



## Food Justice (Food, Health, and the Environment)

By Robert Gottlieb, Anupama Joshi

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**Food Justice (Food, Health, and the Environment)** By Robert Gottlieb, Anupama Joshi

In today's food system, farm workers face difficult and hazardous conditions, low-income neighborhoods lack supermarkets but abound in fast-food restaurants and liquor stores, food products emphasize convenience rather than wholesomeness, and the international reach of American fast-food franchises has been a major contributor to an epidemic of "globesity." To combat these inequities and excesses, a movement for food justice has emerged in recent years seeking to transform the food system from seed to table. In *Food Justice*, Robert Gottlieb and Anupama Joshi tell the story of this emerging movement.

A food justice framework ensures that the benefits and risks of how food is grown and processed, transported, distributed, and consumed are shared equitably. Gottlieb and Joshi recount the history of food injustices and describe current efforts to change the system, including community gardens and farmer training in Holyoke, Massachusetts, youth empowerment through the Rethinkers in New Orleans, farm-to-school programs across the country, and the Los Angeles school system's elimination of sugary soft drinks from its cafeterias. And they tell how food activism has succeeded at the highest level: advocates waged a grassroots campaign that convinced the Obama White House to plant a vegetable garden. The first comprehensive inquiry into this emerging movement, *Food Justice* addresses the increasing disconnect between food and culture that has resulted from our highly industrialized food system.

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### Editorial Review

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From seed to supermarket, every facet of food production is a potential target for abuse and exploitation. Farm workers toil under inhuman conditions for low wages and no benefits, while food-processing plants operate with little regard for safety or cleanliness. Without access to proper grocery stores, many urban residents find themselves in the midst of “food deserts” that force them to rely on fast-food chains and convenience marts for a diet that is high in calories and low in nutrients. With their massive purchasing power, megastores not only drive local and regional grocers out of business, they also contribute to the failure of independent farmers already struggling to compete with agribusiness conglomerates. Meticulously chronicling the genesis of the deteriorating state of food production, distribution, and consumption, Gottlieb, a professor of urban and environmental policy, and Joshi, codirector of the National Farm to School Network, also highlight inspiring and innovative success stories at both grassroots and high-profile levels, and offer attainable examples of ways consumers, farmers, manufacturers, merchants, and legislators can correct system-wide injustices. --Carol Haggas

### Review

*Food Justice* makes a highly valuable contribution to the movement for food justice.

(Christof Bernau *Human Ecology*)

*Food Justice* is an eye-opening treatment of an important subject that has something to offer every reader, and will prove especially useful to those with a keen interest in learning about, and perhaps changing, where their food comes from.

(*Contemporary Sociology*)

This book is essential reading for scholars interested in the connections between food and the environment.

(Kathleen A. Brosnan *Environmental History*)

The authors excel...in presenting a well-rounded picture of how food justice -- and more prevalent food injustices -- touches our daily lives.

(Megan C. Bourke *Policy Perspectives*)

An important contribution to the food policy literature that comes at a critical moment in the food justice movement. Gottlieb and Joshi pull no punches. Their point of view, that the dominant agroindustrial food system is inherently unjust to farm workers, consumers (including our children), and the communities that suffer from the external costs of food production, comes through loud and clear.

(Nevin Cohen, Eugene Lang College, New School for Liberal Arts)

*Food Justice* is about who grows our food, how it is grown, where it is grown, who gets to eat, and the pleasure and celebration of eating food that is good food, clean food, fair food. *Food Justice* tells us that growing and eating food are political acts that challenge a system that is neither good, nor clean, nor fair. Read it!

(Carlo Petrini, founder, Slow Food International)

*Food Justice* is exactly what is needed to understand what is happening in today's food movement. The book explains how movement participants advocate in different ways for a more ethical food system and examines dozens of groups working for change at the local, national, and international levels. It should inspire all of us to advocate for healthier diets for people and the planet, more humane treatment of farm animals, and more supportive policies for farmers, farm workers, and rural communities.

(Marion Nestle, Paulette Goddard Professor in the Department of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health, New York University, author of *Food Politics*)

While their pragmatic and wide-ranging approach to food justice might not be appreciated by environmental purists, the authors' stock of common-sense solutions and genuine concern makes *Food Justice* an interesting and authoritative read. Their central argument -- that the approach to transforming the way we eat needs to be more integrated -- is compelling and certainly worth considering. Unfortunately injustices in the way food is produced and consumed won't go away over night. But if, as *Food Justice* advocates, we work together and focus on community-based initiatives, then we are on the right track.

(Ruth Styles *The Ecologist*)

#### About the Author

Robert Gottlieb is Henry R. Luce Professor of Urban Environmental Studies at Occidental College in Los Angeles. He is the author of *Environmentalism Unbound: Exploring New Pathways for Change* (2001), and *Reinventing Los Angeles: Nature and Community in the Global City* (2007), both published by the MIT Press, and other books.

Anupama Joshi is the Executive Director and Cofounder of the National Farm to School Network, a project of Tides Center (formerly based at the Urban & Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College).

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