



Tuv Ha'Aretz CSA at the Forest Hills Jewish Center

Newsletters Online: groups.yahoo.com/group/TuvForAllFHJC - in "Files > 1_2013"Season"

TUV HASHAVUA: Best of the Week

Michael Pollan: Interview With the High Priest of American Food by Caitlin Yoshiko Kandil

Michael Pollan, the author of seven books including *Food Rules: An Eater's Manual*, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, *In Defense of Food* and, most recently, *Cooked*, has been chronicling America's food system for more than a decade. His mantra—"Eat food. Mostly plants. Not too much"—has inspired a new generation of foodies.

What kinds of meals did your mom cook while you were growing up?

My mom was a really good cook, and we had a kind of regular rotation. It was a typical American high-meat diet: Monday would be steak, Tuesday would be pasta, Wednesday would be something exotic, like pepper steak or Asian stir-fry. We often had roast beef. We didn't keep kosher and would have pork sausage and bacon occasionally.

How did you get interested in food? Why did you want to write about it?

I got into thinking about food in two ways. One was through gardening. I had a vegetable garden as a kid. I really loved growing food. My grandfather was a terrific gardener. He had been in the produce business and loved vegetables, and I loved going to his place and harvesting and watching him garden. So gardening got me interested in agriculture.

Then I did a couple of articles on agriculture for *The New York Times Magazine*. I wrote one on genetically modified food. It was just being introduced—this goes back to 1988—and I was interested in its relationship to plants. So I asked the agricultural company Monsanto if I could get some of their genetically modified seeds and plant them in my garden to see what all the fuss was about. In the course of writing that article, I went to visit some of the farms in Idaho that were using their products and saw big agriculture for the first time.

Because I was from the East Coast, where farms are still small and picket fence-ish, I had never seen a 35,000-acre potato farm that was run by remote control. I had no idea how chemically intensive this agriculture was. The potatoes had so much pesticide in them that you couldn't eat them out straight of the fields—you had to wait six weeks after harvest. That was my introduction to the realization that the story of where people's food came from was news. People didn't know how their French fries were made or how their beef was produced.

Did your Jewish upbringing influence your thinking about food?

Without question, yes. There's an ancient tradition of ethical eating that your food choices—how you eat, what you eat—should be influenced by your sense of ethics and that food is the business of the

Caitlin Yoshiko Kandil writes about food, health, racial inequalities, politics, culture, and religion. She won a national Health Journalism Fellowship for her four-part series, "The Challenges to Healthy Eating for Low-Income Bostonians." This interview is adapted from Moment Magazine.



July 30, 2013 | 23 Av, 5773

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

7/30 Pick-up [A Week]

Kathy Francos
Emily Brana
Vanessa Anton
Food Bank Delivery:
Jessie Schwartz

8/6 Pick-up [B Week]

Mary Beth Bentaha
Manik Jassal
Paula Correa-Silver
Cayuga
Sheana Ahlqvist
Food Bank Delivery:
Jamie Anzellotti

CAYUGA PURE ORGANICS (CPO) – our grain, bean, and flour farm – suffered a devastating fire on May 30, which destroyed the barn housing all of CPO's cleaning and packaging equipment, as well as a considerable amount of inventory. We do not yet know how our shares will be affected throughout this season; we will keep you updated as information becomes available.



We will be donating *tzedakah* to Cayuga Pure Organics collected through the end of July.

TUV HA'ARETZ CSA at the Forest Hills Jewish Center

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WEBSITES:

- **FHJC:** www.fhjc.org
- **Hazon:** www.hazon.org
- **Golden Earthworm:** www.goldenearthworm.squarespace.com
- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/tuvFHJC
- **Yahoo Listserv:** groups.yahoo.com/group/TuvForAllFHJC
- **Twitter:** twitter.com/#!/tuvfhjc



[A] WHAT'S IN THE BOX?**Baby Watermelon****Cucumber****Zucchini****Lettuce****Parsley****Red Onions****Basil****Red or Yellow Potatoes****FRUIT SHARE**

White Peaches

HERB SHARE

Mint

Rosemary

FROM GOLDEN EARTHWORM FARMRe: WATERMELONS: *Be sure to*

refrigerate them immediately and eat them right away. Our melons don't travel too well and if you find that yours has split, check inside to see if it is still ok – and if it is – eat it! Slight cracks to the rind are cosmetic and don't effect the flesh. *Don't throw out a perfectly good watermelon – check it first!* Of course if your melon has spoiled, please tell us!

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community. Judaism isn't the only culture, obviously, to promote that idea, but for me, that's where it came from. I just developed different ethics from the ones in Leviticus. Whether you're supporting the kosher rules or you're arguing against them, you're accepting the form, which is that there is an argument, and it matters.

What happens when cultural traditions clash with healthy eating?

Culture is a powerful thing. Most cultures I look at have interesting rules to keep people from eating until they are completely full. In general, cultural rules about eating tend toward the direction of health. But someone was telling me that in China, it's high status to leave a lot of food on your plate uneaten. It's a sign you've got enough money to waste it. That might be a good thing for health, but it's a bad thing for the environment and for people who are hungry.

What do you mean when you say that ordinary Americans can use cooking to fix our food system?

Wendell Berry famously said that eating is an agricultural act. And he's right, but the eater's doing that act in the dark, to a large extent, whereas the cook is doing that in the light of day and can make some good judgments. People who are approaching cooking in this way are changing the food system. The incredible growth of organic, local and sustainably farmed food is coming from people buying ingredients, not from the purchase of boxes of pre-cooked food.

How can people cook this way if they're short on time and money?

We have to be prepared to invest even a little more time or money—but not necessarily both. Cooking is incredibly economical. People lose sight of the fact that when you cook—especially if you cook regularly—you can eat beautifully, because you're doing the work yourself and can afford to buy better-quality ingredients. Time is the harder issue. Many people feel that they don't have the time—and some people don't. It depends on your situation. I always ask people a few questions to see if they really don't have the time—if they're working with an awful schedule—or if it turns out that it's just not a priority for them and that they are finding time to go to the gym every day, go to a yoga class and watch four hours of television. Then it's a different question—a question of priorities. Everyone should spend more time in the kitchen—not just Mom—it should be a priority.

What kind of meals do you prepare and eat in a typical week?

We'll only have meat twice a week now, and we have a lot more

vegetarian dinners. We eat a lot of fish, lots of leafy green vegetables and a lot of whole grains—whole grain pasta and brown rice. We cook more than we used to, more nights than not. And we eat pretty simply. During the week, most of the meals we eat we can put together in half an hour, 45 minutes.

**Any Veggie Frittata**

michaelpollan.com | Serves 6-8

1 or more onions or leeks

olive oil and/or butter

8 eggs

A splash of milk or water

Any or all vegetables you have around and like, including: spinach, kale, chard, asparagus, summer squash, peppers, peas, green beans, cooked potatoes, mushrooms. Frozen vegetables are also fine. Elements in a frittata can reflect what is in your garden.

grated cheese—optional

fresh (or dry) herbs, torn or chopped

Salt and pepper, to taste

Heat oven to 400°F. Dice the onion or slice the leek and sauté in a cast-iron pan with butter or oil (or both) for 5-10 minutes, until soft.

Slice or tear vegetables into bite-size pieces. Add to pan and sauté for a few minutes, until tender. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Beat the eggs in a bowl with a splash of milk or water. Pour mixture over the cooked vegetables in the hot pan. Grate and top with cheese and herbs. Let cook for 2-3 minutes to let a crust form, then put in the oven for 10 minutes until set.

You can flip the pan over to release the whole frittata onto a serving plate, or cut slices from the pan and serve wedges. Good served with a salad and crusty bread.