

Taking What's Ours

A guide to survival in a world of mass inequality



Information/Resources

<http://www.sdfnb.org/> (San Diego Food Not Bombs. FNB shares free food.)

www.foodnotbombs.net/contacts.html (Find Food Not Bombs in your area.)

www.freegan.info (Some of the ideas involved with this zine.)

www.xevasionx.com (Even better ideas that are connected to this zine. 'Home of the 'Evasion' book.)

www.crimethinc.tk ('Evasion' is a book of inspiration, laughter, and hobo travels... good stuff. It can be downloaded from here.)

www.crimethinc.com (Ideas, thoughts, and actions for a better world. 'Evasion' can be bought from here, \$6.00)

www.crimethinc.info (Brainstorm for projects or just shoot the shit.)

<http://www.tenant.net/Community/steal/steal.html> (Here is an entire copy of 'Steal This Book.' It was printed in sometime in the 70's, but some of it can still be of use.)

www.sdimc.org (Independent news source for the San Diego community.)

Contacts

xsoymilkandgunx@yahoo.com

the_future_is_ours@hotmail.com

arocoun@hushmail.com

tyler@hush.com

solitary_confinement@yahoo.com (Eball Seltress)



“Taking what's ours”? Yes! What's ours!

We are *all* entitled to the things that are essential to life. We *all* deserve to have access to proper nourishment and shelter. This piece of writing is meant to help you obtain these things that we need at the expense of those who are most responsible for our desperate condition: the fucking rich.

Why? Because we simply deserve better!

Against Panhandling

“...I saw it as apathetic and unthreatening to redistribute wealth among those in the bottom 5% of the population when those in the top 1% own a store across the street. You can ask for what you need from a comrade in poverty, or take it from the bourgeois... Try it! They usually don't notice...”

-a professional vagrant

Yes, we can beg or ask others who are a little more fortunate than us to consider our despair and kick down some spare change, or...we can take what we need from those who are generally responsible for our disparity in the first place. There is absolutely no need for begging from others when down the street awaits a maze of criminal corporate chain stores ready to satisfy our hunger.

Of course there are reasons why not everyone can be able to carry out the things noted later on in this text; some, it seems, must rely on the courtesy of others to survive. But this message is aimed at those who are mobile and conscious enough to be able to take the direct action necessary in order to meet their most basic needs. And while we're at it, we might as well do it at the expense of those who *put* the expense in living.

Unemployment... when one's role in life shifts from passive observer to active participant. When "every day is April fools' and every night is Halloween." When we stopped shopping inside and began shopping in the back. When we stopped going to the mall to buy things and started going to collect derelict baby strollers for the 75¢ refund. When we looked at the big, crazy urban chaos and suburban sprawl, and it all began to look suspiciously like a big playground...

If you're homeless, you probably already have a good idea of how much food people throw away in this country. Well, (corporate) stores do the same thing, just on a *much* larger scale. Doughnut/bagel shops, supermarkets, health food stores, fast food restaurants and cafeterias are the best places to look for food.

"Dumpster Diving" is pretty simple. Enter a dumpster, look for edible food... Some places even put the food neatly in a bag or in stacked boxes. It is important that you do not disturb the area or its legal owners if you wish to continue getting food from a particular area.

- Be sure to leave the area as neat as you found it, if not neater.
- Try not to be seen by someone who might want to get you in trouble (i.e. manager, employees, security, random idiots, etc.).
- If it's at night and you're using a flashlight, be sure to keep it aimed below the lid as not to attract any attention to yourself.

"Fuck you rich motherfucker, I'm hungry!"

Okay, this is obviously the stealing part. If you have chosen to follow the advice given previously encouraging you to have a neat appearance, it will be of great help to you while in a busy store trying to get a meal. Another important thing is that you should probably try to avoid sloppy blatant attempts at theft, if possible. Stuffing chips in you bag is quick, but you have no sufficient excuse if you are caught... you're just in trouble.

The best tip of all: use your imagination. The possibilities are nearly infinite; be creative, have fun, take what you fucking deserve!

One of the best techniques is taking something (hold it away from the sight of the cashier) while paying for something inexpensive. Buy a banana or bagel while holding onto a frozen burrito below the register. Walk out. If someone stops you (depending on how hungry you are) you can decide to run, or say sorry, claim ignorance, and say that your really tired/sick and forgot that you were holding onto the item.

Grab and eat items while in store.

Grab and walk out. Confidence/casualness is the key.

But, as stated before: use your creativity. You are the best advice you can possibly have regarding your particular situation and the conditions that you are dealing with.

If it doesn't feel right, drop the item and leave...there's always the supermarket across the street anyway.

Use your imagination, take care of yourself, and have fun!

finds when the college went out (as there usually are) but we couldn't wait the 3 weeks or so.

The warm allowed for daily dumpster excursions that the earlier cold hadn't allowed until then. Every so often one of us would find a movie or game which had been carelessly (or intentionally I guess) by some wasteful jerk. We pawned those things and eventually saved up enough money to buy a set of really good walkie-talkies. An idea was brewing. One of us came up with a plan. We gathered up all the working bikes we had, plus the trailer which we welded ourselves over the course of the winter, one morning, and go on a HUGE food run. Slowly, it became quite the event. The Saturday after we had the idea, it was time we executed it. We broke up into 2 cells. One, attacking all westerly dumpsters, the other took to the east. We each had a city map, with markings of all the best food dumpsters, and equipped with our new walkie-talkies- no cop stood in our way.

We hit the Little Caesar's we left with three fresh pizza's, you can tell if pizza is safe to eat by tearing at the crust. If it's been sitting too long, the crust wont bend, and the cheese or meat probably isn't going to be safe. Most of us had iron bellies from a whole winter of dumpster scrap dinners, so we ate about anything we found. The thing about animal products is: if they taste bad, they're bad so spit it out. If it tastes fine, its not gunna kill you.

We hit the convenience stores. In Minnesota there is a certain regulation time to have deli/grill food under heat lamps, then you gotta toss it and thaw out more. Luckily the convenience store food was so bad no one bought any. It was all tossed away. Bread-sticks, breakfast burgers, regular burgers, big pretzels, cookies by the dozen, bagels, doughnuts, they throw away EVERYTHING. Since it was early in the morning, and we knew that these stores empty their garbage every night, we figured even if it tasted like shit, it was generally all safe because it was wrapped up in foil.

WASH FRUITS AND VEGGIES

All raw fruits and vegetables should be scrubbed under running water (and those who are at high risk for food poisoning may want to avoid raw produce altogether). Those that are at high risk for food poisoning in general should be especially cautious:

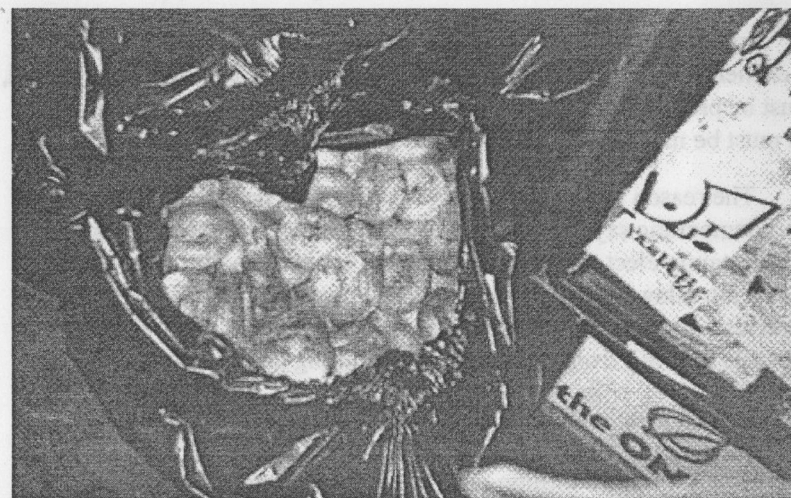
- Young children
- Pregnant women
- Elderly adults
- Immunocompromised persons (AIDS/HIV, steroids, chemotherapy, diabetes mellitus, cancer)
- Alcoholics
- Persons with liver disease
- Persons with decreased stomach acidity (due to gastric surgery or antacid use)

BOTTOM LINE

If it looks bad and/or smells bad, chuck it. IF IN DOUBT THROW IT BACK OUT.

Michael Greger, M.D. is a general practitioner, proud member of Boston Food Not Bombs and can be contacted through <http://www.veganMD.org>

Several bags full of bagels that were thrown out at the end of the night...



want to left hand things or public transport.

Don't feed other peoples animals. Also people don't pass food like marijuana, so don't offer it to anyone else unless you're willing to let them have the rest.

Don't ever use any pack that has only one strap. I hate those things.

Also if someone lets you crash at their place empty their trash, do the dishes, vacuum/sweep or something for them. If you can bring the house some dumpstered food and it'll happen a lot more often and you'll make friends.

Don't try and fit in. Just be yourself. Don't think that you have to suffer either or rough it. You don't. Fuck that Christianity shit.

Learn how to pack a backpack too. Weight distribution is important.

There's so much food you can totally be vegan or vegetarian without any problems. Don't listen to anyone, no one knows shit. People will talk down about shoplifting too. That's usually because they believe that no one has to do anything for anyone else so long as no one hurts anyone else. Don't steal from peoples houses or people who help you out though, because that makes you an asshole and untrustworthy. Besides you can usually just ask and get it.

Peanut butter is a food item that'll keep you happy if you always have some... easy to steal too.

When hitch hiking you can sit down with your knees on your chest and rest your arm on your knee. Kind of hard to explain but your arm wont get tired which makes it very nice.

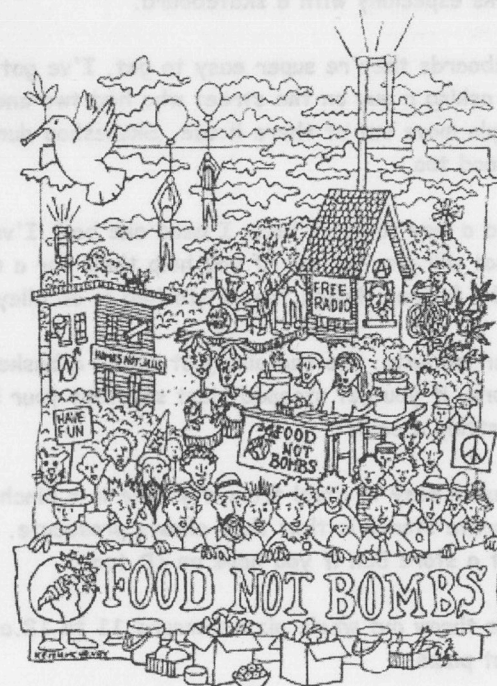
Always bring a sweatshirt. Also you loose the most heat through your wrists, head and feet/ankles (I think that's all of them, I might have messed that up). The best way to wear clothes is to have one skintight layer and one baggy layer, that way a pocket of hot insulating air is in between. Get a beanie.

the explosion of hunger has outstripped the ability of existing hunger relief programs, both governmental and private, to satisfy this crucial need.

Hungry people are children and single parents (mostly women), the working poor, the homeless, the unemployed, the elderly, the chronically ill, and those a on fixed income such as veterans and the handicapped. All of these people find themselves in the clutches of oppressive poverty even while trying to improve their condition. Let's fix that.

Go to this website to find Food Not Bombs in your area ...

<http://www.foodnotbombs.net/contacts.html>



Personal Accounts

I'm homeless right now...

Rooftops are a chill place to sleep if you have a sleeping bag (get an 'ultralight'). Wander around enough and you'll find some stairs or a nearby ladder that you can use to get up it. No one ever looks up. You can build a really comfortable bed out of the branches from Christmas trees, but I haven't tried it yet.

Late at night there's barely any security at super markets. You can have a friend put products in your backpack, stick it in your pants/armpits or walk out of the store with it holding a receipt. 'Left handing' also works especially with a skateboard.

And as for skateboards they're super easy to get. I've gotten two so far, one just by asking a guy on the street who had two and another by helping some people move out of their house. Skateshop dumpsters are supposed to be good too.

I'm trying to find a way to get a bike, I need one bad. I've heard about a co-op that will give you one if you help them for a month or so. I did find two bike frames though that I stashed in an alley.

And back to super markets, you can also just fill up a basket with food and leave the store, if you get stopped, just say that your basket was full and you're getting a cart.

99¢ stores are super easy to steal from if you're in a pinch. The bad thing about corporate stores is that they always prosecute. It's a lot easier to just get a store ban if you have an ID too.

Some pizza places throw out whole pizzas around 11 to 12.am. Camp out at one if you want pizza.

Factories can have good dumpsters too so check the yellow pages. The yellow pages are a good tool.

Also carry around one of those 'Nagalene' bottles and fill it with fruit when you find some fruit trees or bushes.

'Rocket stoves' are supposed to be good too and all you need are some cans and wood for fuel to make one.

I don't think that it should have information on "spanging". Fuck their filthy money, if you can't live your life without it what's the point? Same with "busking". I don't want their pennies or to dance on the street like a monkey for them. Leave the 'spanging' and 'busking' to bored kids in the suburbs who live with their parents. Then again it's only been a little bit so I might have to do that shit. Ahh...such is life.

Also police... Be nice and respectful and avoid them at all costs. I hate police, but they deserve your respect ONLY because they carry lethal weapons and can easily kill you. If you're underage, just give them your name and tell them that you're 18. It's not against the law to not produce ID. If you look crusty they'll just tell you to get the hell out of their district.

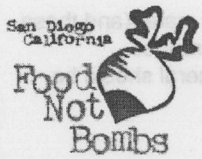
And deny everything. It works...

Some more things I've learned:

If you're going to sleep in an abandoned house, make sure that no one sees you go in or out because the neighbors will call the police on you. That's how my girlfriend got extradited a state away. Same with rooftops but that should be understood.

Food Not Bombs is really cool if you're in a big city and it's a good place to meet people. If you're looking for friends ask them if they're squatters or hop trains, then see if they know of any good dumpsters, rooftops or abandoned houses. They'll usually help you out a lot. If you get directions to somewhere get a map and have them pinpoint it or ask them to take you. Don't go looking for somewhere that you don't have an X for if it's something like an abandoned house. You'll waste your time, get tired and discouraged too. It's best to let those things come to you. Keep away from alcoholics.

You'll have a lot more money too if you don't drink/do drugs or drink soda, but then again you don't really need money. It can help if you



Why Food Not Bombs?

If distributed equally, the world produces enough food to feed everyone. There is an abundance of food. In fact, in this country, every day, in every city, far more edible food is discarded than is needed to feed those who do not have enough to eat.

Consider this. Before food reaches your table, it is produced and handled by farmers, coops, manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, and retailers. At every step, some perfectly edible food is discarded for a variety of business reasons. In the average city, approximately 10% of all solid waste is food. Nationally, this is an incredible total of 46 billion pounds per year, just under 200 pounds per person per year.

Estimates indicate that only 4 billion pounds of food per year would be required to completely end hunger in America. Clearly there is an abundance of edible, recoverable food being thrown away.

In order to recover this edible food and use it to feed people, three key elements must be combined. First, the food must be collected. Second, it must be prepared into a form appropriate for consumption. Third, the food must be made easily accessible to those who are hungry.

The reason this is not already happening is no accident. We do not have a democratic say in how food is produced or distributed. People would certainly elect to eat. In hierarchical economies, the threat of the loss of a job allows owners to keep wages low. An underclass is the result of policies which encourage domination and violence. In our society, it is acceptable to profit from other people's suffering and misery.

Today, people who are living below the poverty line (less than \$9,069 annual income for family of three) are going hungry AT LEAST once a month. Over 30 million people are going hungry on a REGULAR basis. Astonishingly, less than 15% of the hungry are homeless. Moreover,

Above all have fun. Fortune favors the brave. Try and fall in love. Don't try to survive by consuming, surviving to consume.

-Eball Seltress

I've been planning on leaving, to the best of my ability, the whole "system" of things for a while now--ever since I was still in High School a year ago.

I don't want a job. I don't want to whore away half of my waking life, and use the other half to recover. I don't want to have some employer cheat me out of my money, and I don't want to be a good little tax paying citizen. I don't want to work at a job that perpetuates waste, consumerism, capitalism, hierarchy, or the government; but those are realistically the only jobs available. I don't want to adjust my personality to fit the preferences of some rich "boss."

I don't want to live the American Dream, with a big house, big cars, and lots of kids. In fact, I don't want a house at all. I don't want to own land--land ownership is the worst kind of property/theft. I don't want to waste away in a finely air-conditioned jail, and I certainly don't want to waste half my cash for it. And I don't want to own lots of useless junk.

I never want to be dependant on money again, for many reasons I'll leave to your imagination.

I want to travel freely and see the world. I want all of my time and energy for myself and my own activities. I want to be able to follow my values. And finally, I want to be *free*.

-arocoun

It was the first few really warm days in April. We were all emerging from our winter-time hibernation, as we had endured quite a lot. It was a long, cold spring; there wasn't much of a transition from the freezing, depressing, particularly alcoholic winter and the mud of the Minnesota spring. We were so thirsty for activity, we were almost desperate for celebration. There had been talk about some great dumpster

Doctor's Note: Freegan Food Safety Tips by A Respected Physician

by Dr. Michael Greger, MD

Editors's Note: Okay, before we get started with Dr. Greger's advice, a bit of a caveat. Many of us are considerably more daring than the guidelines below recommend. Many of us LOVE dumpstered cut melon and quite a few of us consumer others' leftovers with no ill effect. That said, if you really want to play it safe, you can't get much better than the advice of a nutrition expert (the guy teaches at Cornell University) like Dr. Greger.

Freegan Food Safety Tips...

SELL-BY DATES

Product dating is not required by federal regulations and varies by state to state. "Sell by" or "use by" dates are NOT safety dates. They tend to denote either how long a product can remain on store shelves or when they are recommended to be eaten for best flavor or quality. Properly stored, unopened packaged foods can typically be eaten safely for days after these dates have passed.

FOODS TO AVOID

Stay away from meat (including all seafood), eggs, dairy, sprouts, cut melon, and unpasteurized cider/juice. A few hours outside of refrigeration can potentially allow bacteria counts to reach dangerous levels in these foods. Also stay away from anything that someone else had started eating as one can get communicable diseases like hepatitis, etc.

DECONTAMINATE ANYTHING THAT TOUCHES MEAT

Wash hands thoroughly (lather with antibacterial soap for a full 20 seconds and rinse under warm running water) after touching any sort of raw meat (including all seafood).

BULGING CANS

NEVER take a chance on cans that are bulging or oozing from the seam.

WHAT ABOUT MOLDY FOODS?

Hard or firm foods such as cabbages, bell peppers, potatoes, zucchini, apples, pears, broccoli, garlic, onions with tiny mold spots can be trimmed-- cut away the area around the mold (at least an inch) and rewrap in clean wrap. Make sure that knife does not touch the mold.

Soft foods such as bread, muffins, bagels, leafy vegetables, cooked grains, tomatoes should be tossed at the first sign of mold. Even though there may be just a bit of visible mold, the mold roots can penetrate very deeply into these softer foods.

Anyhow by the time we met across the bridge at a beach/picnic area we saw all the food, a whole mound of food, like uncovering an ancient food cache...how glorious it was. We had boxes of cookies and doughnuts; whole chickens, still hot from the oven; boxes of pizza; bagels; wrapped up burgers everywhere; some fresh produce waiting to be made into stew; a cake! we built a fire and began cooking some of the food. Punks started arriving on their bikes, and some in cars, a few folks who lived in boathouses on the island started gravitating towards us. Folks broke out guitars, and harmonicas. The drinkers passed around a hat and made a beer-run. Some brave little-ones tried swimming in the river, which had only just melted. The FoodNotBombers began filling soil for the summer garden. We all basked in the sun after a long winter. The cops came, and circled once or twice, but seeing our large group, they turned around and didn't come back the whole night.

-TyleRevolution



-The Look-

If you're dressed the right way, you can get away with almost anything...

Being that most if not all of the things discussed in here are illegal, it would definitely be to your advantage if you were to adopt a "cleaner" appearance, if you haven't already. A clean clothed smiling individual will attract much less unwanted attention from store personnel/security than someone with stained and tattered clothing cursing passersby as they enter a store. So for the sake of staying free, stay clean!

Keeping a neat appearance is easy...

Use public restrooms, hotel pools, water fountains, and the beach to stay clean; get scissors/razors to keep hair trim; get some well fitting clothes at the nearest shelter, donation bin or thrift store.

If you have no major problem with looking neat and clean, do it; it will definitely work in your favor.

-Food-

Food can be gotten absolutely free in several ways. The two most basic and easiest methods will be covered here. Some others may be seen in the personal accounts later on. We'll begin with the more obvious method...

"Dumpster Diving"

First off, just because it's in the dumpster, doesn't mean that it's necessarily bad. Food is thrown out all the time by businesses that are in the food industry because of cosmetic imperfections or it because of an old "expiration date." Speaking of which, an 'expiration date' is set by food manufactures to have an item sold by a particular date, given it might take the customer a week or so to consume the item. So, if the expiration date is less than a week old, and the food looks ok, then it should be fine. The same **cannot** be said of animal products however. Dumpstered meat and dairy probably isn't worth risking illness over. You can get really sick from eating putrid, rapidly decomposing meat, of course. People who have eaten dumpstered dairy have told me that if it smells ok, it usually is okay. Hopefully that has calmed any unreasonable concern.

Something happened when we quit our jobs, quit paying rent, quit paying for anything. And I think back to the early days-when, like clouds parting to reveal the sun, we discovered that what we were told were lies, that it *could* be done, and that it would mean the *time of our lives*. Those first moments...a new house, a new life...artists, vandals, philosophers... up on our favorite rooftop, with a view of the city, passing dumpstered granola and thinking-

Three years
leave LA's spray
communities for
Asheville, North
plete wit
intri

"Maybe we're on to something..."

Table of Contents

Introductory Statement..... page 2
A Position on Panhandling..... page 2
The Look..... page 3
Food..... page 3
A Physicians Note..... page 5
Why Food Not Bombs?..... page 7
Personal Accounts..... page 9
Information/Resources/Contact..... page 17



It was a romantic life... If it was poverty, it was poverty only on paper. Poverty is a mathematical equation, an expression of how much one can buy. What about how much we can steal? Doesn't that count for anything?!

-anonymous

Author(s) Disclaimer: The following text is for entertainment purposes only. For none of those who were involved in the making of this text would ever want the most down trodden of the American population to ever enjoy the luxury of life's necessities. Neither do any of us endorse freedom for any animal, human or non-human, or the planet on which they live; nor do we condone any action which will bring about such free conditions. We do, however, encourage the Federal assholes reading this post to find

“So many people hungry
 ain't go no where to live,
 lots of people wealthy
 just too poor in their hearts to know how to give.

You say you want money, new car, new house, new t.v...
 How about some good food, some shelter, heat for the winter and some shoes for that child's cold feet.

American dream is to be wealthy
 American dream is to have it all
 Well, it's not my dream to be filthy rich while my neighbors ain't got nothing...
 nothing at all.”

-Alice Demiceli, homeless folk musician