

Astrid's Nutrition Month Rant:

Your Health is Your Wealth – Eating for the Future



Finally, a food guide I can stand up for! It goes a long way to addressing not just what to eat (mostly plant based whole foods) but HOW we eat. Stopping to eat meals together with friends and family is as important for our wellbeing (including digestion) than WHAT we eat and Canada's food guide goes even further, advising us to cook more. This I like very much – it's the only way to control what goes into our food which is way too much sugar, salt, and preservatives. What ever happened to just tasting the food the way Mother Nature made it? Plus, with a little menu planning and the right tools (I can't live without my Instant Pot pressure cooker) cooking becomes a form of creative expression and relaxation. To do that so I don't get overwhelmed with a lot of time spent, I always plan for leftovers and do pre-prep on light cooking days for the next day.

What the food guide doesn't address, and it should, is HOW the food is grown. We mustn't be complacent, but continue to educate ourselves on the issues of food growing as this impacts our nutrition, health and health of the environment...in other words – our future. We need to fight for a food system that protects farmers from seed patents controlling all seed. Farmers should have the right to save their own seed and develop new varieties, which they've always done in the past but not so much in the last 60 years – in this way they breed resiliency and local adaptation, important traits for erratic climate change.

We deserve a food system that labels GMO foods and GMO ingredients for all Canadians. How about a food system where we reward farmers for doing the right thing by using practices that regenerate and promote the health of soil. Regenerative practices, like in ecological and organic farm systems, can lead to healthier soil which is an important carbon sink drawing down CO₂ from the atmosphere. How that works is that when soil is over-farmed and doused in synthetic fertilizers and chemical pesticides, the life in the soil is killed off. On the other hand, rich, healthy soil has microorganisms in it that consume carbon and sequester it. So, if we can turn the

majority of the world's agricultural land to regenerative practices, we could heal the soil enough that it could start sequestering a whole lot more carbon – enough to actually reverse climate change (source [Regeneration Canada](#)). That's what a very important conference is planning to address - [The Living Soils Symposium - which is taking place in Montreal March 18 – 21, 2020](#)

A main critique of the new food guide is that it isn't realistically affordable for too many Canadians. Cooking whole foods from scratch is actually much more affordable but it means we have to learn how to cook again. To that point, I can recommend 2 books: Scraps, Wilt and Weeds – Turning Wasted Food into Plenty by M. Refslund. Another is Cooking With Scraps by L. Hard. But, finally, we deserve an equitable food system that gives the same support to new farmers and organic growers as it does to conventional farmers, which would result in better food choices and prices for consumers. That's eating for the future.

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