Appetite for Life: Promoting Sustainability with Good Bowls

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Equiti Foods makes and markets Good Bowls - locally sourced, healthy, frozen meals. With a focus on food equity, Good Bowls are sold, subsidized, and donated using a cost offset model to ensure everyone has access to healthy food.
Founder
Equiti Foods LLC - Good Bowls
Now Volunteer Advisor
THE PROBLEM – Food Insecurity and Lack of Economic Opportunity in Rural NC

• Historic discrimination against Black farmers
• Lack of Access to Healthy Food
• Rural Poverty
• High rates of diabetes, heart disease, and stroke
• Food Waste
The Health Impact Pyramid

- Socioeconomic Factors
- Changing the Context to Make Individuals’ Default Decisions Healthy
- Long-Lasting Protective Interventions
- Clinical Interventions
- Counseling and Education

Increasing Population Impact
Increasing Individual Effort Needed

Thomas Frieden, Former Director of CDC
SOLUTION – Good Bowls --> Equiti Foods

A healthy, frozen meal based on the Mediterranean Diet adapted to southern seasonal availability and taste preference (“Med-South”)

Locally Sourced

• Sourcing as many ingredients locally as possible- supporting the local food system and helping to eliminate food waste using “cosmetically challenged” produce.

Locally Made

• Made in Hillsborough NC, supporting a local business and providing local jobs - keeping NC food in NC
Mediterranean/Med-South Diet Basics

• Oil is good, especially (we think) olive oil
  “Use more than you think you should”
• Low fat is no longer the focus
• High quality fat/oil IS a primary focus
• Nuts of all kinds have high quality fat
  • Also fish (particularly cold water)
• And then the usual:
  • More fruits and vegetables
  • Whole vs. refined grains
  • Limit sugar
• And the secret to good nutrition.. Drum roll please

Roasted vegetables!
The whiteness of the Mediterranean Diet: A historical, sociopolitical, and dietary analysis using Critical Race Theory

By Kate Gardner Burt, Lehman College, City University of New York, Bronx, NY
The evidence-based biologic principles of the Mediterranean Diet can be adapted to any culture

The “Med-South” Diet
Mediterranean Diet goes South

The researchers are affiliated with the University’s Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, which received grant funding that could total $3.8 million over five years from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute to fund the research.
It started with the Kinston BBQ Festival...
After: “I’ve eaten eastern style BBQ all my life and love it. But I think preparing it this way is just as good and I would definitely eat it again!”
**Overall Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Question 2</th>
<th>Question 3</th>
<th>Question 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The BBQ dish tasted good to me.</td>
<td>I would be willing to make this dish at home.</td>
<td>My family would enjoy a dish like this.</td>
<td>I would like more information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 1**
- Strongly Disagree: 3%
- Disagree: 4%
- Neutral: 5%
- Agree: 54%
- Strongly Agree: 35%

**Question 2**
- Strongly Disagree: 3%
- Disagree: 4%
- Neutral: 5%
- Agree: 54%
- Strongly Agree: 33%

**Question 3**
- Strongly Disagree: 1%
- Disagree: 5%
- Neutral: 6%
- Agree: 33%
- Strongly Agree: 33%

**Question 4**
- Strongly Disagree: 0%
- Disagree: 10%
- Neutral: 20%
- Agree: 30%
- Strongly Agree: 50%
Conclusions: The intervention yielded substantial improvement in diet, PA, and blood pressure, but weight loss was modest.
A new approach to another southern classic...

Hush Puppies
Hush puppies on a diet?
The Med-South diet study led by Carolina researchers will determine if healthier versions of traditional Southern dishes can help obese people lose weight and keep it off.
Cultural adaptation beyond the US

KARIBU MEZANI

CULTURE, CUISINE, & COOKING FROM KENYA

THE MEDITERRANEAN-KENYAN DIET

The Mediterranean Diet is known to promote heart and brain health, prevent diabetes, and slow the aging process. It emphasizes plant-based foods, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and whole-grain bread. It's also rich in healthy fats, which are found in vegetable oils, particularly olive oil, and fish. Interest in the Mediterranean Diet began growing during the 1960s, when it was noted that there were fewer deaths caused by coronary heart disease in Mediterranean countries than in others.

So, what might a Med-Kenyan dietary pattern look like that takes the principles of the Mediterranean Diet and applies them to traditional Kenyan food? For starters, a Mediterranean-style plate is generally composed of fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and potatoes as well as leafy greens, such as collards, spinach, and pumpkin leaves. Fruits, including bananas, pears, and mangos, are great as snacks and desserts because they contain no added sugars and don't sacrifice taste for nutrition.

While grains and dairy products are to be consumed in somewhat smaller portions than those of fruits and vegetables. Whole grains include brown rice, red millet flour, and sorghum while dairy products include cheese or yogurt. Plant oils, especially olive oil, should be the primary source of fat in the Mediterranean Diet. Palm and coconut oil can be used as well but less often. Additionally, nuts and seeds serve as sources of healthy plant fats.

Fish, meat consumption, especially processed meat like bacon and sausage, should be more limited. It is recommended that you eat fish or poultry up to three or four times a week, and that you eat processed red meat up to once or twice a week. It is also recommended to choose leaner cuts of meat for seasoning to stretch your food budget and make healthier meals. Beans are a great source of protein to eat with meat dishes or alone. Other, meanwhile, too sweet or too fatty foods are good examples of recipes.

Another important part of any Kenyan meal is rice. It's made from white or red rice, which is a staple in many African and Middle Eastern cuisines. It should be eaten in smaller amounts or mixed with whole grains like millet that provide more fiber and nutrients. The same is true with chapati. Some people mix pumpkin or carrots to increase the nutritional value.

The most important thing to avoid on the Med-Kenyan diet is extra sugar. Sugar can make you fatter, and too much sugar leads to weight gain and potentially diabetes. The easiest way to avoid sugar is with what you choose to drink. Avoid soda and very sweet tea. Try cold water instead, or tea or coffee with milk and just a little sugar. For sweet treats like candies, try smaller portions with less sugar. Try for good flavor and nutrition, and then you will need less sugar to get the sweet taste.
UGALI

- 2 cups water
- 1 ½ cups white cornmeal

Nutrition call out - white cornmeal

Cornmeal contains some folate and iron but it is not as nutritious as the foods normally served with it. For best nutritional value, use a small serving of Ugali and larger amounts of vegetables, meats/fish, and sauces.

SUKUMA WIKI

- Collard greens
- Tomatoes
- Onion
- Cooking oil
- Salt to taste

Nutrition call out - collard greens

Collard greens are packed with good nutrition, especially vitamins K, A, and C, and also have a lot of fiber. They also add nice color to many dishes and can be added in small amounts to almost any dish.
Fruit Mandazi

1 ½ cup cake flour
¼ tsp. salt
½ tsp. baking powder
¼ - ½ tsp. nutmeg or cinnamon
1 ½ Tbsp butter – could use oil
2 Tbsp sugar
1 large egg
¼-1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
¼ cup buttermilk
1 cup of chopped fruit (bananas, mango, pears) – roughly pea-sized or slightly larger
SOLUTION – Good Bowls

Dual Price Point Model- BOGO variation

• Moves resources across the wealth gradient to accomplish our social mission while maintaining a sustainable business

Higher End Market

• Direct to Consumer on-line ordering
• Retail
• Coffee Shops

Middle Market

• College Campuses
Higher End Markets

UNC Health Advanced Care at Home
Corner Café

Located on the ground floor of the N.C. Children’s Hospital (down the hallway past the kinetic sculpture), the Corner Café offers a variety of dining options.

The Corner Café is open Monday through Friday from 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM.

- Late Night Meals are available daily from 11:00 PM - 2:00 AM.
• New Partnership
• RN orders Good Bowls through an online portal
• MedSpeed drivers pick up and deliver the meals

UNC Health Advanced Care at Home

Our Advanced Care at Home program allows you to receive high-quality, acute-level care and to recover where you are most comfortable – in your home. Your medical needs are observed and addressed with 24/7 virtual monitoring, along with scheduled and rapid response in-person care, through a coordinated ecosystem of support services managed by the Advanced Care at Home team.
SOLUTION – Subsidized Market

• Blue Collar Worksites
  • Retrofitted ice cream vending machines
  • Return on investment for employers
  • Foundation of worksite wellness program
• Federal Food Program Reimbursement
  • SNAP Eligible
  • Medicaid - NC Healthy Opportunities Pilots
• Medically Tailored Meals
  • Potential to reduce hospital readmission and reduce health care costs
• Pay it forward model

A Good Bowl from the Penco Factory vending machine
$4.50/bowl
Good Bowls and Healthy Opportunity Pilot Program
Medicaid Transformation -> Food is Medicine

- Provide participants with a box of 14 healthy frozen meals each week
- Medically tailored meal capacity
- Delivered through distribution team using freezer vehicle
Good Bowls is partnering with the UNC Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Program for the Wake Heat and Eat Program. This program provides healthy Good Bowls for mental health clinicians to bring along on patient visits in the community.

In addition to providing a healthy meal, the Heat and Eat program provides a connection and makes it easier for the ACT Team to engage patients that may be difficult to reach. Many of the patients are experiencing food insecurity, so nutritious Good Bowls meals not only meet that need, but help to build trust between the ACT Team and patients.
Adapting recipes to the seasons and helping farmers sell their seasonal excess and “cosmetically challenged” product – often wasted.
our farmers

Our farmers are guided by a passion for growing and harvesting the absolute best for you. Practiced, patient, and brilliant, they are always working hard to deliver what Mother Nature intended.

About Us
Join The Team!
172 Meals Donated So Far
Help us Get to 200

The Fall Good Bowls Pay-It-Forward campaign with PBO Eats! and Angelina’s Kitchen has begun!

The mission at Good Bowls is to promote food equity in the community. The Pay-It-Forward campaign is our initiative to help food insecure families have access to healthy food, especially in these challenging times. Donate a meal or more online today and help us in our goal of raising at least 100 meals!
Total over 2,000 bowls and $10,000 to local restaurants
Good Bowls and Pittsboro Eats have now teamed up with the newly formed **Chatham Alliance** to create the Community Harvest program.

Four times per year, collect donations from people and businesses in the community and then a group of volunteers prepares healthy meals in a local commercial kitchen.

Meals are distributed to families in the community through our various partners - **CIS Chatham County**, **CORA Food Pantry**, and **Chatham Chuckwagon**.
KEY TO THE SOLUTION

Partnering with and promoting local farms, businesses, and non-profits to increase access to healthy food
Small Business Technology Transfer Grant:

“Good Bowls: Empowering Communities to Achieve Good Food Access and Health Equity”

Phase I: Proof of concept

Phase II: Commercialization and testing impact in blue collar worksites
Micro Pilot: Manufacturing plant in Eastern North Carolina
Manufactures lockers and shelves
The Lunchroom – only food in the plant for 160 workers. Average “meal” cost $7.50
Only other source of food for 15 miles – 2 miles from the Plant
Avg. cost of a meal $8-10
Good Bowls $4.50 for a 12 oz. bowl
Frozen Food Vending Machine
Physically Distanced Focus Group and Taste Testing

Going back for seconds!
Some internet challenges with swipe options but generally well received
Implementation Pilot

- New packaging and flavors
- Testing vending machine and bowl flavor preferences
- Will test AI Ap and beacon system
New Good Bowl flavor today ...

Try some nice cold water and skip the soda.

All the Good Bowl recipes are on the website – try this at home!

**Ingredients – Serves 4**

- Small white onion – diced
- Zucchini cut into half moons
- ½ Red Pepper diced
- Sweet Potato diced
- Dino Kale – 3oz
- Garlic – 4 cloves minced
- ¼ Jalapeño minced
- No Evil Pit Boss BBQ – 6 oz
- Barley – 1 cup dry
- Olive Oil – 4 tbsp on veggies
  - 2 tbsp in frying pan
- 1 lime
- Salt – ½ tsp
- Margarine 1.5 tsp
- Eastern NC vinegar based BBQ sauce – 1/3 cup

The Big Al’s Big BBQ Bowl- A vegetarian version of the NC classic featuring No Evil Food Pit Boss plant-based BBQ. Enjoy with your favorite BBQ sauce and a slab of corn bread.
Local Food Promotion Program - USDA

Assisting local farmers with finding markets for
• “Cosmetically challenged” food
• Seasonal excess

Fits well with Equiti Foods model:
• Reduce food waste
• Lower food costs
• Support local farmers
Sustainability Impacts

• Sourcing from local farmers as much as possible
  Transportation
  Aggregation
• Using seasonally/regionally tailored recipes (sweet potatoes, peppers, greens)
• Limited beef and pork
• Packaging – ongoing challenge
• Using Grade B “cosmetically challenged” produce
• Minimal (vs “ultra”) processing
“Upcycled foods use ingredients that otherwise would not have gone to human consumption, are procured and produced using verifiable supply chains, and have a positive impact on the environment.”
• Protecting the social mission while maintaining a viable business
• Balancing adequate return for local farmers using sustainable practices with affordable price for consumers
• Accommodating diverse cultural preferences/economic status
• Help others build capacity without losing market opportunities
• Navigating conflict of interest at the university
• Trying to solve too many problems at once -> spread too thin
• Choosing between equity investment vs. “bootstrapping”
Maybe a better BOGO model?

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<tr>
<th>Provided a needed product to disadvantaged populations</th>
<th>Original Tom’s Shoes</th>
<th>Good Bowls</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Builds on Altruistic Spirit</td>
<td>⭐</td>
<td>⭐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers wealth</td>
<td>⭐</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports local businesses</td>
<td>X?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Builds capacity</td>
<td>X?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourages local entrepreneurship</td>
<td>X?</td>
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The Good Bowls Mission

Good food is the essence of good health and well-being. Everyone deserves access to healthy, good-tasting, and affordable food. At the same time, the farmers that produce our food are struggling to make a sustainable living. That's why we created Good Bowls.

- Medicaid At-Risk Recipients
- Hospital At-Home Patients - UNC Health
- Blue Collar Worksites - Vending Machines
- Pay-It-Forward Volunteer Made Meals to Charities
- Direct to Consumer at Home - Produce Box & Hungry Harvest
- Retail - Local Co-ops

- NIH STTR (Small Business Technology Transfer) Grants
- USDA LFPP (Local Food Promotion Program) Grant
- North Carolina Healthy Opportunities Pilot Capacity Building Funding

Med-South Healthy Recipes
Locally Source Ingredients
Grade B and Excess Produce to Reduce Food Waste
Produced in Local Co-op Commercial Kitchen
Community Stakeholder Engagement