

The 7 Most "Intelligent" Foods, by Maureen Whitehouse

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I vividly remember standing at the front of my 4th grade classroom, being faced down by my teacher, Mrs. Chamberlin's beady eyes as I first stammered, and then completely faltered, while attempting to recite the Gettysburg address. I just couldn't remember what came after the pivotal line, "*Now we are faced with a great civil war*" Had I only known then, what I know today; that a powerful way to enhance our ability to learn is to pay attention to what goes into our mouths as well as what goes into our minds. Then, I might have told my mom to put a hold on the pop tart she'd given me for breakfast that morning, and asked her for a nice hot bowl of steaming oatmeal instead.

One of the most Soul-satisfying experiences for any human being is to discover new information, as we are all perpetual students of life! But what many people aren't aware of is the great impact that eating certain foods can have on our capacity to focus, learn and retain knowledge. When we feel hungry or under nourished, it's very difficult for us to tap our full capacity for learning and live an inquisitive, interesting life. This experience leads to frustration, low self-esteem and feelings of failure. You may have been, or know of, or even have a child who's experienced learning problems – which is no surprise in today's world. According to recent studies, the frequency of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) among school children in the US has been estimated to be as high as 20 percent. This is a prime example of the learning/behavioral problems that affect millions of children and adults all over the world.

So what causes some people to thrive in academic situations while others struggle? The fact is that many learning problems are caused by eating food that is lacking in "intelligence" – food laced with chemicals, junk food, and food that just isn't fresh. Such fare, lacking in intelligence, disturbs the mind. Although this has been surmised by many for quite a while, modern researchers are just now discovering the extent to which learning disorders are linked to harmful food additives such as chemical food preservatives, colorings, flavorings and emulsifiers. All of which are unfortunately found in most packaged foods.

One rather shocking study showed that the average person consumes 8 -10 pounds of additives a year. And the troubling truth is that the harmful effects of these artificial flavors, colors and preservatives are magnified many times for children who are in the critical developmental years. Children exhibit even more allergic reactions to foods than adults do because they are more sensitive due to their lower body weight.

Regardless of our size, or age, when we eat "unintelligent" food, we are not nourishing our minds with the vital minerals, vitamins, and other aspects inherent in nature's bounty. But fortunately in our abundant and progressive society that situation is easy for us to remedy. We are blessed with an abundance of healthy intelligent food choices. We just have to choose our food wisely – a sort of "catch 22", isn't it!

So to make it a lot easier for you, I've put together this list of what I feel are **The 7 Most Intelligent Foods**. Keep them in mind while filling your grocery cart, preparing your next meal or filling your child's lunchbox. And remember, the best way for our children to learn and grow effortlessly is to be led by our loving example!

1. Eat Colorful Fresh Fruits and Veggies – Here's an easy to follow rule of thumb – at least 30% of your food should be non-cooked, non-processed fresh and raw. That includes a huge array of possibilities when you consider the many fruits and vegetables, and nut and seed varieties available to us today. Get creative! Include every color of the rainbow in your next meal. Adding a crispy red apple, some green celery or grapes, a colorful, chopped salad and a handful of raw nuts to your lunch or dinner insures that your food choices are brain nourishing and chock full of the vitamins, minerals and nutrients your body needs. (More on this in *Soul-Full Eating* – Chapter 13: *Dead and Live Foods*, Chapter 27: *The Raw Food Diet* and Chapter 40: *Food As Healer*.)

2. Eat Organic and Locally Grown Foods – Whenever possible, choose organic and locally grown foods. They are not only healthier, but tastier. Take a typical snack; on the surface, there is little difference in appearance between a peanut butter and jelly sandwich made with organic ingredients and one that's not. But the difference in nutritional value is significant. Non-organic grapes, peanuts and wheat are known to contain some of the highest levels of chemicals and pesticides of all foods. So choosing to go organic here is a wise choice. And what about the milk you use in your morning cereal? Non-organic milk contains not only the residual pesticides from the non-organic feed that the cows consume, it also contains the antibiotics and hormones given to the cows to keep them healthy and producing milk while eating a contrived diet rather than the fresh, sweet grass (grown with fresh air, water and

sunshine) that Mother Nature intended them to eat. (More on this in *Soul-Full Eating* – Chapter 4: *Buy Locally/Grow Your Own* and Chapter 5: *Choose Organic Foods* and Chapter 18: *Got Organic Milk?*)

3. Eat Foods with Good Fats – Something amazing I've discovered, that most people aren't aware of, is that the human brain is made up of about 60% fat. So doesn't it stand to reason then that fat is a very important part of your diet? The fats you eat profoundly affect your brain function. Yet there is no other dietary topic that seems more confusing or conflicting than fats – so here's what you need to know in a nutshell – avoid trans fats (also referred to as trans-fatty acids). These fats form when vegetable oil hardens in a process called hydrogenation. Hydrogenated fats are considered to be very dangerous and are linked with many diseases, including heart disease. It's fortunate that the FDA has mandated that all processed food labels identify them whenever they are used as an ingredient. So what are the good fats to include in your diet? Omega 3 and Omega 6 Fats are a dietary must. They are found in fish oils, such as cod liver oil, and in vegetable oils such as flax seed, walnut oil, or canola oils. Be certain to use cold-processed and organic oils whenever possible. (More on this in *Soul-Full Eating* – Chapter 20: *Here's the Skinny on Fats and Oils.*)

4. Eat Low Salt Foods – Most people love it. But too much of a "good" thing can wreak havoc within our body's many systems. Sodium is not just a tasty seasoning, it's a vital component of the fluid that bathes each and every cell of your body. To avoid the perils of eating too much salt, here are some tips: Again, eat fresh, whole foods. Substitute unrefined sea salt or Himalayan rock salt for common table salt. Check labels – words that signal a high sodium content are: barbecued, broth, pickled, cheddar, parmesan, smoked, marinated and tomato-based. In essence all chips, other than reduced or no sodium chips, contain high levels of sodium. The good news is that craving salt is one of the easiest tendencies to overcome. (More on this in *Soul-Full Eating* – Chapter 22: *Salt – Easy Does It.*)

5. Eat Foods Low in Sugar – If you're eating a typical American diet then it is quite likely that you *are eating a whopping 42 teaspoons of sugar a day!* The major percentage of this intake comes from eating prepared foods. For example, did you know that one chocolate bar has 7 teaspoons of sugar, a stick of gum has ½ tsp.; a half cup of ice cream, 5 to 6 tsp.; a slice of apple pie, 12 tsp.; and a half-inch piece of chocolate cake, 15 tsp.? Even though that's a lot of sugar, you do expect to find sweetener in those items. However, it may surprise you to discover sugar in foods you'd never suspect – such as frozen lunches and dinners, cereals, breads, many canned fruits and vegetables and even French fries and ketchup! Be a conscious consumer and read the labels of your favorite prepared foods. There are always healthier versions to find, or even to create! (More on this in *Soul-Full Eating* – Chapter 21: *Sugar – The Not-So-Sweet Truth.*)

6. Consume Plenty of Fresh Water (and Fresh Air) Be sure you have the opportunity throughout the day to drink plenty of water and to breathe clean, fresh air. Many people find themselves lagging during their day at times when it's not appropriate to eat. Realize that this is a good time to get a drink of fresh water and to take a few deliberate nice deep breaths. This will refuel and replenish your cells with oxygen and help you avoid brain fatigue. Avoid having sugar laden energy drinks, soda and other carbonated beverages. They contain not only excessive amounts of sugar but caffeine – both of which are addicting. (More on this in *Soul-Full Eating* – Chapter 24: *Do Drink the Water* and Chapter 26: *Breathe Deep*, Chapter 21: *Sugar – The Not-So-Sweet Truth*, Chapter 23: *Kicking Caffeine – Grounds For Change.*)

7. Love! Above all else, love is the vital ingredient of *Soul-Full Eating*. When you pay attention to the source, ingredients and preparation of your food, you feel the attentiveness you put into your meal on a much deeper level – this is what I call the *Soul-Full* quality of food. It's the most fulfilling ingredient – your presence! When you *eat with love, what's grown with love, prepared with love and served with love*, you automatically feel, nourished, revitalized, satisfied, fully balanced *and loved!*

One final point – vital to living a vibrant, healthy and joyous life – remember that anything you eat with judgment, guilt or fear is less than optimum. **Love is the key.** When we love ourselves unconditionally, no matter what we eat, while taking advantage of the many good, wholesome choices available to us today, then we feel effortlessly aligned with peace, and have the capacity to tap our highest intelligence and our deepest, most creative, divine nature.

PS – I ate a nice, fresh, juicy organic apple *with love* before writing this article to ignite my cleverness. . . how'd I do?

This article was written by Maureen Whitehouse, the founder of Axiom, Inc., expert in Personal Development and Enlightenment and author of the newly released, award-winning book, *Soul-Full Eating: A (Delicious!) Path to Higher Consciousness* – available now in bookstores everywhere. To find out more about Maureen's *30 Day Non-diet Program*, books, CDs, newsletter, Soul-support groups and other products and programs visit her website at: www.soul-fulleating.com