

## COMFORT FOODS

### Note:

Readers of this column know that Dr. K sometimes asks his alter ego, Dr. Bob to fill in sometimes. Dr. K would like you all to know that Dr. Bob is not *always* the most serious individual and that you should not necessarily believe anything Dr. Bob writes.

Dear Dr. Bob,

In these stressful times, are there any more simple things that can slow down the anxiety I'm feeling? When I was a kid, my Mom used to give us kids 'comfort foods' that were supposed to calm us down and make us feel better. Is there anything to that?

Pete, Los Angeles

Dear Pete,

We all believe that certain foods can offer us comfort, solace or a sense of calming. The ancient Greeks believed that its oval shape had magical powers and thus worshipped the eggplant as conveying spiritual strength. Socrates ate eggplant every morning until his last when someone substituted hemlock which did not give him his usual mental boost.

Studies of brain chemistry have shown that certain foods can cause our little gray cells to produce certain happy hormones that give us that sense of well being. More recent data from The Food For Thought Institute suggests that it is the *sound* of the food and what it conjures up in our minds that is most important in this neuro-chemical process.

This article lists (within length constraints) various comfort foods (or not) and the definitive reasons why they work (or not) to help us achieve a sense of serenity, peace and calm. You will note that some foods, although considered comfort foods, really cause more stress to us so *watch out*.

## Comfort Foods: The Definitive Guide

(The Not So Authoritative Listing of Foods to Soothe or Stress the Soul)

### Good Comfort Foods

### Why They're Good

Chicken Soup	Because your mother said so
Meat-loaf	'loaf' makes us think of lounging and relaxing
Macaroni & Cheese	Macaroni was the name of Yankee Doodle's feather and feathers are <i>fun</i> !
Cheeseburger	'eese' in cheese means easy, relaxing
Pizza	Piece of pizza=Peace
Chocolate	Chocolate is <i>good</i> , anytime
Peanut Butter	Peanuts are small and something we can control; control is good
Pasta	Flat Pasta only...easy to use, no resistance, flexible (swiggly pasta will make you tense)
Fish-filet of sole	Sole=soul=spiritual=calm
Oranges	Sunshine of course
Passion Fruit	Ardor, energy
Cling peaches	They keep you 'regular'

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## *Bad* Comfort Foods

## Why They're *Naughty*

Mashed potatoes

Too violent sounding

Beef Stew

Anything 'in a stew' gets you worked up

Split Pea Soup

Split=conflict

Fish: snapper  
flounder  
Mahi mahi

Anger, irritability  
Adrift, confusion  
If you have to say it twice, it  
causes uncertainty

Clams

Stubbornness

Lobster

Those claws are scary

Fruits:

Black berry  
Blueberry  
Cherries

Too dark-evil  
Depression  
"You'll choke on the pit"

Fusilli pasta

Too screwy

The emotions and associations that foods can evoke in us add immensely to how they can calm or cause stress. For more information, please contact the Council on Comfort Causing Consumables at 1-800-U-R-What-U-Eat. I hope this has helped a little.

Dr. K.