

## Food and Nutrition

In a country with extreme poverty as Haiti, there is little doubt that many of its people would suffer from nutritional based deficiencies. With little to no government infrastructure to care for its own helpless and hurting citizens, it is no surprise that many children never see their first birthday. 52 children die before their first birthday as opposed to 6 in the U.S.

Life expectancy in Haiti is just over 50 years old and many people die in Haiti from preventable and treatable diseases either directly or indirectly a result of malnutrition.



This is often also linked to other problems such as poor drinking water, poor sewage systems and the list goes on. Many do not know where their next meal will come from.

There is no welfare, no food stamps, no social services in Haiti. There is no one within government to aid those children in need. As a result, many parents, realizing the new child will endanger the survival of the already large family unit will often give their children to an orphanage to be raised and care for. In doing so, their children MAY have a chance to survive by means of NGO and charitable organization support. But many of these orphanages are poorly managed and the conditions are deplorable by any standard, not just American ones.

The standard fare for most Haitians is the most economical food in most of the world; rice. 90 percent of all meals in Haiti have rice as their primary source of food. Most rarely get abundance of protein, vegetables and other necessary nutrients. While there is a bountiful supply of fresh fruit in Haiti it still does not bridge the nutritional gap in the ordinary diet of a Haitian.

According to the World Food Program, "A malnourished person finds that their body has difficulty doing normal things such as growing and resisting disease. Physical work becomes problematic and even learning abilities can be diminished. For women, pregnancy becomes risky and they cannot be sure of producing nourishing breast milk. "

Malnutrition is attributed to difficulty in learning by children and even results in lower incomes for adults. Inability for the body to function as designed resulting from a lack of nutritional needs continues to contribute to the downward spiral of developing countries like Haiti.

We have been blessed in that we have established a solid relationship with a street market that sells quality food at an affordable price. Often the larger bulk-type markets also bring with them American-like inflated prices. We have cut out the middle man as to be good stewards of the generosity of our partners and donors. We have already cut the food cost for the orphanage considerably. This will free up more funds for more variety.

Our goal is to provide a balanced diet of food that is still culturally relevant to the people of Haiti. In addition to rice and beans, we intend to provide healthy vegetables, fresh fruit and meat so these children can function and grow into healthy adults.