

Eat Right

Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Celebrate a World of Flavors

Enjoying different flavors of the world is a chance to learn more about your own food culture as well as those that may be new to you. Familiar ingredients can be presented in new ways and new foods may remind you of things you already know and love. You may also come across ingredients and flavors you've never experienced before.

Trying foods and recipes from various cultures is one way to include different flavors into your healthy eating routine. Many cuisines offer dishes which include foods from each food group, so it's possible to plan meals that are nutritious, well-balanced, and bursting with flavor.

Trying new flavors and foods from around the world can also help you increase the variety in the foods you eat. Choosing a variety of nutritious foods from all of the food groups (fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy, and protein foods) and in the recommended amounts will help you get the nutrients that are needed for good health.

Incorporate your favorite cultural foods and traditions, as you "Celebrate a World of Flavors" during National Nutrition Month® and throughout the year. These are a few ways to embrace global cultures and cuisines when planning your meals and snacks:

Vary your breakfast (or first meal of the day) to include favorites from around the world.

Healthful options are available, even if time is limited. These are just a few examples for on-the-go or when more time is allowed for eating.

- A smoothie with low-fat yogurt or buttermilk and tropical fruits, like papaya or mango.
- Za'atar mixed with a little olive oil and spread on whole wheat pita bread, then topped with tomato slices, olives, cucumber, and fresh mint.
- Scottish oatmeal or bulgur with low-fat or fat-free milk or fortified soymilk with a topping of fruit and nuts or nut butter.
- Congee, a Chinese rice porridge, that can be served plain or with vegetables and a protein food, such as cooked chicken, meat or fish.
- Vegetable upma, an Asian Indian dish, that can be made with semolina or rice, spiced with ginger and other seasonings.
- A Spanish omelet with potatoes and other veggies, topped with a sprinkle of cheese.
- Or, an omelet filled with fried rice, known as omurice in Japan.



Choose healthful recipes to make during the week based on other cultures. Think seasonally when it comes to ingredients, as well as the temperature of dishes.

In hot weather, consider popular dishes from around the world that don't require heating. Seasonal produce can also inspire your meals. Try different fruits and vegetables depending on what's in season. For additional variety, choose ingredients with different textures and colors, such as:

- Gazpacho, a type of soup served cold, which can be made with tomatoes, peppers, and onions or a mixture of those vegetables with watermelon as the base.
- Salads that include different types of produce along with whole grains, dairy, and protein foods. Many options exist, such as tuna salad made with Greek yogurt, onion, celery and whole wheat pasta.
- Spring rolls, a Vietnamese dish that's served cold with a dipping sauce and includes fresh vegetables and a protein food, such as tofu, stuffed inside thin sheets of rice paper.

When temperatures drop, many people crave warm and filling foods to satisfy them – like soups, stews, roasted foods and items that are baked. Variations of these foods, which include healthful and flavorful ingredients, can be found in cultures all over the world. For example:

- Munggo gisado is a stew native to the Philippines, featuring mung beans, leafy greens and seafood.
- A spicy lentil and vegetable stew, known as Sambar, originates from India.

- Da pan ji is an example of a Chinese stew made with chicken, potatoes, ginger, and garlic.
- Vegetables like cabbage, eggplant or zucchini can be stuffed with seasoned mixtures that may include meats, grains, and sauces. One example is mahshi, a Middle Eastern dish, made of zucchini stuffed with cooked rice, lamb and spices served in a tomato-based sauce.

There are so many different food combinations which can be flavorful and nutritious at the same time, and the same is true for snacking.

Choose healthier snacks that include foods from different food groups, such as:

- Fruit chutney eaten with bread or cheese.
- Raw veggies with hummus or tzatziki, which is a creamy yogurt-based dressing made with cucumbers, garlic, and dill.
- Baba ganouj, a mixture made of roasted eggplant and tahini, which is a sesame seed paste, served with whole wheat pita bread.
- Or, for a crunchier snack whole grain tortilla chips with guacamole or a salsa made with veggies or fruit.

Healthful eating options span the globe. Plus, many recipes can be modified based on personal food preferences or to accommodate different budgets.

For a referral to a registered dietitian nutritionist and for additional food and nutrition information, visit www.eatright.org.



The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy.

This tip sheet is provided by: