

The Winner Is...the World!

Adapted from Kathy Douglas, "The Winner Is...the World!" Mandate 41:2 (May 2010), pp. 40-44. Used with permission of Mandate.

Eating ethically is no small task. It's not about absolutes, but about doing the best you can and trying to do better. Try baking the Ethical Brownies as a group. While the brownies are in the oven, discuss the food choice statements (last page) or other food concerns the participants have.

Ahead of Time

- Allow at least a week to assemble brownie ingredients. Some ingredients will take time to find—and that is a good learning experience in itself.
- You will also need a spatula, mixing bowl, mixing spoon, greased 9" x 13" baking pan, and access to an oven.

Ethical Brownies

1/3 cup (80 mL) fair trade cocoa	Available at health food stores; Ten Thousand Villages stores, www.tenthousandvillages.ca ; and Just Us! stores, www.justuscoffee.com .
1 cup (250 mL) organic canola oil	Available at most health food stores.
1½ cups (375 mL) locally milled all-purpose flour	It is difficult to find guaranteed locally grown flour, but most places in Canada have a local mill where you can buy flour in bulk (best stored in the freezer).
½ tsp (2 mL) salt	The best way to limit the use of salt is to eat fewer processed foods.
¼ cup (60 mL) tap water	Tap water is healthy and safe.
4 local free-range eggs	Some organic egg producers also pasture their chickens in large, moveable enclosures that are outdoors, sit directly on the pasture, and are moved daily. You may also know of local small-scale producers.
1½ cups (375 mL) fair trade sugar	See sources for fair trade cocoa.
1 tsp (5 mL) fair trade pure vanilla	See sources for fair trade cocoa.

Preheat oven to 325°F (160°C). Grease a 9" x 13" baking pan. Pour all ingredients into a large mixing bowl, and stir them together. Pour the batter into the greased pan. Bake for 25 minutes or when toothpick inserted in centre comes out clean or almost clean.

The producers/growers and distributors of the Ethical Brownie ingredients have made a decent living without injustice and can be considered winners. Everyone who gets to taste and enjoy the brownies is a winner too!

Food Choices

While the brownies are in the oven, have a discussion around food choices. Photocopy this page, cut out each section, and have participants pull out a statement to discuss. Participants may also have their own food concerns to add to the choices.

You will be following the 100-mile diet for Thanksgiving dinner (food comes from within 100 miles/160 km). You will need to drive 20 km to pick up your free-range turkey. No sugar will be used in the baking, only honey or maple sugar. All vegetables will be purchased from a local farmer's market or grown in your backyard garden. You have asked your family to bring a dish and to follow the 100-mile diet rules, and some are grumbling.

You have decided to make enough canned tomatoes and salsa for your family's winter meals. You will need the following: 1) three 8-hour days for the canning; 2) three bushels of local or home-grown tomatoes; 3) thirty 1 L sealer jars and equipment for canning; 4) knowledge of safe canning practices (ask your elderly aunt!).

You are in charge of serving coffee/tea/juice and snacks for the after-church community gathering time. You know dollars are always tight for the church and fair trade coffee and tea and local fruit are more expensive than coffee on sale or cheap bulk cookies. Nevertheless, you have decided to serve and bill the church for healthy, low-sugar, no-additive, and fairly traded products.

After a year of choosing reusable, glass-bottled, organic milk, you have decided to return to milk in conventional 3 L bags. You buy the bottled milk at the health food store 20 km away and the bagged milk at your neighbourhood food store. Your decision is based on the following: 1) all milk (organic or conventional) usually comes from within 100 miles/160 km of where it is produced; 2) all milk is tested for antibiotics, and no milk sold in Canada contains antibiotics; 3) no farmers in Canada are allowed to feed their dairy cattle growth hormones.

Your family has agreed for three months (September–December) to eat only vegetables and fruits that are seasonal, home frozen, winter stored, or canned. This means there are no leafy green salads or hydroponic local vegetables like cucumbers, tomatoes, and peppers. You will likely need to can or freeze fruits and vegetables from your garden or local farmers, making sure you can secure the vitamins you need.

Homemade versions of soups, bread, cookies, and snacks usually do not include high levels of high-fructose corn syrup, additives, and salt. As a parent you decide not to purchase processed and packaged foods. The children (and adults) complain. They say there is nothing good to eat, and that they feel like outsiders at school because their lunches and snacks are not like those of their schoolmates.

You have decided not to purchase and eat pineapples or bananas because of the many miles they must be shipped to Canada and because many farm workers in the global South are exposed to unhealthy work conditions. You are told these crops are sometimes the only commodities that can offer a means of income for some countries trying to participate in the world trade market.