

# What I Eat Project

Christy Kingham

Date: Saturday, December 10 2016

Breakfast- cooked at home

- Two Coffees with half and half
- Banana peanut butter smoothie
- Two hard boiled eggs
- Ezekial bread with butter

Lunch- ordered from a diner

- Turkey burger with cheddar cheese and a greek salad
- Large Smartwater

Dinner- family dinner for a birthday

- Grilled shrimp
- Grilled fish with fennel
- Salad
- Banana cream pie



*I made a Banana smoothie with my breakfast- it had almond milk, peanut butter and banana. I love smoothies!*

Splashing oats into the flour dusted silver mixing bowl, my mother's hands would next reach for the butter and sugar mixture she had cautiously heated. Then it was my turn as I dug into the bowl hands splayed, ready for mush. I can distinctly remember the first time I rolled out the oatmeal cookie dough then bunched it together in seriously imperfect clumps. A last reminder to push the lumps down with a fork, then the sweet thirty-minute anticipation as they finished baking. There are so many little memories like this with food from my past- my mother teaching me all I know.

I grew up in Westchester County, just 45 minutes north of Manhattan. I only moved away for four years of college, but I am lucky to have travelled all over the world. Growing up, my mother put a lot of emphasis on family dinner time. We had to sit at the table, eat together and talk. We ate everything, but my mother was half Italian and loved to make Italian dishes for us. When I was in high school, we lived together alone as she hadn't met my step father yet and my siblings were off at college. This was when I really learned to cook- we took turns. Whoever was home first cooked the dinner, but I often would have to call her for directions. I still call her for directions when cooking- this just happened on Thanksgiving. My brother and I cooked for my dad and that side of the family, but I spent the whole

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*This looks pretty, but I ordered it from a local diner! It's a turkey burger with cheddar cheese and a greek salad.*



*I drink at least two big bottles of water a day. Smartwater is my go-to if it's bottled, but I am a tap girl!*

morning on the phone with mom. She finally hung up the phone and showed up at the door. It was the best part of my day.

Unfortunately, I don't cook much anymore, though I do enjoy it and I do know how to. I have lived in Manhattan for about ten years where literally anything you want can be picked up or ordered. I do cook a few times a week, but life seems to move a bit too fast for me to take the time to shop, cook and settle down and eat.

I am a high school English teacher and I'm currently leading a course that asks us to consider the relationship between food and culture. I'm 38 years old at this time, and I'm a pretty active person as I play on five soccer teams in addition to running half marathons. The work in our intensive has me thinking about what we value, our priorities and how they may be connected to food. I value connections with people- having time to sit and be with each other over a shared meal is something that I find to be incredibly important.

I also consider food to be fuel I am constantly asking myself if I have enough "good" fat and protein. This wasn't always the case- like so many women I've had my ups and downs, judging myself for what I eat, trying out diets and different ways of eating. It's taken a long time to learn this, but I finally know what healthy really is - and that being mindful has everything to do with it. I do get too full sometimes, but I don't judge myself for that. Instead, I try to just work on slowing down and enjoying. I work on using food as fuel for my needs of the day. If I have an 8pm soccer game, I consider what time I need to eat dinner and what am I eating so that I have a good performance. These decisions are natural to me- and in thinking about them I realize just how many decisions we all make related to food in a day.

The day that I recorded what I ate for this project was an average Saturday in December. I was on a day off from working out or soccer, and spent most of the day at home preparing my lesson plans for school. Breakfast was something I was proud of since I made it myself. (It's the little things!) I was feeling pretty hungry so I tried to balance some protein, fat and carbs to help fill me up.

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*Banana Cream Pie was my last food of the day. I can NEVER resist this sweet treat. I was full, full, full, but I still went for it.*

The attempt to fill myself up worked until the afternoon when I realized I was starving. This happens to me sometimes when I'm working- I'm not mindful enough about eating before I get starving and then I eat too much, too fast. So, I ordered my favorite turkey burger from the diner and scarfed it down fast. I had to lie down after, I felt so full! I had a family dinner to go to later and I knew I would be eating a lot. We eat in my family- always family style, and everyone fills their plate.

As soon as I got to the dinner I had bread, drinks, and tons of greek food. It was delicious and I was stuffed...again. Thinking about it now, I often get too stuffed when I eat because I get so excited about the deliciousness of what I'm eating. It's something I know I want to work on- not to judge what I'm eating, but to slow down, enjoy and recognize when I'm full. The best part of the meal, though, was being with my family. My seven neices and nephews, four of my siblings, parents and spouses. We sat at a huge table, glowing with tea-lights. It was a delicious meal that filled me up but more than that I felt the love. When it comes down to it, for me, food is fuel and food is family!