

# What We Eat



**TINGO, ECUADOR**—THE AYME FAMILY: Orlando and Ermelinda (at right) with their children (left to right) Livia, Natalie, Moises, Alvarito, Jessica, Orlando Junior (held by Ermelinda), and Mauricio. COOKING METHOD: wood fire. FOOD PRESERVATION: natural drying. The Aymes grow corn, potatoes, and barley. Their diet rarely includes meat, fish, or eggs.

A look at what families around the world consume in a typical week tells us a lot about how they—and we—live

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER MENZEL



**RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA**—THE REVIS FAMILY: Rosemary and Ronald stand behind Rosemary's sons Brandon and Tyrone. COOKING METHODS: electric stove, toaster oven, microwave, outdoor barbecue. FOOD PRESERVATION: refrigerator-freezer. FAVORITES: Ronald and Brandon, spaghetti; Rosemary, potatoes of any kind; Tyrone, sesame chicken.

**I**t happens so often, we rarely think about it.

But which of our everyday rituals better shows how we live than eating?

At a refugee camp in the African country of Chad, a mother squats in the dust over a small fire. In a pot perched on three stones, she's cooking up a porridge of sorghum (a grain similar to corn) and dried tomatoes. Her children and thousands of other refugees

from the war-torn region of Darfur, in neighboring Sudan, might eat that same meal for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Across the Atlantic, in Raleigh, North Carolina, a family has no trouble finding a seemingly limitless amount of food. Hot Pockets, burritos, burgers—their food is grilled, popped into the microwave, or grabbed at fast-food chains. This family, like many others in Western nations, may have to worry about

heart disease, diabetes, and other illnesses related to eating *too* much, or at least too much of the wrong foods.

A few years ago, photographer Peter Menzel and writer Faith D'Aluisio set out to document how people around the world get and consume food. Their book *Hungry Planet*\* shows 30 families in 24 countries with all of the food they eat in a typical week. You'll see six of these photos, representing five continents, in this story.

©PETER MENZEL/WWW.MENZELPHOTO.COM (2)

For centuries, the basic diet of humans was limited to what was available nearby or what people were able to grow or trade for.

Diets began to evolve during the Industrial Revolution in the late 1800s. Modern methods of transportation and preservation, like refrigeration and freeze-drying, meant that food could be transported thousands of miles away. And waves of immigration in the last 200 years have also

influenced food choices around the world.

"The global marketplace has changed the way people are eating," D'Aluisio writes. KFC franchises are sprouting in China, while Americans today think nothing of eating chicken lo mein.

Yet in many places in the world, there are people who don't have enough to eat. Nearly 1 billion people worldwide are undernourished, according to the United Nations.

Fortunately, the situation in some developing countries improved slightly last year as the global economy began to recover from the 2008 recession.

Examine the food consumed by the families pictured on pp. 10-13. What might it tell you about their daily lives? How do their diets compare with yours, and what are the positives and negatives of each?

\* *Hungry Planet* by Peter Menzel and Faith D'Aluisio, foreword by Marion Nestle (Ten Speed Press)



**A REFUGEE CAMP IN CHAD**— THE ABOUBAKAR FAMILY, ORIGINALLY FROM DARFUR, IN NEIGHBORING SUDAN: D'jimia Ishakh Souleymane holds her daughter Hawa as she sits beside her other children (*left to right*) Acha, Mariam, Youssouf, and Abdel Kerim. COOKING METHOD: wood fire. FOOD PRESERVATION: natural drying. FAVORITE: D'jimia, soup with fresh sheep meat.



**WARSAW, POLAND**— THE SOBCZYNSKY FAMILY: Hubert and Marzena (*standing at rear*) with their daughter, Klaudia (*at right*), Marzena's parents, Anna and Jan Boimska. COOKING METHOD: gas stove. FOOD PRESERVATION: refrigerator-freezer. FAVORITE: Hubert and Marzena own a Japanese restaurant, and sushi has become a family staple.



**TOKYO, JAPAN**— THE UKITA FAMILY: Sayo and Kazuo, with their children Maya (*holding a bag of chips*) and Mio. COOKING METHODS: gas stove, rice cooker. FOOD PRESERVATION: small refrigerator-freezer. FAVORITES: Kazuo, sashimi; Sayo, fruit; Mio, cake; Maya, potato chips. The Japanese diet includes lots of seafood—fish, shellfish, and several kinds of seaweed.



**TODOS SANTOS CUCHUMATAN, GUATEMALA**— THE MENDOZA FAMILY: Susana (*left*) and Fortunato (*second from right*), with (*left to right*) son Ignacio, daughter Cristolina, a family friend, and live-in helper Sandra Ramos. COOKING METHODS: gas stovetop, wood stove. FOOD PRESERVATION: refrigerator. FAVORITES: fruits and vegetables—but they are only available in season.

©PETER MENZEL/WWW.MENZELPHOTO.COM (4)

# FOOD AROUND THE WORLD

The variety of foods produced and eaten around the world is staggering. And with an ever-expanding global marketplace, the ingredients of any typical American meal might come from several continents.

Outside the U.S., there's been substantial progress in feeding the world's ever-growing population. Between the 1960s and 1990s, new farming techniques and international aid increased the global food supply and reduced the number of people without enough to eat.

In countries like China and India, booming economies have helped millions of people enter the middle class and eat much better.

But even in India, millions still live in extreme poverty and don't have enough to eat. And the World Bank reports that bad harvests and other factors have caused a spike in food prices that threatens the food supply of millions more worldwide.

Study the map and information, then answer the questions.

## MEXICO

Dried, chili-flavored grasshoppers are a popular snack in the Mexican state of Oaxaca (wah-HAH-kuh). More than 1,000 kinds of insects are eaten around the world, including giant red ants in Thailand, locusts in South Africa, and agave worms in Mexico.



## BRAZIL

Brazil is the world's largest coffee producer. Coffee is the most popular beverage worldwide, with more than 400 billion cups consumed each year.



## IVORY COAST

This war-torn nation, also known as Côte d'Ivoire, produces 34 percent of the world's cocoa—the principal ingredient in chocolate. Ghana (at 21 percent) is second, and Indonesia (at 13 percent) is third.



## UNITED STATES

The U.S. is expected to produce almost 17 million tons of chicken this year, the most in the world.



## ITALY

Whether it's in the form of spaghetti, fusilli, or linguine, Italians love their pasta. They consume an average of 57 pounds in a year. No other country comes close!



## CHINA

China produces 75 percent of the world's watermelons.



## AUSTRALIA

Beef still rules Down Under, but crocodile meat is also showing up on barbecue grills, or "barbies," as the Aussies call them. Croc meat is meaner and leaner. A 3.5-ounce serving has 2 grams of fat—compared with 16 grams for beef sirloin.



## Questions

Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Which country produces the most coffee?
2. Which continent produces the most cocoa?
3. What percent of the world's watermelons did *not* come from China in 2008?
4. Which country borders Ghana to the west?
5. Which continent is not on this map?
6. How many more grams of fat does a 3.5-ounce serving of beef have than a similar serving of croc?
7. Why did the global food supply increase between the 1960s and 1990s?
8. Why are people in China and India eating better than in the past?
9. What are some of the factors that might affect the global food supply?
10. Which food fact here surprises you most? Which surprises you least? Explain.