FOOD DAY DINNER DISCUSSION GUIDE

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO GUIDE YOUR CONVERSATIONS







USE YOUR WORLD FOOD DAY DINNER CONVERSATIONS TO INTRODUCE YOUR GUESTS TO FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR FEEDING THE PLANET. WE CALL IT THE GROW METHOD:



The **GROW METHOD** is reducing food waste, so we're making the most of the precious resources that go into making food.



It's buying products and brands that ensure small-scale food producers in developing countries get a fair deal.



It's cooking smart, to cut down on wasted water and energy.



It's buying food that's in season, cutting down on greenhouse gas emissions.



It's eating less meat and dairy to reduce both greenhouse gas emissions and water use.

TRYING ANY OF THESE PRINCIPLES, AND **ENCOURAGING YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO** DO SO AS WELL, COULD MAKE A REAL IMPACT AND HELP ADDRESS THE PROBLEM OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE WHO STILL DON'T HAVE ENOUGH FOOD ON THEIR PLATES.

HERE'S A SCRIPT FOR THE DINNER HOST TO START YOUR EVENING:

FEEDING THE PLANET: MAKING A DIFFERENCE FROM YOUR PLATE TO THE GLOBAL AGENDA

GROW is a campaign for the billions of us who eat food and the billions of us who grow it. We all deserve good food for ourselves and our families. Yet nearly 1 billion of us still go to bed hungry—not because there isn't enough, but because of deep imbalances of opportunity and resources. Today, crises and disasters, rising prices, and failing production threaten to push hundreds of millions more people back into hunger. Within our lifetime there will be 9 billion of us on the planet. This is a turning point and a wake-up call. A food system organized by vested interests is failing to meet our deepest needs.

We are all in this together. We know from experience that fairer and more sustainable ways of growing, sharing, and living are possible. We can share a wealth of solutions that are fit for the future and benefit us all. The GROW Method is a step in the right direction. We have to manage our precious resources and vital systems better. What ways can you think of to help the global community to invest in small-scale farmers and women, grow food sustainably, improve aid to the hungry, and hold governments and corporations accountable?

HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOUR **DINNER CONVERSATIONS:**



WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO WASTE LESS FOOD?

About a third of the food produced for people's plates ends up lost or wasted between farm and fork. The amount of food thrown away in rich countries is almost the same as that produced in sub-Saharan Africa each year. But by planning your meals and saving your leftovers, you'll reduce this waste. You'll also be responsible for less greenhouse gas emissions, which is more sustainable.

How often do you throw out food? Where do you see the most food waste in your home and in your community? When is the last time you said yes—or no—to supersizing? What kind of meal could you make with the leftovers from this World Food Day meal so no food is wasted? What strategies could help your family to waste less food?



HOW CAN YOUR DIET SUPPORT SMALL-SCALE FARMERS?

By supporting small-scale food producers you're supporting the 1.5 billion people, many of them women, who live on small farms in the world. You are also helping protect our ability to produce food in the future through sustainable farming practices. Buying Fair Trade products and brands is a great way of doing this, so look out for them when you shop.

When you picture a farmer, who do you see? How much of the food in your kitchen is from the US? How much from other countries? If you could only buy food within a 100-mile radius, within a 1,000-mile radius, or from the US, would it change your diet and life choices? Can small-scale farmers, who grow food on less than five acres, feed the world? What role do women farmers from around the globe play in ending hunger? How can your family support small-scale farmers when you shop and eat?



WHAT IF WE COULD SAVE ENERGY WHEN COOKING?

We rely on precious fossil fuels to cook and heat our food, and these everyday tasks add up to big emissions, as well as big energy bills. Try cooking with as little water as possible, using a flatbottomed pan, covering your pan with a lid, and reducing the heat as soon as the water starts to boil—you'll save energy, water, and money.

How much water do you use in cooking—from cleaning fruits and vegetables to boiling pasta to washing dishes? If you had to walk five miles for just three-to-four gallons of water (having no water tap nearby to simply turn on), how would your habits change? Do you know how much of your energy bill comes from cooking? How many meals a week do you eat that require no electricity to make? What can you do to conserve water and energy while cooking?



DOES BUYING SEASONALLY GROWN FOOD MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

We waste lots of energy trying to grow food in the wrong place, at the wrong time of year. Discover what's in season near you, and you'll find perfectly delicious fruits and vegetables to eat that aren't using all that energy to reach your plate.

What is your favorite recipe? Why? What memories are associated with it? Where do you get the ingredients? Where do they come from and who grows them? Are there times of the year you can't make your favorite dish because some of the ingredients aren't available? Do you grow any food yourself? If you could, what would it be? If you had to grow all your own food, what would a meal in January look like versus a meal in August? What can you do to eat more local, in-season food? Compare the last in-season fruit you ate to the store-bought out-of-state/out-of-season fruit? What are the taste, color, or texture differences between seasonal and unseasonal berries, peaches, or apples?



HAVE YOU EVER TRIED EATING MORE VEGETABLES AND LESS MEAT?

If you eat a little less meat and a little less dairy, you'll dramatically reduce the impact of your diet on the environment. Just think: one 1 pound of ground beef for your family uses more than 28,000 cups of water to produce—that's enough to fill 20 bathtubs to the brim, and then some!

How often do you eat meat? What is the best vegetarian meal you've had? What recipe might you make to persuade a die-hard meat eater to go vegetarian for one dinner a week? Are there cases where eating high-quality meat and dairy is good for people—and how do we balance that with a call to eat less? Are there instances where raising meat products can actually conserve resources and reduce waste? How can we meet the needs of a world that is demanding more meat with constrained resources? How could your family eat a little less meat and dairy?

FOR IN-DEPTH DISCUSSIONS, BELOW WE PROVIDE BACKGROUND ON HOW THE CHOICES WE MAKE EVERY DAY—AT THE GROCERY STORE, IN THE KITCHEN—ARE MORE POWERFUL THAN WE MIGHT THINK:

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO WASTE LESS FOOD?

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- · With nearly a billion people going hungry in the world, and with the demand for food set to soar, 1 we need to play our part in ensuring that the food that's grown is available to the people who need it, rather than rotting in a landfill.
- Both food production and sending food to landfills results in emissions of greenhouse gases. These gases contribute to changes in the climate, which make it increasingly difficult for farmers to supply the world with food. The problems that climate change cause mean that even more of us could go hungry in the future.
- The usual reason for throwing food away is that the food spoils before we get around to eating it. In other words, spoiling is something we can prevent. Most of us store apples, for example, in a fruit bowl. But putting them in a bag in the fridge allows them to keep longer. This is the same for most other fruit, except bananas and pineapples.2

HOW?

- Store smart: Keep fruits and veggies in the fridge instead of on the counter—they'll last longer and you'll throw less away.
- Save leftovers: Try it at home and in restaurants.
- Plan meals: Make a list of meals for the week, and buy only what you need at the store.

HOW CAN YOUR DIET SUPPORT SMALL-SCALE FARMERS?

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- Around the world, food prices are fluctuating. When prices go up, you'd think it would be good news for the people who farm and produce our food, but often this is not the case. Small-scale producers in developing countries typically spend well over half of their total income on food. Many of them spend more on buying food for their families than they earn from selling the produce they grow.3
- Women are responsible for the majority of food production in many developing countries, despite having restricted access to markets, land, and credit. If women had equal access to resources, their efforts could reduce world hunger, lower child malnutrition, and raise the incomes of rural people.
- Low incomes make it difficult for small-scale farmers to invest in their farms, to respond to short-term changes in demand, and to afford the increasingly expensive material and tools they need.

- · What's more, the increased frequency with which prices go up and down makes it even more difficult for small-scale producers to plan what to grow and to invest for the future.
- · To help, look for products and brands that ensure smallscale food producers get a fair deal.

HOW?

- Buy Fair Trade: Find fairly traded products like chocolate, coffee, or tea at the grocery store and at your favorite café.
- Connect with farmers: Shop at your local farmers' market it's also good to support growers close to home.
- Use your voice: Tell food companies and politicians to give farmers and workers a better deal. For example, urge your local supermarket to join the Equitable Food Initiative (www.equitablefood.net).

WHAT IF WE COULD SAVE ENERGY WHEN COOKING?

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The amount of energy we use to cook the same meal with the same equipment can vary hugely depending on how we cook. What kind of pan we choose, whether we use a lid or not, even whether we are in a hurry when cooking—all of these factors have an impact.

HOW?

- Try these tips: Add just enough water to cover your veggies instead of filling the pan to the top; use a flat-bottomed pan and cover it with a lid; and reduce the heat as soon as the water starts to boil.
- Multitask: Use your oven for more than one thing at a time, like warming up dinner while baking cupcakes.
- **Unplug:** Turn off or unplug the microwave and other kitchen appliances when not in use.

DOES BUYING SEASONALLY GROWN FOOD MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- By eating seasonally, we can help minimize the energy use and greenhouse gas emissions that result from producers having to force food to grow outside its natural season.⁴
- The only way to go about eating more seasonally is to investigate what's in season where we are and what's in season elsewhere in the world.
- Reduce "food miles," the distance that food travels from farm to fork. Fewer food miles means less food transport, which in turn means fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

HOW?

- Explore: Visit www.oxfamamerica.org/growmethod to find out what's in season near you, and then try using one of these ingredients in a new recipe.
- Ask questions: learn more about how your food is grown, where it comes from, and how it's transported.
- Plant your own: Get in touch with the seasons with a fruit and vegetable garden.

HAVE YOU EVER TRIED EATING MORE VEGETABLES AND LESS MEAT?

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Livestock produce some of the most dangerous greenhouse gases—methane and nitrous oxide—through their digestive systems and their manure. Both of these gases are far more powerful than the more commonly talked-about carbon dioxide.⁵

- Overall, livestock is responsible for 18 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- Livestock farming also uses huge amounts of water—nearly 8 percent of global human water use goes to grow food for cattle alone.

HOW?

- Go meatless: Try making a vegetarian meal for yourself or your family once a week.
- Swap it out: Try using a nondairy option instead of a dairy product.
- Find recipes: Go to pinterest.com/oxfamgrowmethod to find a new recipe or share your favorite.

BEFORE YOUR DINNER GUESTS LEAVE:

- Hand them some recipe cards from our celebrity chefs.
- Ask your quests to like Oxfam America on Facebook and follow us on Twitter (@OxfamAmerica).
- Ask them to sign the World Food Day petition, which urges the US government to support small-scale farmers from around the world.

2. Ibid., 15.

3. Ibid., 16.

4. Ibid., 27.

5. Ibid., 21.

 [&]quot;The Food Transformation: Harnessing Consumer Power to Create a Fair Food Future" (Oxfam International, July 2012), 14.