

Conscious, Ethical Eating



I resisted watching the documentary *Food, Inc.* as I knew it would be an unsettling experience, one that would probably change everything about my relationship to food. In fact, the movie's subtitle is: "You'll never look at dinner the same way again!" Indeed, I haven't looked at *any* meal the same way since, and I am grateful for this eye-opening education.

Food, Inc. exposes America's industrialized food system and its effect on our environment, health, economy and workers' rights. It encourages us to become conscious of what we are eating, where it comes from, how animals and food workers are treated, and other problems associated with the production of our food.

Here are some things that you can do to be more conscious and ethical about food. As is always the best when making changes, start with small steps:

- Educate yourself about the current state of our food industry and what is in the food that you eat. Watch *Food, Inc.*, *Fast Food Nation*, *Super Size Me*, read *Food, Inc.* (the book), *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, *Food Rules*, and other books by Michael Pollan.
- Decide what values you are supporting when you make your food choices: e.g. sustainability, better treatment of animals, fair trade and worker's rights, physical health, health of our planet. This will help you decide the steps you can take in this complex and sometimes confusing arena.
- Purchase organic and/or locally grown food whenever possible. Encourage your supermarket to carry these items.
- Find farmer's markets, food-coops, Community Supported Agriculture programs, and restaurants that are concerned about sustainability and your health. Check out www.eatwellguide.org.
- When shopping at a supermarket, purchase foods on the perimeter of the store and stay out of the middle where most of the processed food is.
- Think about how far your food must have traveled to get to your food store or restaurant. Read labels!
- Research ocean-friendly seafood at NE Aquarium site: www.neaq.org or www.blueocean.org.
- Eat less meat. Or go without meat one day a week - perhaps have a Meatless Monday.
- Have a garden and grow your own produce and herbs. Compost!
- Tell the legislature that food safety and safety of workers is important to you, and also that school children should be served healthy meals, not junk food and soda.