

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

From Flying Squirrel Bakery Café

We all know that what you put on your fork and into your body has a profound impact on your health, but the earth is also greatly impacted by our food choices. Consuming and producing “sustainable food” means different things to each of us in the effort to balance food issues about health, environmental, social, and economic concerns. Here are some of the things we try to do at Flying Squirrel that we hope set small examples of creating food for thought about the food we eat.

No High Fructose Corn Syrup Served Here

As writer Michael Pollan told *The Washington Post* in 2009, high-fructose corn syrup “may be cheap in the supermarket, but in the environment it could not be more expensive.” Most corn is grown as a mono-culture, meaning that the land is used solely for corn, not rotated among crops. This practice depletes soil nutrients, requiring more pesticides and fertilizer while weakening topsoil. At Flying Squirrel we do our best to keep HFCS out of the building offering only select cane sugar sweetened sodas, paying close attention to all ingredients we buy, and preparing the freshest most minimally processed foods possible.



No Bottled Water Available Here

Bottled water is just water, sometimes not even very high quality water. Bottled water also produces up to 1.5 million tons of plastic waste per year. Over 80 percent of plastic bottles are thrown away, if they actually make it to a garbage can. Plastic waste is now at such a volume that vast eddies of current-bound plastic trash spin endlessly in the world’s major oceans. Flying Squirrel has clean, regularly-tested well water and a filter system that makes the water as great tasting as it can be. When summer travelers come in asking for bottled water, we “just say no to bottled water” and hand them a cold glass from the tap!

Healthy People, Healthy Planet

More whole grains. Less meat. Raw veggies. Less sugar, natural sweeteners. Smaller portions. Bake, sauté, steam, but don’t deep fry. Home-made, fresh, real, healthy, balanced, wholesome and satisfying. Sounds great and Flying Squirrel boasts all kinds of choices for healthy diets. But how does it help the planet? Encouraging healthier eating and healthier lifestyles reduces health care costs, ideally freeing up money worldwide for better uses! Our casual style means no frills and options for small portions – which in the end means less waste. We’re happy to report that the majority of Squirrel customers belong to the “clean plate club”! The Squirrel also boasts many vegetarian and vegan options. Choosing to consume less meat may be the best way to “eat green.” Cattle consume *fourteen times* more grain than they produce as meat. It takes huge amounts of water, land, and energy to produce that meat, animal waste creates pollution, and feed lots are a large source for erosion. Check out the website Meatless Mondays for a great national campaign to reduce meat consumption for better health and a happier planet.

Discounts for the Planet!

YOU can help too! If you come to Flying Squirrel by non-motorized means, we will give you a 5% discount in honor of the late avid bicycle and bread enthusiast Mike Fisher. If you bring your own container (travel mug for beverages, bags for bread, or other container for deli salads, etc.) you will get a 5% packaging discount in thanks for reducing the use of throw away packaging.

(Sorry, no double discounts.)

Reduce/Reuse/Recycle



Our revolving, creative deli-style menu at Flying Squirrel enables us to reduce restaurant waste by utilizing what we have on hand and making items that keep well. Our spent grain bread is delicious and nutritious and is made with reused barley grains from Denali Brewing Company’s beer brewing process. We use most of our solid fat waste from chicken, bacon and sausage to make homemade dog treats and suet-style bird feeder food. Our to-go packaging is “earth-friendly”; reuse your coffee cup in your compost pile! We make vegetable and chicken stocks with kitchen peelings and compost everything from coffee grounds to napkins. We combine recycling trips with town errands, taking cardboard, recyclable plastics, aluminum, tin and paper to the Anchorage recycling center. Look for Flying Squirrel reusable travel mugs for sale in the future!

Local/Organic



Choosing to spend precious food dollars on locally grown and organic products can be a difficult choice to make, but is an important step in caring for the environment. Organic ingredients we use include: whole wheat flour, chicken, hamburger, carrots, black beans, soy sauce (tamari), rice, quinoa, and more. All of our coffee and espresso is organic and roasted in Alaska, with most of it from K-Bay Caffé, a small, independent socially-conscious roasting company in Homer. All of the milk and cream at the Squirrel comes from local dairy Matanuska Creamery. We are lucky to have a family connection with local farmers at Birch Creek Ranch and Talkeetna Grown CSA, who supply Talkeetna-grown potatoes as well as a variety of fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers. Birch candy scraps from local birch syrup producer Kahiltna Birchworks are added to our yummy oatmeal toffee cookies and we use the uniquely flavored Talkeetna-made birch syrup in all of our granola. Sparkling rhubarb ade is made with locally grown rhubarb and organic cane sugar, and it really hits the spot on a hot day. We serve locally brewed beer on tap, only use wild Alaska-caught salmon and cod, and keep researching even more ways to buy ingredients that are produced close to home or are produced using sustainable practices.

Passing It On

While all businesses must have a bottom line to measure their financial performance, Flying Squirrel seeks to have a *second* bottom line measured by positive social impact. Our kids cooking classes introduce young minds to cooking techniques, trying new foods, and making healthy choices. We support community efforts that educate the general public and especially our children, promoting healthier life-styles and care for the planet. Please visit the Flying Squirrel website to sign up for our e-mail newsletter where you can find out about future events and specials. Facebook has also become a great way to pass along not only Squirrel information, but support for local, national and world-wide campaigns to eat well and live well.

YOU Make the Biggest Difference of All!

When you spend your food dollars locally – by buying fresh bread or by ordering a birthday cake locally, you save the gas for a trip to town, you support local business and local jobs, and you are guaranteed freshness, quality and a non-corporate personal connection. You also make a difference by using your voice to tell others about all the ways it makes you feel good to eat at Flying Squirrel. THANK YOU!

