

## Food Day, October 24, 2011

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Food Day is October 24, 2011. It is a day that can be used to bring attention to the food we eat and the beverages we drink. In the same way Earth Day promotes conservation and concern for our environment, Food Day brings awareness to promoting delicious, healthy, affordable foods produced in a sustainable, humane way.

There are 6 main goals for food day:

1. Reduce diet-related diseases by promoting safe, healthy food
2. Support sustainable farms and limit subsidies to big agribusiness
3. Expand access to food and alleviate hunger
4. Protect the environment and animals by reforming factory farms
5. Promote health by curbing junk-food marketing to kids
6. Support fair conditions for food and farm workers

I would like to share with you a little of what the first goal means for me and some options that may be available. To me, it may mean that I am paying attention to eating foods close to their natural source. An apple is a wonderful fruit. If I buy it, wash it and eat it, I get vitamins, minerals, and fiber. If I peel the apple to make applesauce, I take away some of the natural goodness. What's next? Apple pie - which has added sugar, added fat and refined grains.

Does this mean I might choose to no longer eat apple pie? Probably not. This may be an opportunity to look at how often I choose to eat an apple, before I eat the apple pie. If I bake my own apple pie, I'll know what ingredients have been used and make substitutions if I choose. I can use less sugar than the amount the recipe calls for. I can mix whole wheat flour with white flour when I make my crust. I can bake my pie and share it with friends to avoid the temptation to eat more than I should.

I can take a look at where my food comes from. It's fall in New Hampshire. I can go to an apple orchard, pick my own apples, and support my local economy at the same time. This is one way I can make a difference where I live. If I can't get to an apple orchard, some stores sell apples that are locally grown. When I purchase local food, I know where my food is coming from. By visiting a farm, farm stand or farmer's market I can ask questions to learn more about the business (when they plant their crops, how they decide what to plant, etc.), find out what it is like to work on a farm, and perhaps take a farm tour. Buying local also supports those who make locally grown food available.

The first goal of Food Day is using food to promote good health. Both Food Day and the new *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010* put an emphasis on healthy food. At a time when one-third of the children and more than two-thirds of adults in the United States are overweight or obese, the new *Dietary Guidelines* focuses on three areas:

1. Eating healthier foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and seafood.
2. Balancing calorie intake and physical activity.
3. Eating fewer foods with sodium and salt, saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, added sugars, and refined sugars.

Some ideas to help focus on Food Day:

- Enjoy your food but eat less. Avoid overeating.

- Increase your physical activity and reduce screen time. Screen time includes TV, computers, video games, etc.
- To see what the right amount is for you or your family, refer to MyPlate at [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)
- Make half your plate vegetables and fruits.
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk.
- Choose whole grains.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.
- Compare sodium in foods like soup, breads, and frozen meals – choose the food with lower numbers.

When I first saw the six goals for Food Day, one of my thoughts was, I am only one person, that I won't make a difference. But I can.

**Food Day is October 24, 2011. Is there one thing you can do to help?**

Additional information on Food Day can be located at [www.foodday.org](http://www.foodday.org).  
Recipes can be located at <http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/>