

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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ABOUT ORGANIC FOOD

What is the difference between an organic and a conventional egg? At first sight, none at all. What changes is the process prior to the egg going on sale: no synthetic pesticides, no farms packed with animals, no intensive growing. "It's more sustainable".

Recent polls show that most Americans think organic food isn't worth the cost, mainly because many consumers think organics are the same as conventional items, simply with a fancy organic label attached

Discuss

1. Do you try to eat **organic** food? Why (not)?
2. Do you think organic food could be a marketing trick?
3. Why did (does) everyone believe organic food is healthier?

ABOUT OBESITY

It is already a scientific fact that the Mediterranean diet is a healthy diet. So why has obesity become so widespread in Spain?

Many people say that they follow the Mediterranean diet. But the truth is that the younger generations have mixed it with the American diet. Spaniards now eat too much processed and red meat. I'm not saying we have to become vegetarians, but there is scientific evidence to suggest that there is a drastic reduction in death from heart disease and cancer if we replace animal proteins with vegetable proteins. The Mediterranean diet, meaning extra virgin olive oil, nuts, fruit, vegetables and pulses, is the best option. If you have to eat animal protein, it is better to eat fish than meat, and it is better to eat rabbit or poultry than red meat. It is also a good idea to reduce sugar and salt in the diet and lead a less sedentary lifestyle – climb the stairs instead of taking the elevator, for example.

1. How much of a problem is obesity in your country?
2. What should governments do to combat obesity?
3. Is obesity immoral when so many people in the world are starving?

ABOUT FAST FOOD

The profusion of fast food restaurants in historical city centres along the Mediterranean – where the most popular menu item is often a dish of spaghetti swimming in a pool of industrially produced carbonara sauce – is just one of the signs that a slow but inexorable change is underway: the end of the Mediterranean diet.

The abandonment of traditional habits and the emergence of new lifestyles associated with socio-economic changes pose important threats to the preservation and transmission of the Mediterranean diet to future generations,” reads the report *Mediterranean Food Consumption Patterns*.

1. Is fast food killing off Spain’s famed Mediterranean diet?
1. Are parents who feed junk food to their children irresponsible?
2. Do you think there’ll be more or less junk food in the future?

ABOUT EATING DISORDERS

Eating disorders are serious behaviour problems. They can include severe overeating or not consuming enough food to stay healthy. They also involve extreme concern about your shape or weight.

Types of eating disorders include

- Anorexia nervosa, in which you become too thin, but you don't eat enough because you think you are fat
- Bulimia nervosa, which involves periods of overeating followed by purging, sometimes through self-induced vomiting or using laxatives
- Binge-eating, which is out-of-control eating

Women are more likely than men to have eating disorders. They usually start in the teenage years and often occur along with depression, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse.

Eating disorders can lead to heart and kidney problems and even death. Getting help early is important. Treatment involves monitoring, talk therapy, nutritional counselling, and sometimes medicines.

1. Eating disorders are diseases still found predominantly among young women, yet studies show more and more young men are exhibiting symptoms. What

are some possible reasons for this trend? Why do some people develop eating disorders?

2. How might an eating disorder affect a person's family and social life

ABOUT DIETING

When people go on diets, they often disconnect from natural body responses, such as hunger, shifting their focuses to caloric guidelines. This can lead to a life that revolves around dieting. Dieting can make food the enemy so that you feel guilty when you eat it. Even worse, restricting foods can cause cravings for them, which can lead to yo-yo dieting. Dieting can have many consequences including damaged health, increased risk of obesity and side effects resulting from nutritional deficiencies.

1. Talk about your regular diet.
2. Have you ever been on a diet?
3. What do you think of all the fad diets that come on the market?
4. Do you think the fashion industry and advertising is responsible for encouraging women to be super skinny?

ABOUT EATING OUT

Sitting down for a leisurely dinner at a full-service restaurant may sound like a healthier choice than grabbing a burger and fries at a drive-through. But is it really?

It turns out that whenever you go out to eat, wherever that may be, you end up taking in an average of 200 more calories than if you eat at home, according to a paper published in the European Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

1. How often do you eat out? Is this more or less than the average person, in your opinion?
2. What kind of restaurants do you like?
3. Do you prefer to eat at your parents' house or a restaurant?

ABOUT BECOMING A VEGETARIAN

People who make the decision to change their diets and embrace a vegan or vegetarian lifestyle can do so for a number of reasons. Some believe in the sanctity of all life and are against all forms of animal cruelty. They seek to exclude the exploitation of other animals for food, clothing or any other purpose. Some also believe that eating meat is unhealthy and/or that raising beef cattle and dairy cows is bad for the environment and ecologically irresponsible.

In some respects restaurant outings appear to be less healthy than eating at a fast food outlet. While you may be taking in more nutrients -- like vitamins, potassium and

omega-3 fatty acids depending on what you order -- you're also likely to consume more sodium and cholesterol.

1. What comes to mind when you hear the word 'vegetarianism'?
2. Is a vegetarian diet healthier than a meat diet? Do you think vegetarians lead better lives than non-vegetarians?

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