

Awaken Your Taste Buds this Spring

Spring is finally here and it's time to awaken our taste buds with fresh, delicious foods. Did you know that we all have about 10,000 taste buds, mainly on the tongue with a few at the back of the throat and on the palate?

A taste bud is a taste receptor. **There are four types of taste receptors:** (1) *sweet*, as produced by sugar: sweet receptors are mostly on the tip of the tongue (noted in a child's preference to lick a candy sucker rather than chew it); (2) *sour*, as produced by vinegar: sour receptors occur primarily along the sides of the tongue and are stimulated mainly by acids; (3) *salty*, as produced by table salt: salt receptors are most common in the tip and upper front portion of the tongue. Mainly inorganic salts stimulate them; and (4) *bitter*, as produced by caffeine: bitter receptors are located toward the back of the tongue. They are stimulated by a variety of chemical substances, most of which are organic compounds, although some inorganic salts of magnesium and calcium produce bitter sensations too. All tastes are formed from a mixture of these basic elements.

As we celebrate Earth Month in April, I encourage you to rethink what you put on your plate and challenge you to buy, for one whole month, your food **ONLY** from local farmers & growers. Why, you may ask. **Because you will:**

1) Support a local business (or 2, or

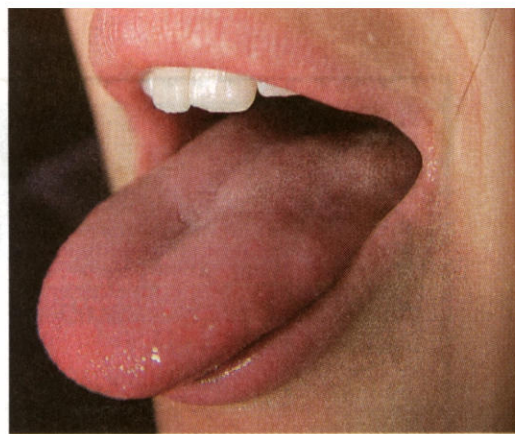
more), along with their families (as these are typically family owned);

2) Make new friends by getting to know where your food comes from;

3) Support the environment and the Earth (buying local reduces carbon dioxide emission, because no need for cross country transportation);

4) Revive your taste buds and feed your body and soul with nutrient-rich organically grown produce and grass-fed meat. Yes, your food will taste drastically different than what you've been accustomed to.

I know what is going through your mind as you are reading this, I do. And the reason I do is because my clients and my students all ask me the same question when we approach that subject: but those cost more... how do you justify buying organic when you are on a tight budget with children? Great question. You just need to re-think the way you look at food. Nutrient-rich foods will fill you up and keep your tummy full for much longer than their empty, nutrient-deficient "look-alikes", which means that you, and your kids, will need to eat a lot less of these foods to be satiated. When you buy in bulk (think rice,



grains, cereals, nuts, seeds), you don't pay for the marketing, the packaging and the labor, thus you pay a lot **LESS** per pound than the pretty packaged versions, which leaves you more money for what's worth paying more for. As a rule of thumb, when it comes to produce, if I eat the skin (apples, grapes, berries), then I buy organic, if I do not eat the skin (avocados, pineapple, bananas) then, I don't worry so much about it being non organic. If you cannot afford grass-fed meats, then look for labels that read "hormone and antibiotic free".

I was born and raised in France, where we grew a lot of our own produce, and shopped for the majority of our foods at local markets and the two farms in our village. We talked to the growers and the farmers, made friends with their kids (who were my age), bought their goods, brought them home and ate them that day. I will never forget the aromas of the different specialties as we walked the isles of the outdoor markets. Appetizing, healthy fruits and vegetables that were grown with great care and love and that were just picked the day before.

Whenever I go back and visit, I always make sure I check out the dates when the town I'm in has its local outdoor farmers market, and I make sure to go wander, awaken my taste buds, and get a good dose of "make-me-feel-good" sensory overload therapy.

Not sure where your local farmers and growers are located at? Check out this great website www.eatlocalgrown.com, enter your zip code at the top in the search box, and you will see the list of all of them within a 15-mile radius of where you live.

Happy Earth Month, and happy locally grown eating for new, awakened taste buds this Spring! •

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