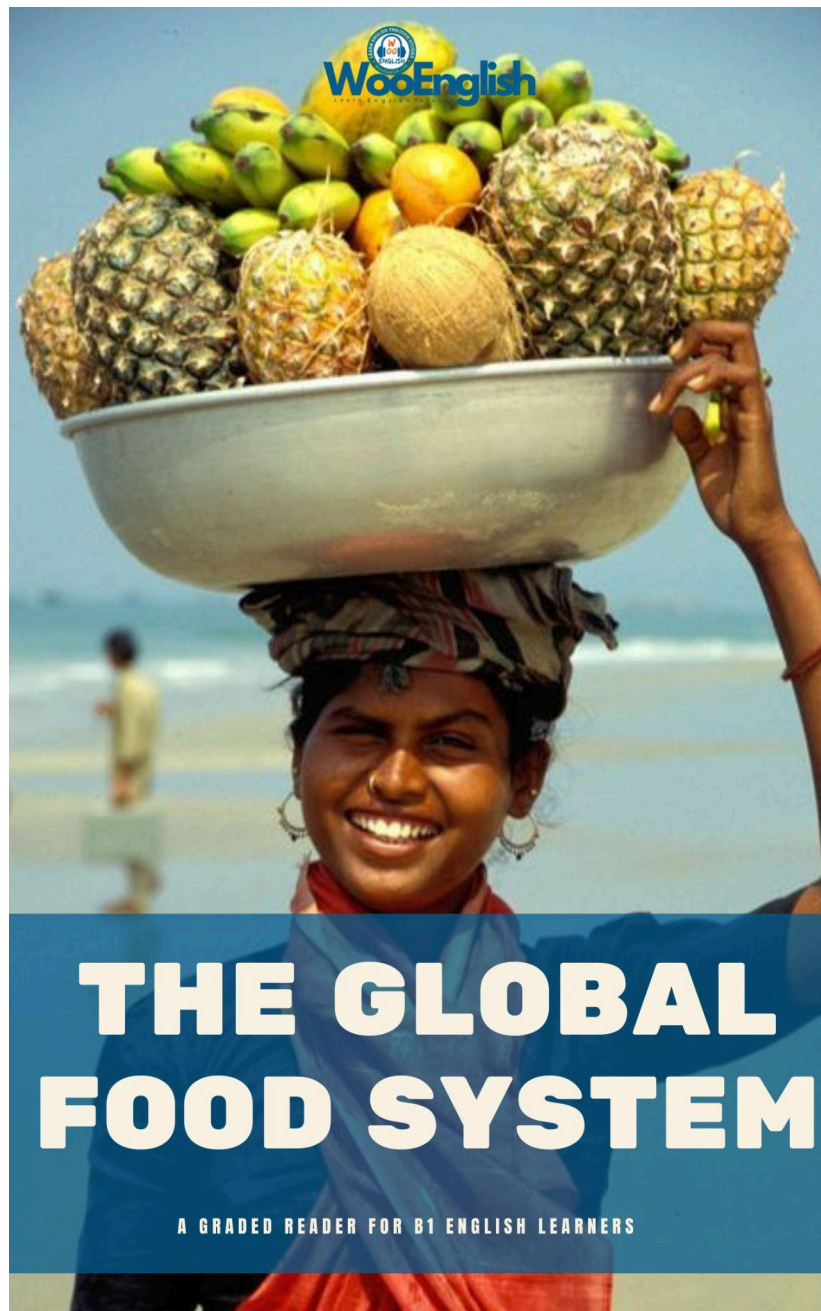


The Global Food System

by WooEnglish



Boost your English skills while exploring a crucial global topic! In this video, we unravel the mysteries of the global food system through an engaging story, offering you valuable listening practice and enriching your vocabulary. Get ready to learn and be entertained!

Every day, we eat food from all over the world. But where does it come from? In this chapter, we follow the journey of a single banana — and uncover the invisible system that feeds billions.

Chapter 1: What Is the Global Food System?

It begins with a banana.

Yellow, sweet, soft. You see it in your kitchen. Or in the shop down the street. Maybe it came from Ecuador... or the Philippines... or Costa Rica.

But have you ever asked — *how* did it get here?

Let's follow it.

The story of this banana starts on a farm. In the heat. Under the sun. A farmer named Luis walks between tall banana trees. He wears a wide hat. His hands are strong. His shirt is wet from sweat.

He works fast. He must cut the bananas before they are too ripe. Before they spoil.

Luis does not own the farm. He works for a big company. Every day, he cuts bananas for less than \$10. That's his wage. For eight hours. Sometimes more.

"It's hard," he says. "But I have no choice. This job feeds my family."

Once cut, the bananas go into boxes. Then, onto trucks. They travel to a port, hundreds of kilometers away. They go into a cold container. Like a giant fridge.

From there... a ship takes them across the ocean.

Thousands of bananas. Moving together. Not just to one country — but to many. To supermarkets. In London. In Tokyo. In Cape Town.

This is the global food system.

It is the network that moves food across the world. From farms. To factories. To warehouses. To stores. To you.

It sounds simple. But it is not.

Behind every apple... every bag of rice... every bottle of milk... is a long chain of people. Workers. Drivers. Packers. Farmers. Sellers. Scientists. CEOs.

And not everyone is treated the same.

Let's go back.

Do you know how many people work in agriculture today?

More than one billion. That's 1 in every 8 people on Earth.

Many are small farmers. They grow food for their families. And sometimes, for markets nearby.

Others work on big farms. For large companies. These companies grow food on huge lands. Sometimes the size of cities.

In the United States... one farm can feed thousands. In Africa... a small farm may feed only one family.

But here's the twist — the small farms produce one-third of the world's food.

Yes. One-third.

And yet... they are often poor. They don't own machines. They don't get fair prices. They face drought, floods, and rising costs.

Meanwhile, the big companies control the system. Just four companies — only four — control more than half of the global grain trade.

They decide prices. They decide how food moves.

They have power.

And when food prices go up... they often make more money.

But poor families? They suffer.

Let's meet Amina. She lives in northern Kenya. Her family grows maize — a type of corn. Last year, there was little rain. The maize dried up.

They had almost no harvest.

The market price of maize doubled. But Amina had nothing to sell.

Instead, she had to *buy* maize. At a high price.

“I cried,” she says. “We worked so hard. But we had to skip meals. My children went to bed hungry.”

It is not fair.

This is the dark side of the global food system.

Yes, it helps move food fast. Yes, it brings mangoes to cold countries. And fish to dry ones.

But it is not equal.

Rich countries import more. Poor countries often export cheap raw food — like cocoa beans or coffee — but don't earn much.

They don't control the factories. They don't make the chocolate. They don't set the price.

Back to our banana.

By the time it reaches your table... maybe 10 or 15 people have touched it. But who made the most money?

Not Luis.

Probably the supermarket.

Or the shipping company.

Or the banana brand you see on the sticker.

The farmer's share? Maybe 5%.

Sometimes even less.

So... who feeds the world?

Is it the farmer?

The driver?

The company?

Or you?

The truth is... all of them play a role. But not all of them have a voice.

And here's something more — every time we choose what to eat, we become part of the system.

Every bite is a choice.

Cheap? Local? Organic? Packaged? Imported?

Each one supports a different path. A different story.

And today, the global food system is under pressure.

Climate change. War. Pandemics. All of these make food harder to grow... and more expensive.

In 2022, food prices hit record highs.

Millions went hungry. Not because there wasn't enough food... but because it didn't reach the right people.

Or it was too expensive.

That's the world we live in now.

One where food moves fast. But not always fairly.

And as we look forward... we must ask: Can we build a better system?

One that feeds everyone... not just the lucky ones?

One that respects the farmers... and the planet?

This is what we'll explore in the next chapters.

We'll meet the workers, the dreamers, the rebels... the people fighting to fix the system.

Because this is not just about food.

It's about justice.

It's about survival.

And it's about us.



Chapter 2: From Farm to Fork

Let's start with a tomato.

Red. Juicy. Round.

You see it on your salad. On your sandwich. Maybe on top of a pizza.

But before it reached your plate... it went on a long, long trip.

This tomato was born in the soil of southern Spain. In a greenhouse — a big one, like a glass city. Inside, it's hot and bright. Even in winter.

Here, the tomatoes grow all year.

Maria is one of the workers. She comes from Romania. She wakes up at 5 a.m. every day. She rides her bike to the farm. It's quiet. The sun is still sleeping.

She picks tomatoes for hours. Her hands move fast. She wears gloves. But sometimes the juice still stains her fingers.

She gets paid by the kilo. Not by the hour. That means the more she picks, the more she earns.

"It's hard work," she says. "But I send money home. For my children. For their future."

After the harvest, the tomatoes go into boxes. They're not ready for your table yet. Not even close.

Next stop: Morocco.

Yes — the tomatoes go south. To a packing factory across the sea. It's cheaper there.

On the coast of Morocco, in a warehouse, machines clean the tomatoes. Workers sort them. They check for spots. They throw out the soft ones. Only the best can go to export.

Youssef is 19. This is his first job.

He puts labels on the boxes. He's fast. He laughs with his coworkers. But his face grows serious when we ask about his dreams.

"I want to be a mechanic," he says. "But first, I must work. My family needs this money."

The boxes now have stickers: "Grown in Spain. Packed in Morocco."

Next, they go on a truck.

The road is long. Through deserts, cities, and finally to a port.

From there, they go by ship. Up through the sea. Past Portugal. Past France. All the way to England.

This takes days.

And while the tomatoes travel, they must stay cold. Not too warm. Not too cold. If the temperature changes... they rot.

At a port near London, the tomatoes arrive. From there, they go to a distribution center.

It's like a giant puzzle.

Boxes go in. Orders go out. Trucks wait in line. The goal is speed. Get the tomatoes to stores. Fast. Fresh.

And finally... a supermarket.

Maybe the one you know. Big lights. Clean shelves. Music in the background.

You see the tomato.

You put it in your basket.

You don't think about Spain. Or Morocco. Or Maria. Or Youssef.

But that tomato holds all their stories.

And it's not just tomatoes.

Bread. Milk. Chicken. Pineapples. Everything moves.

A steak in Germany may come from a cow in Brazil.

Chocolate in Japan starts with cocoa beans in Ghana.

Shrimp in Canada could be peeled by hand in Thailand.

The journey from farm to fork is long. Complicated. And full of people.

Each one plays a part.

But here's something important: not all parts are paid the same.

In rich countries, food is cheap. Fast. Easy.

In poor countries, food is work. It's sweat. Sometimes it's pain.

Why does this happen?

Because the food system tries to cut costs. Make food cheaper. Make profit bigger.

And the easiest way? Pay workers less. Move jobs to places where wages are low.

But that has a price.

For people. For the planet.

Think about the trucks. The ships. The energy it takes to move food.

The carbon from fuel. The plastic for wrapping. The waste when food goes bad.

Almost one-third of all food in the world is wasted. That's one in every three meals.

While others go hungry.

It's strange, isn't it?

We move food so far... and still, not everyone eats.

This is the food system. Efficient. Powerful. But also... unfair.

Let's go back to Maria.

Last year, she got sick. She had no health insurance. No sick pay. She had to stay home.
No work. No money.

Youssef? He wants to study. But his salary is too small. He works long hours. His dream
feels far away.

And yet... without them, your tomato wouldn't be here.

So next time you eat... stop. Think.

Where did this food come from?

Who picked it? Who packed it? Who shipped it?

And... who didn't get enough?

Because food doesn't just grow. It moves.

And every step tells a story.



Chapter 3: Hunger in a World of Plenty

Look around.

Supermarket shelves... full.

Markets... full.

Restaurants... full.

And yet...

Tonight, around 800 million people will go to bed hungry.

How can that be?

We grow enough food. In fact, we grow more than enough. Experts say we grow enough to feed 10 billion people.

But we are only 8 billion.

So... what's the problem?

Let's meet Rosa.

She is 12 years old. She lives in a small village in Honduras. Her family grows beans and corn. But last year, there was a long drought.

No rain. No harvest.

Now, they eat only once or twice a day. Some days, there's no food at all.

Rosa's mother gives her own portion to the children.

"I'm a mother," she says. "They need it more than I do."

Rosa is thin. She walks to school with an empty stomach.

"I feel dizzy," she says quietly. "But I still try to study."

This is hunger. Not just the kind that lasts a few hours... but the kind that lasts for days, weeks, months.

And it's not just in poor countries.

In the United States — the richest country in the world — 1 in 7 children lives in a home without enough food.

In the United Kingdom, food banks are growing. More and more families cannot afford groceries.

So we must ask again — why?

The answer is not simple. But here are some of the reasons.

1. Poverty.

Most hunger is not about food. It's about money.

If you don't have money, you can't buy food — even if it's right in front of you.

Rosa's family lost their crops. They had no savings. They had no way to buy food from the store.

It's the same for many farmers. They grow food... but cannot afford to eat well.

Yes — the people who grow the food... often go hungry.

2. War and conflict.

In Yemen, in Sudan, in Gaza... people face hunger because of war.

Farms are destroyed. Trucks can't move. Markets close.

In war zones, even if there is food, it's too dangerous to get it.

And sometimes... food becomes a weapon. A way to control people. Or punish them.

3. Climate change.

Drought. Floods. Fires. Storms.

These are getting worse. And they hit farmers hard.

In East Africa, four seasons of no rain destroyed crops.

In Pakistan, huge floods washed away farms and animals.

Less food means higher prices.

And higher prices mean more hunger.

4. Waste.

One-third of all food is wasted.

Yes — one in every three apples, breads, or fish is thrown away.

Some go bad during transport. Some are lost in storage. Some are rejected by supermarkets for not “looking perfect.”

And some... we simply throw away at home.

This is the saddest part.

So much food... wasted.

While others have nothing.

Let's go to a city in France.

A man named Julien works at a charity kitchen. They collect leftover food from stores.

Yogurt that is one day from expiring. Bread that wasn't sold. Fruit with small spots.

Julien and his team cook meals with it.

Every night, people come to eat.

Families. Old people. Students.

Julien says, “We don’t need to grow more food. We need to share it better.”

And maybe he’s right.

Because the truth is... hunger is not about shortage.

It’s about *access*.

Food may exist — but who can reach it?

Who can afford it?

Let’s go to India.

Arun drives a cart through the city. He sells bananas.

He buys them from a wholesaler. But the price has gone up. Fuel is more expensive. The bananas come from far away.

So Arun raises his price.

But fewer people buy.

And when they don’t sell... the bananas rot.

He loses money. They lose food.

Everyone loses.

This is the food system.

It’s big. But fragile.

Strong... and broken.

Here’s one more fact.

Most of the world’s hungry people are women and children.

Why?

Because in many places, women eat last.

In some families, men get the biggest portion. Boys before girls. Mothers after everyone.

And when food is low... the women go without.

Like Rosa's mother.

She smiles, but her eyes are tired.

"I just want my children to grow," she says.

So what can we do?

We can start by seeing the truth.

That hunger is not far away. It's here. In our cities. In our streets. Maybe even in our schools.

We can support food banks. We can reduce waste. We can ask better questions.

Where does our food come from?

Who doesn't have enough?

And why?

Because hunger in a world of plenty... is not a mystery.

It is a problem we *can* solve.

If we listen. If we care. If we act.

Because food is a right — not a gift.

And everyone, everywhere... deserves a full plate.

Chapter 4: The Power of Big Food

Close your eyes.

Think of your favorite snack.

Chips? Chocolate? Cookies?

Now open your eyes... and look at the label.

Do you see a brand name? Maybe Nestlé... PepsiCo... Unilever... or Cargill?

These are some of the biggest food companies in the world.

And here's the truth — just **10 companies** control more than half of the food brands in the supermarket.

Yes... only ten.

They make the cereal. The soup. The juice. The frozen pizza. The ketchup. Even the baby food.

They are everywhere.

But most people don't know.

Let's meet Joseph.

He lives in Nigeria. He grows cocoa — the main ingredient in chocolate.

Every morning, he walks to his small farm. He checks the trees. He cuts the cocoa pods by hand.

It's hard work. His hands are full of cuts. His back hurts. But he keeps going.

He sells his cocoa to a trader. The trader sells it to a company. The company makes chocolate. And sells it in stores around the world.

Joseph earns just a few cents per bar.

The chocolate bar in the shop? It costs \$2.

Joseph gets maybe **5 cents** of that.

The rest goes to shipping. Marketing. Processing. And profit — for the company.

“It’s not fair,” he says. “We grow the cocoa. But we stay poor.”

And he’s right.

Because these big companies — sometimes called **Big Food** — hold the power.

They decide the price they pay for crops.

They decide what ingredients go into products.

They even decide how food looks and tastes.

Let’s go to a lab in Switzerland.

Inside, food scientists are testing a new flavor for potato chips. They try different levels of salt. Sugar. Fat.

Why?

Because these ingredients make people want more.

More chips. More cookies. More drinks.

And more profit.

But there’s a problem.

Too much sugar, fat, and salt can lead to health problems.

Obesity. Diabetes. Heart disease.

In many countries, these health problems are growing fast.

In Mexico, nearly 1 in 3 adults is obese.

In the U.S., it's almost 4 in 10.

And many of these health problems are linked to ultra-processed foods — the kind that Big Food sells.

So... who is responsible?

Is it the companies?

The governments?

Or the people who eat the food?

Let's look at another part of the system: **Seeds**.

Almost every farmer needs seeds. But today, **four companies** control over 60% of the global seed market.

Monsanto. Bayer. Syngenta. BASF.

These companies also sell chemicals — pesticides and fertilizers — that farmers use with the seeds.

It's a package.

And sometimes, farmers cannot save seeds from one season to the next. They must buy new ones. Every year.

This creates **dependence**.

Farmers lose control. Big companies gain more.

In India, many small farmers take loans to buy seeds and chemicals. When crops fail, they fall into debt.

Some lose their land.

Some... lose hope.

“I wanted to grow food,” says Raj, a farmer in Maharashtra. “Now I feel like a servant.”

Let’s go back to the supermarkets.

Look at the shelves. So many choices. So many colors.

But look closer.

Many “different” brands... belong to the same company.

So it looks like you have freedom to choose.

But do you?

Big Food companies also spend millions on advertising. They tell us what to eat. What to drink. What is “cool.” What is “normal.”

They also spend money to influence governments. To stop new food laws. To avoid taxes on sugar or unhealthy products.

In 2019, food companies spent over **\$11 billion** on advertising in the U.S. alone.

Compare that to how much is spent on healthy eating education... it’s not even close.

So, what can we do?

Some people are fighting back.

In Chile, a new law requires warning labels on foods with too much sugar, fat, or salt.

In France, schools now teach children about fresh, local food.

In Brazil, activists push for food grown by small farmers — not just big companies.

And you, too, have power.

Every time you shop. Every time you eat. Every time you talk about food.

You can choose local. Fresh. Fair.

You can ask questions.

Who made this?

Where did it come from?

Who got paid?

Because food is not just about taste.

It's about power.

And when only a few companies control what we eat... we must ask: Is this system fair?

Or is it dangerous?

Let's not be afraid to look closer.

Let's not be afraid to imagine something better.

Because the future of food is in our hands — not just theirs.



Chapter 5: Food Waste — A Silent Crisis

Imagine this.

You are hungry. Your stomach hurts. There is no food in the house.

Now imagine this.

Just a few streets away... a bakery throws away fresh bread. A restaurant dumps half-eaten meals. A store throws out bananas with brown spots.

Every year, we waste over **1 billion tons** of food.

Yes — 1 billion tons.

That's **one-third** of all the food we grow.

Gone. Thrown away.

While people starve.

How can this be?

Let's follow a truck in a city in Germany.

It stops behind a supermarket. The driver opens the back door. Inside — boxes of food.

Loaves of bread. Packs of cheese. Bags of apples.

The food is still good.

But the labels say: *Best Before Yesterday*.

So the store throws it out.

Not because it's unsafe. But because of **dates**.

“Best before” does not mean “bad after.”

But many stores don't take the risk.

Better to waste it... than to sell it.

Now let's go to a hotel in Dubai.

At the end of a wedding party, the buffet is still full.

Rice. Chicken. Salad. Cake.

So much food.

The guests leave. The workers clean up. All the food goes into big trash bags.

Perfect food. Untouched.

Gone.

One worker says, "It hurts to throw it away. But what can we do?"

Now, let's visit a farm in the U.K.

James grows carrots. Long, orange, crunchy.

But not all carrots are "perfect."

Some are too small. Some are bent. Some have little cracks.

Supermarkets only want the best shape.

So James must leave some in the ground.

Or throw them away.

"It's sad," he says. "They taste the same. But they don't look 'pretty' enough."

Why do we waste so much?

Here are some reasons.

1. Looks.

Stores reject “ugly” fruits and vegetables. Even if they are healthy and tasty.

2. Labels.

People think food goes bad after the date. Even when it’s still safe.

3. Portions.

Restaurants serve too much. People can’t finish. The rest is wasted.

4. Planning.

We buy more than we need. Then forget it in the fridge.

5. Money.

In rich countries, food is cheap. So wasting it doesn’t feel like a big loss.

But it is a big loss.

Not just of food.

But of water. Energy. Labor. Land.

To grow one apple, it takes **70 liters of water**.

To raise one cow, it takes **thousands**.

And when we waste food... we waste all of that too.

And here’s something worse.

When food rots in landfills, it creates **methane**. A gas that warms the planet.

So food waste is also a climate problem.

But there is hope.

Let’s meet Noor.

She lives in Jordan. She started a project called “Fridge of Kindness.”

It's a public fridge in her neighborhood.

People leave extra food. Others come and take what they need.

No money. No shame.

Just sharing.

Every day, mothers, students, and workers come to the fridge.

“Food is love,” Noor says. “Why throw it away, when someone else is hungry?”

Now meet Jean-Luc. He is a chef in Paris.

He cooks with “imperfect” vegetables.

Twisted carrots. Small onions. Bruised tomatoes.

He turns them into soup. Stew. Sauce.

Delicious meals.

He says, “Ugly food is still good food.”

Some supermarkets now sell these fruits and vegetables at lower prices.

They call them “wonky veg” or “imperfect picks.”

Customers like them. And they save money too.

And in South Korea, people pay to throw away food waste.

Each house has a smart bin. It weighs the food inside. You pay by the kilo.

So people think twice before wasting.

And it works.

South Korea now recycles **95%** of its food waste.

Smart ideas.

But we can all help.

Here's how:

- Check your fridge. Use what you have.
- Don't be afraid of "ugly" fruits.
- Learn the difference between "best before" and "use by."
- Cook smaller portions. Or save the rest for later.
- Share extra food with neighbors.
- Compost leftovers, if you can.

Because wasting food is not just about money.

It's about respect.

Respect for the farmer who grew it.

Respect for the worker who packed it.

Respect for the planet that gave it.

And for the millions who still go to bed hungry.

So let's not stay silent.

Let's break this cycle.

Let's stop the waste.

Let's feed each other — not the trash.



Chapter 6: Small Farmers, Big Challenges

Early morning. The sky is still dark.

In a village in Nepal, Maya walks to her field. A scarf covers her head. She carries a basket on her back.

The air is cold. The soil is wet.

She begins to work.

She pulls weeds. She checks her tomato plants. She gives water, carefully.

This is her life. Every day. No break. No rest.

Maya is a small farmer.

She owns just one hectare of land — about the size of a football field.

But from that small space... she grows food for her family. And for her village.

Rice, tomatoes, beans, onions.

She grows with her hands. With love. With hope.

But life is not easy.

Last year, the rain came late. Then, too much came at once. Her crops flooded.

She lost half of her harvest.

She had no insurance. No savings. She had to borrow money.

Now, she is in debt.

“I work harder and harder,” she says, “but I never catch up.”

And Maya is not alone.

Across the world, there are more than **500 million small farms**.

They grow about **one-third of all food** in the world.

But most of these farmers live in poverty.

Why?

Let's look at the reasons.

1. Low prices.

Small farmers sell to middlemen — traders who take the food to markets.

But the farmers get paid very little.

Sometimes, just enough to survive.

Sometimes... not even that.

Let's visit José in Peru.

He grows coffee in the mountains.

He wakes early. Picks beans by hand. Dries them in the sun.

But the price of coffee on the world market dropped last year.

Now, he earns less — even though he works the same.

"I don't control the price," he says. "The market decides. I just try to live."

2. Lack of support.

Many small farmers don't have tractors. Or irrigation. Or storage.

They don't have access to good seeds or training.

Sometimes, they don't even have legal rights to their land.

Without these tools, they can't grow more. Or earn more.

And when they ask for help... no one listens.

3. Climate change.

The weather is changing.

Too hot. Too dry. Too wet.

In Kenya, Amina's cows no longer have grass to eat. The land is dry. The river is gone.

She walks five kilometers to find water.

She used to sell milk. Now... there is no milk.

"Everything is harder now," she says. "The climate has changed. And we suffer."

4. Big competition.

Small farmers compete with big farms.

Big farms use machines. They grow more. They sell for less.

And the small farmers get pushed out.

Let's go to the Philippines.

Leo grows bananas.

But a large company moved in. They bought land. Built roads. Sold bananas to supermarkets around the world.

Leo cannot match their price.

Now, his bananas sit in the sun. Unsold.

And still, he keeps trying.

Because he loves his land. And he has no other choice.

So... what can be done?

There is hope.

In India, a group of women formed a farming cooperative.

They share tools. Share seeds. Share knowledge.

They sell their vegetables together. In local markets. For fair prices.

With their own voices. Their own power.

In Uganda, a program helps farmers grow “climate-smart” crops — like millet and cassava.

These crops need less water. They survive heat. They bring better harvests.

And in Brazil, the government once had a simple rule:

Every school must buy food from **local small farmers**.

Fresh. Local. Healthy.

Farmers earn more. Children eat better.

It worked.

And it showed something important.

When small farmers get support... everyone wins.

But today, that support is still too small.

Most money goes to large farms. Most attention goes to big food companies.

And still, the small farmers carry the weight.

They feed us.

But they are tired.

“I don’t want much,” Maya says. “Just a fair chance. Just a little help.”

We must listen.

Because small farmers are not weak.

They are strong. Brave. Smart.

But they are fighting too many battles alone.

Debt. Drought. Injustice.

And still, they plant seeds.

Still, they believe in the next harvest.

Still, they feed the world.

So the next time you eat...

Think of Maya. Of José. Of Amina. Of Leo.

Think of the hands that grew your food.

And ask:

Are we giving them enough?

Or are we just taking?



Chapter 7: Climate and Crops

The sky is blue. The sun is strong. Too strong.

In northern India, the ground is dry and cracked.

Ravi stands in the middle of his field. He looks down. His rice plants are dying.

“No rain this year,” he says. “Nothing is growing.”

He shakes his head. He looks tired. His voice is low.

“I don’t know what to do.”

Ravi is a farmer. He has worked this land since he was a boy.

But now, things are changing.

Too fast.

Too big.

This is climate change.

And it’s already here.

Around the world, farmers are watching their crops fail.

Rain comes too late... or all at once.

Winters are warmer. Summers are hotter.

Floods wash away seeds.

Drought dries the soil.

And farmers are caught in the middle.

In Ethiopia, the coffee plants are moving uphill.

Why?

Because coffee needs cool air. But the lowlands are now too hot.

So farmers must climb higher. Look for new land. Start again.

But not everyone can move.

In California, fires burn fields. In Pakistan, floods cover farms in water.

In the Philippines, typhoons break trees and houses.

And each time... food is lost.

Money is lost.

Hope is lost.

The problem is not small.

According to scientists, climate change could reduce food production by **30%** in some regions.

That means less rice, less wheat, less maize... for more and more people.

And here's the scary part — the people who grow the food are often the ones who suffer the most.

Like Fatima, in Morocco.

She grows olives.

But the trees are dry. They give fewer fruits.

Her water well is almost empty.

She walks further now, to find water for her family.

And for her goats.

“We had good years before,” she says. “But now... we only wait for rain. And sometimes, it never comes.”

So what can farmers do?

Some are trying to adapt.

Let’s go to Vietnam.

There, the sea is rising. Salt water is entering rice fields. The rice dies.

So farmers are planting shrimp instead.

They are turning rice farms... into shrimp farms.

Smart. But not easy.

Others try new seeds. Seeds that grow faster. Or need less water.

In Kenya, farmers plant **sorghum** — a grain that grows well in dry soil.

In Bangladesh, they plant “floating gardens” — vegetables that grow on rafts, in the water.

These are **climate-smart solutions**.

They are creative.

But they need support.

Farmers need training. Tools. New technology. Money.

And they need information.

What will the weather be like next week?

When should I plant?

What crop will survive?

In some places, farmers now get help from apps.

Yes — mobile apps.

They check weather, soil, and market prices.

They help farmers make better choices.

But not everyone has a smartphone.

And not every country invests in small farmers.

That must change.

Because climate change is not just a farming problem.

It's a food problem.

A hunger problem.

A survival problem.

And it affects all of us.

If crops fail in one country, food prices go up in another.

If drought hits wheat fields in Canada, bread in Egypt becomes more expensive.

If storms destroy banana farms in the Caribbean, supermarkets in Europe see empty shelves.

We are all connected.

So the question is...

Can we adapt in time?

Some people say yes.

They talk about **regenerative farming** — a way of growing food that helps the planet.

It means less chemicals. More compost. Healthier soil.

Soil that holds water. Soil that stores carbon. Soil that stays strong in heat and rain.

In Brazil, one farmer turned his dry land into green land... just by changing how he planted.

He added trees. Let animals graze in new ways. Used natural compost.

And now?

His land grows more than ever.

His farm is alive.

But again... change is hard.

And farmers need help.

From governments. From companies. From all of us.

Because we all eat. We all depend on crops.

And the climate touches everything.

Rain. Soil. Seasons. Seeds.

Everything.

Let's go back to Ravi, in India.

This year was hard. His rice died.

But next year, he wants to try **millets** — small grains that need less water.

“I must try something,” he says. “I cannot give up.”

He looks at the sky again.

Still blue. Still no clouds.

But in his hands... he holds seeds.

And in his heart... a little hope.

Because farmers don't stop.

They plant.

They wait.

They believe.

And now, more than ever, we must believe with them.



Chapter 8: Trade Wars and Food Prices

You walk into the store.

You reach for your usual bag of rice... but something is different.

The price is higher.

Again.

You check the label. Same rice. Same size.

So why is it more expensive?

It's not just the store. It's not just the farmer.

It's the world.

Because food prices don't just depend on weather or harvest.

They depend on **trade**. On **rules**, **roads**, and **relationships** between countries.

Let's start with wheat.

Wheat makes bread. Pasta. Noodles. Biscuits.

It feeds billions of people.

Now... imagine this:

A war starts in a country that grows a lot of wheat — like Ukraine.

Trucks stop. Ports close. Farmers can't plant. Ships can't move.

Suddenly, there is **less wheat** in the global market.

And when there's less wheat... the price goes up.

Not just in Ukraine.

But in Egypt. In Indonesia. In Brazil.

And yes... even in your supermarket.

This happened in 2022.

After the war in Ukraine began, wheat prices rose by more than **40%**.

Bread became more expensive.

So did pasta. And cereal.

Millions of people could no longer afford basic food.

Now let's talk about oil.

Not engine oil... but **cooking oil**.

Soy oil. Sunflower oil. Palm oil.

It's in nearly everything — chips, sauces, cookies, instant noodles.

In 2021, Indonesia banned palm oil exports for a few weeks.

Why?

Because they wanted to protect their local prices.

But that one decision shook the world.

Other countries couldn't get enough oil.

Prices jumped.

Suddenly, even cooking became more expensive.

Now think of a ship.

One big ship.

In 2021, a ship called the *Ever Given* got stuck in the Suez Canal.

The canal is a narrow waterway between Europe and Asia.

Thousands of ships pass through it each year — many carrying food.

When the ship got stuck, no one could pass.

It was stuck for **six days**.

But in those six days, global trade lost billions of dollars.

Food shipments were delayed. Some products spoiled. Prices rose.

Yes... **one ship** can change the world.

Because the food system is fast — but fragile.

It's global.

But also risky.

Let's meet Lina, in Lebanon.

She runs a small bakery.

She used to buy flour for a good price.

But after the war in Ukraine, her costs doubled.

Now, some customers can't afford her bread.

Some stop coming.

And Lina? She works the same. Bakes the same. But earns less.

"It's not our war," she says. "But we still feel it."

Now meet Jacob, in Canada.

He grows canola — a crop used for oil.

When the war started, demand for oil went up.

Suddenly, Jacob got **higher prices** for his crop.

For him, it was good.

More profit. More money.

One war. Two stories.

This is how trade works.

It connects us — in good ways, and bad.

And sometimes... it becomes a weapon.

Countries use **food exports** like tools.

They stop selling rice or wheat during a crisis.

They block food to punish others.

It's called a **trade war**.

No guns. No bombs. Just rules and restrictions.

But the effect can be the same.

Hunger. Fear. Scarcity.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries closed borders.

They stopped food exports.

Not because there wasn't enough food...

But because they were scared.

They wanted to protect themselves.

And that fear caused panic.

Prices went up.

Poor countries suffered most.

Because poor countries often import food.

They don't grow enough. Or don't have strong trade deals.

So when global prices rise... they pay more.

Or get nothing.

And hunger grows.

So what can we do?

We need a **fairer trade system**.

One that protects people — not just profits.

We need **better storage**. Better roads. Smarter shipping.

We need more **local food**, too.

Food that doesn't need to cross oceans.

Because local food is safer in a crisis.

And more sustainable for the planet.

Some countries are already trying.

In Ghana, the government is helping farmers grow more rice — so the country doesn't need to import as much.

In France, schools buy local vegetables for student meals.

In Thailand, people grow food in city gardens — to reduce dependence on imports.

These are small steps.

But they matter.

Because the food system is not just a machine.

It's a web.

Touch one part... and the whole thing moves.

A war. A law. A ship.

And your dinner changes.

So the next time you see the price of bread rise...

Don't just blame the shop.

Look at the bigger picture.

And remember — the food on your plate has crossed borders, oceans, and sometimes, politics.

It carries a story.

And sometimes... a struggle.



Chapter 9: Who Owns the Seeds?

It starts with a seed.

Small. Light. Quiet.

You hold it in your hand. It looks like nothing.

But inside... is life.

Plant it. Water it. Wait.

And soon — it becomes something more.

Wheat. Rice. Corn. Beans. Vegetables.

Food.

For thousands of years, farmers saved seeds. They chose the best ones from each harvest. Strong seeds. Tasty ones. Seeds that could survive wind, heat, or cold.

They shared seeds with neighbors. Traded them at markets. Passed them to their children.

Seeds were a gift.

Seeds were freedom.

But today... many seeds are no longer free.

Let's meet Ram in India.

He grows cotton.

In the past, he saved cotton seeds from his own fields. He used them the next year. And the next.

But then, a big company came. They sold a new type of cotton seed.

It grew fast. It fought pests. It gave more cotton.

But there was a catch...

He couldn't save those seeds.

They were **patented**.

That means — legally owned by the company.

Ram had to buy new seeds every year. If he tried to reuse them, he could be fined. Or taken to court.

“I liked the seeds,” he says. “But now I’m trapped.”

And he's not alone.

All over the world, farmers now use **commercial seeds** — seeds made and sold by large companies.

Some are hybrid seeds — they don't grow true if saved.

Others are genetically modified — changed in a lab, to resist insects or disease.

These seeds can be useful. They can bring big harvests.

But they also come with **rules**. And **contracts**. And **costs**.

Let's pause here.

What is a patent?

A patent is a special legal right. It means **you own an invention**. No one else can use it without permission.

And yes... companies can patent seeds.

Not the wild seeds. Not the ones from nature.

But the ones they create — in labs, in greenhouses.

That's allowed by law in many countries.

But is it right?

Can anyone really *own* life?

Let's go to Kenya.

A farmer named Grace grows maize. Last year, she bought seeds from a local store.

But the price was high. Too high.

She wanted to use her saved seeds. But they didn't grow well anymore. The weather had changed. The soil was tired.

So she had to buy again.

"It's like chasing a train," she says. "The price goes up, but I stay in the same place."

And here's another problem.

Just **four companies** control over **half** of the world's seed market.

Four.

They decide what kinds of seeds are available. What crops are grown. What farmers can afford.

This means less choice.

Less freedom.

And sometimes... less diversity.

Why does that matter?

Because the world needs **many kinds** of seeds.

Different plants grow in different soils. Some survive drought. Some resist pests. Some need less water.

If we only use a few seed types — and one fails — we risk losing everything.

Biodiversity is protection.

Variety is strength.

In the Philippines, one group is doing things differently.

They run a **community seed bank**.

It's like a library — but for seeds.

Farmers bring their local seeds. They store them safely. They share them freely.

Old rice seeds. Local tomatoes. Native beans.

All saved. All protected.

“It's our seed memory,” says the leader. “A treasure for the future.”

Seed banks now exist in many countries — from Nepal to Peru to Norway.

The biggest one is in the Arctic Circle. It's called the **Svalbard Global Seed Vault**.

It holds millions of seeds. Frozen. Safe.

In case of war. Or disaster. Or climate change.

A backup... for the world.

But we also need freedom now.

Not just in the future.

Because without seed freedom, farmers lose power.

They must follow rules. Pay more. Grow less.

And in some places, farmers are fighting back.

In Colombia, protests broke out when seed laws became too strict.

In India, farmers ask for the right to save and share seeds — without fear.

In Brazil, movements call for **seed sovereignty** — the idea that seeds should belong to the people, not companies.

And maybe... they're right.

Because food starts with seeds.

And seeds... start with freedom.

Freedom to grow. To save. To share. To feed.

So the question is not just **who owns the seeds**.

It's **who owns the future**.

Let's go back to Ram.

This year, he joined a local seed group.

They grow traditional cotton. Not modified. No patent.

The plants are smaller. But strong.

And he smiles when he says:

“These seeds... are mine. And I will plant them again.”

Chapter 10: Can We Feed the Future?

Close your eyes.

Imagine the year 2050.

Cities are bigger. The world is hotter. There are more storms. More people.

Ten billion people.

All of them need food. Every single day.

Rice. Bread. Milk. Vegetables. Fruit. Meat.

But here's the big question...

Can we feed them all?

And can we do it... **without killing the planet?**

Let's look at where we are now.

Every year, we cut down forests to grow more crops.

We use more chemicals. We take more water.

The soil becomes weaker. The rivers run dry.

The planet is shouting.

And still... millions go hungry.

So no — more food alone is not the answer.

We need **smarter food. Fairer food. Cleaner food.**

Let's start with farms.

Farms of the future must be different.

Some are already changing.

In the Netherlands, high-tech greenhouses grow tomatoes all year.

They use less water. Less land. No soil at all.

In Singapore, farmers grow lettuce inside tall buildings. It's called **vertical farming**.

LED lights replace sunlight. Computers control the temperature. No pesticides needed.

It's not science fiction.

It's real.

And it's growing.

But technology is not the only answer.

Old ideas also help.

In Malawi, farmers plant different crops together — maize with beans, groundnuts with cassava.

This protects the soil. It feeds more people. It costs less.

In Ecuador, farmers use **agroforestry** — they grow food under trees.

Shade for crops. Roots for the soil. Life for the land.

These methods are not new.

They come from tradition. From wisdom. From the past.

And now... they can shape the future.

But there's another problem.

Meat.

Yes — meat.

Raising animals takes a lot of land. A lot of water. And it produces gas that warms the planet.

Beef, especially.

One kilo of beef uses **15,000 liters of water**.

That's like **250 showers**.

So what can we do?

Some people eat less meat. Or no meat at all.

Some try **plant-based meat** — burgers made from peas or soybeans.

And now... some scientists are growing **real meat** from animal cells.

No farm. No slaughter. Just meat, made in a lab.

Strange? Maybe.

But maybe also... part of the solution.

Because we must feed more people, with less harm.

Let's go to Nigeria.

Ada is 17. Her school has a garden. She learns to grow vegetables. To cook local food.

She learns about food waste, plastic, and climate change.

She says, "I want to be a food scientist. I want to help my country eat better."

Young people like Ada are the future.

And they want change.

They want to know: Where does my food come from? Who made it? Was it fair?

They want local. Fresh. Healthy. Just.

And they want **a planet that can still breathe.**

Here's the truth:

We can feed the future.

But not with the same old system.

Not with waste.

Not with pollution.

Not with unfair prices for farmers and high profits for only a few.

We need a new way.

A food system that feeds **people and planet.**

A system that pays farmers fairly.

A system that respects water, soil, and seeds.

A system where food is a **right**, not a luxury.

So what can **you** do?

More than you think.

- Eat seasonally.
- Choose local when you can.
- Waste less.
- Support small farmers and fair trade.
- Ask questions.

- Teach others.
- Vote for leaders who protect land and food.

Because food is not just about eating.

It's about caring.

Caring for your health.

Caring for the hands that grow your food.

Caring for the earth that gives it.

Let's go back to the beginning.

To the farmer in the field.

The worker in the factory.

The seed in the soil. And the plate on your table.

Everything is connected. And the future?

It depends on **what we do today**.

The time is now.

Let's grow food that heals. That nourishes. That includes.

Let's build a food system that feeds **everyone** — not just the lucky. Let's feed the world... and not forget to feed the future.



THE END

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