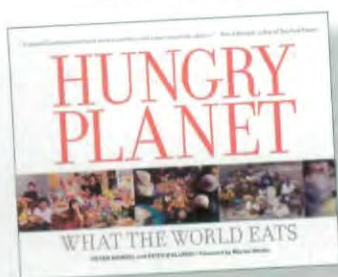


## BOOKS OF NOTE

### **HUNGRY PLANET: WHAT THE WORLD EATS**

by Peter Menzel and Faith D'Aluisio;  
Ten Speed Press, Napa, CA, 2005;  
288 pp., \$40.00 cloth (ISBN 1-58008-681-0).

Not all the planet is hungry. Indeed, in half of the 24 countries described in this volume, more than half of their populations are overweight and an eighth or



more are obese. But in a sense, these people are also hungry: for the sugar, fats, and salts that

fuel their heaviness and high blood pressure. This hunger creates the emerging pandemic of diabetes and obesity or, as one essay describes it, "diabetesity."

There is much in this book about the changes that have precipitated this epidemic, such as the obsolescence of manual labor and the global spread of fast foods and hypermarkets. In this vein, it also illustrates the expansion of transnational food corporations skilled in the creation and worldwide distribution of the soft drinks, candies, and fat- and sugar-laden foods that play to the biological propensity of humankind, evolved in times of scarcity, to favor these foods and flavors.

But *Hungry Planet* is not just a cautionary tale. It is above all a profound and touching testament to human diversity, struggle, family life, and environments—all focused around what we eat. This is the newest book from the photographer who created the extraordinary volume *Material World*, which features pictures of families from around the world displaying their possessions outside their homes. This book is similar, with photographs of 30 (often extended) families from 24 countries with a week's

worth of food on display. Accompanying these central photos are others showing their lives, neighborhoods, shopping trips, and favorite recipes, with statistical country data and interesting guest essays. Also included are photo collections comparing food, meals, and sources around the world.

The families are not a cross-section of the numerical global village. From refugees in Darfur to seal hunters in Greenland, the families depicted are somewhat more middle-class than most in the world, and totally absent are the millions who eat alone or without children. But their stories are moving, their food preparation and consumption is obviously central to their lives, and the food on display is fascinating in its diversity, despite the frequent presence of Coca-Cola and—to my surprise—the apparent growing universality of sushi. *Hungry Planet* is a table book both in size and theme but it is one you will want to read and eat all the way through.

Robert W. Kates  
Trenton, ME

### **ASSESSMENTS OF REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS: DESIGNING PROCESSES FOR THE EFFECTIVE USE OF SCIENCE IN DECISIONMAKING**

edited by Alexander E. Farrell and Jill Jäger; Resources for the Future Press, Washington, DC, 2005; 301 pp., \$70.00 cloth (ISBN 1-933115-04-1), \$34.95 paper (ISBN 1-933115-05-X).

Whether seeking to determine the scientific consensus in a particular area, to persuade for policy change, or to evaluate the feasibility of technical solutions, assessments are a common component of environmental decisionmaking. But what criteria make for a successful assessment? And are assessments effective at meeting their goals? What factors help or hinder, and how does context affect outcome? One of three eagerly anticipated volumes summarizing the work of the Global Environmental Assessment project, *Assessments of Regional and Global Environmental Risks: Designing Processes for the Effective Use of Science in Decisionmaking* provides a wealth

## OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST

### **GLOBAL ENERGY SHIFTS: FOSTERING SUSTAINABILITY IN A TURBULENT AGE**

by Bruce Podobnik; Temple University Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2005; 240 pp., \$22.95 paper (ISBN 1-59213-294-4)

### **GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY: NEW CHALLENGES FOR STATES, COMPANIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

edited by Ulrich Petschow, James Rosenau, and Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker; Greenleaf Publishing, Sheffield, United Kingdom, 2006; 245 pp., \$75.00 cloth (ISBN 1-874719-79-9)

### **PRECAUTIONARY TOOLS FOR RESHAPING ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

edited by Nancy J. Myers and Carolyn Raffensperger; MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2005; 348 pp., \$25.00 paper (ISBN 0-262-63323-X)

### **OUR EARTH'S CHANGING LAND AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF LAND-USE AND LAND-COVER CHANGE: VOLUMES 1 AND 2**

edited by Helmut Geist; Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 2005; 792 pp., \$225.00 cloth (ISBN 0-313-32704-1)

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