

Mindful Eating Suggestions



Eat Slower

Eating slowly doesn't have to mean taking it to extremes. Still, it's a good idea to remind yourself, and your family, that eating is not a race. Taking the time to savor and enjoy your food is one of the healthiest things you can do. You are more likely to notice when you are full, you'll chew your food more and hence digest it more easily, and you'll probably find yourself noticing flavors you might otherwise have missed.

Savor the Silence

Eating in complete silence may be impossible for a family with children, but you might still encourage some quiet time and reflection. Again, try introducing the idea as a game — "let's see if we can eat for two minutes without talking" — or suggesting that one meal a week be enjoyed in relative silence. If the family mealtime is too important an opportunity for conversation to pass up, then consider introducing a quiet meal or snack time into your day when you can enjoy it alone.

Silence the Phone. Shut off the TV.

Our daily lives are full of distractions, and it's not uncommon for families to eat with the TV blaring or one family member or other fiddling with their iPhone. Consider making family mealtime, which should, of course, be eaten together, an electronics-free zone. I'm not saying you should never eat pizza in front of the TV, but that too should be a conscious choice that marks the exception, not the norm.

Pay Attention to Flavor

The tanginess of a lemon, the spiciness of arugula, the crunch of a pizza crust — paying attention to the details of our food can be a great way to start eating mindfully. After all, when you eat on the go or wolf down your meals in five minutes, it can be hard to notice what you are even eating, let alone truly savor all the different sensations of eating it. If you are trying to introduce mindful eating to your family, consider talking more about the flavors and textures of food. Ask your kids what the avocado tastes like, or how the hummus feels. And be sure to share your own observations and opinions too.

Know your Food

Mindfulness is really about rekindling a relationship with our food. From planting a veggie garden through baking bread to visiting a farmers market, many of the things we locavores have been preaching about for years are not just ways to cut our carbon footprint, but also connect with the story behind our food. Even when you have no idea where the food you are eating has come from, try asking yourself some questions about the possibilities: Who grew this? How? Where did it come from? How did it get here? Chances are, you'll not only gain a deeper appreciation for your food, but you'll find your shopping habits changing in the process too.