

# PART THREE

## Food Choices in the Modern World

*“As the diseases of nutritional deficiency have diminished, they have been replaced by diseases of dietary excess and imbalance—problems that now rank among the leading causes of death in the United States, touch the lives of most Americans, and generate substantial health care costs.”*

*—Surgeon General’s Report  
on Nutrition and Health,  
July 27, 1988<sup>136</sup>*

By investing the time and effort required to read the previous seven chapters, you have, we hope, learned a good deal about green foods and why we need them. But for some the question still remains: “Why change? I’ve done all right so far with the foods I’ve been eating.” The present section provides answers to this question.

The foods we eat may not be treating us as well as we think they are. Our ways of eating not only influence how we’ll feel tomorrow, they might also help determine how we’ll feel ten, twenty, or thirty years from now. Furthermore, the foods we consume as a society have a huge impact on our environment and natural resources. This, of course, also affects how we’ll feel thirty years from now. There are plenty of reasons to pay attention to what we eat, and to make changes if necessary.

In this section we look first at the diets of our ancestors for clues about the kinds of foods for which our bodies may be best suited. We then look at the changes which have taken place in how we eat, in what we eat, and in our health status in relatively recent times.