Welcome back!

Last week, we learned about how important it is to start the day with a good breakfast. (Especially if you are worried about gaining weight, eating breakfast helps you avoid food cravings throughout the day.) Today, we are going to cook some healthy wholegrain quick breads. Just like brown rice is a healthier alternative than white rice, whole grain breads are, too. Don’t be fooled at the store! Read the fine print on the label and make sure the breads you eat are “100%” whole grain — not just caramel coloring calling itself “wheat.”

**Sweet Potato Biscuits** from *The Welcome Table*

**Ingredients:**
- 1 TBS butter
- 2 cups flour
- 1 TBS dark brown sugar
- salt, to taste
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- Pinch freshly ground nutmeg
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 1/3 cup buttermilk

**Instructions:**
1) Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. and lightly butter two baking sheets.
2) In a large bowl, mix the mashed sweet potatoes and butter with the dry ingredients. Slowly pour in the buttermilk and lemon juice until you have a soft, slightly sticky dough.
3) Coat the dough lightly with a dusting of flour, working it slightly so that the dough is completely covered.
4) Roll the dough out on a floured surface until it is about ½ inch thick and cut the biscuits with a biscuit cutter or water glass.
5) Place the biscuits on the baking sheet and bake them for 15 to 17 minutes, or until they are lightly browned on top. Serve hot with butter.

**Iron Skillet Cornbread** from *The Welcome Table: African-American Heritage*

**Cooking by Jessica B. Harris**

**Ingredients:**
- ¼ cup yellow cornmeal
- ¼ cup flour
- 2 TBS sugar
- 1 TBS baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 egg
- 3 TBS melted butter

**Instructions:**
1) Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F.
2) Place the dry ingredients in a large bowl.
3) Add the milk, egg and melted butter and beat for about 1 minute, or until the mixture is smooth.
4) Pour the mixture into a well-greased, seasoned cast-iron skillet and bake for 20 minutes. Serve hot with butter.

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How Media Messages Dictate What We Eat

Food industry advertisers have too much control over the media messages you hear on TV, billboards, cell phones, computer, in the news and even at doctors’ offices and hospitals. They start influencing what Americans eat from the time they are babies until they are adults. They hire psychiatrists and other experts so they can trick us even better.

What’s the media message about feeding babies formula instead of breastfeeding?

What message do kids hear about breakfast, snacks and fast foods?

What messages do fast food places sell to adults?

How do cooking shows make you feel about cooking in your kitchen?

How do grocery stores make it hard to choose whole foods?

In your neighborhood, do the stores close-by make it hard to spend SNAP dollars on good food?

Other things we talked about today:
Benefits of Breastfeeding Your Baby

- Breast-fed babies are healthier. They can resist disease and infection better than formula-fed babies. That means fewer colds, flu and ear infections!
- Breast-fed babies are less likely to develop asthma and allergies.
- Breast-fed children are less likely to get many diseases later in life, including juvenile diabetes, multiple sclerosis, heart disease, and cancer.
- Breast-fed babies are smarter.
- Breast-fed babies have better teeth. Breast milk does not cause “baby bottle mouth.”
- Moms who breastfeed loose pregnancy eight sooner, especially off their thighs.
- Moms who breastfeed are less likely to get breast cancer, ovarian cancer and osteoporosis later in life.
- Hen you breastfeed, your body releases a feel-good hormone (oxytocin) that takes the stress off and helps you love our baby even more.
- Breastfeeding can postpone your period and help you space babies (It is not a birth control method).
- Your babies milk is always ready and always available. You don’t have to mix it up, ash bottles or run to the store because you ran out.
- Formula costs between $1,138.5 and $1,188.00 for the baby’s first year. Breast milk cannot be duplicated by any laboratory formula.
- Healthy breast-fed babies do not need any other foods or formula during their first year.
- Some moms choose to breastfeed their babies until they are 2 or 3 years-old.

Breastfeeding doesn’t always get off to an easy start. For breastfeeding support in the Grand Rapids area, contact:

Resources
- Black 360° Breastfeeding mochamanual.com
- La Lecher League www.lli.org

* Source: The Breastfeeding Center of Ann Arbor
Women of Color & The Fight for Food Justice

When people think of farmers in the United States, the image that most people have is a man. For the most part this is true, especially with the onset of industrial agriculture, where men operate machines to produce food.

However, globally, women dominate food production. According to the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), women produce about 80% of the world’s food.

If you think about food preparation and preservation, the image probably work being done by women. This is also true. Whether it’s preparing meals, baking breads, canning or saving seeds, women are responsible for the majority of these tasks.

Isn’t it ironic that while the world’s women are the most involved with food, they have the least to say in our current food system, which is dominated by large multinational corporations. This system doesn’t consider the wellbeing of women in the decisions it makes, especially not the well being of women of color.

Research shows that the current food system impacts women of color disproportionately with higher rates of heart disease, diabetes and obesity.

Because communities of color experience higher rates of poverty, women of color are forced to make difficult decisions about food with limited income every day. The vicious cycle of poverty and limited access to healthy food is further compounded because communities of color have little or no health insurance.

Our Kitchen Table believes that these injustices need to be fought and the fight needs to be led by women of color. While providing temporary relief, food handouts and food assistance, are not the answer. We need a food system where women of color and communities of color play an intricate role in determining the kind of food they eat, how it is produced and who benefits from that food production.

Organizations like Via Campesina, Navdanya and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers all recognize the vital role that women play in food justice and food sovereignty movements. Our Kitchen Table is committed to playing this same role in West Michigan, empowering women of color to have a voice in determining the kind of food system they want.

OKT sees women of color creating food justice by:

- Having real access to healthy and nutritious food through growing, preserving and preparing their own food. We do this by offering food growing resources and operating neighborhood-based farmers’ markets.

- Changing school food policies to guarantee that their children eat healthy, nutritious meals, made fresh daily. We do this by supporting food growing projects and local schools with students and parents.

- Sharing knowledge and skills on food growing, food preparation, seed saving and food preservation. The more women have these skills and share them with each other, the more influence they will have in creating a food justice movement. We do this by hosting forums, workshops and creating educational materials on food justice.

- Challenging local restaurants to prepare food that is local, fresh, culturally relevant and does not use exploitative labor, including those who pick the food, prepare the food and serve the food.

- Demanding that the City of Grand Rapids allow women of color to garden on vacant, city-owned land for food production in their neighborhoods.

For more information on the food growing and food justice work of Our Kitchen Table, contact us at:

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Women of color are the main vendors at the Southeast Area Farmers’ Market. They sell safe, locally grown produce and cottage foods.