

We are what we eat

Unlike most creatures, humans eat not only to satiate hunger or to replenish lost nutrients. Unlike other animals, humans derive pleasure from eating culinary masterpieces. New research even suggests that eating the stuff we love activates certain chemicals in our body, rewarding us for consuming sinful goodies.

Kelly Childs

A well-balanced diet provides the human body with all the nutrients it needs for optimal physical and mental performance, enables the body to regenerate damaged cells and tissues, and even allows it to ward off or fight diseases. The ancient Greek physician Hippocrates was definitely on to something when he said, "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."

The modern diet is far from ideal. If you look closely at the food sold at supermarkets and served in most restaurants, you will find that they are processed and high in saturated fats, refined carbohydrates and full of sugars. Almost everything made in bulk for the supermarkets and the food industry for restaurants is made in a lab by people in lab coats, not in a kitchen by people in chef coats. If you add the impact of a sedentary lifestyle, high stress levels and large portion sizes, you've got a veritable buffet of lifestyle diseases including heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, stressed-out bodies, sleep apnea, as well as many cancers.

What these trends suggest an imbalance with our relationship with food. Apart from nourishing the body, food should satisfy the other needs of a person, including emotional, social and spiritual. Aside from replenishing the nutrients needed by the body, or even satisfying our cravings, there is a social aspect to eating. More often than not, the imbalance at either end of the food disorder spectrum comes as a result of losing close touch with any of these aspects of food consumption.

Sometimes, food can hurt us too.

Take the case of gluten. Over the past few years, the gluten-free diet has gained wide attention from the public. Some restaurants and food establishments are providing gluten-free options, however, there are very few that are 100 per cent gluten-free such as Lettuce Love Café and Kelly's Bake Shoppe.

Gluten is a type of protein found in a number of grains including wheat, barley and rye. Notice how chewy some baked products are? That's created by gluten. It can also be found in other types of food products including chocolates, soy sauce, vitamin supplements and even personal hygiene products like toothpaste and body moisturizers.

For people with celiac disease, gluten can be a curse to their existence. Even the slightest trace of this protein can trigger

54 BCity Summer 2014

For me, I enjoy a 100 per cent plant-based diet and the majority of it (maybe 80 per cent) is centred on organic vegetables (raw, baked, grilled or roasted). The other 20 per cent of my diet is comprised of fruit, legumes, nuts, seeds and gluten-free grains. I suggest the same for other people and try to focus on the source of food as nutrition, the preference is always directly from Mother Earth. Forego packaged foods (like gluten-free crackers, processed cookies and cereals, sauces, dressings, etc.) and make everything directly from

whole ingredients and the earth. That way you know exactly what is in the food you're eating. It's just feels good to eat that way and in doing so; you'll be a natural gluten-free eater.

As a gluten free eater and chef, I can't stress enough the importance of getting back into the kitchen and to be a part of the creation of food. I believe that by getting back into the kitchen and making our food we receive natural gifts that enhance our wellbeing. Not only this, we have fun with family and friends

Consequently more and more people are experiencing health issues and symptoms like stomach pain, bloating, brain fog, heartburn, fatigue and Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

Interested in gluten-free alternatives?

There are numerous alternatives you can adopt into your diet like brown rice, buckwheat, millet, and quinoa as a gluten or wheat substitute. These are very simple grains to prepare. Garbanzo bean flour and fava bean flours are gluten-free flours favoured for their high fibre and high protein contents.

again. This is inspiration. It's a time we can welcome all into the kitchen - what I consider the most influential room in the home. Here we can just be and work on our health from the inside out. My belief is optimal health equals ultimate happiness. Creating a meal is creating your own reality.

Kelly Childs is a conscious chef, extreme vegan baker and entrepreneur. She is the co-founder and co-owner of Kelly's Bake Shoppe and Lettuce Love Cafe in downtown Burlington.



Kelly Childs

Photo by Brian Cappricci



Buddha Bowl from Lettuce Love Cafe

Photo by Kelly Childs