towards a Just Food System.** "Creating Scarcity from Plenty" by Frances Moore Lappé and Anna Lappé ♦ "The Blind Leading the Blind" by Steven L. Hopp ♦ "Too Much and Too Little, Here and There" ♦ "Beautiful Horizon" by Frances Moore Lappé and Anna Lappé ♦ "Growing Resistance" by Alison Hope Alkon ♦ "Local Food Policy Councils" by Rosemarie Cordello ♦ "Bananas" by Ed Hamer ♦ "Trading Fair and Square" by Steven Hopp ♦ "Breadbasket of Democracy" by Ted Nace ♦ "The Value of Diversity" by James E. Horne and Maura McDermott

**6. Choices for Change.** "When Eating Local Gets Personal" by Brian Halweil ♦ "Thirteen Things You Can Do to Support a Sustainable Food System" ♦ "Local or Organic? A False Choice" by Samuel Fromartz ♦ "Regional Cuisine and Sustainable Community" by Greg Higgins ♦ "Slow Eating" by Jennifer Allen-Keilty ♦ "Tangerine Meditation" by Thich Nhat Hanh ♦ "A Grand Experiment" by Bill McKibben ♦ "Returning Stories to the Modern Kitchen" by Ann Vileisis ♦ "Seed Banking" by Adrienne Shelton ♦ Excerpt from "Small Wonder" by Barbara Kingsolver

**7. Wrap-Up.** Evaluation and Next Steps

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