

Food Trends

Nurturing Healthy Minds & Bodies
in K-12 Texas Schools

Published by ECI Management Group

To Farm or Not to Farm?

As local farming movements and organic products become increasingly popular among Americans, it is clear that our society has developed a curiosity about where our food is coming from. American food culture has undoubtedly begun to shift towards more informed consumerism, with shoppers choosing regionally harvested products over those produced by global industrial food systems.

Direct-to-Consumer markets have become a popular method of local food distribution, allowing farmers to sell their product directly to customers instead of through grocery stores. Farmer's markets are now common sights in towns and cities across America not only because they provide communities with improved accessibility to fresh food, but also because they facilitate

regional economic development.

The urban farming movement has also flourished across American cities in the past decade, demonstrating our society's growing commitment to sustainable agricultural practices. At the end of the day, it is clear that our society is making great strides towards fostering a new generation of more healthy and educated consumers.

Food Trends

Students Taste The Value Of Gardening

Students at John Paul II Catholic School in Houston, Texas, grow herbs that are used in their ECI Management Group run Dining Hall. "Growing an herb garden can be a lot of fun, since you can actually use what you grow while cooking. Children love herb gardens, too, watching plants grow and harvesting," says Executive Chef Wendy Fitzgerald. Chef Fitzgerald uses herbs grown at the school to prepare House Made dressings, zest for vegetables and rubs for the school's meat and poultry.

Herbs used regularly include: lemon basil, onion chives, dill, Mexican oregano, cabbage and rosemary. The students harvest and take care of the garden, with Chef Fitzgerald overseeing the project. Once the herbs are ready Chef Fitzgerald advertises what seasoning she is using and when. The John Paul II students are excited to see what Chef Fitzgerald comes up with next.

Texans know TEXAS

ECI Management Group is more than just a company based in Fort Worth — it is owned and operated by native Texans. Founder Frank Ricupati realized the need for food management services when he delivered pizzas across Houston school districts and decided to start his own business in 1993.

Although ECI Management Group has since become one of the nation's leading food management services, the company has never forgotten its roots. ECI Management Group maintains company headquarters in Fort Worth and shapes its corporate philosophies around Texan values in part because most of its upper management is composed of Texas natives.

Take ECI Regional Director Christy Timmons, who grew up in Eagle Mountain Lake near Saginaw, Texas. "I've traveled abroad and there is no place on earth like Texas," Ms. Timmons says. ECI Corporate Chef Michael Mosses not only loves Texas but also appreciates its vast wealth of culinary options. "Texas understands all aspects of the culinary world, from fine dining to custom baked goods," he explains. "Texas is where my heart resides."

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An Apple A Day

A Happy Heart

This Valentine's Day, we all should show a little more love to our own hearts. Even in an age of health conscious living, most of us don't realize just how much our



heart is affected by diet and lifestyle choices. The heart is of the most sensitive organs in the body, so anything from unbalanced food intake to increased anxiety can place unnecessary stress on it. Since heart disease is a progressive condition that can have an early onset, it is best prevented or regulated by making informed lifestyle decisions. Following a balanced, heart healthy diet of fresh vegetables, nuts, and whole grains combined with sufficient exercise and minimal stress will put you (and your heart) on track for a long and healthy life.

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Food Trends
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Out Of The Oven

Texas Sheet Cake

PREP TIME: 30 Minutes
COOK TIME: 30 Minady
READY IN: 1 Hour
YIELD: 20 servings

Fun Food Fact

Egg yolks are one of the few foods that naturally contain Vitamin D.

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups white sugar
1 cup butter
1 cup water
1/2 cup shortening
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1/2 cup buttermilk
2 eggs
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
6 tablespoons milk
4 cups confectioners' sugar

DIRECTIONS:

Sift together and set aside in large bowl the flour and sugar. In saucepan over medium heat bring to a boil; 1/2 cup margarine or butter, 1/2 cup shortening, 1 cup water, and 4 tablespoons cocoa. pour cocoa mixture over flour and sugar mixture. Stir in buttermilk, eggs, baking soda, and 1/2 teaspoon vanilla. Mix well and pour into a greased and floured sheet pan. Bake in a preheated 400 degrees F (205 degrees C) oven for 20 minutes.

To Make Frosting: Five minutes before cake is done, bring to boil in a saucepan 1/2 cup margarine or butter, 6 tablespoons milk, and 4 tablespoons cocoa. Remove from heat and immediately stir in the confectioners' sugar, nuts (if desired), and 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract. Beat until smooth and immediately pour frosting over cake. Cake may be served warm or at room temperature.