

Hungry Planet: What the World Eats Study Guide

Hungry Planet: What the World Eats by Peter Menzel

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Plot Summary

"Hungry Planet: What the World Eats" by Peter Menzel and Faith D'Aluisio offers a photographic study of families around the world. It details what each family eats during a week and gives a family profile. The book goes into depth describing food options and purchases.

In Australia, two families have different eating experiences. The Browns of Riverview once lived in the outback where they survived on lamb, porcupines, and kangaroo. The other family highlighted is the Malloy family. They enjoy barbecuing out by the pool when the weather is hot. Since they live close to Asia, they enjoy some Asian cuisine. Once a week they have nibble food, and once a week they have fast food for dinner.

In Bhutan, the Namgays live in a steady diet of food with chili pepper added. They think that this is a vegetable. The village people work together to make sure everyone is fed. In Bosnia, the Dudos family struggles to survive after a civil war. They are better off than others since they have a vegetable garden, fruit trees, and a well. Over in Chad, things are even more difficult. They people struggle to get basic nutrition and water.

In China, traditional foods sit in the cupboards next to modern, international fare. Families grow foods on land given to them by the government. They purchase other foods by trading or with cash. In Cuba, the families are given food ration booklets that they use to get food, which provides 1/3 to 1/2 of their monthly diet. The rest of their food comes from markets. In Ecuador, food also comes from markets, since it's difficult to grow anything in the harsh climate.

In Egypt, women spend a lot of time preparing stuffed, spicy food. This is in contrast to France where fast food seems to be taking over traditional French meals. In Germany, large supermarkets take over local markets because their prices are more economical.

Food based on convenience is also prevalent in Great Britain, but the family highlighted is leaning toward a vegetarian diet. This is different from the family in Greenland who uses a dogsled to travel over two hours to the store. They hunt for their food. Like the family in Great Britain, the people in Guatemala have a mostly vegetarian diet. They eat meat less than once a week, but unlike the Great Britain family, their sweets are bananas, not processed foods.

In India, the food is centered around vegetables. Hindus are vegetarian, and the family highlighted is Hindu. Over in Italy, there is a wide variety of foods in the market. The diet includes fresh vegetables and fish as well as lots of pasta. In Japan, the younger generation is drawn to fast foods as they are in Okinawa, but in Okinawa, everyone gathers for traditional fare on weekends. Kuwait food name brand foods and lamb. Their land is poor for growing. In Mali, families eat various forms of porridge.

Food is difficult to obtain in poverty-stricken areas such as Mexico, Mongolia, the Philippines, Poland, and Turkey. However, places such as the United States have such easy access to fast food and processed foods and obesity is a serious issue.



Australia - Chad

Australia - Chad Summary and Analysis

"Hungry Planet: What the World Eats" by Peter Menzel and Faith D'Aluisio offers a photographic study of families around the world. It details what each family eats during a week and gives a family profile. The book goes into depth describing food options and purchases.

In Australia, food expenditures for one week equal \$376.45. During the 18th century, European settlers imported sheep, and many of Australia's original inhabitants became shepherds. Because of this, the people in the outback are used to slaughtering and eating their sheep. When the parents of the family interviewed were young, they would cook on an open fire. They had a refrigerator that sometimes ran on kerosene. The family eventually moved close to Brisbane, the city. It was very different from the home they were used to, and they had different food choices. They didn't work outdoors as much.

As they looked around them, and they see obesity as a pervasive issue for Australians. The three adults in the household had diabetes. The family members like to tell stories, and many of the stories feature food. John remembers one time when he had to go out to catch a porcupine for dinner after a hard rain. The hills all looked the same, and he thought he was lost. The upset boy heard his uncle whistling, he realized that he was in range of the house.

When the family members live in the bush, they commonly eat kangaroo, porcupine, and lamb. Now that they lived near Brisbane, they find it difficult to balance food purchases. They get checks from the government for disability and make the food last for a fortnight. They have to buy a certain amount of food, but when they lived in the Bush, if they ran out of meat, they would just go over to the paddock and get a kangaroo. Things are easy now, but Vanessa feels as if her children have missed out on some of the most basic experiences. For example, they didn't understand that someone could make tea without having teabags.

In Brisbane, food expenditures for one week equal \$303.75. The weather in January is very hot in Brisbane, which is a city on the east coast of Australia. The family cooks using a microwave, stove, and an outdoor barbecue grill. They preserve their food in the refrigerator-freezer. Once a week they have a nibbles night. On this night, they might eat something such as ready-cooked chicken, artichokes, pickles, pistachios, crackers, Vegemite, olives, and snow peas. They enjoy eating on the patio next to the pool. On Friday nights, they go to Subway or McDonald's before their son's t-ball match. Thanks to their proximity to Asia, this Australian family enjoys Asian food and culture.

In Bhutan, food expenditure for one week equals \$5.03. In Bhutan, the chili pepper is eaten at nearly every meal. It is considered a vegetable. It's a winter morning in the



Himalayan village, and a pot of red rice simmers on the earthen stove in the kitchen. The mother mixes up cheese, chili powder, whole chilies, onions, and salt to make a paste to eat with the rice. Nalim is a subsistence farmer, and her husband, Namgary is the village seer. He is disabled, but others come and help them do the work that they can't do. When other people need help, they are ready to help them however they can.

The village has narrow, terraced fields with trails to the pounded-earth houses. The houses each have three stories and have hand carved windows and an elaborately decorated prayer room that is painted by monks. The families lived on the second story in their houses, and they store grain, dried meat, and straw in the top story while their animals are corralled on the ground-floor. Health officials try to prevent people from keeping animals in the house due to disease, but they aren't very successful. In this household, everybody works together to prepare the meal. The children participate in the meal and clean-up without anyone asking them.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, food expenditure for one week equals \$167.43. Ensadah and her husband, Rasim, are working together to prepare strong, sugary, Turkish-style coffee for their guests. It is served with Turkish treats. Every weekend, the mother bakes deserts for the family. Both parents work, and the grandmother takes care of the children. Even though her schedule is very busy, Ensadah doesn't use takeout or prepared foods for lunch. She makes stewed chicken. Since they are Muslim, they don't eat pork. In the evening, they have a light meal such as eggplant and red pepper spread on crusty slices of bread. Most of their food comes from the supermarket, but eggs, vegetables, and seasonal fruits come from the outdoor Green Market Ciglane.

In the Essay by Alfred W. Crosby, the authors discuss how even though families around the world differ in appearance, they have one thing in common. Everyone eats. Cooking is something that is unique to our species, and has evolved over time. For the first time in history, diseases from overeating are nearly as prevalent and dangerous as undereating.

In Chad, food expenditure for one week is \$1.23. D'jimia Ishakh Souleymane prepares the kitchen for the day's meal right after she wakes up. She props three rocks set up in a triangle to hold up the family can over a tiny wood fire. She boils together a few handfuls of milled sorghum. Once it becomes a thick porridge, she dumps it out into an oiled bowl and swirls it until the surface is flat. She makes a soup from dried tomatoes, water, and salt. This is what the family of six will eat for breakfast in the refugee camp. Nearly everyone in the camp eats the same thing for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

The family receives food rations, which they have to wait in intense heat for. For each day, each person receives 15 ounces of cereal, 1 teaspoon of salt, 1 tablespoon of sugar, and slightly under 1/4 cup each of pulses (lentils or something similar), a corn soy blend, and vegetable oil.

In Chad, the Mustaphas of Dar Es Salaam Village, food expenditures for one week equal \$18.33. The 12-year-old Amna and her cousin tie plastic jugs and gourds to their

father's donkeys then set out to ride across the plain in order to fetch the day's water. Everyone pitches in to work together because if they don't, they know they won't eat.

The girls join other children, mostly girls, in a 20 min. ride to the wadi. This is a seasonal riverbed that is dry at this time of year. There are wells built into the wadi, and the children prepare the ground and pull up the water. They water the animals then bring water home.

There are livestock all around, but the families rarely slaughter animals and their herd because it depletes their assets. Instead, they split the cost of an animal with other families and eat the meat for celebrations.



China - Germany

China - Germany Summary and Analysis

In China, food expenditure for one week is \$155.06. Traditional China melds into modern living as one enters the Dong's government issue low-rise apartment. Guo Yongmei decorates with magazine photographs and modern furniture. In the kitchen, Xiaozhan rice is on the shelves next to French baguettes and coffee creamer from Maxwell House. Times are changing, and the family eats a mix of international cuisine, traditional Chinese food, and Western fast food.

In China, food expenditure for one week is \$57.27. Cui Lianyou and his friends live in a rural village 60 miles south of Beijing. He has recently planted corn on land allotted to him by the government. The family grows ten percent of the food it eats, and it purchases the rest using money from a relative who has a job outside of farming. This family member has to go away to earn the money, and he comes home on weekends.

Letting nothing go to waste, the family grows corn and feeds the husks to the sheep. The sheep are sold to the butcher when they are grown in order to bring in more income for the family. They also have chickens, which they eat when the chickens stop producing eggs.

While Chinese in the cities rely on a cash economy, those in the rural areas still use a bartering system. The family trades their harvest for peanut oil. They also trade for other items and services. Grandmother and Grandfather Cui recall times when they ate anything they could find during the Cultural Revolution. They even ate wild grass and food that fell on the ground. Nothing went to waste. They are concerned about the wastefulness of the modern generation. The younger ones are interested in fast food and packaged foods, but the older generation refuses to try it.

In the Essay by Corby Kummer, the authors describe how fast foods have re-defined the family meal. They are comfortable and familiar, but not necessarily healthy. They also don't build a sense of community. Since Eric Scholsser wrote "Fast Food Nation" in 2001, there have been some changes, and these changes are making a difference in global agriculture. One way to get the most out of fast food is to regionalize it. It's also important to raise an environmental awareness.

In Cuba, food expenditure for one week is \$56.76. Angelina and Euripides lived in Havana, and they constantly have friends and extended family visiting. As children come in and out, Euripides, the patriarch of the family, comes back with the government ration of monthly food. He brings it in a cart. Euripides freezes the bread and adds rice to the family crock. Family members of varying ages work together on making the food. Dinner choices range from chicken and rice to spaghetti with cheese and sugar. Since 1962, the Cuban government issues each household a ration book that they can use to purchase certain quantities of food for practically nothing. This food includes coffee,



sugar, cigars, milk, bread, beef, salt, cooking oil, eggs, rice, and dried beans. The rations provide 1/3 to 1/2 of the typical family's food. They get the rest from open agricultural markets.

In Ecuador, food Expenditure for one week is \$31.55. Ermelinda Ayme Sichigalo would rather leave her children home when she goes shopping. She has to go down the mountain on a weekly basis to get to the market in town. The children want everything they see, and there isn't much money. Her husband, Alvarito, generally does the shopping for this family with eight children to raise. Ermelinda tends to the children while doing field work. She also does the laundry and cooking while her husband goes to the market. She is also a midwife and medicinal healer. The hike down to the market is three miles long, and the walk back is vertical. Planting is very difficult since the land is dry, and the wind is harsh. The family grows potatoes, corn, broad beans, oca, wheat, and onions. They eat chicken and guinea pig, but only a few times a year. Their milk cow provides one quart of milk a day. Their main way of making money is to raise sheep and sell them. Many other families in the area sell piglets, alpacas, cows, llamas, and bulls. All the family members help in the kitchen, including Ermelinda's husband.

In Egypt, food expenditure for one week is \$68.53. Food takes a long time to prepare in Egypt. It's filled with spices, and the women are busy making dishes such as spiced lamb and stuffed foods. They have eggplant wrapped in grape leaves and rice.

In France, food expenditure for one week is \$419.95. When entertaining, Delphine serves traditional French gratins, several meat dishes, cheese and salad courses, rich desserts, and French wine. However, during the week, her family eats a more global diet. It's also a convenience-oriented diet. They get their food from the megamarket, which is more cost-effective than the classic shops. Immigrants have come to France and have introduced a wide variety of foods. While this is a good thing, Michele is disappointed to note that young people spend less time eating than ever before. They don't seem to appreciate mealtimes. They enjoy eating at fast food restaurants.

In the Essay by Charles C. Mann, the authors note how anywhere one goes around the world, notes sights and smells of cooking wafting through the air as one walks down the street. When you go to purchase something from a vendor, they hand you the food in exchange for money, and you, yourself, are taking part in a culinary tradition.

In Cairo, you might purchase Koshari, in Rio de Janeiro, it might be cheese bread. In Beijing, you might find yourself purchasing scorpions on a stick while in St. Petersburg Palace Square, you might be purchasing a pirogi. Street food is part of market capitalism, which became widespread after the Industrial Revolution. It is part of global trade. In the Philippines, children from families such as the Cabaña family run to the stands and stalls in the nearby streets during lunch time at school. The parents do the same from their offices. As fast food takes over, restaurants might emerge, and the unsanitary stalls might disappear.

In Germany, food expenditure for one week equals \$500.07. The authors go straight from the blazing African furnace of Chad to a German blizzard. The Melander family



welcomes them with nourishing warmth. Sipping spiced tea, the host tell them about the house and the woman who used to live there. It was a great aunt who was like a grandmother to the children. The cooking space is utilitarian, and the family gets their food from a super-sized supermarket. There is a wide variety of food offered at the market—much more than the small shops and markets that populate the village squares of Germany.

Jorg is getting ready to attempt shopping at the huge supermarket for the first time now that his wife has taken on more hours at work. She is a nurse so her schedule is very erratic. He is used to smaller markets, including outdoor markets. Although the family prefers the fresh food the outdoor markets, it's more economical to shop at the super-supermarket. Suzanne wishes she could buy all organic foods, but it's too expensive. The small amounts of organic food they purchase stands out from the rest because it is marked "Bio."

On the weekends, Jorg rides his bike to the store to get rolls or croissants. The family eats together. Often, Michele is returning from her night shift and eats with her family before going to get some rest.



Great Britain - Mali

Great Britain - Mali Summary and Analysis

In Great Britain, food expenditure for one week is \$253.15. The Bainton family members call themselves The Bees. They have two sons, one of which was turning 14 so they were going to celebrate his birthday at a pub. Deb says her son Josh is "almost vegetarian." The entire family leans towards vegetarianism, but Mark (the father) sometimes misses his Sunday roast. Both the mother and the father cook. When they shop, they gravitate towards convenience foods such as frozen pizzas and juice boxes. The children love sweets. The birthday dinner at the pub will include a cake and a spray can of whipped cream. A common breakfast might include cold cereal, toast or eggs.

In Greenland, food expenditure for one week is \$277.12. With fewer than 700 people living on the central east coast of Greenland and no roads, provisions come by boat during the summer and by snowmobile or air the rest of the year. Basic shopping can be done at the government owned market. Emil goes to the market with his dogsled and 14 dogs. The trip home takes over two hours.

The family is planning to go on a camping trip inland. As they talk about the trip, they eat musk ox stew. For breakfast, they eat sugary fruit concentrate, tea, and muesli in reconstituted powdered milk. The kitchen is typical except for the fact that it lacks running water. The children eat in front of the television. Provisions for the trip include frozen musk ox, package noodles, muesli, cookies, a soup pot and a portable kerosene cook stove, and ice pikes for fishing. The dogs eat packaged dog food and seal innards. The hunting trip goes well.

In Guatemala, food expenditure for one week is \$75.70. Most families in Todo Santos eat meat less than once a week unless there is a holiday. They eat rice, potatoes, tortillas, beans, and eggs three times a day in different combinations. For dessert, they eat bananas. Soft drinks are available, but the Mendoza family drinks a wheat drink, water, and instant coffee. It is a holiday in the beautiful remote mountain town, and sheep are slaughtered for dinner. Musicians come in and play guitars as visitors ready themselves for horse racing spectacles. The men are drinking alcohol freely. This is not a typical day. Generally, the villagers work hard, and farmers grow potatoes, corn, barley, wheat, beans, and sugarcane. They live in adobe houses, which they rent to students. Women teach visitors about basket weaving, and they run restaurants and bars. Many of the villagers own sheep and turkeys, which they slaughter for festivals and family reunions.

In the Essay by Michael Pollan, the authors discuss how we seem to have a disconnect with the way we treat animals. Some we pamper animals as pets, while we eat others that are equally intelligent. For example, we generally treat our dogs well, but we eat pigs. We do this because we don't have a connection with the pig. By the time it shows up in the market, it doesn't even look like a pig. Since we don't have that connection,



killing animals has become more of a factory process. The animals are not treated well before they die.

In India, food expenditure for one week equals \$39.27. Hindus believe that a long time ago, during a struggle between demons and gods, four droplets fell to earth from a pot that held the nectar of immortality. It is said that these drops were absorbed into the sacred rivers in the cities of Hardwar, Allahabad, Nasik, and Ujjain. Because of this, millions travel to these four cities every three years, in a 12 year cycle. At this time, half of the Patkars take a month-long break from school and work. Jayant has to work, however. He is a worker for the city's water department, and the water supply is seriously strained as the pilgrims come in.

Everyone gathers at the breakfast table to eat fluffy vegetables, rice with coconut and cilantro, and sev. The family is vegetarian, like most Hindus. For treats, like other people of India, they turn to the street vendors who sell spicy chickpea curry with flatbread, steamed rice cakes, spicy mashed vegetables in the federal, state and crispy flatbread with coconut milk and spicy vegetables, a savory pancake with chutney, curried puffed rice with chutney, yogurt drinks, fruit juices, and Chai tea.

In Italy, food expenditure for one week equals \$250.11. Giuseppe drinks coffee while smoking his first cigarette of the day as he looks outside of his third-floor apartment window onto the street. He can see the fish and seafood shop where he works. He watches as trucks come to set up open air displays as fruit and vegetable sellers, butchers, grocers, tobacconists, fishmongers, and bakers get ready for the day. They do this every day except Sunday. For lunch, the mother sends her son off with oven baked pasta and money for candy and juice boxes. The family has pasta every day. Sometimes they have it with potatoes, and other times they have it with beans, tomatoes, or clams.

In Japan, food expenditure for one week is \$317.25. In Japan, many feel that the presentation of food is as important as the food itself. Sayo is up early preparing breakfast. She is scrambling eggs and artfully placing cucumber, tomato, and lettuce together in an accompanying salad for her daughters. Her husband grabs a cup of coffee. The girls sit at a low table in the living room and sip tea, and their mother joins them. For lunch she has prepared grilled fish, lightly steamed green beans, rice, strawberries, cherries, and apples. One daughter is going to eat lunch at a fast food restaurant near her school. The girls don't clean up after themselves since the parents say their responsibility is to do well in school.

Every day, Sayo rides her bicycle to the neighborhood shopping center and goes through the fish, fruits, and vegetables to find food to prepare for dinner. She spends over an hour every day preparing dinner.

In Okinawa, food expenditure for one week is \$214.26. The family gathers together for traditional Okinawan food every weekend. Everybody enjoys the Malabar spinach, which grows on the island. Although the leaves of the plant taste like spinach, the plant is actually a relative of the sweet potato. Keiko chops the plant and mixes it with



Okinawan tofu (firmer than regular tofu) and adds a bit of citrus flavored vinegar. Along with other vegetables, she also prepares pork and egg.

During the week, the younger family members, now living on their own, eat a wide variety of foods. Some of this food includes Western fast food, and this bothers Keiko. She doesn't think it's very nutritious. In her opinion, Western food consists of a lot of bread, which they only use as a snack or a desert.

The older Okinawans say they "eat only until 80% full," and researchers come to the island to find out how so many Okinawans live past the age of 100. They think it might have something to do with their eating habits, their low stress, community commitment to quality life for the elderly, and exercise. Keiko's mother danced at her own hundredth birthday. The next generation doesn't seem to be faring so well. Those under the age of 50 now have higher rates of obesity, and a greater risk of liver disease, cardiovascular disease, and premature death than the overall Japanese population.

In Kuwait, food expenditure for one week is \$221.45. The eldest children eat their regular breakfast of salty olives, cucumbers, tomatoes, eggs, and feta. They also eat Kraft cheeses, Laughing Cow cheeses, and chewy, fresh Iranian flatbread. They drink milk tea. For lunch, they plan to have lamb.

It's Friday, the Muslim weekend, and they go to the mosque near the supermarket. At they market they purchase Egyptian strawberries, Heinz ketchup, Kraft mayonnaise, Carnation powdered milk, Galaxy chocolate spread, Consul olive oil, and Jordanian cabbage. While the country has oil, its land is poor for crops. The children also hope to pick up Snickers, Mars, Twix, and Pepsi at the multi-storied Western-style supermarket.

In the Essay by Carl Safina, the sea and ocean have a huge impact on our lives. Most people touch the sea through the food we eat. Still, we don't give it much thought. Dieticians encourage the eating of fish due to its nutritious value.

In Mali, food expenditure for one week is \$26.39. The village of Kouakourou seems to have risen out of the desert. The village has no electricity, and the rooms have no windows. Families cook in the courtyard where women and girls pound grain in a mortar with a pestle. They go to the river to wash the dishes. The men can have up to four wives in their Muslim tradition, and the women work together to cook for the children. In theory, the men are supposed to treat their wives and children the same, but this is often not the case. It leads to dissension in the families.

In the Natamos household, the wives get along well. They take turns cooking breakfast. One makes porridge, and they all eat together by choice. All the family members eat out of one pot. Other meals include smoked rice porridge with sour milk, okra soup with dried red peppers and salt, smoked fish stew with tomatoes, and cornmeal porridge. These are the same choices for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.



Mexico - United States

Mexico - United States Summary and Analysis

In Mexico, food expenditure for one week is \$189.09. In the past, Marco and Alma lived in a two-story, cement block apartment 50 miles south of Mexico City. They operated a mini convenience store that sold a few items. For lunch, they would usually eat rice, beans and chicken soup with cilantro, crab soup or pork tacos. In the evening, they would have a light meal served with fruit and bread. Almost all the meals were served with Coca-Cola.

When Alma as young, her family lived on rice, beans, pasta, and tortillas. They didn't have money for sweets. However, with the store below them, her own children had easy access to sweets. Like other Mexicans, the old, traditional Mexican foods are becoming problems. The food is great fuel for those who are physically active, but modern Mexicans are increasingly not active. Now, a huge percentage of the population fights obesity and diabetes.

Recently larger supermarkets have come into the town, and their own business suffered as a result so they don't have the money they need to survive. Because of this, Marco paid a smuggler to help him cross the border so he could work. So far, the risk is not paying off. Most of the money he earns goes to pay off the smuggler, and the family can't eat like they used to because they don't have the money to buy the food. They don't eat as many fruits and vegetables, yet they still manage to have plenty of snacks around. The children often do favors for others in exchange for candy or chips.

In Mongolia, food expenditure for one week is \$40.02. Oyuntsetseg shops for her family's food in a big market filled with flour and imported sugar. She selects onions, garlic cloves, vegetables, and red meat before she goes home. On her way home, she stops at the local Buddhist temple to pray. After years of living without running water, she is happy to live in a place with an indoor bathroom, electric stove and running water.

In the Philippines, food expenditure for one week equals \$49.42. Living in Metro-Manila is very difficult due to crime, pollution, unemployment, and other negative factors. The cohesive nature of the Filipino family is what makes it possible to survive. For breakfast, the family highlighted usually has chicken eggs, rice, Cheese Whiz, and salty bread. The family doesn't have a refrigerator, and Angelita, the mother, sometimes travels 30 min. by jeepney to get to the big market where she can get deep discounts. Angelita picks vegetables and fruits that are within her budget. She tries to shop early because she hopes to be the vendor's first sale of the day, which promises sellers many more sales. This gives her the biggest discount of the day.

She can get a better deal when she buys in bulk. Angelita knows how to make the dishes last longer. For example, if she buys milkfish, she marinates it in vinegar and garlic. Fast foods exist in Metro Manila, but most people still eat street food. Vendors



offer a variety of foods ranging from chunks of congealed pig blood to day-old baby birds and floured quail eggs.

In the Essay by Francine Kaufman, the authors discuss how humans are omnivorous and eat a wide variety of food. Although people around the globe eat different things, there are some universal patterns. Most diets around the world traditionally are low in fiber carbohydrates, but things are changing. Now, people are eating more simple carbohydrates and trans-fats and saturated fats. Packaged products are taking over. As a result, we are experiencing a global epidemic called diabetes. This is a mix of diabetes and obesity. In the United States, nearly 60% of adults and 30% of children are obese or overweight. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that one in three children born in the United States in the year 2000 will have diabetes sometime in their life.

In Poland, food expenditure for one week is \$151.27. Hubert grew up eating hearty Polish fare such as beet soup with dumplings and herbs, sauerkraut, potatoes, and meat stews that simmered for days. Now, he enjoys eating sushi. This is because he works in the first Japanese restaurant in Warsaw. However, when he is home, he cooks Polish dishes for his family of five. For breakfast, the family might eat fruit, sweet buns, yogurt, sausage, eggs, cereal and milk, and drink coffee or tea.

There are many international cuisines coming to the formerly communist eastern European country now that disposable income is increasing. American-style fast food is becoming increasingly popular. While they enjoy the food at the time, many of the friends combat the new diet by trying to make a concerted effort to lose weight.

Marzena remembers when times were different. Basic foods were big treats. She remembers a time when her boyfriend brought oranges to school. Each piece was wrapped in thin paper. He shared it with her.

In Turkey, food expenditure for one week is \$145.88. Melahat cooks for her family of six (her widowed mother lives with them). After working all day cleaning other peoples' houses, she makes sigara boregi, a favorite family dish. Melahat combines feta cheese and arugula then unfolds some pastry dough. After placing the cheese and arugula inside the dough, she fries it.

There are certain dishes that she always makes. Meals include some of the following: homemade tomato soup, lentil soup, rice, chopped spiced meat wrapped in grape leaves, eggplant, zucchini, spinach, cabbage, meat, or fish. Sometimes her sister helps take care of the children if she has to work late, but she generally does the cooking. It often takes up to two hours. She doesn't know how she could survive without her sister's help. She hopes that her children get educated and had a better life than she has.

Already, she can see that her children's lives are very different from her own. She doesn't understand their attraction to fast food. She takes them to McDonald's four or five times a year if she has the money.



In the United States, food expenditure for one week is \$159.18. In the school where Craig teaches, there are more soft drink machines than water fountains. This frustrates Craig, especially when he sees all the candy wrappers on the classroom floor. He and his wife Regan try to teach their own children about nutrition. They attempt to teach them about wants versus needs. Balance isn't easy. Regan commutes to her job, and after an hour on the road, she doesn't always take the time to think about what to cook. Still, she tries not to serve convenience food on a regular basis. Generally, she uses the microwave oven to cook.

When they shop, Craig tends to go for store brands because they are cheaper than national brands. When Regan shops, she looks for foods that are low in fat, sodium, and processing. They take their children out for fast food several times a month. They have discovered that eating properly isn't easy, especially with so many holidays with candy.

In the United States in North Carolina, food expenditure for one week is \$341.98. Rosemary constantly struggles with food. She lives an extremely busy life and tends to nibble throughout the day. Her mother was a wonderful cook who made things such as cube steak with gravy, cabbage, onions, corn bread, and boiled potatoes. They had a feast every night.

As the children grew older, they began to snack instead of eating the big meal at home. The family members were quick to grab convenient food, and they battled weight and nutritional choices. Since they were so busy, they ate a lot of fast food. They realized that they had a problem and began to work out more. They also cut back on the fast food. Now, they have their weight under control and eat healthier foods.

In the United States in Texas, food expenditure for one week is \$242.48. Once a week, Alejandrina makes tortillas with her grandchildren. Most of the time, the family eats global foods. Lawrence, an accomplished cook, says they go from mullet to menudo to eggrolls.



Characters

The Baintons

This family shares cooking responsibilities in Great Britain. They eat eggs and cereal for breakfast and have chosen to eat a mostly vegetarian diet.

The Madsens

This family travels over two hours by dog sled to get their groceries. They also go out to hunt for seals.

The Browns

This family lived in the outback of Australia before they moved to Brisbane. They were used to eating porcupine and kangaroo and lamb, but had to adjust to food pensions when they were on disability in Brisbane.

The Namgays

This is a family that live in Bhutan. Everyone in the village works together to help each other. They eat a lot of chili peppers.

The Dudos

This family purchases its food from a market near a graveyard filled with the war dead. Even though they struggled during the civil war, they were better off than most because they had their own well, vegetable garden, a milk cow, and fruit trees.

The Aboubakars

This family lives in a refugee camp. They are given small rations of food that they wait for in intense heat. The mother prepares the same food three times a day for the family. It's thin soup and ayish.

The Dongs

This family lives in a government-issue low-rise building in China where traditional ways give way to modern looks.



The Cuis

This family farms on lands issued by the government. While some of their food is paid for with cash, most comes from bartering and from what they grow.

The Costas

This family lives in Havana. They get 1/3 to 1/2 of their food from government rations.

The Aymes

This family in Ecuador must travel three miles to go to market. The climb back is nearly vertical.

The Ahmeds

This family lives in Cairo. The woman spend a lot of time flavoring meats and making stuffed dishes.

The Le Moines

This family in France serves guests traditional French foods on the weekends. However, during the week they eat more convenient quick foods.

The Melanders

This family would like to eat organic foods, but find it too expensive. Instead they opt for foods from the super-supermarket.

The Mendozas

This family is from Guatemala. They eat rice, beans , potatoes, eggs, and tortillas three times a day in various combinations.

The Patkars

This family lives in Ujjain. The Hindu family eats a vegetarian diet and enjoys the guests that come into the city every 12 years.



The Manzos

This family in Sicily has a market outside their window. The father works in the fish market.

The Ukitas

This family in Japan believes that preparing the food to look good is just as important as supplying healthy food.

The Matsudas

This family in Okinawa gathers on weekends to eat traditional food at an extended, multi-generational family gathering.

The Al Haggans

Although the land in Kuwait is rich in oil, it isn't good for growing so this family has to rely on foods from other places.

The Natomos

This family in Mali has no running water. In this family two wives get along well together, and they take turns cooking meals for the family.

The Casaleses

This family had a convenience store in Mexico, but bigger stores came in and took over their business.

The Batsuuris

This family lives in Mongolia, which emerged from Soviet-style Communism in the 1990s. The mother remembers when food was so scarce, eating orange slices was a big treat.

The Cabañas

Family is of key importance in Metro Manila, and this family works together to make ends meet. The mother often shops early, hoping to get the biggest discounts of the day.



The Sobczynscy

This family lives in Poland. Traditional cooking is still eaten at home, but they enjoy sushi and other international cuisine when eating out.

The Celiks

Even after a busy day at work, the mother often spend up to two hours cooking for her family. All five people in this family live in a one-bedroom apartment.

The Cavens

This family fights hard to eat nutritiously. This isn't easy in the United States, where candy, soda and fast food is prevalent.

The Revises

This family noticed that their health was declining as they took advantage of processed and fast foods to complement their busy schedules. They started eating at home more and exercising more to combat the poor nutrition and weight gain.

The Fernandezes

The grandmother in this Texan family makes tortillas with her grandchildren once a week.



Objects/Places

Australia

This is the place where people ate foods such as Vegemite, kangaroo, and porcupines.

Bhutan

The people in this place considered chili peppers to be vegetables and ate them with nearly every meal.

Bosnia

This area is war-torn and the people here shop near graveyards filled with the remains of the dead.

Chad

Life in this area is harsh and food is tough to get. Refugees in this place live on rations while others outside the refugee camp must travel far and work hard to get water for their families.

China

In this country, traditional foods share the shelves with international quick foods.

Cuba

The government offers rationed foods to each family in this country.

Ecuador

Although this country is very close to the equator, rocky soil and high winds make farming extremely difficult.

Egypt

This area is known for spicy foods and slow cooking.



France

While traditional food is sometimes served for guests, convenient food is taking over. Immigrants bring in different types of food, but the youth don't seem to have an appreciation for meals. They want quick, fast food.

Germany

It's difficult to find affordable organic food here. Instead, families shop at super-supermarkets.

Great Britain

This family in Mali has no running water. In this family two wives get along well together, and they take turns cooking meals for the family.

Greenland

There are no roads here. Food is brought in by boat during the summer and by snowmobiles or air during the rest of the year.

Guatemala

This is a beautiful mountain town where visitors gather to watch horse racing. They celebrate the event by cooking meat, drinking alcohol and listening to musicians.

India

In this area, people believe that droplets fell to earth from the gods. These droplets are believed to be in the water in the sacred rivers.

Italy

In this place there are many outdoor displays for fruits and vegetables. The father works in a fish and seafood shop, and the family eats a lot of pasta.

Japan

In this place, the children don't help with meal preparation or cleanup. Their only job is to do well in school.



Kuwait

In this place, rich in oil, the people import food as well as people to help them in their houses.

Mali

There is no running water in this place. The village seems to come up right out of the desert.

Mexico

Times are tough in this city, and many families hire smugglers to get them out of the country to earn wages as illegal workers in other countries.

Mongolia

This country is breaking out of its Communist past. The cities are crowded, but people are beginning to have disposable income and food is no longer as scarce as it once was.

Philippines

The family highlighted in this book lives in a crime-ridden, poor area of this country. They take a jeepney to the market.

Poland

In this former Communist country, international foods are becoming more prevalent.

Turkey

In this Black Sea region marriages are arranged. The highlighted family lives in cramped quarters and works for low wages.

United States

Obesity is a big problem in this country. The schools have more soda machines than water fountains.



Themes

The Universality of Food

As you travel around the world, you will find people living very different lives from each other. However, there is one thing that everybody has in common. Everybody eats. Anywhere you go, food will reflect culture, diet, and heritage. Particular foods acquired or purchased by families around the world reflect their traditions. They also reflect conditions in a particular area since food access depends on soil, trade, poverty, and conflict.

Everybody needs food to survive, and diets reflect how well an individual survives. In this book, the authors travel around the world showing how dinner unites us all. The authors also show how food and diet have evolved over time in nearly every region. As food choices change, health also changes around the world. For the first time, overeating is causing almost as much trouble as suffering from a lack of food.

Globalization changes the way nearly every region interacts with food. Even war torn countries feel the effects of globalization as food is imported and rationed out. Processed foods are available on the shelves in remote areas, and international foods make their way into urban and rural communities.

Traditional Foods Versus Modern Foods

As the authors traveled around the world, they discovered a common theme among the families. Traditional foods were not as popular as convenient, fast food. In areas like Japan, the older generation doesn't understand the appeal. Many of the older generation refused to even try the food the younger generation craves. In the Philippines, an older woman expresses amazement at the fact that the younger generation will spend more money on fast food when they can get better tasting, healthier food at a lower price.

In Texas, a grandmother spends time making traditional foods with the grandchildren, speaking to them in her native language. Around the world, families enjoy traditional food at family gatherings and for celebrations. However, during the week most of the younger generation reverts back to international cuisine and fast foods.

For many, it is a matter of survival in today's world. Life had become busier and both men and women participate in the workforce outside the home. This leaves less time for cooking, especially when traditional meals take hours to prepare. Unfortunately, this turn towards convenient, processed, fast foods is also taking a toll on the health of the younger generation. Diabetes, poor cardiovascular health, and obesity are on the rise globally. When asked about the changes they see in diet, some point out that convenient food is based on breads and carbohydrates.

How Convenience Affects Our Health

When asked, most individuals will admit that convenient, packaged, fast food is not the best choice for optimal health. Still, it obviously has appeal, especially for the younger generations. Restaurants offer an illusion of familiarity and comfort. People who are on the go appreciate the convenience of grabbing a quick meal rather than spending hours shopping and cooking on their own.

The processed sugars, trans fats, saturated fats, and carbohydrates that show up in the modern diet contribute to a new global epidemic frequently called diabetes. This is a mixture of obesity and diabetes. It originates in the United States where almost 60% of adults and 30% of children are obese or overweight. Experts say that one out of every three children born in the United States in the year 2000 will have diabetes at some point in their life. As a result of diabetes, most children will die at a younger age than their parents.

This trend is already seen in a rural area of Japan. Researchers come to the island of Okinawa to study the elderly population since a disproportionately large number of them live past the age of 100. Scientists say this could be due to a combination of exercise, healthy eating habits, low stress, and a community commitment to caring for the elderly. While this has been true in the past, now the younger generation, which eats more convenient foods than generations of the past, is changing. There is a higher rate of obesity for Okinawans under the age of 50. Along with this comes a greater risk of liver disease, cardiovascular disease, and premature death.

Style

Perspective

"Hungry Planet: What the World Eats" by Peter Menzel and Faith D'Aluisio is written by a photographer and an editor who enjoy traveling. Peter is known for his coverage of international feature stories on the environment and on science. His photographs have won awards and have been published in a wide variety of magazines including "National Geographic," "The New York Times Magazine," "Life," "Smithsonian," "GEO," "Stern," and "Time."

Faith is the lead writer and editor for the Material World book series. Together they co-created the books "Material World: A Global Family Portrait" and "Women in the Material World." They co-authored "Man Eating Bugs" and "Robo sapiens: Evolution of a New Species."

In order to create this book, they visited families they had met before while writing their previous book. They also visited some new families. As they traveled, the husband and wife team felt that it was important to tell the world about food and nutrition in other places. They also wanted to demonstrate the effects of food on health since obesity is becoming such a big issue. For the most part, Peter did the photographs for the book and Faith did the writing.

Tone

This book is written in the third person objective point of view. It highlights specific families, offering an overview of their living situation and their habits and diet. Each section includes quotes from the families that were interviewed, offering more insight into their lives and thoughts. Captions underneath the photographs tell more about the region and villages in general. The book points out traditions that are similar to the families interviewed as well as some new and different concepts related to a specific area.

Structure

"Hungry Planet: What the World Eats" by Peter Menzel and Faith D'Aluisio is wider than the average book. While this makes it difficult to hold at times, it also helps the reader immerse themselves in the images represented in this photographic study of families from around the world. On the pages depicting the table of contents, the reader previews 30 of the families highlighted in this book, seeing the food they eat in one week represented on one page.

After the table of contents, there is a forward then an introduction to the book. This is followed by the main part of the book, which highlights families from around the world.



Most countries have one family highlighted, but Australia has two, Japan has two, and the United States has three. Each family provides a favorite recipe for the reader. After three to five families have been highlighted, there is an essay, which is followed by a photo gallery. There are six essays and photo galleries in the book. The main part of the book is followed by a digestif, a methodology, further reading, statistics, sources, contributors, and acknowledgments.

Quotes

"Vanessa does feel that her children have missed out on some of the most basic experiences she remembers from her own childhood" (p. 28).

"When they need extra help, others in the village page in—and Sangay Kandu returns the favor when asked: cooperation is often the key to survival in poor places" (p. 37).

"The number of us who suffer from the diseases of overeating may be, for the first time in history, approaching that of those suffering from undereating" (p. 53).

"Though more and more urban Chinese are embracing the cash economy, the traditional style of bartering goods and services still prevails in China's rural villages" (p. 84).

"With its powerful ability to conjure up a specific time and place, street food utterly lacks the studiously generic quality that critics decry in fast food" (p. 129).

"She would like to buy only organic foods, but they're more expensive to produce, and therefore cost more" (p. 134).

"Meat comes from the grocery store, where it is cut and packaged to look as little like parts of animals as possible. The disappearance of animals from our lives has opened a space in which there's no reality check, on either the sentiment or the brutality" (p. 163).

"Neither girl is expected to pick up her breakfast dishes. 'Their responsibility is to do well in school,' says Sayo as she cleans up after them" (p. 181).

"During the rest of the week, the younger Matsudas, who live on their own, eat a wider variety of foods, including Western fast food. This troubles Keiko. Olkinawan cities are teeming with McDonald's, KFC's, and A&Ws, and though she has never eaten at any of them, she's sure she doesn't want to: 'I think it isn't very nutritious,' she says" (p. 187).

"Because obesity is tightly linked to diabetes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that one in every three children born in the United States in the year 2000 will have diabetes sometime in their life. As a result of diabetes, this generation of American children will likely live less long than their parents" (p. 242).

"As every traveler learns, human beings eat an extraordinary variety of foods, all prepared and stunningly diverse ways" (p. 245).

"There are more soft drink machines and water fountains in the Northern California high school where Craig Capon teaches-a fact that angers, but doesn't surprise him. Lucrative contracts with soft-drink companies and snack vendors provide cash-strapped school districts with needed funding" (p. 261).



Topics for Discussion

Compare food from different markets in several different countries.

How does warfare affect diet and food availability in different countries?

Compare ways people obtain food in various countries.

Why is fast food so popular? How does fast food's popularity affect health globally?

Define the term obesity and explain how it came about.

Compare foods from vendors in several different countries.

How do families pass on traditional dishes to current generations?