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Introduction

Why should my Jewish institution use this Guide?

“V’Achalta, V’Savata, u’Verachata”

You shall eat, you shall be satisfied and you shall bless G-d.

—Birkat hamazon, the traditional Jewish blessing after the meal.

Jewish meals unite us—whether it’s a Passover seder at home, a communal lunch in a JCC senior center or a Jewish summer camp, or a Shabbat dinner in your congregation. Food, rituals around food, distinctions about what’s “kosher” whether defined according to Jewish law or to other ethical standards, is a defining feature of our religion, tradition and culture. So, when a group of Jews sits down to eat in a JCC, a synagogue, a hospice program or a summer camp, what we serve and how we serve it matters.

Hazon’s Food Guide seeks to help us to approach the daily act of feeding ourselves and our communities with the kind of sanctity, satisfaction and gratitude our tradition celebrates. And believe me, in the age of industrial agriculture and in our increasingly “flat world,” this is not as easy as it seems. We do our best to provide nutritious meals to our children, our families, and our seniors. And yet, when we hand over a Styrofoam plate heaped with steaming industrial processed red meat, slaughtered by underpaid laborers and stewed in tomatoes imported from who-knows-where, we can’t help but be nagged by the uncomfortable question, is this really “kosher?” If we determine that who grows our food, where it comes from, what it’s fed, what’s sprayed on it and what it’s served on matters to