

Resolve to Eat Right, Save Money, and Live Longer

by Ellen Teeter, AP

The *China Study* (www.thechinastudy.com) might just be the catalyst you need this year to begin changing the way you eat in order to preserve your health, now and in the future. It might also be a practical way to save money on your food budget while eating a diet proven to help prevent diseases like cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. *The China Study* by T. Colin Campbell, PhD, and Thomas M. Campbell II is, according to the authors, the most comprehensive study on nutrition ever conducted.

In a nutshell, the study invites the reader to look at the evidence supporting a diet devoid of animal proteins including meat, fish, dairy, and eggs. The traditional American diet is far from devoid of these animal proteins; in fact, much of mainstream nutrition information supports animal protein as essential. *The China Study* gives clear evidence that animal protein contributes to what can be termed the diseases of affluence. The authors point to wealthy cultures as having a higher incidence of cancer, heart disease and diabetes. Poorer cultures that still follow their traditional diets rarely, if ever, get these diseases. As we look for ways to save money in our current economic climate, we may actually be encouraged to eat a cheaper diet that is ultimately healthier. A meal of vegetables, beans, and rice is about half the cost of a cheeseburger served at home. According to *The China Study*, the former is far and above a healthier choice over the latter, even if the burger is made with organic, free range, lean ground turkey.

The New Year is a great time to make changes and to set a resolution. From a Chinese perspective, the winter solstice on December 21 was when the old yang energy of 2008 disappeared and the new yang energy of 2009 began to rise. In Western cultures, January 1 is obviously when we traditionally mark new beginnings and go about making resolutions to change. Because of this new rising energy, January is the ideal time to make changes in your life. If you have been thinking about ways to save money and make some dietary changes, here are seven ways to get started.

1. Eat a vegan meal at least once a week. Gradually add more days. Then commit to a whole week. Notice how you feel; there will be cravings (which pass), but you will also feel lighter emotionally and physically as well as more comfortable in your body.

2. Buy whole grains and dried beans in bulk, and cook at home. Buying in bulk can



save dollars off your food budget, and if you cook a large amount and freeze portions, you can save time as well as dollars.

3. Cultivate a vegetable garden. You can save even more money and get the freshest, healthiest food you can imagine in your own back yard.

4. Cook and eat at home most of the time. Occasionally eating out in restaurants featuring vegetarian and organic food can inspire you to be more imaginative in your home cooking. Relax and enjoy slow food instead of fast food. There is a group called Slow Food that is a good resource for finding area restaurants that cater to healthy diets and sources of locally grown foods. You can contact them at slowfood-sarasota@hotmail.com.

5. Read *The China Study* and digest the information that will inspire you to maintain a plant-based diet. Learn about the intricate connection between nutrition and disease. The book will help clarify many of the confusing and often contradicting nutritional information to which we are exposed.

6. Get some support to make these changes. Learning to take control of your diet can be difficult, and often the sup-

port of a health professional, counselor, or support group is all you need to be successful.

7. Entertain inexpensively with a vegan version of the traditional black-eyed peas and collard greens or vegan chili. Create new and healthy traditions that will help to ensure the health of your friends and family for generations to come. You can visit www.orientalmedicine.com for recipes.

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