

‘Eat Well Guided Tour of America’ Finds Coast-to-Coast Hunger to Reconnect Through Sustainable Food

The National Tour will end at FARM AID on September 9th in New York City

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July 10, 2007

New York City--August 23rd— When Sustainable Table Founder and Director Diane Hatz set off on her 38-day Eat Well Guided Tour of America earlier this month from California to New York (chronicled live at www.sustainabletable.org/roadtrip), she suspected she'd be meeting far more interesting people than recent media caricatures of America as a “fast-food” nation have suggested.

“We knew, for instance, about the research behind the Institute of Food Technologists’ recent report listing ‘dining at home’ and ‘eating natural, fresh and locally produced food’ as among this year’s ‘Top 10 Food Trends.’”

Nevertheless, Hatz reports that she and her fellow travelers on the bio-fueled bus have been surprised that “nearly everyone we’ve met” seems to share the deeper hunger that inspired the trip: “for food that satisfies our palates and helps sustain our environment, all while helping us to re-connect with community.” Since 2003, Hatz has worked to help educate consumers through her work with Sustainable Table, a Manhattan-based nonprofit program created to support alternatives to industrialized agriculture. The tour began on August 2nd at an apt venue for a group committed to the notion that nature produces the best-tasting foods: a picnic in West Hollywood’s Kings Road Park.

Under the park’s beautifully landscaped old-growth trees, Hatz met chefs like Amelia Saltsman whose newly published “Santa Monica Farmers’ Market Cookbook” argues that good cooking is not only about picking the right ingredients, but about knowing how they are produced.

The event featured other local food celebrities like farmer and independent filmmaker Lisa Brenneis ("Eat at Bill's: Life at the Monterey Market") and chef, caterer and best-selling cookbook author Evan Kleiman, who served up ensalata forte, zucchini frittata, beet and fennel salad, and heirloom tomato and mozzarella salad.

From here we left on a four-hour drive north to The Vineyard Restaurant in the Central Valley town of Madera. Designated only by fading purple letters on a modest sign, "the place can be easy to miss," Hatz said, "but it's the best in the valley."

The restaurant's owner, Chris Mariscotti, is a leader of the "Slow Food Movement" that has been gaining popularity throughout the country far more swiftly than its name might suggest.

Started in 1986 in Italy by Carlo Petrini, the movement emphasizes a return to regional traditions and home cooking from local, sustainably grown ingredients. And as Petrini sees it, Americans are key to determining the movement's fate.

"The challenge, the game, truly begins in America," he told the Associated Press earlier this year. "The country which invented fast food can propose slow food."

After events in Berkeley and southern Oregon over the next few days, "The Eat Well Guided Tour" stopped at the Rogue Creamery in Central Point, Oregon, which Petrini and Jeff Roberts, director of Slow Food USA, recognized earlier this year with an award for numerous achievements, from pioneering the movement to producing the legendary and coveted Rogue River Blue Cheese, which is sold out until 2008.

There the group learned that Rogue cheddars are created in a huge vat and use about 10,000 lbs of milk to make 1,000 lbs of cheese, and tend to age anywhere from 6 to 8 months. And that the secret to good cheese-making is a keen sense of smell and taste. Rather than rely on chemistry sets, as the larger cheese operations do, the artisans at Rogue rely on taste, touch and smell, and tasters decide when each batch of cheese is finished aging. At Rogue, everything is done by hand, from the stirring to the packing. The group got to stick their noses into the 'cave' room, where the aging happens. It doesn't look much like a cave, but their hosts told them it resembles the caves in European creameries. One of the visitors remarked, "If you've never smelled a cheese cave, you should! It smelled rich and buttery and kind of musky. It got us all hungry to taste some cheese, which was what we did next and it tasted 'smooth like brandy.'"

After venturing north through Oregon, Washington and Idaho the tour arrived in Missoula, Montana, on August 14, where Hatz met chef Eric Stenberg, a chef who works with the "Farm to Restaurant Collaborative," a local group which aims to connect people back to the system that grows our food--the seed, the land, the farmer or rancher and the routes that deliver it to us.

Stenberg shared his shopping methods with the group. Hatz writes that "He gave us each a sheet of paper with a type of vegetable you may find in a typical farmers market - carrots, squash, beets, potatoes, and a few others. For each, he listed all the different types of ingredients you can use to preserve the flavor of the vegetable. His philosophy was about keeping the integrity of the vegetable as much as possible through cooking, since local produce already has incredible tastes to offer the palate."

On August 17, the tour traveled through the Teton Valley that runs from Idaho to Wyoming. There Hatz met Sue Muncaster, who helped pioneer both "Farm to Restaurant" and "Slow Food" programs in the valley.

Muncaster said she began learning about "the pleasures of the table" from her aunt, "who loved to cook." But "right now," as Muncaster sees it, "we aren't doing too well? Even the farmers who have lived here in the Tetons for generations can no longer afford to

farm and are selling out to developers. Meanwhile, in what was once a self-sustaining community, we can no longer buy local milk from the cows we pass on the road and all our organic produce comes from Los Angeles. If we don't change the direction we are going, we might just end up where we are headed."

Hatz emphasizes, however, that although she has met many activists like Muncaster on the trip, "our tour is not really political. We do believe that consumers have a right to know more about where their food comes from, who grows it and how, and we also believe in the power of "voting with your fork." Small-scale farmers and communities need local dollars to survive, and in America, when money talks, corporations listen."

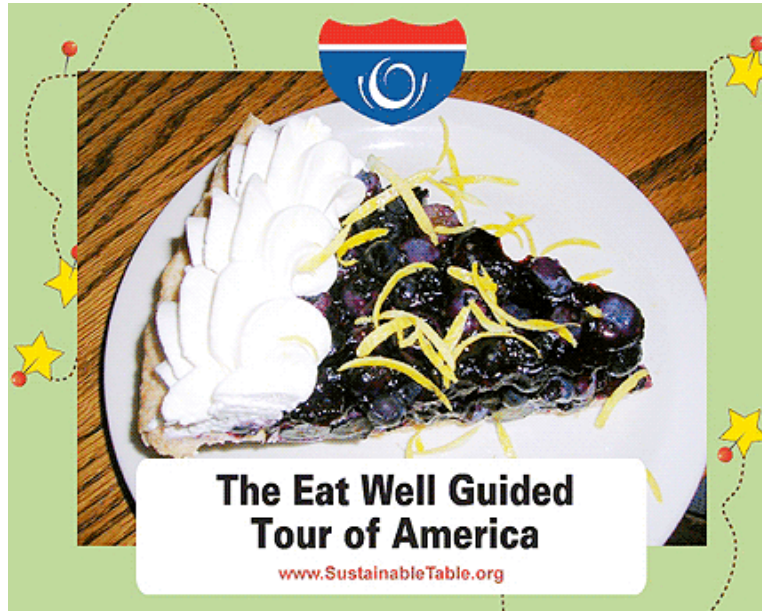
For Hatz, one of the most memorable stops of the tour was her visit to Pie Ranch in Pescadero, California. Pie has been a major theme throughout the tour which, in fact, is subtitled 'Pie Across America.' "Pies are such a great metaphor for sharing community through local, wholesome food because their ingredients tell stories about the people who bake them and the communities who created them."

"If you could see Pie Ranch from the sky," Hatz said, "you'd know how it got its name. It's wedge-shaped, just like a slice of the good stuff." In fact, Jared Lawson, who runs the ranch along with Nancy Vail and Karen Heisler, told us that the shape of the property was part of the inspiration for its business model".

"To truly experience a pie," Hatz said, "you need to first harvest and bake it, as we did on Pie Ranch. We walked out onto the farm, cycles in hand, and harvested long stalks of golden wheat. With the warm sun on the back of our necks, we walked down rows of strawberries, blackberries and raspberries, harvesting the fruit for our own pies.

"Nothing quite compares to standing in a field of berries and popping a just picked strawberry into your mouth. It's as if the warm juice of the berry soaks up the sun and bursts summer into your mouth. As you kneel on the ground, you feel the richness of the soil, the smell of moist earth mixing with the sweetness of the strawberries all around you. Everything you touch is warm, soft and vibrant with life. The blackberries and raspberries hung heavily from their vines, inviting us to pick them. At the house, we learned how to strip, winnow and mill the wheat by hand, and before we knew it, we had 100% whole grain wheat flour in front of us. Add to that fresh berries, bursting with juice and flavor, and you have pie. The closest one can get to standing in a field harvesting all the ingredients to a pie is to stand in a kitchen and smell a homemade pie, made with fresh, local, sustainable ingredients, baking in an oven. Think of the smell of home and family and goodness, wrap it up with a healthy dose of sunshine and fresh air, sprinkle it with a little friendship, and you've got a pie baked on Pie Ranch."

"From here on," Hatz said, speaking from Lawrence, Kansas, where Simran Sethi, host of the Sundance Channel's "The Green," joins the tour for a few days, "pie-making will continue to be the highlight of our tour," from the Iron Chef Pie Contest with local chefs and celebrity judges in Minneapolis on August 25 to the pie judging, pie walk and pie storytelling planned in Ann Arbor, Michigan on Sept. 1, and finally, the pie buffet and bake off at Gigi's Market in Red Hook, New York, on Sept. 7 where representatives from FARM AID will join us to delight in the taste of pies and celebrate local, sustainable farmers.



SOLSTICE BLUEBERRY PIE (pictured above)
 Recipe courtesy of The Solstice Café in Corvallis, Oregon

Ingredients for the Crust:

18 tablespoons organic butter (9oz)
 3 cups flour (pastry flour if available)
 1 teaspoon salt
 7 tablespoons ice water (or more, if necessary)
 1 tablespoon cider vinegar

Special equipment: Food processor

Cut butter into 3/4 inch cubes and freeze 6 tablespoons. Refrigerate the remaining butter. Process the refrigerated butter for 20 seconds with the flour and the salt. Add the frozen butter and process the mixture until it forms clumps the size of peas. Add water and cider (add additional water one tablespoon at a time if the dough is too dry). Turn out on a lightly floured counter or board and knead slightly. Chill at least 30 minutes before rolling out.

To bake a single crust pie shell:

On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to about 1/8 inch thickness. Ease dough loosely into the pie pan, and, with kitchen scissors or a sharp knife, trim the edges of the dough to leave about 1/2 inch overhanging the edge of the pie pan. Fold the extra 1/2 inch of pie dough under itself. Let the pie dough rest for 15 minutes. Flute the edges of the pie.

Using a fork, prick the pastry all over the bottom and up the sides of the pie pan (this prevents the dough from puffing during baking). To avoid large bubbles during cooking, add a cup of dry beans or rice to the pie shell, or use pastry weights. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes at 425, or until crust is a light golden color. Cool before filling.

(Makes dough for crust for 1 single crust 8- or 9-inch pie shell)

Ingredients for Filling:

5-6 cups fresh blueberries, rinsed and dried (preferably organic)
 1/2 cups plus 2 tablespoons water, divided
 2 tablespoons cornstarch
 1/2 cup sugar

2 teaspoons lemon juice, freshly squeezed
Pinch of salt
Lemon zest (from one lemon) and whipped cream, for garnish (optional)

Measure 1 cup blueberries, choosing the softest berries. In a medium saucepan, simmer the berries on medium heat with 1/2 cup of the water. In a small bowl, whisk remaining 2 tablespoons water with the cornstarch. When the water and blueberries come to a boil, lower the heat and continue to simmer until the mixture begins to thicken. Add the lemon juice, sugar, salt, and cornstarch mixture and simmer until the mixture is translucent. Remove from the heat and add remaining blueberries, tossing to coat. Spoon the blueberry mixture into the pre-baked pie shell and refrigerate until set (around 2 hours).

Optional: pipe whipped cream around the edges and zest a lemon on top just before serving.

Tips: When zesting lemons or other citrus fruit, be sure not to dig into the bitter white pith.

Expert Chef & Spokesperson Team Diane Hatz & Laura Pensiero

Diane Hatz

Diane Hatz – Founder/Director, Sustainable Table; Executive Producer, The Meatrix

As founder and director of Sustainable Table, Diane Hatz develops and manages creative projects to raise awareness and educate consumers about issues surrounding the sustainable food and agriculture movement, while promoting solutions to the problems caused by factory farms.

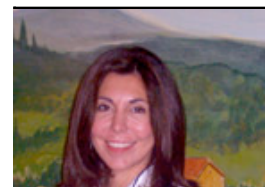
Diane is Executive Producer of the award-winning, critically acclaimed, animated films *The Meatrix*, *The Meatrix II: Revolting*, and *The Meatrix II 1/2* as well as Project and Marketing Director for the Meatrix campaign, both online and off. Diane is also Project Director for *The Eat Well Guide*, an online consumer directory of sustainably-raised meat and dairy products in the United States and Canada. These are the first two projects of Sustainable Table. Diane has recently added a new role to her position - Director of Creative Projects for GRACE. She will be responsible for conceptualizing, strategizing and creating marketing tools for new and existing campaigns for GRACE and our partner organizations.

Previously, she was Director of the GRACE Factory Farm Project, author of the Project's *Guide to Confronting a CAFO*, and webmaster for the organization's web site. Prior to joining GRACE, Diane worked in the music industry in various roles, including marketing, publicity, business affairs and management. She also co-founded, wrote and published *The Relay*, an independent music magazine on The Who, which is archived in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum. Diane has an MA in Creative Writing from Antioch University, a BS in Business Administration and Marketing from the University of Delaware, and a Minor in Philosophy. She is a student of Tibetan Buddhism and The Dalai Lama. She has written two unpublished, fictional novels and is currently working on her third. She is committed to sustainable issues and to helping build community through food.



Laura Pensiero

Laura Pensiero is a French Culinary Institute graduate, a registered dietitian, health educator, restaurateur, cookbook author, spokesperson, and industry expert. Additionally, she founded and operates Chef4life, a nutrition and culinary consulting service that actively promotes healthy eating via



freelance writing, cooking demonstrations, presentations, educational materials, web content, and product marketing events. Laura's strategy to help people make long lasting changes to their diet? Make it delicious, flexible, practical and fun.



She is the author of "The Strang Cancer Prevention Center Cookbook" (Mcgraw-Hill, 2004), and the owner of Gigi Trattoria in Rhinebeck, New York, where she can be found many nights of the week greeting guests at the door while managing the fast-paced and successful restaurant. In the summer of 2006, Laura and the Gigi team will open Gigi Market, a catering outpost, gourmet store, year-round farmer's market and bake shop located smack in the middle of the 500-acre Greig Farm in Red Hook, NY.

In the spring of 2006, Laura helped launch Just Salad (51st/Lexington in NY). As a consultant and limited partner, she developed the menu and recipes for this first locations; partners Nick Kenner and Rob Crespi hope this prototype store will be the first of many Just Salad healthy fast-food franchise outlets.

As a nutritionist in the clinical setting, Laura develops recipes, diets, and menus and provides up-to-date clinical analysis for healthcare institutions and medical schools, including Strang Cancer Prevention Center and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital - Cornell Medical College in New York City. From 1998- 2005 she served as Culinary Coordinator for the Prevention and Wellness Program at The Society of Memorial Sloan-Kettering. In this setting she provided weekly culinary demonstrations and coordinated regular guest chef appearances. Laura also consults with America's leading cooking schools, the French Culinary Institute (FCI) in New York and the Culinary Institute of America at Hyde Park. She recently wrote the New York State accredited nutrition materials for FCI's first ever nutrition curriculum. Laura will work with the institute to launch this program in fall 2006.