

WHEN A BILLION PEOPLE GO HUNGRY EACH DAY, HOW CAN WE SPEND ANOTHER DOLLAR ON WAR? FOOD NOT BOMBS IS AN ALL-VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT THAT RECOVERS FOOD THAT WOULD OTHERWISE BE DISCARDED, AND SHARES FREE VEGAN AND VEGETARIAN MEALS WITH THE HUNGRY IN OVER 1,000 CITIES AROUND THE WORLD AS A WAY TO PROTEST WAR, POVERTY, AND THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT. WE ALSO PROVIDE FOOD TO THE SURVIVORS OF NATURAL DISASTERS AND PEOPLE PARTICIPATING IN OCCUPATIONS, STRIKES, VIGILS, MARCHES AND OTHER PROTESTS.

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CREATING COMMUNITY THROUGH:
OUTREACH, DIRECT ACTION, & MUTUAL AID

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Kansas City, MO

FOOD NOT BOMBS



AN INVITATION

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SETTING UP

It is important to get to know the food pantries and soup kitchens in your area. Learn where they are located, whom they serve, and how many they serve. This information will help you know where and when there is a need to provide a hot meal and, therefore, where and when to set-up a Food Not Bombs table out in public on the street or in a park.

Know a food kitchen that serves cold meals one day a week? Know where the local homeless camps are? The social service offices? A protest with which you sympathize? An unfortunate natural disaster? These are all great places to set up.

Have a large sign (Food Not Bombs, Free Food, etc) so folks understand why you are there and feel invited. You can move around from spot to spot or choose one specific spot and hold it down week after week.

With success you can begin imagining and acting on many other free services and programs. Free clothing, free medical, free skools, squatting. But first let's eat.



This zine was written by Food Not Bomb's volunteers but is in no way any kind of 'official' publication of the Food Not Bombs organization or any specific chapter. Made using other Food Not Bombs literature and our own words and experiences. Nothing but love for each other, nothing but contempt for the state and capitalism. No amount of free food will fix this world. But it is a good start! And remember: No matter how good an idea is, it remains only an idea until it is put into action. Hope to see you soon.

WHAT IS FOOD NOT BOMBS?

Food Not Bombs is a global all volunteer loose-knit group of independent collectives, serving free vegan food to others to protest war and poverty. Food Not Bombs' ideology is that corporate and government priorities are skewed to allow hunger to persist in the midst of abundance. To demonstrate this (and to reduce costs) a large amount of the food served by the group is surplus food from grocery stores, bakeries, farms, dumpsters and markets that would otherwise go to waste. The donated food is prepared into community meals which are served for free to anyone who is hungry. The central beliefs of the group are:

Always vegan or vegetarian and free to everyone.

Each chapter is independent and autonomous and makes decisions using the consensus process.

Food Not Bombs is dedicated to nonviolence.

Food Not Bombs works to call attention to poverty and homelessness in society by sharing food in public places and facilitating community gatherings of hungry people.

Anyone who wants to cook may cook, and anyone who wants to eat may eat. Food Not Bombs strives to include everyone. **The only prerequisite to receiving food is being hungry.**

Food

With flyers in hand, begin looking for sources of food. The first places to approach are the local food co-ops and health food stores. These types of stores tend to be more supportive and are a good place to practice your approach. Ask the produce managers if they ever throw away any excess produce. Explain that you are willing to collect any food which is still edible but which will not or cannot be sold. Tell them you plan to give the food to shelters and soup kitchens to feed hungry people. (You need to decide if you want to tell them that some of the food will be used for political organizing or even to tell them the name of the group. At some stores, this might not be an issue; at others, it might be better left unsaid, especially at first, until they get to know you better.) If they are interested and willing, arrange for a regular time to pick-up the food each day or as often as is practical. Early on, also visit bakeries and ask for day old bread, muffins, and bagels. Eventually, when you are able to handle the volume, start approaching food distributors, warehouses, and producers. When and where it is appropriate, leave literature which explains what Food Not Bombs does. Some groups hand out food that was dumpster dived. Be smart. Be safe.

Literature

There are lots of great sources for literature. Here are a few:

foodnotbombs.net/flyers.html

tangledwilderness.org/zines

sproutdistro.com/catalog/pdfs

crimethinc.com/tools/downloads/zines.html

theanarchistlibrary.org

And you can always write your own!

GETTING STARTED!

These are general suggestions you and your crew will find what works best and what your community needs most. Good luck out there.

Set-up Contact Information & Find Each Other

Food Not Bombs can be as large or as small as you are able to pull off. But it all begins with one person or a small group of people deciding that they want to make things better for themselves and for others.

This can begin with a PO box, an answering machine and/or a social media presence. That is of course after you have checked and made sure there isn't one already in your city, there are over 1,000 Food Not Bombs operating all across the planet! If there is not a local group where you live, then there is no one better to start one than you!

Another great way to find both volunteers and folks who need our services is to make flyers. These flyers can be distributed at events (protests, shows, etc) and in high traffic public areas (bulletin boards, street poles, etc).

Supplies

There are some basic supplies you will need to distribute food. You need somewhere or some how to prepare the food. You need a way to transport the food. A table is good for setting up in public. Silverware to serve the food. As a group try to figure out which of these things you already have access to and what you can do to get the rest of what you need at minimal cost or even better for free. And of course you will need the food! And literature explaining what it is we do and why among other topics.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

There are a lot of different types of folks who participate in Food Not Bombs. Perhaps the most common in receiving food are low income families and houseless people. Poverty is no accident. Take a good hard look at your surroundings. There are more than enough empty homes for every person who does not have a home to go to. There is more than enough food on this planet to feed everyone but rather than make it accessible it rots on supermarket shelves and in landfills. There are not enough jobs to keep every person employed yet there is plenty of labor to be done. We deserve more than this. We demand more than this. We are building more than this.

The food we share is for everybody. We do not check citizenship, we do not tell people how much they can take, what religion they must adhere to, we do not check their incomes or any other humiliating or discriminatory practice that is common of charity. In fact what we do isn't charity we base our actions around the concept of mutual aid. **Mutual Aid** is voluntary reciprocal exchange of resources and services for mutual benefit. We don't just hand out food, we build community and allow anyone to participate who desires to do so. It is empowering to know and support your neighbors.

We live in a world that puts a price tag on items every human being needs to survive. Many are faced every day with the hard 'choice' to either starve or risk being locked in a cage for taking what they need to survive. The government spends endless amounts of resources on police, prisons, and war but rarely spares much of anything to make sure our neighbors have enough to survive. They would rather buy bombs than food. They would rather distribute violence than community.



**A photo of the first arrest of Food Not Bombs.
Nine volunteers were arrested on August 15, 1988,
at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco charged with
sharing food without a permit.**