

# Food For Thought

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SWEET CHERRIES

## Seasonal Spotlight

BY SIMONE EPPICH

**D**id you know that Washington State produces over half of all sweet cherries grown in the US? Pretty amazing. Cherries are truly still a seasonal crop, locally available only from early June to late August. They are a sensitive fruit that must be refrigerated immediately after purchase to maintain freshness. Left in the sun, they will become limp.

With no major frost hit to the crop (like last year), it appears that this year will be a bumper crop. Those of you that forewent cherries at \$6 a pound in 2008 can expect lots of delicious, low priced cherries at your farmers markets or grocery stores.

The Bing cherry is the most famous and popular dark red variety, but there are others such as Sweetheart, Chelan, Tieton, Skeena, and Lapins. The famous tasty yellow-red cherry is the Ranier variety.

Most people eat sweet cherries fresh, while craving cherry desserts made with tart or sour cherries, the majority of which are grown in Michigan. But the added advantage of making a dessert with sweet cherries (other than that they are locally grown), is that you add less sugar. Here is a delicious recipe from *Bon Appetit*, June 2008

### Cherry Cornmeal Upside-Down Cake

(makes 10 servings)

3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature, divided  
 1/4 cup (packed) dark brown sugar  
 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar  
 3 cups whole pitted fresh Bing cherries or other dark sweet cherries (about 21 ounces whole unpitted cherries)  
 1 1/4 cups all purpose flour  
 1/4 cup yellow cornmeal (preferably stone-ground medium grind)  
 2 teaspoons baking powder  
 1/4 teaspoon salt  
 1 cup sugar  
 2 large eggs, separated  
 3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 1/2 cup whole milk  
 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar

Position rack in center of oven; preheat to 350°F. Combine 1/4 cup butter with brown sugar and vinegar in 10- to 11-inch ovenproof skillet with 2-inch-high sides. Stir over medium heat until butter melts and sugar dissolves, about 2 minutes. Increase heat to high; add cherries and bring to boil. Remove from heat.

Whisk flour, cornmeal, baking powder, and salt in medium bowl to blend. Using electric mixer, beat 1/2 cup butter in large bowl. Add sugar; beat until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Beat in egg yolks and vanilla. Add flour mixture alternately with milk in 2 additions each, beating just until blended and occasionally scraping down sides of bowl. Using clean dry beaters, beat egg whites in another medium bowl until foamy. Add cream of tartar and beat until whites are stiff but not dry. Using rubber spatula, fold 1/4 of whites into batter to lighten slightly. Fold in remaining whites in 3 additions (batter will be thick). Spoon batter over cherries in skillet, then spread evenly with offset spatula to cover cherries.

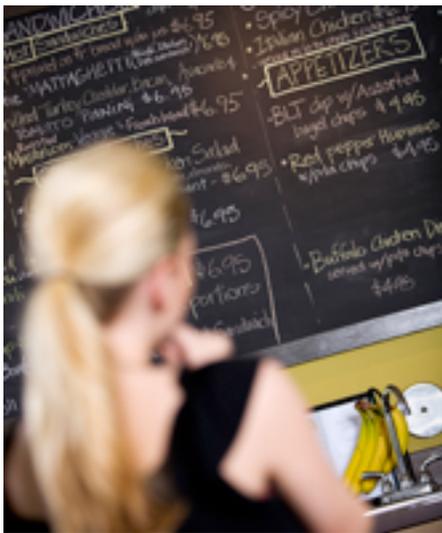
Bake cake until top is golden brown and tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 45 minutes. Cool in skillet on rack 5 minutes. Run spatula around edges of cake to loosen. Place large serving platter upside down atop skillet. Using pot holders or oven mitts, firmly hold platter and skillet together and invert. Leave skillet atop cake 5 minutes. Remove skillet. If necessary, rearrange any cherries that may have become dislodged. Let cake cool at least 45 minutes. Cut cake into wedges and serve slightly warm or at room temperature.

# Restaurant Nutrition Labeling

BY ELIZABETH PAYNE AND MEGHAN LYLE

**Y**ou may have noticed new numbers on the menus at some restaurants. King County restaurants with fifteen or more nationwide locations are now required to post calorie information, as well as saturated fat, sodium and carbohydrate amounts for most of their menu items. King County is one of the first in the nation to pass legislation requiring nutrition information to be posted for customers to see. New York City, California and Multnomah County in Oregon also adopted nutrition labeling policies, and twenty other jurisdictions currently have proposals for labeling in the works.

Referred to as “restaurant nutrition labeling”, the King County policy went into effect in January. The policy is intended to make choosing healthy items easier by providing nutrient information at the point of purchase. A 2008 poll of 500 King County residents found a majority (60%) were in support of restaurant nutrition labeling.<sup>2</sup> In addition, most people who were polled had a hard time estimating calorie information when quizzed on items served at area restaurants. With many of us eating up to 33% of calories away from home, making healthy choices in restaurants is more important than ever.<sup>2</sup> But how can you make use of all of this new information?



Most people have a hard time estimating calories of foods offered at area restaurants.



In effect since January 2009, the legislation requiring restaurants to label their menus is meant to help consumers make informed decisions during their many meals eaten away from home.

To help consumers use the menu labeling information, the policy requires that restaurants post the following: “The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting saturated fat to 20 grams and sodium to 2300 mg for a typical adult eating 2000 calories daily. Recommended limits may be higher or lower depending upon daily calorie consumption”. One way you can use this information is to figure out how many calories you need at each meal and use that information to guide your meal choices. For example, if you are a typical adult eating 2000 calories daily, you can estimate 500-550 discretionary calories allotted for snacks or drinks throughout the day. That means that any menu item over 500-550 calories contains more calories than you need for any one meal and you can make another choice. Similarly, you can use the information about saturated fat, sodium and carbohydrates to make informed choices. If you are eating 2000 calories daily, saturated fat intake should be limited to 20 grams and sodium to 2300 mg, so you can estimate that any one meal should not have more than 5-6 grams of

saturated fat or 633 mg of sodium. 271 grams of carbohydrates are recommended for someone eating 2000 calories daily, so you can estimate that you need no more than 75 grams of carbohydrates at any one meal. Information about carbohydrates is especially important for people with diabetes who often need to track the amount of carbohydrates they eat.

The new policy will provide the nutrient information that consumers want and will take the guesswork out of making healthy choices. More information about estimating your nutrition needs and about restaurant nutrition labeling can be found on the Public Health Seattle King County website, <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/nutrition/healthyeating/menu.aspx>



Reference:

<sup>1</sup> [cspinet.org/new/200804171.html](http://cspinet.org/new/200804171.html)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/nutrition/healthyeating/menu/campaign.aspx>

# Is a Soda Tax the Answer to the Obesity Epidemic?

BY KATE MURPHY



Predictably, soft drink manufacturers and beverage lobbying groups oppose a soda tax, arguing it unfairly targets lower income consumers, does not teach self-monitoring of caloric intake, and will impact jobs. The industry also points to efforts it is making to offer lower calorie and smaller portioned beverages in schools. Bill Clinton's Alliance for a Healthier Generation has worked with soft drink manufacturers on these options and also opposes a soda tax. He stated to the NY Times that he would rather see a focus on containing health care costs and increasing prevention and wellness through incentives.

Research by UW's own Adam Drewnowski has pointed out the possible futility of a soda tax without altering the costs of healthier food options. An imposition of a soda tax does not mean it will be economically feasible for consumers to purchase healthier beverage options like milk or juice because of the extreme price differential. Soft drinks cost on average \$1 per 1000 calories while 100% vegetable juice costs \$10 per 1000 calories. A soda tax also does not ensure people will choose the healthy option instead. A soda tax is likely to also bring up much opposition from consumers themselves, who vehemently opposed a proposed 18-cent tax earlier this year in NY state and repealed a soda tax in Maine last November. It looks to be an uphill battle, but with over 60% of the US adult population overweight or obese and U.S. children following in their footsteps, any increase in awareness of this epidemic will be priceless.



A 1-cent per ounce tax can reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages by more than 10% and generate \$16 billion per year, money that can be used to support a new health insurance system.

In Congress' latest effort to reduce health care costs and generate revenue for a new health insurance system, a new soda tax is being considered that could also reduce obesity. A 1-cent per ounce tax is estimated to reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages by more than 10% and generate \$16 billion per year. Proponents of a soda tax include the Center for Science in the Public Interest and Thomas

Frieden, newly appointed head of the CDC and the former NYC Health Commissioner under whose tenure menu labeling and the trans fat ban were enacted. Both cite evidence connecting increased consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages to increased obesity and displacement of more healthful beverages as well as to the success tobacco taxes have had in improving health.



The screening of "Good Food" was followed by a lively and insightful panel discussion with, from left to right, Maggie Hoback from Full Circle Farms, Erin MacDougall from Seattle King County Public Health, and Sue McGann from Full Circle Farms.

## Food Group Spring Quarter Highlights

BY ANNA CARROLL

Food Group held a number of fun activities during Spring Quarter, including volunteer trips to Northwest Harvest, a charity bowl-a-thon, a health fair in Rainier Beach, and a meet & greet with the Bastyr University nutrition students. We were also very excited to sponsor a screening of the award-winning movie, "Good Food: Sustainable food and farming in the Pacific Northwest". The film, which was recently featured at the Seattle International Film Festival and the United Nations Association Film Festival, follows the stories of farmers, farmers' markets, distributors, stores, restaurants and public officials who are developing a more sustainable food system in the Pacific Northwest. Following the screening Food Group hosted a lively and insightful panel discussion with representatives from Marra Farm, Full Circle Farm and Public Health - Seattle King County. The event was promoted across campus and attracted students and faculty from a variety of disciplines. The evening concluded with a reception for Food Group members and the newly admitted nutrition students. The reception was a great way to meet the new students and to celebrate Food Group's successes over the soon to be completed 2008-2009 school year.

# Alumni Spotlight: Janice Kao, MPH

BY MARI OBARA

## In what year did you graduate from the Nutritional Sciences program?

August 2006.

## What degrees/certifications do you currently hold?

BA in Psychology, MPH in Public Health Nutrition. I'm a dietetic internship and RD exam away from an RD, though I have taken all the DPD courses.

## Who is your employer, and what do you do?

I work for the Center for Weight and Health at UC Berkeley, as a researcher. I'm currently working on 4 different evaluation studies -- 2 are evaluations of community-based initiatives, and 2 are school nutrition policy evaluations. As a project manager, I do things like coordinate school site visits, develop data collection instruments, manage the collection, cleaning, and analysis of data, and help with reporting/presenting results and findings. I've also been able to contribute to publications, and last fall I presented at the annual APHA conference. This fall I will be at FNCIE in Denver, so if you're going, come find me!

## What was your favorite class in the NS program, and why?

This is a tough one! While I remember my time at UW as filled with rigorous

coursework with a lot of studying and even more project-completing, I also remember the classes very fondly. I liked community nutrition for the hands-on, practical public health experience that it gave us (I continue to use interviewing/focus group-conducting skills today!), but I also remember food science lab being really fun and practical as well. I even liked the intensity of the 520 series (Nutrition and Metabolism) and really having to understand how nutrients work at such a detailed level.

## Any advice for current NS students?

As someone who completed the MPH in the nutrition program, I know that sometimes it feels like we have to do a LOT of extra work, especially compared to similar programs at other universities. Once I graduated and started working, however, I became instantly grateful for my many and varied curricular and extra-curricular experiences at UW. Every one of those field work experiences, power point presentations, every aspect of my master's thesis has all translated into something useful, even if it's just having more subject knowledge about a public health agency or program. In fact, I wish I had done more! If I were still a student at UW, I would take more biostats classes and a program evaluation course too. I also wish I had tried to publish my thesis while I still had an advisor to guide me! So, I guess my overall



Janice Kao, MPH now works as a project manager at the Center for Weight and Health at University of California, Berkeley.

advice is to take advantage of the opportunities that you have while you're in the nutrition program, even though they may not feel like "opportunities" right now. I really feel like UW gave me excellent preparation for my job and am still so grateful.



solid ground  
Building community to end poverty

Strike Out Hunger

Thank YOU!

The Retro Rollers  
Strike Out Hunger 2009

## Food Group Events

*Friday, June 26:  
Northwest Harvest*

Join us for our monthly volunteer event at the food bank, and mingle with us afterwards during our post-volunteer happy hour!

Keep an eye out for future FG event announcements in your inbox! Participating in FG events is fun and rewarding - this quarter, FG members won the Most Spirited Award for dressing as retro athletes at Solid Ground's Strike Out Hunger Bowl-a-thon fundraiser. From left to right: Joyce Chen, Mari Obara, Kate Murphy, Bryce Mercer, Amy Hendrickson, and Ophelia Woo.



**FOOD GROUP at University of Washington** promotes and raises awareness of nutrition on campus and in the greater Seattle area. We aim to increase access to nutrition information for students, conduct educational outreach and fundraise with promotional messages.

*Joining the Food Group is FREE!*

For membership information, please contact [foodgrp@u.washington.edu](mailto:foodgrp@u.washington.edu)