

# Making America Organic...One Home At a Time!



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## A Nation's Eating Habits

For Americans, rushing to get dinner on the table between work, soccer, ballet class and bedtime, time is often the missing ingredient, and it leads many people to rely on take-out, fast food and easy-to-fix convenience foods, diet experts say.

But most Americans still eat at home, according to Harry Balzer, a vice president at the The NPD Group. The marketing information group has been studying our eating habits since 1980.

"We've always eaten in the home," Balzer said. "In fact, the trend has been toward eating more meals in home, always. It's just [that we've] been getting more and more of those meals at a restaurant to eat at your house."

And, he said, that's changed over the past three or four years. Frozen and pre-prepared foods have gotten more popular, and people are not ordering out as much.

"You want to eat in your house, you don't want to really go out. But you don't want to prepare the meal, or you want to spend as little time preparing the meal," Balzer said. "So one of the ways to do that is to just prepare fewer dishes, and that's the driving force in the way we're eating right now."

He said that about half of all main dishes are still put together with fresh ingredients or from scratch. "But that number's been declining for 10 years, and that doesn't show any sign of slowing down because assembling a meal takes time and effort."

Lola O'Rourke, a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association, said that grocery stores are offering more foods that are both good for you and easy to fix.

"I think that there are very healthful options available," she said. "If you look in the produce department, there are pre-prepped vegetables that are ready for stir-fry or whatever.

"One characteristic of produce that some people view as making it difficult to consume is that it requires a little bit of preparation, usually," O'Rourke said, "and I think that there are options out there that can help people."

Balzer also said he keeps track of his respondents' body mass index -- and that number has been rising steadily. (BMI measures weight in relation to height.)

"The numbers of meals we eat over these last 20 years really has not changed significantly, but the weight people reported to me has," Balzer said. "So, by inference, I have to conclude that the average meal is getting larger."

Barbara Rolls, a professor of biobehavioral health at Penn State University, said that portions served in the home and typical recipes in cookbooks are all bigger now than in the '70s.

Rolls has studied the effects of portion size and found that "if you give people more food they eat more." She said that people she studied often did not notice the bigger meals, even when researchers doubled the portion size.

"And they're sitting in a cubicle in a lab by themselves, so imagine when you're distracted, eating out, you've got some wine or beer, you're conversing," Rolls said. "People don't pay attention."

She said restaurants also are offering bigger portions in a continually escalating battle to attract customers.

"We love value, but in the end, if you're going to get to be obese it's a pretty poor value, because you're going to end up with more health-care costs, you're going to earn less money," Rolls said. "There are all kinds

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### Harvest Blend Regular

- White Garlic
- Baby Carrots
- Red Leaf Lettuce
- Red Onions
- Celery
- Tomatoes
- Green Chard
- Zucchini
- Fuerte Avocado
- Cameo Apples
- Valencia Oranges
- Bartlett Pears
- Tommy Atkins Mango
- Kiwi

See the web site for details on our other options. Produce bag contents are subject to change based on availability.

### OO Reminder

Now that warmer days are upon us, please remember it is your responsibility to leave a cooler outside your door if you are not home to receive the delivery.

This is especially important if you are receiving dairy with your produce.

While we have, in the past, left the thermal bags at your door, we would really prefer not to do so, as the return rate on these bags is often a problem for us.

A cooler is also better for you because ice packs in the cooler will do a better job of keeping your food fresh in the ambient temperature than our bags without any ice.

Thank you for your business, and let us know if you have any questions.

of economic consequences of not keeping your weight in a healthy range."

Rolls said that cutting the calorie density of a meal, by substituting low-calorie cheese or mayonnaise for example, can have an even greater impact on the diet than cutting portion size.

"Just as a small rise in extra calories sneaks in unnoticed, you could probably reduce calories by a small amount and people wouldn't notice," Rolls said.

Eating on the run and not lingering over a daily family dinner are also changes from the past.

"I think it's really important for people to slow down when they

eat, even if they don't have a lot of time," O'Rourke said. "Slow down, and that will help them eat less."

She said that it normally takes about 20 minutes for the brain to get the message that the stomach is full.

"People are so pressed for time, and that's often something they'll state as a reason for eating fast food or eating sort of whatever is at hand even if it's not the most healthful thing," O'Rourke said. "But it's sort of ironic that at the same time, people are consuming more food which, theoretically, should take longer to eat."

O'Rourke said another advantage of slowing down is that you appreciate what you're eating, "instead of just mindlessly inhaling too much food."

## Recipes

### Braised Chard With Pinenuts and Currants

- 1 bunch chard, stalks sliced thinly and leaves cut crosswise into 1-inch ribbons
- 1 small red onion, very thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1/4 cup chicken stock or water
- 2 tbsp toasted pine nuts
- 2 tbsp dried red currants or raisins
- kosher salt, to taste
- freshly ground pepper, to taste
- balsamic vinegar, to taste

Add the olive oil to a large (12-inch) skillet and place it over medium high heat. When the oil is hot, add the onions and saute, stirring constantly, until the onions soften, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the Swiss chard to the skillet and stir to combine. Pour in the chicken stock and cover the pan. Cook until the chard wilts, about 5 minutes. Uncover the skillet and add the pine nuts and currants. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer the chard to a serving bowl or platter and drizzle with balsamic vinegar, as desired. Serve immediately.

### Kiwi Salsa

- 4 kiwis, peeled, halved, and cut into 1/4-inch slices
- 6 ripe strawberries, cut in halves
- 1 small mango, cut into 1/2-inch dice
- 1 tbsp finely minced jalapeno, or to taste
- 10 chives, finely snipped
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh cilantro or parsley
- juice of 1 lime
- 1 to 2 tsp candied ginger puree or syrup, optional

Combine the kiwis, strawberries, mango, jalapeno, chives and cilantro in a small bowl and gently mix to combine. If using the ginger, mix with the lime juice to combine, then add the mixture to the fruit, blending gently. Serve at room temperature.

### Mango Shortcake

- 4 1/2 cups sliced ripe mangos

- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 tbsp cornstarch
- 1/2 tsp pure almond extract
- grated zest of 1 lime
- 1 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 large egg
- 3/4 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup melted butter

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 350F. Butter a 9 x 9-inch baking pan and neatly arrange the mango slices on the bottom, overlapping slightly. Combine the 3/4 cup sugar, cornstarch, almond extract, zest, and juice in a small bowl. Sprinkle mixture on top of the fruit. Sift the flour, 1/2 cup sugar, baking powder, and salt into a bowl.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the egg, sour cream, and melted butter. Pour the liquid ingredients into the dry mix and stir just until combined. If you over-mix, your shortcake will not be tender and light. Drop the batter by spoonfuls onto the fruit. Bake for 35 to 45 minutes or until the cake is golden brown and the mango juices bubble. Cool on a wire rack and serve warm with whipped cream.

### Peanut Butter Baked Apples

- 6 apples
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup miniature marshmallows

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat to 350 F. Grease the bottom of a large baking dish. Core each apple, making sure not to cut out the bottom. This will give you a "pocket" in each apple. Mix the peanut butter, unsalted butter, raisins and miniature marshmallows together in a mixing bowl. Stuff each of the apples with an equal portion of this mixture. Bake the apples until they are brown and bubbly on top, about 30 minutes. Transfer the pan to a wire rack and let the apples cool in the pan.