

We are what we eat

A look at how our taste in food has changed

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Over the past couple of decades, the American diet has changed in some significant ways.

We eat less red meat per person than we did in 1980, according to recent census surveys. But we also eat a lot more sugar and — cue ominous music — high-fructose corn syrup.

We eat a lot more chicken but fewer eggs. Less ice cream but more cheese. Way more strawberries and pineapples and way fewer grapefruit.

And two of our signature agricultural products here in the Inland Northwest — apples and potatoes — showed a drop in per-person consumption, though they remain among the most-eaten fruits and vegetables in the country. Here are some of the ways American diets have changed, based on the latest per-capita consumption statistics from the census.

A sampling of what we eat now

Here are some of the foods we consumed in 2006, with the calories per pound of each food in parentheses.

WHEAT FLOUR
135 pounds
(1,637)

STRAWBERRIES
6.1 pounds
(145)

CELERY
6.1 pounds
(59)

ORANGES
10.2 pounds
(226)

ICE CREAM
14.4 pounds
(912)

SUGAR
62.3 pounds
(1,772)

BEEF
62.7 pounds
(1,400)

And how it's changed

Percentage change in consumption per capita of those foods 1980 to 2006

