

LIVING LIGHTER

10 Principles for Eating Lighter

Eating more ethically can feel like a minefield, so start small, and start simple. Begin by eating healthier, eating less, wasting less, and cooking from fresh ingredients. Eat local and seasonal produce, and best of all grow your own where you can. While free-range or organic meat can be more expensive, you will enjoy it more, and you can always eat meat less often, or eat smaller portions with more vegetables. Whatever you do, don't stop enjoying the goodness of food!

Remember that every mouthful is a gift of God's grace, and good food is a celebration of God's creation and human creativity. Give thanks to God before eating, and try to imagine the places and people that have prepared what you are eating.

Here are our top ten principles to start eating lighter:

1. Shop LOAF! Start buying all your food according to LOAF principles: Local, Organic, Animal-friendly, Fairly-traded. Where there's a hard choice, the advice is to go for local first. When you support local co-ops, farmers markets, etc. you reduce the distance your food migrates and the amount of fuel and packaging it takes to feed your family. Find local sources for eggs, honey, meat, and produce. Try to increase your organic food purchases by at least 10 per cent.

2. Shop seasonally. Not only will the fruits and vegetables be fresher when you buy what's in season, you'll also support local economies and reduce harmful emissions. Learn more at <http://www.eattheseasons.com>

3. Shop efficiently. Shop from a grocery list and avoid impulse purchases. Purchase food in bulk when possible, but only what you need and what you will use!

4. Grow your own. Grow some vegetables in your garden or on a window ledge, or start an allotment. Home-grown produce will taste fabulous and is much better than shop bought!

5. Eat less meat and processed food. The vast majority of meat that Canadians eat is factory farmed. Factory-farmed meat is harmful to the planet, unkind to God's creatures, and full of unhealthy antibiotics, hormones, and bacteria. Eat more vegetarian meals, and when you do eat meat consider buying free-range chicken and "grass-finished" beef.

6. Pay attention to packaging and bags. Buy in bulk, bring your own bags, and avoid individually wrapped items. Purchase cloth grocery bags and use them in place of paper or plastic. Avoid food packaged in containers that cannot be recycled.

7. Eat at home. Cooking at home does not have to be difficult or time consuming, and the payoff is big: fresh ingredients, less processed food, healthier eating, and more time together as a family.

8. Save and reuse leftovers. Instead of throwing leftovers away, save and freeze them if possible, and then eat or reuse in other meals. Compost food scraps to significantly reduce household waste.

9. Share! Share your table with others, share any produce from home vegetable gardens, or share your time and volunteer at a soup kitchen or food redistribution centre.

10. Water. Stop drinking bottled water and buy a filter instead.