Assignment: Food Diary
Food Systems, CRD 20, UC Davis, Fall 2008
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Assignment overview
The food diary assignment requires you to individually (1) maintain a detailed record of your eating over a three-day period, (2) analyze the information, (3) write a two-page paper, and (4) make a global map of the ingredients in your food. The goal is for us to reflect on what we eat and some aspects of why.

Deadline
Your daily record keeping must occur between October 9 and October 16. You then have a week to write your 2-page paper, which is due in lecture on October 23.

Course grade
This assignment is worth 5 percent of your total course grade.

Keep a record of your eating for three days
Over the next week, choose three full days and keep a detailed list of everything you eat, even snacks and beverages. Since it is difficult to recall what you ate even after one day, you are advised to keep your food diary with you and keep track as you go. Table 1 on page 3 provides a template, which is also available for download from the course website: http://hcd.ucdavis.edu/courses/crd20/Assignments.html.

You will be keeping track of not just the food you eat, but also the time eaten, when, where, and with whom (but don’t worry about measuring how much). You will also record who prepared your food and the ingredients in it. To obtain these, you are encouraged to enter the kitchens of the places you eat and speak with the people preparing your food and, if possible, examine the ingredients lists on the boxes and cans. For example, does it contain artificial colors, flavors, preservatives or aromas? Is it organic? Does it contain genetically engineered or modified ingredients? Record the supplier and information about the transporter, packager, and producer of the food.

Investigative work and analysis
When you have this information, you will do two types of investigative work:
(1) a geographic analysis of where the food you ate was produced and where the ingredients originated from. For example, was the coffee you drank this morning from Colombia, Nicaragua, or East Timor? Was your pasta produced in Italy, Morocco or the Bronx? What can you find out about food transportation across borders, continents, hemispheres and oceans? When you have this information, you can estimate food miles using a world map.
(2) an assessment of the social and environmental impacts of one ingredient of a food you have consumed. Look at the labor conditions in these areas, and any relevant trade agreements or policies that impact the area in which this food is produced. Who

1 Assignment adapted from Joshua Muldavin’s curriculum on the educational version of The Future of Food by Deborah Koons Garcia. Dr. Muldavin is the Henry R. Luce Professor in Asian Studies and Human Geography at Sarah Lawrence College.
produces this food item (consider class, race/ethnicity, gender) and what are their working conditions and benefits? What are the environmental impacts of its production? For example, was rainforest cleared to make way for its production? Are pesticides and fertilizers used, and what might be their effects?

**Two-page paper**
When you are far enough into this project and deep enough into your research to have gained detailed information about the origins of your food, you can start composing a two-page paper about your diary and your findings.

**First**, look for patterns in your personal consumption and try to find explanations for your behavior. Limit this to about 1/2 of a page. For example, do your food habits change on the weekends? Do you think what you eat is representative of your current age or have you always eaten this way? Do you eat alone or with others? How often? How many times a week do you skip a meal? Are there any unusual circumstances that affect your eating habits, such as money, illness or guests? Do you eat organic, fair trade, local? What is the ratio between highly processed and unprocessed foods that you consume?

**Second**, you need to present your analysis of what goes into what you eat. This should fill the remaining 1 and 1/2 pages. Include your **geographic analysis** of information on ingredient origin, transportation, and food miles (3/4 page), and your **assessment of the social and environmental impacts** of one food ingredient (3/4 page). What kinds of information are difficult to locate? Why?

**Third**, you must complete a global food map whereupon you diagram the different origins, and where possible, the transportation routes and the processing and packaging sites. A blank map is provided on page 4. Be prepared for a class discussion on your findings.

**Examples of useful resources**
Books and atlases:
Ettlinger, Steve. 2007. *Twinkie, deconstructed: my journey to discover how the ingredients found in processed foods are grown, mined (yes, mined), and manipulated into what America eats*. New York: Hudson Street Press.
Food mile calculators to try out:
http://www.fallsbrookcentre.ca/cgi-bin/calculate.pl
http://www.sagacious.us/LocalFoodsSF/
## Template for Food Diary, one day of data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Food item</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>With whom</th>
<th>Prepared by whom</th>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>Geographical origin(s)</th>
<th>Processing plant location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
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