

A History of Eating

By Paul Rozin

The Movement to Suppress Passive Eating and the Risks of Side-plate Food

JULY 15, 2010: With the conquest of the cigarette hazard well in hand in the late 1990s, the attention of American health reformers turned to the next treatable threat to immortality: obesity. Though it was possible to eliminate smoking, even the most passionate reformers recognized that it would not be possible to eliminate eating. Their aim was to reduce it substantially. It was noted that sex was also necessary for survival, but that one could reduce it substantially with no effects on the size of the next generation. The same, perhaps, for food.

Two factors that encourage eating had been isolated in the research literature. People eat more when the food is more palatable, and they eat more in the presence of other people. The solution seemed simple: reduce palatability and social eating, hence limiting the obesity-promoting effect of passive eating, or side-plate food. Individual overeaters argued that it was their right to eat as much food as they wanted, but it became clear that eating palatable food in public was a public health hazard.

The anti-eating movement began on January 13, 2005. A committee of economists constructed an influential model that showed the practicality of government action. They calculated that a switch to an unpalatable diet, eaten only in private, would cause the average American to live at least one month longer. They also noted that if all food were taken as nutrient pills, we could save 1,217 days (at one hour a day over 80 years) for devotion to worthwhile activities, like watching football, stamp collecting, or working. Thus, in addition to saving a month of life by eating less, one would save almost four years of American life just by not wasting time eating. Undoubtedly, these savings would increase the gross national product while reducing the gross national weight.

MARCH 22, 2005: A National Academy of Sciences report on the dangers of side-plate food, combined with the persuasive arguments from the economists, led to government action.

MAY 12, 2005: Congress instructed the Food and Drug Administration to require supermarkets to place palatable foods (palatability to be determined by a National Food Palatability Board) behind the counter or on hard-to-reach top shelves, to be sold only on request to adults with the proper ID.

JUNE 5, 2005: The FDA required a statement on all foods that eating may be hazardous to health, in bolder type on palatable foods.

OCTOBER 28, 2005: Berkeley, California passed the first local ordinance requiring that all restaurants reserve a section for the eating of unpalatable foods (they recognized that this would cause no inconvenience for many restaurants) and offer all diners sterilized blindfolds to eliminate observed eating.

NOVEMBER 11, 2005: Congress passed a law requiring all corporations that receive government contracts to serve unpalatable food in their cafeterias and to provide opportunities for individual, unobserved eating.

JANUARY 1, 2006: The first eater's rights organization, Eaters' Anonymous, was born. Aided by the food industry, its members fought unsuccessfully for free eating areas. They demanded that company cafeterias and restaurants reserve at least 25

percent of their tables for free eaters. The gluttonous overeaters organized, and, just like the cigarette companies before them, attacked the scientific basis of the anti-eating movement. How come the British were heavier than the French, when it was clear who had more palatable food? They claimed that the big social eaters, like the French and the Mediterraneans, were among the thinnest people in the world. But these specious country differences could not stem the tide.

MARCH 21, 2006: The US Chamber of Commerce provides subsidies to encourage replacement of Asian, Mexican, and Italian restaurants with British restaurants.

MARCH 28, 2006: California required that all public buildings convert 50 percent of public bathroom stalls to private eating chambers (with less intake, people will need fewer bathrooms, they claimed).

APRIL 20, 2006: Congress passed legislation requiring the Internal Revenue Service to convert the current 50 percent deductible rule for business dining entertainment to a 150 percent tax surcharge.

MAY 15, 2006: American Airlines proudly announced that it would continue to serve unpalatable food on its flights, and would provide in-flight eating blindfolds.

MAY 17, 2006: United Airlines claimed its food was less palatable than American's, and offered frequent flyer points for

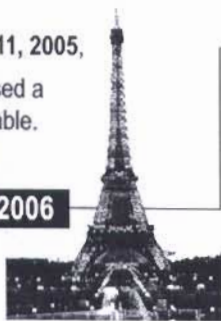
Death to Food

On November 11, 2005,

in response to NSF research, Congress passed a law mandating that foods become less palatable. The events following were tough to swallow.

January 1, 2006

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March 28, 2006



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American Airlines'



May 15, 2006

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unpalatable meals eaten in private at selected restaurants.

AUGUST 4, 2006: The food industry began a concerted effort to discredit the claims of the harms of side-plate food. They protested the labeling of foods as both harmful to health and unnatural. As a compromise, they proposed producing unpalatable mashed foods in opaque bags, called "filtered foods."

SEPTEMBER 12, 2006: The Society for the Attenuation of Passive Eating (SAPE), with 11 million members, surpassed the National Rifle Association in political power. It lobbied for and got federal legislation banning food preparation, display, or consumption in public.

DECEMBER 8, 2006: McDonald's, one of the last restaurants in the United States, survived by introducing private eating booths and introducing a reliable low-quality control system.

FEBRUARY 12, 2007: American tourist income from European tourists dropped to almost zero.

MARCH 26, 2007: The Sierra Club and Greenpeace, having saved all forests and controlled pollution, turned their attention to reclaiming original forests from farm land, and joined the effort to reduce food intake, and hence land use. They noted that the reluctance of people to consume recycled food (sometimes called used food, or pre-eaten food) could be usefully integrated into the passive eating movement. It was estimated that in the United States, 50 percent of food was thrown away because someone else had partaken of it. Since consumption of used food was both environmentally sound and unpleasant, two great goals could be served by promoting the replacement of new with used food.

MAY 20, 2007: Sierra, Greenpeace, other environmental organizations, and SAPE, successfully lobbied the California legislature, which passed the "pre-owned food act": at least 25 percent of food served at any restaurant had to be used/recycled, a practice to be monitored by the California Used Food Administration (CUFA).

JUNE 11, 2007: In its first report, based on examination of restaurant kitchen practices, CUFA reported that most restaurants, before the law, were already serving over 25 percent used food, re-sorted from the uneaten returns of prior customers. But since the customers didn't know this, the desired reduction in food intake did not occur. New legislation was proposed.

AUGUST 1, 2007: CUFA's proposal led to the passing by the California legislature of the "Used Food Public Information Act," which required that restaurants clearly label, on the menu and plate, the used (vs. new) origin of the food served. The symbol for used food was a small garbage can,

placed next to the already existing "heart" symbol, as well as the symbols for low fat, low salt, Mediterranean diet, high vitamin, natural, and other indicators already required on the California menu. Thus, a typical and ideal California menu item might look like this:



TOFU BURGER WITH ALFALFA SPROUTS*

**natural, no below minimum wage labor used, no cholesterol, low saturated fat, low salt, low aluminum, high vitamin E, no animal products, low calorie (if eaten in modest amounts)*

\$34.95

SEPTEMBER 11, 2007: California restaurants offer 40 percent discounts for used foods, and food markets start to sell them. Colorado and Oregon consider adopting similar legislation.

OCTOBER 16, 2007: The USDA reported that the total weight of the United States had dropped by 72,000 tons.

NOVEMBER 4, 2007: Open eating emporiums began to line the US borders with Canada and Mexico. Dinner round-trip flights from New York to Bermuda and Montreal began.

MARCH 5, 2008: Delaware voted to permit passive eating, and became the culinary capital of America. By May, 70 percent of all conventions were booked in Delaware.

MAY 30, 2008: New York City legalized palatable food restaurants where people can eat together, so long as the windows are painted black.

JUNE 3, 2008: Merck offered full-nutrient, low-fat, low-calorie food capsules that require no eating or chewing.

JULY 21, 2008: Baskin-Robbins bought Phillip Morris as a hedge against the declining popularity of tasty food.

SEPTEMBER 4, 2008: General Mills introduced a new ugly food line, in opaque cans with disgusting pictures on them, and food dyed black in glass jars.

DECEMBER 31, 2008: America led the world in increase in longevity, and decrease in the quality of life.

MAY 16, 2009: The remaining 614 residents of Hershey, Pennsylvania, once known as "the sweetest place on earth," change the town name to Diet, Pennsylvania.

AUGUST 15, 2009: The last American dental school closed its doors.

NOVEMBER 24, 2009: The American Kennel Association embraced the promotion of unpalatable foods for pets and encouraged solitary eating by pets.

DECEMBER 31, 2009: The problem was declared "licked" by SAPE, which now turned its attention to the health risks of sleeping: their studies indicated that 70 percent of people die while they are asleep. ♦

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July 21, 2008



**PHILIP MORRIS
USA**

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September 4, 2008

General Mills introduces a new ugly food line, in opaque cans with disgusting pictures on them, and food dyed black in glass jars.



May 16, 2009

Hershey, Pennsylvania, once known as "the sweetest place on earth," is changed to Diet, Pennsylvania.