

# Definitions

**Food Deserts** are geographic areas where residents have limited access to affordable and nutritious food, particularly fresh fruits and vegetables. These areas often lack supermarkets or grocery stores within a convenient traveling distance, especially for those without a car. Food deserts are common in low-income urban or rural areas.

**Food Swamp** refers to an area where unhealthy food options (such as fast food, convenience stores, and junk food outlets) are more prevalent and accessible than healthy options. Even if supermarkets are present, the overwhelming availability of calorie-dense, nutrient-poor food contributes to poor dietary habits and health outcomes.

**Food Mirage** is a term used to describe an area where healthy food is available (e.g., supermarkets are present), but it is not affordable for the local population. Residents may live near stores that sell healthy food, but high prices make it effectively inaccessible, especially for low-income households.

**Food insecurity** refers to the lack of consistent access to enough food to live a healthy and active life.

**Food apartheid**, a more recent term, highlights the systemic injustices and racial disparities that lead to limited access to healthy food in certain areas, often low-income communities and communities of color.

**Food sovereignty** empowers communities to define their own food systems and have control over food production, distribution, and consumption.

You can learn about the six pillars of food sovereignty at this website.

<https://usfoodsovereigntyalliance.org/what-is-food-sovereignty/>

**Sustainable agriculture** is a broader term encompassing food justice and food sovereignty, as it emphasizes environmentally sound practices that support long-term food systems.

**Food justice** aims to ensure everyone has access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food.

Food justice is a concept and movement that seeks to ensure equitable access to healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food for all people, regardless of race, income, geography, or background. It addresses the systemic inequalities in the food system, including issues related to:

- Food access and affordability
- Labor rights for food workers and farmworkers

- Land ownership and use
- Environmental sustainability
- Racial and economic justice

At its core, food justice advocates for community empowerment, particularly in marginalized communities, so they can have control over their food systems—from production to distribution to consumption. It emphasizes the idea that access to healthy food is a human right, not a privilege.