

Food Evangelist

Founder of California's legendary Chez Panisse restaurant and a globetrotting slow-food guru, **Alice Waters** speaks at the Indianapolis Museum of Art on December 2 as part of the museum's Planet Indy series. As an appetizer, we got Waters to dish on the Edible Schoolyard, farmers markets, what our kids are eating, and her undying love for tomatoes. *As told to Renee Wilmeth*

It's not a question of getting access to local products; it's a question of demanding it.

I used to live in Indiana. My father transferred from New Jersey to Chicago, and we lived in Michigan City when I was in high school.

One of my favorite cheese makers, Judy Schad of Capriole, lives in Indiana. I met her 10 years ago at a fundraiser in Chicago. I was just knocked out by her cheeses.

Local and sustainable eating is not a trend. Trends are things that come and go. This is a philosophy about food that's here to stay. It's a necessity. It's for the survival of the planet.

I'm pretty determined to see a garden on the White House lawn. In the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, we need to build a garden that symbolizes our stewardship and nourishment of the land.

In this country, we think of food in terms of health and fueling up, and we don't know where it comes from.

Every day we're making decisions about what we're going to eat, and they aren't good for our health, the environment, or our culture.

The Edible Schoolyard was created as a way to teach children about food. We need to

reconnect and bring them into a new relationship with food, away from fast food and into a real connection with where food comes from and how to cook it.

What if, in schools, our kids were all eating real food? What if we changed the criteria in the cafeteria and decided that food had to be purchased locally and sustainably?

Chez Panisse is 37 years old and, in the course of a year, buys from 85 farmers and producers. And this is just a small restaurant that serves 500 people a day.

I think it's terribly important that we have year-round marketplaces. Farmers markets can't just be for the summer months.

Every time I go to the farmers market, I'm spiritually uplifted.

I can't resist tomatoes. I've always loved them. Tomatoes and garlic. And salads. I eat salads every day.

For myself, I cook pasta. I make some confit tomatoes, you know, with the end-of-year tomatoes with olive oil. It's like a tomato sauce already made when I open the jar. With lots of garlic, it's my staple.

My favorite guilty pleasure is organic salty potato chips.

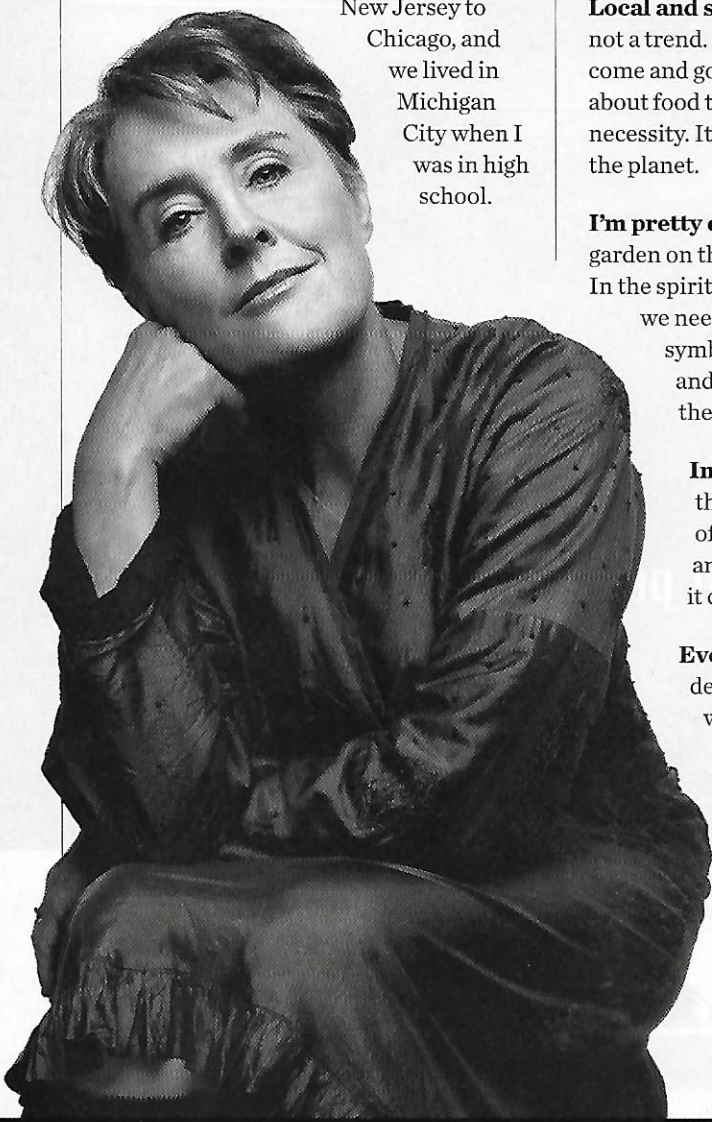


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