

What the World Eats

A Guide for Educators



Photograph by Peter Menzel, from *What the World Eats*

Stunning photographs show readers what people of the world eat in portraits of twenty-five families from twenty-one countries surrounded by a week's worth of food, documenting a fascinating exploration of comparative world nutrition. For their study, Menzel and D'Aluisio spent time with typical families in each country, discussing their eating habits, calculating a week's worth of food purchases, and accompanying families to the marketplace to document local customs and traditions. About so much more than food, this book offers fertile ground for the examination of the expanding global food economy, world hunger, current events, sustainable agriculture, and cultural similarities and differences.

What the World Eats

Written by Faith D'Aluisio Photographed by Peter Menzel

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Questions for Group Discussion

1. Browse the book, looking only at the photographs and not the accompanying text or description. List three observations based on the visuals.
2. Which family's groceries are most like your own family's foods?
3. *What the World Eats* makes the observation that for the first time in history more people are overfed than underfed. Why do you think this is so?
4. Which family's food would you like to eat for a week?



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Activities across the Curriculum

Language Arts – Vocabulary

Students will be able to define and use these words following reading and study of *What the World Eats*.

- indigenous
- subsistence farming
- undernourished
- sustainable
- expenditure
- food security

*Economics, Math – What does your family eat?**

Go grocery shopping with a parent or other adult and keep track of the food bought for the week. Make a list of foods purchased, the amount and cost, organizing the foods under the same categories used in *What the World Eats*. Include food from the garden, fast food, and food eaten in restaurants. How does your family compare with the U.S. families included in the book?



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Nutrition, Health – Menu Planning

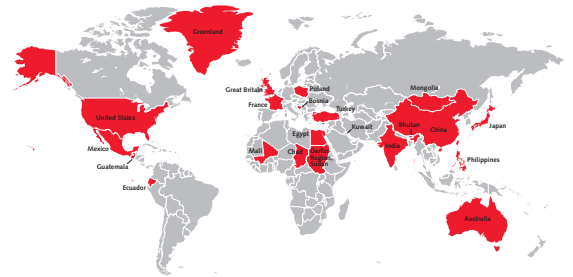
Based on the food purchased for your family, plan three days of nutritious, balanced meals, including three meals per day and two snacks. Students may want to review the Food Pyramid guidelines at <http://www.mypyramid.gov/index.html> or http://kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/food/pyramid.html. Ask students to write down what they've learned following this activity. What changes, if any, would they make on future food shopping trips?

Language Arts, Social Studies – Stop Hunger

Research and write a report of a person or group working to alleviate world hunger.

Geography, Social Studies, Math – Looking at Why

Through class discussion and research of news articles, both in print and online, identify five areas throughout the world that are facing serious hunger issues and mark the locations on a world map. What are the reasons for the hunger problems: war, climate change, poverty? Construct a bar graph of these reasons to show commonalities and differences among the five areas.



Social Studies – Act Locally

Visit a local food bank or have a representative talk to the class. Afterward, the class can plan a community service project and provide assistance through fundraising, volunteering, etc.

Health, Nutrition—What's for Lunch?

Study your school lunch program and assess the nutritive value of the meal choices. Are nutritious snacks available through vending machines or other sources? How can you work with the administration to ensure more nutritious choices (if needed)?

Art, History, Social Studies – Be Part of the Solution

Create posters or pamphlets describing some facts and figures about hunger in the U.S.; the reasons why it is a problem in a prosperous country with vast natural resources; and some methods of addressing the problem.

Art, Current Events, Language Arts – World Food Day

Over 150 countries observe World Food Day annually on October 16. A different theme is chosen each year; you can look up this year's current theme online. Create posters that promote awareness of World Food Day and hang them throughout your school. Or write a speech about the meaning and importance of the day that could be delivered to a class or school assembly.



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Additional Resources

In the back of *What the World Eats* there is a listing of excellent related resources. Here are some others you may want to review.

<http://freakonomics.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/05/16/show-us-your-food-a-qa-with-the-authors-of-what-the-world-eats/> — A very good interview with the authors of *What the World Eats*.

<http://animalvegetablemiracle.com/> — Barbara Kingsolver's family continues recording their experience with the local food movement.

<http://www.thefoodtrust.org/> — The Food Trust works to increase access to nutritious and affordable food through community and school based programs.

<http://www.HeiferEducation.org> — Heifer International launched a comprehensive web site for educators in the fall of 2008. This site will serve as a powerful tool for educators to inform, engage, inspire and enlighten their students about their global neighbors — their lives, cultures, struggles and efforts to achieve sustainable futures for their families.

http://www.wfp.org/country_brief/hunger_map/map/hungermap_popup/map_popup.html — The World Food Programme has an interactive map showing the current percentage of the world population that is undernourished.

<http://www.secondharvest.org/> — Formerly Second Harvest Food Bank, Feeding America is a U.S. organization that provides food for Americans facing hunger through a network of food banks.

<http://www.edibleschoolyard.org/homepage.html> — Students learn how to grow, harvest, and prepare nutritious seasonal produce, making the connection between what they eat and where it comes from.



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Standards

Language Arts Standards

1/ Demonstrate competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

4/ Gather and use information for research purposes.

7/ Demonstrate competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of informational texts.

Geography Standards

18/ How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future

National Council for the Social Studies Standards

1/ Culture — *Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.*

3/ People, Places, and Environments — *Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.*

5/ Individuals, Groups, and Institutions — *Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.*

7/ Production, Distribution, and Consumption — *Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.*

9/ Global Connections — *Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.*



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National Science Education Content Standards

4/ Life Science: Populations and Ecosystems

6/ Science and Technology: Understanding about science and technology

7/ Science in Personal and Social Perspectives: Personal Health; Populations, Resources and Environments; Natural Hazards; Science and Technology in Local, National and Global Challenges

Mathematics Standards (NCTM)

Content Stands: 4/ Measurement

Process Standards: 5/ Representation