

Lecture Topics

Some presentations are for the public (e.g., community, church, or cultural events), while others are tailored to specific market segments (e.g., government, business, or healthcare). All presentations approximately 1 – 1 ½ hours. Talks can be designed and tailored to your requirements and budget.

Solutions to Global Warming - A Culinary Perspective

Global warming has become a defining scientific, political and social issue of our time. The interest has spurred endeavors to reduce carbon footprints, but what about "food-prints?" How does the industrial food system, and what you and I eat, help or hinder the problem? This talk explores how food impacts climate change and what individuals can do about it. Chef Laura Stec, author of *Cool Cuisine: Taking the Bite Out of Global Warming*, examines connections between food, environment, energy and cooking, offering ways to reduce food-prints through food choices. She offers a chef's interpretation of the science and solutions via a culinary perspective, introducing ideas such as "soil as a seasoning agent," "plastic and water pairing," and the "energetics of high-vibe foods." A short culinary "how-to" class completes the presentation.

Taste Your Way Thru the Book - A Cool Cuisine!

Enjoy a 2-hour tasting class where recipes and food samples are intertwined with the story behind the food. Based on the book *Cool Cuisine: Taking the Bite Out of Global Warming*, cooking tips are given on how to create positive environmental change through food choices, and how to create great meals. We talk about the issue, then we eat it! Sample menu: Taste of California Artisan Cheese and Vegetable Platter highlighting bee pollinator crops; Grass-fed Beef Crostini with Arugula, Dry Jack and Green Peppercorn; Palette Cleanser - Honey Sparkler; Popping Chocolate Gomasio over High-Vibe Ice Cream; Green Drinks, featuring Laura's "Red, White, or Green?" wine list.

Cooking for Time, Taste, Cost and Kids

The odds of eating healthy are not in our favor these days. Grocery shelves are stocked with highly stimulating foods, and brains have been high-jacked into expectations of "eatertainment," rather than nourishment. Who has the motivation, or the time, to cook and eat healthy food? Join chef and author Laura Stec for a discussion on adult and child influences in grocery stores, restaurants and lunch lines. We'll look at the effects sugar, salt, fat, time, money and culture have on our minds, bodies and households, and learn ways to set up our kitchen for healthy and delicious outcomes. Topics include: youth best practices, teaching our taste buds, foods and the environment, vegetable seasonings and complements, cooking with grains, and children's snacks. A mini cooking demo completes the presentation.

The New Economy and the Food System - Best Bang for the Bite and the Buck

This presentation, originally commissioned for The Commonwealth Club, looks at the new economy through the eyes of the food system. Rather than expanding control and diminishing variations, the emerging food economy is about expanding variety and building smaller, yet efficient, regional food systems. When healthy food systems model a "full-circle food cycle," or a "cradle-to-grave" system that builds upon the interconnections of community, ecology, and business they thrive. Atmospheric scientist Dr. Eugene Cordero presents research on the energy efficiency of our food system in relationship to our changing climate and our economic system. Chef Stec looks directly at business / regional food system leaders and at new business and investment models that are emerging to accommodate them. This talk addresses the importance of learning the story behind our food and shows how broadening our relationship to food and cooking is our first step toward a bountiful green-cuisine economy. Taste of California Artisan Cheese and Vegetable Platter, highlighting bee pollinator crops, can be served and discussed.

FOR GOVERNMENT

Solutions to Global Warming (and other municipal hassles) - A Culinary Perspective

Specifically designed for policy makers, this talk reports on trends in urban agriculture and manufacturing using the San Francisco Bay region as a primary guide. Chef Stec discusses how our modern-day business model has created a "global-warming diet" and what communities are doing to combat the trend. She introduces the Four Biggest Unmet Needs and the Three Next Best Ideas for regional agriculture systems, and she describes what cities and counties are doing to help find solutions. Stec reviews climate action plans from Berkeley, San Francisco, and Palo Alto, CA, describing innovative food-purchasing policies, waste-reduction measures, land protection and allocation issues, and their expected effect on greenhouse-gas reductions. A mini cooking demo completes the presentation.

FOR BUSINESS

The Business of Eating - Green Cuisine Trends and Practices

What's hot and what's not? Ask Chef Laura Stec, a Bay Area chef who received the "Top Trendy Business" award from NASFT Fancy Food Show. This talk reviews green trends in the food industry, and debunks popular myths about local foods and profit potential. Innovative food service production practices at leading companies such as Google and Kaiser Permanente are introduced. Stec discusses how companies large and small are turning waste into fuel, carbon offsetting, inspiring staff to think sustainably, and incorporating green-cuisine vendor networks. A discussion of flavor trends and a green-cuisine tasting complete the presentation.

FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

Cool Cuisine - Feed Your Body, Mind and Planet

Foods that are best for our health are also best for the health of our animals and planet. Is this statement accurate, why does it matter, and most importantly if it is true, what's in it for eaters? Based on the book, Cool Cuisine - Taking the Bite Out of Global Warming, and work by Harvard University in partnership with the Culinary Institute of America, this talk links the four key U.S. dietary concerns (overweight, too much sodium, poor carbohydrates, and red meat) to major problems affecting environmental health. Chef and author Laura Stec discusses how the problems (and solutions) contribute to the taste and nutrient-quality of our food, and how teaching food/environment connections is an important motivator (especially in youth). We learn how grocery shoppers decide what to buy, and review recent addiction studies about brain response to highly stimulating foods. A cooking show and tell completes the presentation.

WORKING GROUP PRESENTATION FOR INSTITUTIONS

Bringing Regionally Responsible Cuisine into Food Service

In conjunction with EcoSpeakers.com and based on a successful program with Loews Hotels, Laura presents inspiring workshops for chefs and food service professionals looking to incorporate regionally responsible cuisine into their kitchens and business models. A motivating presentation that addresses:

- Why should we do this, how much will it cost, how can I do it easily?
- Current food labeling and marketing terms
- Corporate and local leaders and their practices
- Wholesale access to specific foods: meat, eggs, produce, seafood, water and alcoholic beverages
- What do we do with the waste?

Included are handouts, an action plan, and an individually designed, regional contact list of vendors and organizations addressing your specific needs, goals and challenges. Contact EcoSpeakers.com for availability.