What did you eat today?

Whether you sat down with family or friends...

or grabbed a bite on the go...

your meal was shaped by history and nature, commerce and cultures.

That cup of tea had its start in the highlands of Tanzania, but the milk you add is from a local dairy.

Hens may have laid your eggs in a back yard in Brooklyn...

but the pepper on top is a pinch of India.

And even if your bao was steamed in Guangdong, the sugar to sweeten it may have come from Brazil, half a world away.

What you choose to eat shapes the planet. Your food choices may be personal, but our food system is vast.

Your choices connect you to a global web of food growing, trading, cooking and eating.

Even the simplest choices you make can have wide-reaching effects—on your health; the environment; and plants, animals and people all around the world.

From the earliest moments in our lives, food nourishes our bodies and helps us grow.

We call on food to mark special moments...

honor symbolic holidays...

and celebrate the joys of friendship.

What we choose to eat every day makes a difference, in our own lives, in terms of our personal health.

Food can help keep us healthy...but it depends on our choices.

Worldwide, at least 35 percent of adults are overweight or obese—more than a billion people in total.
[TITLE:] 42 million children under the age of 5 overweight

And with 42 million children overweight, childhood obesity is one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century.

Over time, diet-related disorders like diabetes and cardiovascular disease take a toll—not only on individuals, but also on health care systems and broader economies.

Many of us are fortunate to have an abundance of good food choices...

...but food is distributed around the world unequally. Some people have too few choices... and too little to eat.

[TITLE:] 1 out of 8 people is hungry

Globally, one out of eight people is hungry, lacking consistent access to enough safe, affordable and nutritious food.

Yet it’s not that we don’t grow enough food to feed the world’s people. Instead, the main issues are economic...social...and political...

[TITLE:] ECONOMIC SOCIAL POLITICAL

... made worse by extreme weather events and natural disasters that are becoming more frequent with climate change.

[TITLE:] Japan Tsunami 2010
[TITLE:] Hurricane Katrina 2006
[TITLE:] Hurricane Sandy 2012

The challenge of feeding people will only increase as the population grows—to a projected 9 billion by 2050. How can we meet this challenge?

[TITLE:] Projected 9 billion people in 2050

Let’s look at how we grow and raise food now.

Growing crops and raising animals takes enormous natural resources: nearly 40 percent of Earth’s ice-free land... and 70 percent of freshwater drawn from lakes, rivers and aquifers for human use.

[TITLE:] 40% ICE-FREE LAND
[TITLE:] 70% OF FRESH WATER

We’ve bred thousands of crops, but we are dependent on just a handful—40 percent of all cropland is used for wheat, corn and rice.

[TITLE:] 40% of all cropland wheat corn rice
We grow more food today than ever before—crop production has increased almost 30 percent in just 20 years.

**[TITLE:]** crop production 1985 2005 almost 30% increase

But these high yields have come at a cost: our use of synthetic fertilizers, chemical pesticides and herbicides has led to declines in water quality and soil health.

Of the land used globally for agriculture, 75 percent is devoted to raising animals...

**[TITLE:]** 75% AGRICULTURAL LAND

...and 35 percent of the crops we produce go to feed livestock, not humans.

**[TITLE:]** 35% OF ALL CROPS

How we raise animals, and the rising global demand for meat, have far-reaching consequences for both animals and people.

Oceans and waterways are no better off.

Global catches have stabilized in recent decades, but more and more fisheries are overexploited to keep up with demand.

In many corners of the globe, people are working on promising approaches.

Improvements in sustainable growing techniques...

better managed fisheries...

less food waste...

and better regional distribution networks, to deliver food more efficiently where it’s needed, all will help.

New choices in our diets can shift demand to healthier or more sustainable menu options.

And political leaders, scientists, economists and other experts and organizations, working together with community members continue to address the problems of poverty and hunger.

The simplest meal can connect you—
to people and places you may never know... to means of food production, economic systems and distribution networks you may never see.

Still, your small plate plays a big role in our food system.

Each of your choices connects you to the past... the present... and the future of food.
[TITLE:] WHAT WILL YOU EAT TODAY?