

Food culture

A BALANCED MEAL

A balanced meal includes at least a drink, fruit and vegetables and some starch. We also have to consider proteins, either from meat, fish or, for vegetarians, from eggs, tofu, a dairy product or pulses. We have to add a little fat too.



REPRESENTATIONS PER COUNTRY

A balanced diet is illustrated differently from one country to another.



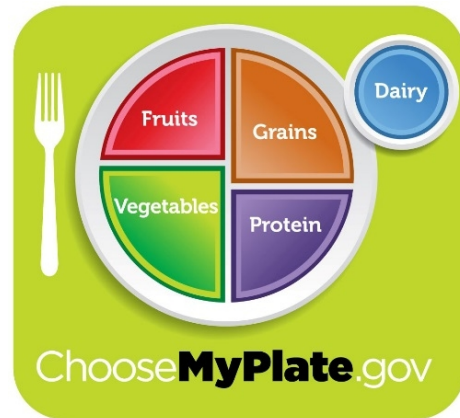
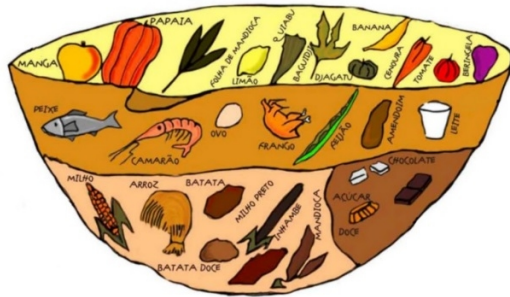
Keywords > The Swiss pyramid

In Switzerland, the food pyramid has several layers. The food on the upper storeys should ideally be eaten in lower quantities than those on the lower levels.

Keywords > The Japanese spinning top

The Japanese diagram is in the shape of a spinning top. It is different from other illustrations as it includes the idea of physical activity through a person running on the top around a large glass of water.





Keywords > The bowl from Guinea-Bissau

Keywords > MyPlate in the US

You will find a bowl in Guinea-Bissau, in West Africa or *MyPlate* in the US. These illustrations allow you to understand the main principles behind a healthy diet and also take on board the resources available in each country and the local cultural habits.

HEALTHY EATING AROUND THE WORLD

Every country in the world can achieve a healthy diet – but each country does it in its own way! The differences can be seen in all food groups, but particularly in the starch food.



A traditional Swiss meal includes **boiled potatoes**, whereas an American meal would usually have **chips** and a Mexican meal **corn tortillas**. An Indian or Japanese meal often includes **rice**, while a meal from Mali may include a **bowl of millet**.

If you consider the geographical origins of food, you can quickly see where these differences come from. Bearing in mind that corn comes from southern Mexico, it is not surprising and it is even common sense that a Mexican meal includes corn tortillas.

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Some countries prohibit certain kinds of food.



For example, cows are sacred in the Hindu religion in India.



The Quran and the Torah prohibit eating pork as pigs are considered to be impure animals. Respecting these prohibitions plays a role in defining the identity of each community. Even where certain kinds of food are prohibited, the variety of food available to us should mean we can eat a balanced diet.

Food culture

A balanced meal does not necessarily contain...

- fruit and vegetables
- starchy food
- sweets

Tofu contains proteins.

- True
- False

We should never eat fats.

- True
- False

There is a universal way of showing how to balance diet.

- True
- False

In the Swiss food pyramid, the upper levels contain food which is...

- forbidden
- to be eaten the least
- to be eaten the most

The Japanese food pyramid looks like...

- a spinning top
- a sphere
- a fish

Above the spinning top, there is a person who is...

- eating
- running
- sleeping

Which object is used to portray a balanced diet in Guinea-Bissau, Africa?

- A plate
- A spoon
- A bowl

In Judaism and Islam, it is forbidden to eat...

- pork
- beef
- chicken

In India, the consumption of beef is taboo.

- True
- False

Answers

A balanced meal does not necessarily contain...

fruit and vegetables

Wrong! We should include fruit and vegetables in every meal.

starchy food

Wrong! We should include starchy food in every meal.

sweets

Well done! Sweet desserts and confectionery should not be consumed at every meal.

Tofu contains proteins.

True

Well done! Tofu is an excellent source of plant proteins and can replace meat in vegetarian meals.

False

Wrong! Try again!

We should never eat fats.

True

Wrong! Fats are an essential part of our diet.

False

Well spotted! Fats are in fact an essential part of our diet.

There is a universal way of showing how to balance diet.

True

Wrong! That's not the right answer.

False

Well done! Each country has its own way of illustrating a balanced diet.

In the Swiss food pyramid, the upper levels contain food which is...

forbidden

Wrong! The Swiss food pyramid does not forbid any foodstuff.

to be eaten the least

Well done! That's right.

to be eaten the most

Wrong! Try again!

The Japanese food pyramid looks like...

a spinning top

Well done! That's right.

a sphere

Wrong! That's not the right answer.

a fish

Wrong! Try again!

Above the spinning top, there is a person who is...

eating

Wrong! Eating is not the correct answer.

running

Well done! This is to illustrate that, in addition to having a balanced diet, it is important to practise regular physical activity.

sleeping

Wrong! Nice try, but that's not right.

Which object is used to portray a balanced diet in Guinea-Bissau, Africa?

A plate

Wrong! A plate is used to illustrate a balanced diet in the United States.

A spoon

Wrong! That's not the right answer.

A bowl

Well done! That's right!

In Judaism and Islam, it is forbidden to eat...

pork

Well done! The Quran and the Torah prohibit the consumption of pork, as pigs are considered impure animals.

beef

Wrong! Eating beef is not prohibited.

chicken

Wrong! Eating chicken is not prohibited.

In India, the consumption of beef is taboo.

True

Well done! For Hindus, a cow is a sacred animal.

False

Wrong! Try again!

Cultural differences in diet

[8-10 years old and 11-13 years old and 14-16 years old]

Fill in the blanks with the following terms: **Indian, American, Mexican, Japanese.**

1. Carbohydrates (rice) are the main element in a [_____] meal; soup is a typical everyday dish.
2. An [_____] meal often comprises meat and carbohydrates and has a high fat content.
3. [_____] meals are usually vegetarian. Pulses (lentils) are often complemented with cereals (rice and naan bread).
4. In a [_____] meal, pulses (black beans) complement meat. Avocados are also a source of fat.

Cultural differences in diet

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Fill in the blanks with the following terms: **Indian, American, Mexican, Japanese.**

1. Carbohydrates (rice) are the main element in a [**Japanese**] meal; soup is a typical everyday dish.
2. An [**American**] meal often comprises meat and carbohydrates and has a high fat content.
3. [**Indian**] meals are usually vegetarian. Pulses (lentils) are often complemented with cereals (rice and naan bread).
4. In a [**Mexican**] meal, pulses (black beans) complement meat. Avocados are also a source of fat.