

DIG IN!

Some Common Food Terms

It's common to hear a lot of different terms for food-related experiences, issues, and concepts. We are always learning more and our language changes as we respond to new ideas. This results in various terms communicating related, but different things.

We wanted to provide an introduction to some common terms as a starting point for your conversations about food. We have drawn from academic thinkers and our own experiences to offer explanations of concepts at the forefront of our work.

Example of Change *In the 1980s, “hunger” was used to describe what we now know as “household food insecurity;” hunger now refers to the physical feeling of being hungry, which we all experience.*



Household food insecurity

commonly refers to the inability to get (or uncertainty in getting) enough healthy food that is personally acceptable. Income is the key factor in whether a person may experience household food insecurity.

Food security

is not the opposite of household food insecurity. Food security is when all people, at all times can get the food they need to be healthy and active. This includes being able to afford healthy food that is within easy reach.

Community food security

exists when all community residents have access to enough healthy, safe food available through a food system that can be sustained for generations to come, and that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice.



Food environments

is the notion that highlights the role of the places in which we live, work, play, and learn in shaping our experiences with food and influencing what foods are available to us.

Food systems

refer to the activities and relationships that make up and influence what we grow, catch, harvest, process, market, sell, distribute, share, prepare, eat, and dispose of.

Food literacy

refers to the ability of individuals to access, choose, and prepare foods that meet their needs and preferences. This idea has expanded to include the ability of individuals to know how to produce and share foods, as well as contribute to decisions that affect our food systems.



Food justice

acknowledges that our food system is not neutral; we don't have a level playing field. The rules, who gets to set the rules, and the functioning of our food systems contain oppressive and colonizing forces that create and sustain inequities.

Food sovereignty

emerged from *La Via Campesina*, a global peasant movement, as the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, as well as their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. To learn more about the seven pillars of food sovereignty in Canada, please visit <http://foodsecurecanada.org/who-we-are/what-food-sovereignty>.

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February 2018.



Always more to learn

We've been hearing more about **food democracy** as a way to challenge corporate influence over our food. Disability and social justice advocates, feminists, and racialized communities continue to shine a light on how our food systems further ableism, racial discrimination, and gender and class inequities, giving rise to terms such as **food feminism** and **food racism**.

Which terms reflect your experiences? Which terms are commonly used in your community and context? What does each term mean for you? Which ones do you want to learn more about?

For more reading, please check out the references below:

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Slater, J. (2013). Is cooking dead? The state of Home Economics Food and Nutrition education in a Canadian province. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 37(6), 617-624.

Tansey, G., & Worsley, T. (1995). *The Food System: A Guide*. New York: Routledge.

Tarasuk, V., Mitchell, A., & Dachner, N. (2013). Household food insecurity in Canada 2011. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). Retrieved from: <http://proof.utoronto.ca/resources/proof-annual-reports/annual-report-2012/>.

Some other listening and reading recommendations include:

- Civil Eats
- Food Secure Canada
- The Racist Sandwich Podcast
- Bitch Media: The Food Issue
- Guts Magazine: Food/Land Issue