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# INTERNATIONAL FOODS PROJECT

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**H**ow much do you know about the lands that have given us so many of our favorite foods and customs? After you've completed this 4-H project, you'll know a lot. We'll take fascinating "tours" of four countries—Mexico, Germany, Italy, and Japan—sampling their foods and sharing their traditions.

With the help of neighbors, friends, and relatives of different nationalities, you can bring each of these lands right into your meeting room. You can also learn a great deal from foreign restaurants, magazines, newspapers, radio, television, travel folders, films or slides from airlines, and your local schools. Most embassies, consulates, and travel bureaus will send information free or for a small charge.

Enhance your project with authentic music and decorations, which are often easy to come by. Many supermarkets carry a wide choice of international foods.

Plan to have at least two meetings devoted to each country. You'll find the meetings so interesting you may even want to plan more!

# Mexico



**M**exico has an exciting and colorful heritage. When Spanish explorer Hernando Cortez invaded Mexico in 1519, the Aztec emperor Montezuma welcomed him, believing him to be a god. Two years later, Cortez had conquered the Aztec nation, and Montezuma's proud Indian nation had become a Spanish province. From this intermingling of two distinct cultures has emerged a gracious people, vibrant art, and a unique cuisine.

Modern Mexico is a dynamic blend of the old and the new. Before Cortez, Mexico was a land of many Indian nations, some of them primitive, others, such as the Aztecs, highly advanced. Today, ancient ruins and rustic Indian villages are as much a part of Mexico as modern skyscrapers and luxury resorts.

## The Mexican Way with Food

Mexican foods are rich in tradition. For example, tortillas (tor-TEE-yahs) which Mexicans use as bread, are today prepared much the same as they were by the ancient Indians.

During the reign of Montezuma, the Aztecs gave Europe its first turkey, corn, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, chocolate, and vanilla. The explorer Cortez, intrigued by

these foods, brought them back to Spain. Their popularity spread across Europe and, eventually, throughout the world. The Spaniards, in turn, brought some of their favorite foods to Mexico, including rice, olives, and wine.

Many people believe that all Mexican foods are hot and spicy. In reality, foods and meals in Mexico vary as much as they do in the United States.

## Favorite Foods

Corn, dried beans, and chiles (CHI-lays) are traditional and basic in the Mexican diet. Corn is ground into masa (MAH-sah) for tortillas, which are used in a variety of ways: as tostadas (To-STA-das); as tacos (TAH-cohs)—fried sandwiches; or as enchiladas (en-chee-LAH-dahs)—tortillas baked in a sauce. Tamales (tah-MAH-lays), another Mexican specialty, feature corn in a different way. In this dish, corn husks are soaked and drained, spread with masa and filling, then tied, steamed, and served with a sauce.

Beans, or frijoles (free-HOLE-ays), may be served at one or more meals of the day, including breakfast. Because the traditional soaking, cooking, mashing, and frying of beans takes time, modern Mexican homemakers may buy canned beans, which they mash and fry to suit the family's taste.

Chiles are varieties of peppers that range from mild to extremely hot. Chili powder is made from chiles that are dried and ground, then mixed with other seasonings. Chili powder can be substituted for fresh chiles in most Mexican recipes. However, Mexican cooks prefer fresh chiles for their flavor.

## Let's Cook Mexican

Try these treats from Mexico for your next party. Start with tostadas—a Mexican treat that has gained great favor in the United States under the name of "corn chips." Serve them with a variety of dips and Mexican hot chocolate.

### Tostadas

To-STA-das (Toasted Tortillas or Corn Chips)

### Guacamole

Wah-cah-MOH-lay (Avocado Dip)

### Queso

KEH-so (Cheese Dip)

### Champurrado

Shahm-poo-RAH-doh (Mexican Hot Chocolate)

### **Guacamole** (*Avocado Dip*)

- 1 ripe avocado
- 1½ teaspoons finely grated onion
- 1½ tablespoons lime or lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon chili powder or 1½ teaspoons minced, peeled green chile

1. Peel and pit avocado and mash coarsely with a fork or blender. Blend in onion, lemon or lime juice, and salt.
2. If using green chile, remove veins and seeds before mincing. Add the chile or chili powder to taste.
3. Cover and refrigerate until serving time to prevent discoloration. If desired, garnish with tomato wedges and parsley, pomegranate seeds, or peanuts. Makes about 1 cup.

**How to choose a ripe avocado:** *Avocados are ripe when they have softened and no longer feel firm. To test thick-skinned varieties, prick the stem end with a toothpick. If the toothpick glides in easily, the avocado is ripe enough to eat. Ripe avocados may be refrigerated for a day or two. Unripened avocados will ripen at room temperature.*

### **Queso** (*Cheese Dip*)

- 1 (3-ounce) package cream cheese (low fat if available)
- 3 tablespoons milk
- 1 cup (¼ pound) shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- ½ teaspoon chili powder
- 1 small onion, finely minced (optional)
- Pinch of garlic salt (optional)

1. Allow cream cheese to soften at room temperature.
2. Mix together all ingredients to blend. Serve as a dip for corn chips or raw vegetables. Makes about 1 cup.

### **Champurrado** (*Mexican Hot Chocolate*)

- 2 ounces (2 squares) unsweetened chocolate or use chocolate syrup (follow recipe on container)
- ¼ cup sugar
- Pinch of salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon or 1-inch piece of stick cinnamon
- 1 quart milk

1. Combine all ingredients in heavy saucepan and heat slowly until chocolate melts. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking or scorching.
2. Remove from heat. Serve immediately. Makes four servings.



### **Taco Party**

Let's have a taco party! Buy or make the tortillas, add a choice of fillings and garnishes, and serve with sauce. If frozen or canned tortillas are available, the tacos will be more authentic than if made from the recipe in this manual.

#### **Tacos (from tortillas)**

(TAH-cohs)

#### **Carne Molida**

CAR-nay Moh-LEE-dah (Ground Beef Filling)

#### **Frijoles Refritos**

Free-HOLE-ays Ray-FREE-tohs (Refried Beans)

#### **Lechuga**

Lay-CHOO-ga (Lettuce)

#### **Queso**

KEH-so (Cheese Dip)

#### **Salsa**

SAHL-sah (Chili Sauce)

### **Tortillas** (*for making tacos*)

- ¾ cup yellow cornmeal
- 1¼ cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons shortening
- 1 cup boiling water

1. Combine cornmeal, flour, and salt.
2. Stir in shortening and boiling water, mixing well.
3. Shape to form 12 balls.
4. Roll out or press each ball between two sheets of waxed paper or pat out by hand to form a 5-inch circle.
5. Bake on a hot, greased griddle until lightly browned on underside. Turn and bake on other side. Makes 12 tortillas.

**To make tacos:** *Fry tortillas in one-half inch of hot oil until soft. Fold in half with tongs or fork. Continue to fry until tortilla is crisp, turning occasionally. Drain on paper towels. Fill as suggested in "Do as the Mexicans" on page 4.*

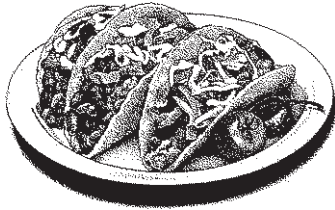
**To soften tortillas:** *If tortillas (either homemade or purchased) seem hard and dry, dampen with a few drops of water and heat for 30 seconds or less in a hot, ungreased, heavy skillet.*

### **Carne Molida** (Ground Beef Filling)

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 medium onion, chopped, or 1 tablespoon instant minced onion
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 teaspoon chili powder; more if desired
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

1. Place ground beef and onion in a skillet. Break meat apart and cook until meat browns and onion is soft; drain fat.
2. Add sauce and seasonings. Simmer slowly about 10 minutes. Makes 3 cups.

**Do as the Mexicans:** Fill taco with ground beef filling; shred the lettuce and cheese and sprinkle them over your taco as garnishes. Then liberally drench with sauce! Grated cheese adds flavor. Refried beans may be used as a taco filling or a vegetable dish.



### **Frijoles Refritos** (Refried Beans)

- 1 pound dried pinto or pink beans
- 5 cups water
- 1 or 2 medium onions, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced, or 1/4 teaspoon garlic salt (optional)
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 cup lard, bacon drippings, or other fat

1. Boil beans in water for two minutes. Cover pan and remove from heat. Let stand for one hour.
2. Add onion, garlic, and salt to beans.
3. Return to heat. Bring to boil and simmer slowly until beans are tender (two to three hours).
4. Drain excess water.
5. Mash beans.
6. Place fat in a large heavy skillet over medium heat and add beans. Mix well. Continue to cook, stirring frequently until beans are thick and fat has been absorbed.
7. If desired, stir in 1 cup of cubed mild cheddar cheese and cook until cheese begins to melt. Makes six or more servings.

**To save time:** Mash canned Mexican or red kidney beans and fry to suit your taste. Or heat canned refried beans, with a little fat or oil.

## **A Good Mexican Dinner**

Tamale Loaf is an easy-to-prepare tamale variation with all the flavor of traditional recipes. Add a Mexican-style salad by shredding lettuce and topping with tomato wedges and French dressing. If you'd like dessert, serve canned or fresh pineapple or various flavored gelatins cut in cubes and mixed together in a pretty dish. Add Mexican music, decorations, or dress, and you're South of the Border. Ole!

### **Tamale Loaf**

#### **Tostadas**

#### **Ensalada de Lechuga y Tomate**

En-sah-LAH-dah day Lay-CHOO-gah ee Toh-MAH-tay  
(Mexican-style salad)

#### **Frijoles Refritos**

### **Tamale Loaf**

- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 small green pepper, chopped
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 pound ground beef
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 No. 2 1/2 can (3 1/2 cups) tomatoes
- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1 cup milk
- 1 No. 2 can (2 cups) cream-style corn
- 1/2 cup grated American cheese
- Pitted ripe olives (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (moderate).
2. Cook onion, garlic, green pepper, and celery in oil for about five minutes.
3. Add ground meat and cook until lightly browned, stirring often. Add salt, chili powder, and tomatoes and cook 15 minutes.
4. Mix cornmeal with milk and stir into ground beef mixture. Cook 15 minutes longer, stirring constantly. Add cream-style corn.
5. Pour into greased pan, top with grated cheese, and decorate with olives. Bake in preheated oven one hour. Makes six servings.

## A Mexican Game

Here's a game your entire club can enjoy: rompienda la pinata (roh-m-PYEN-dah lah peen-YAH-tah). Rompienda, breaking the pinata, is one of the most festive parts of a Mexican child's Christmas or birthday celebration.

You'll find that pinatas are fun, too—no matter the occasion!

The pinata is a large paper bag, clay pot, or other container filled with candy, nuts, trinkets, and small toys and colorfully decorated to represent stars, birds, fish, animals, ships, boys, girls, or other shapes.

Traditionally, the pinata is suspended over a tree limb, but it may be hung from the ceiling. Each player is blindfolded, whirled around several times, and given a stick. The player is allowed just one whack each turn to try to break the pinata. When the pinata is finally broken, everyone scrambles for the dulces (DOOL-say-s), or sweets, and other items that fall out of the pinata.

### How to Make a Pinata

Blow up a balloon or stuff a paper bag to the desired shape and cover with strips of papier-mache. When dry, cut a hole in one end to remove stuffing and fill with treats. Tape over the opening, and decorate with rows of fringed crepe or tissue paper.

### More Things to Do

- Take a trip to Mexico—without ever leaving home. Find out everything you can about our neighbor to the south. What would you want to see most? How would you get there?
- Learn some Spanish phrases that might be useful at mealtime or on a Mexican vacation.
- Learn the “Mexican Hat Dance.”
- Learn a Mexican song, such as “La Cucaracha” or “Cielito Lindo.”
- List all the words you can give that have entered our language from Mexico, such as lariat, patio, and fiesta.
- Dress dolls in typical Mexican costumes.
- Learn to identify the flag of Mexico and find out what it symbolizes.



# The Mexican Daily Four

Everyone, everywhere needs the same nutrients to live, grow, and stay healthy. But people in different countries obtain these nutrients from different foods. Consider the Mexicans:

**Milk Group**—People in Mexico obtain calcium from cheese and the limewater in which corn is soaked before being ground for tortillas. Although some milk may be given to children, it is not as common a beverage in Mexico as it is in the United States. Milk is used primarily in coffee, chocolate, and desserts such as the favorite caramel-topped Mexican custard called flan (flahn).

**Meat Group**—Since meat is relatively expensive, Mexican homemakers have learned to make a little go a long way by combining it with other ingredients. The protein quality of a traditional meal of tortillas and beans is considerably improved when small amounts of meat or cheese are added. The many varieties of fish available along the coast also help fill the need for protein.

**Vegetable-Fruit Group**—Tomatoes, chiles, and greens are important sources of vitamin C. A large fresh chile may provide as much of this vitamin as an orange. (However, vitamin C is lost when the chile is dried.) Many tropical fruits, rich in vitamins A and C, are also available. Vegetables used in main-dish soups and stews, such as corn, potatoes, green beans, peas, zucchini, squash, spinach, sweet potatoes, and carrots, are additional sources of these vitamins, especially vitamin A.

**Bread-Cereal Group**—Although tortillas may be served at every meal, breads and rolls are also favored, especially for certain festivals and holidays. The popularity of dried beans and other legumes in the Mexican diet makes these foods significant sources of the B vitamins and other nutrients.

*Note:* Chocolate-flavored desserts and candy, as well as sweet, carbonated beverages, are favorites in Mexico. Lard is often used in cooking and frying. These come from the Fats, Oils, and Sweets Group.

# Germany

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## German Meals

**G**erman food has a wonderful staying quality well suited to an energetic people in an invigorating land. Just reading a menu of German foods with its sweets and sours, thick soups, zestful sausages, dark breads, and delicate cakes is enough to make your mouth water. This, along with the stick-to-your-ribs, easy-on-the-budget goodness of a German meal, helps explain the popularity of German foods in the United States.

German cuisine is thrifty; this is evident in the kitchen where not a scrap of usable food is wasted. Even the snout and ears of the pig end up, deliciously, in a stew!

## The German Way with Food

Many of Germany's best dishes came about as practical answers to economic necessities. In the days when women and children commonly worked in the fields, foods were needed that could cook slowly with little or no watching. Many such foods were cooked in heavy utensils with plenty of liquid to keep them from boiling dry. Not wishing to waste food, the traditional hausfrau (hows-frow), or housewife, thickened the liquid and served it as gravy.

Other German dishes developed from the need to preserve food: preserves, fruit butters, and vinegars; salted vegetables such as sauerkraut; cured and smoked meats; sausages, cheese, and butter; smoked and pickled fish; and pickled meats and game, including sauerbraten (SOWER-brah-ten), or German pot roast, pickled beef, and hasenpfeffer (HAH-sen-feffer), or marinated rabbit stew.

Germany also gave us the delicatessen with its tantalizing assortment of cold meats and other foods. Liverwurst, potato salad, and even pickles originated in the German delicatessen. And two of our favorite foods—hamburgers and frankfurters—are named for their German cities of origin.

A hearty, substantial meal is traditional in Germany. The meal usually is relaxed and unhurried so that every tasty morsel can give full pleasure. Foods are served family-style and passed around the table.

A simple, early breakfast of coffee, bread or toast, and marmalade starts the day. A second breakfast is served between 10 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. in many homes. This meal might be sandwiches or a variety of sausages and cheese.

The main meal, abendessen (AH-bent-essen), is usually served midday. This may consist of an all-in-one dish or stew or a hearty meat-and-vegetable soup. Pork or sausage, sauerkraut, and rutabaga or kale are often cooked together. Other favorite combinations are mutton with green beans and beef with carrots or kohlrabi. Desserts make "the end more sweet."

Supper is served around 7:30 p.m. This might include open-faced sandwiches, cold cuts, sausages, salads, cheese, beer, and wine. A hot dish of eggs, potatoes, or mushrooms may precede the cold foods in some homes. Fruit, often with cheese, is a favorite dessert for supper.

## Do as the Germans

Forks and knives are handled quite differently in Germany (and other parts of Europe) than in America. To eat abendessen, for example, hold the fork and knife as you would to cut a piece of meat. Use the knife to cut or to push food onto the back of the tines of the fork. Raise the fork to your mouth without changing its position in your hand. The knife stays in your hand, even when you have no use for it. This is often called the continental use of silver.

In setting the table, place the fork to the left, knife to the right, and spoon crosswise above the plate.

## Let's Cook German

As satisfying as the following meal might be, a typical German hausfrau would add several more items. Some of these dishes, especially sauerbraten, take longer to prepare than American foods. Decide who will marinate and partially cook the meat before your meeting.

### Sauerbraten

SOWER-brah-ten (German Pot Roast)

### Kartoffelklosse

Kar-TOFF-el-KLAY-seh (Potato Dumplings)

### Saft

Sahft (Gravy)

### Warme Kopsalat

VAHR-mah KOHPF-sah-laht (Wilted Lettuce Salad)

### Apfeltorte

AHP-fel-tor-teh (Apple Tart)

### **Sauerbraten** (German Pot Roast)

4 pounds boneless beef pot roast (chuck roast may be less expensive; may also use round, rump, or sirloin tip)

2 cups wine vinegar or cider vinegar

2 cups water

2 onions, peeled and sliced

3 bay leaves

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

6 whole cloves

2 tablespoons sugar

1/4 cup fat

1. Place meat in a large, deep bowl.
2. Place all other ingredients, except fat, in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Pour over meat.
3. Cover and refrigerate 48 hours or more, turning meat several times to season evenly.
4. Remove meat, reserving marinade. Dry meat well with paper towels.
5. Heat fat in a heavy saucepan or Dutch oven over medium heat. Brown meat well on all sides.
6. Strain marinade and add 1 cup to meat. Reserve remaining marinade.
7. Cover and cook meat over low heat until fork-tender (about 1 1/2 hours). Add more marinade, if necessary, to keep 1/2-inch liquid in the pan.
8. Remove meat to a warm platter, slicing it first, if desired. Makes 10 to 12 servings.

**To make gravy (saft):** Thicken liquid in pot with a thin flour-and-water paste. Allow 1 1/2 tablespoons flour for each cup of liquid. Add more marinade or water for the desired flavor and consistency. Cook to thicken and blend flavors. Check seasonings. Strain, if necessary. Pour part of the gravy over meat and pass the rest.



### **Kartoffelklosse** (Potato Dumplings)

6 medium potatoes

3 eggs

3/4 cup enriched flour

3/4 cup fresh bread crumbs

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

1. Peel potatoes and boil until tender. Drain and mash or force through sieve or food mill. Spread on paper towels to remove excess moisture.
2. Beat eggs to blend in a medium-size bowl.
3. Add potatoes and other ingredients to eggs and mix until blended.
4. Shape into balls about the size of large walnuts. Add more bread crumbs if mixture is too soft to handle.
5. Drop balls into boiling salted water. After they rise to the surface, cook about 3 minutes.
6. Remove with a slotted spoon. Makes six servings

### **Warme Kopsalat** (Wilted Lettuce Salad)

6 cups bite-size pieces of lettuce

4 slices bacon

4 green onions, thinly sliced

1/4 cup vinegar

1 tablespoon sugar

1/2 teaspoon salt

Pinch of pepper

2 sliced hard-cooked eggs (optional)

1. Place lettuce in serving bowl.
2. Fry bacon over low heat until crisp. Drain on paper towels. Crumble bacon.
3. Add onion to hot bacon drippings and fry until golden.
4. Remove pan from heat and add vinegar, sugar, salt, and pepper.
5. When ready to serve, bring dressing to a boil. Pour over lettuce and toss lightly to coat all leaves.
6. Garnish with crumbled bacon and sliced eggs. Serve immediately. Makes six servings.

*For variety, use a combination of greens, or substitute spinach, Swiss chard, or Chinese cabbage for the lettuce.*

### **Apfeltorte** (Apple Tart)

1 egg  
1/3 cup sugar  
1/4 cup milk  
2 cups enriched flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
2 large apples  
1 egg  
1/4 cup sugar  
2 tablespoons evaporated milk  
2 tablespoons sugar

1. Place 1 egg, 1/3 cup sugar, and milk in a medium-size mixing bowl and beat until blended.
2. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Gradually stir into egg mixture to form a soft dough that can be handled.
3. Place dough in greased 9- or 10-inch round baking pan. Pat dough to cover the bottom and sides.
4. Peel and slice apples. Arrange them in overlapping slices over dough.
5. Beat together 1 egg, 1/4 cup sugar, and evaporated milk in a small bowl. Drizzle over apples.
6. Bake about 20 minutes in a 400°F oven or until tart is brown and apples tender.
7. Remove tart from pan and place on cooling rack or serving plate.
8. Sprinkle the 2 tablespoons sugar over hot tart. Serve while warm. Makes six servings.

*For variety, substitute other quick-cooking fresh fruit or canned or dried fruit.*

## **More Good German Sweets**

### **Pfefferneusse**

*FEH-fer-noo-seh* (Christmas Spice Cookie)

1/2 cup honey  
1/2 cup molasses  
1/4 cup margarine or butter  
1 egg  
3 1/2 cups flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 teaspoon ground allspice  
1/4 teaspoon ground anise seeds

1. Heat honey and molasses in a saucepan, but do not allow to boil.
2. Add margarine and mix. Cool mixture, then beat in egg.
3. Sift together all dry ingredients and gradually stir into honey mixture.

4. Turn onto floured baking board and smooth out dough with hands.
5. Place in refrigerator for about 30 minutes.
6. Shape dough into 3/4-inch balls
7. Bake on greased cookie sheet in a 350°F oven for 12 to 15 minutes. Makes about four dozen.

### **Apfelkuchen** (Applenut Cake)

1 egg  
2/3 cup sugar  
1/2 cup flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 cup chopped apples  
1/2 cup chopped walnuts  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Beat egg in electric mixer until light and fluffy; gradually add sugar and continue beating until well mixed.
2. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt; fold into egg mixture.
3. Add apples, nuts, and vanilla and stir until well blended.
4. Pour batter into a greased and floured 8-inch square or round baking pan. Bake 30 to 35 minutes in 350°F oven. Serve cake warm with whipped topping. Makes four to five servings.

### **Stollen** (Christmas Bread)

1 package dry yeast  
1/4 cup lukewarm water  
2 teaspoons sugar  
1/4 cup butter or margarine  
1 cup milk  
3 eggs, room temperature  
5 to 6 cups flour  
1/3 cup sugar  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 cup chopped blanched almonds  
1/2 cup mixed candied fruits, cut small  
1/2 cup raisins

1. Dissolve yeast in water with 2 teaspoons sugar.
2. Melt margarine. Add milk and heat to warm. Combine with egg, 2 cups flour, 1/3 cup sugar, and salt in bowl of an electric mixer.
3. Beat for a couple of minutes at medium speed; add yeast mixture and mix well.
4. Add additional flour to make a thick batter and continue beating, scraping the bowl occasionally.
5. Add more flour until the mixer cannot handle the beating. Stir in enough flour to make a soft dough.
6. Turn out onto a floured board and knead about five minutes. Knead nuts, candied fruits, and raisins into the dough.
7. Place in a greased bowl, turning over once to grease both sides of dough.



8. Cover and let rise in a warm place until double in bulk, about 1½ hours.
9. Punch down dough and divide into three pieces.
10. Roll out each piece into an 8- x 12-inch oval; fold in half lengthwise and place on a greased baking sheet.
11. Cover and let rise again in a warm place until double in bulk, about 40 minutes.
12. Bake in 350°F oven about 25 to 30 minutes or until done.
13. Remove from baking sheet and cool on wire racks. Ice with confectioners' sugar frosting while still warm and, if desired, decorate with additional almonds and candied fruit. Makes three loaves.

## Share a Custom

If you want to celebrate Christmas with a German custom, make an Advent wreath. Wire together branches of evergreens to form a wreath. Trim with red ribbons and insert four red candles, equally spaced apart. Use the wreath as a centerpiece or suspend it from the ceiling. Light one candle on each of the four Sundays before Christmas.

## More Things to Do

- Learn “O Tannenbaum,” one of Germany’s favorite Christmas carols. Find out the origin of the Christmas tree. Find out how many of our Christmas customs came from Germany.
- Learn a typical German folk dance, such as the schottische or polka. Listen to music by the great composer Strauss. Or dance the waltz. The waltz originated in Germany and Austria in the late 1700s and is still a favorite.
- Learn a German roundelay, such as “Schnitzelbank.”

# The German Daily Four

**Milk Group**—Cheese appears many times on the German table—as part of the main course, as snacks, and as dessert. Some milk is used as a beverage. Because German gravies and sauces are often made with milk as well as sweet and sour cream, these foods are also sources of calcium. In the United States, we lower the fat by using less cream and using just milk to make the gravies and sauces.

**Meat Group**—Germans eat generous amounts of meat—fresh and cured pork, veal, some beef, poultry, fish, and rabbit and other game. They especially favor sausage, which forms the basis of many meals. A typical German market offers at least two dozen kinds of liver sausage plus several dozen combinations of beef and pork, each blended, flavored, or cured in a distinctive way.

Dried peas and beans, used in hearty soups and main dishes, provide an additional source of protein.

**Vegetable-Fruit Group**—The Germans produce many vegetables, but the ones that appear most frequently on family tables are those that store well through the winter. Potatoes are so popular that they may be served three times in a meal—in a soup, in a vegetable dish, and in a salad. Potatoes fried, mashed, baked, or boiled often take the place of bread. Potato dumplings and pancakes are German specialties.

People in Germany also enjoy eating cabbage. They eat large amounts of sauerkraut, a dish they have made world-famous.

Potatoes and cabbage are generally eaten in such quantities that they provide significant amounts of vitamin C. Other vegetables and fruits, along with milk, cream, butter, cheese, eggs, and liver, are a source of vitamin A.

**Bread-Cereal Group**—Germany is famous for its dark breads and baked desserts. While white flour is used for fancy breads, pastries and cakes, everyday bread is whole-grain.

# Italy

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Italians who came to America in the early 1900s brought with them a way with tomato sauce and pasta that has had a great impact on American food preferences. A few of the dishes they introduced—notably spaghetti and pizza—have become standard American fare. Yet, tomato-rich foods such as these do not typify Italian cuisine, as most Americans believe. Instead, they represent the cooking in the southern and central provinces of Italy from which many “first-generation” Italian-Americans originated.

Italian foods have great variety. Every region has its own dishes, determined in part by climate and terrain. To eat any of them, as the Italians would say, is “to live.”

## The Italian Way with Food

Much of the Italian food we love today dates back to ancient Roman times, an era of extravagant banquets and unusual food creativity. During the Renaissance, French royalty sent chefs to Italy to learn to cook. Today, Italy is often called the mother of continental cuisine.

Pasta has been a favorite Italian dish for centuries. Some historians believe that the Italian explorer Marco Polo brought back pasta from China in the 13th century. Others say that pasta was being served in Caesar’s time.

Tomatoes were introduced into southern Italy by the Spaniards, who brought seeds from Mexico. The Italians added their own herbs and seasonings to the traditional Aztec sauces.

Italians today, as in ancient times, love fine food and cook with a certain gusto. Their salads are similar to French salads but are “livelier.” Grated Parmesan cheese, adds a pungency and tang to many dishes. And seasonings, especially basil, oregano, and thyme, are added with a generous hand.

## Italian Meals

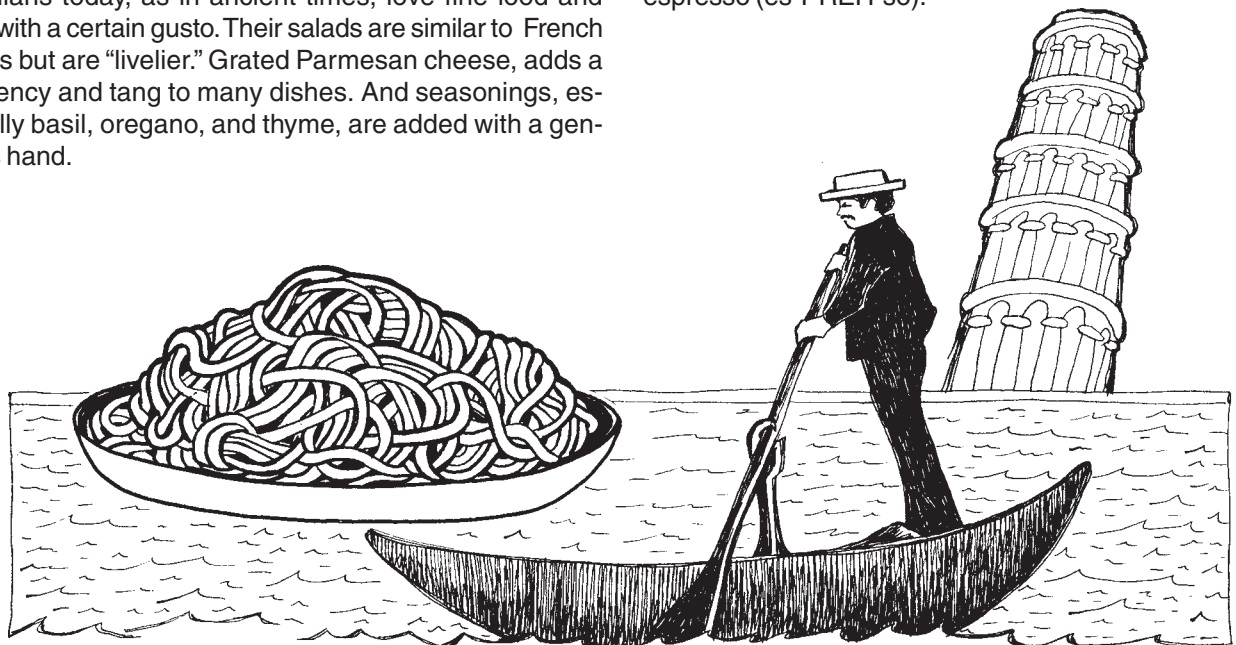
“Good food praises God,” say the Italians. Even in the humblest homes, meals are prepared, served, and eaten joyously. A typical breakfast consists of coffee with hot milk (or for children, milk flavored with coffee) and bread. If possible, cheese and fresh fruit are included.

The midday meal can be quite substantial—often a hearty soup or a pasta, vegetable, meat, fish, egg, or legume main dish with a tossed salad. Cheese and fresh fruit may be served for dessert.

The evening meal could be a supper, similar to lunch, or a dinner as elaborate as the family budget will allow. A full-course Italian dinner, served on holidays and special occasions, starts with an appetizing before-dinner relish plate called antipasto (ahn-tee-PAH-sto) and continues through course after course of soup, pasta or rice, salad, meat or fish, vegetables, and cheese and fruit or a sweet dessert.

Italian meals characteristically consist of several more courses than American meals, with each dish served separately. In much of Italy, main-course meats, poultry, and fish are not as plentiful. Italians have found that a smaller quantity of meat can serve more people if the appetite is appeased with appetizers, soup, salad, and other foods first.

Since water is sometimes scarce and in places impure, Italians usually drink wine with their noon and evening meals. They are regular but temperate wine drinkers. At the end of a meal, they like a strong black coffee called espresso (es-PREH-so).



## Let's Cook Italian

Minestrone is such a basic part of Italian life that each region, town, and cook has a special way with this soup. Minestrone means "food on the table." A good minestrone is so thick it is a meal in itself. All you need with it is a sprinkling of cheese and bread.

### **Minestrone**

Mee-neh-STROH-nay (Thick Vegetable Soup)

### **Pane Bianco**

PAH-neh BEE-AHN-ko (Crusty Italian Bread)

### **Parmigiano**

par-mee-JAH-no (Parmesan Cheese)

### **Minestrone** (*Thick Vegetable Soup*)

2 tablespoons oil or bacon fat  
1/4 pound ham or salami, chopped  
1 large onion, chopped  
1 medium carrot, chopped  
1 stalk celery, chopped  
1 large tomato, chopped, or 1 cup canned tomatoes, slightly mashed  
1 can, undrained, red kidney beans or garbanzos  
2 quarts meat broth (may use bouillon cubes)  
1 large potato, diced  
1 tablespoon dried basil  
1 small clove garlic, minced, or 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder  
Salt, as needed  
1/4 small head cabbage, shredded and chopped  
1 to 2 cups cut green beans  
1/2 cup homemade noodles (recipe follows)  
Grated Parmesan cheese

1. Heat fat in skillet and fry ham and onion until onion is soft but not brown. Transfer contents of skillet to a large saucepan or kettle.
2. Add carrots, celery, tomato, kidney beans or garbanzos, and meat broth. Simmer, uncovered, for 15 minutes.
3. Skim off some fat if desired. Add potato, basil, garlic, and salt. Simmer, uncovered, for 15 minutes.
4. Add cabbage, green beans, and noodles. Simmer until soup has thickened and all ingredients are cooked.
5. Sprinkle generously with grated Parmesan cheese. Makes eight or more servings.

**Note:** If fresh or frozen green beans are used, add with the potato. A ham bone, beef bone, or a few slices of Italian sausage adds fine flavor. Two small zucchini, diced, may be added. Peas or other green vegetables may be substituted for the green beans.

## **Homemade Noodles**

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
2 beaten eggs  
1/3 cup water  
1 teaspoon olive oil or cooking oil

1. In mixing bowl, stir together 2 cups of the flour and the salt. Make a well in center.
2. Combine eggs, water, and olive or cooking oil, add to flour. Mix well.
3. Sprinkle kneading surface with remaining flour. Turn dough out onto floured surface. Knead until dough is smooth and elastic, eight to 10 minutes. Cover and let rest 10 minutes. Dough can be refrigerated for three days or can be frozen for longer storage.
4. Divide dough (thawed) into thirds. On lightly floured surface, roll each portion into a 16- x 12-inch rectangle. If dough becomes too elastic during rolling, cover and let rest for five minutes.
5. Use a sharp knife or pasta machine to cut dough for the desired shape of pasta. To prevent drying, keep pasta covered with a damp towel until ready to shape.

## **A Good Italian Dinner**

Dinners in famous Italian restaurants and in affluent homes include more courses and foods than many Americans can comfortably eat. You may find that even with this scaled-down version you need to loosen your belt!

Cook the spaghetti until barely tender. Then thoroughly drain and toss with enough oil to keep the strands from sticking together. Add grated Parmesan cheese for extra flavor. If you prefer, substitute other salad greens for the romaine. To prepare your salad the Italian way, toss it with just enough oil to coat each piece. Then sprinkle with lemon juice or vinegar and seasonings. Toss again lightly until blended.

### **Antipasto**

#### **Pollo alla Cacciatore**

POH-loh ah-lah Kah-chee-ah-TOH-ray  
(Chicken Hunter Style)

#### **Spaghetti con Formaggio ed Olio**

Spaghetti cohn For-MAH-gee-oh eh OH-lyo  
(Spaghetti with Cheese and Oil)

#### **Broccoli alla Romana**

Broccoli ah-lah Roh-MAH-nah (Roman-Style Broccoli)

#### **Insalata de Lattuga Romana**

Een-sah-LAH-to dee Lah-TOO-gah Roh-MAH-nah  
(Romaine Salad)

#### **Frutta della Stagione**

FROO-tah del-lah Sta-JOE-nay (Fruit in Season)

#### **Formaggio**

For-MAH-gee-oh (Cheese)

### **Pollo alla Cacciatore** (*Chicken Hunter Style*)

- 1/2 cup oil
- 1 (2 1/2- to 3-pound) fryer, cut up
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 small green pepper, chopped
- 1 No. 303 can (2 cups) tomatoes
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon basil (optional)
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley flakes

1. In a large, heavy skillet over medium heat, brown chicken on all sides in hot oil.
2. Add onion, garlic, and green pepper. Cook about five minutes. Spoon over chicken.
3. Add remaining ingredients except parsley. Cover and cook over low heat for 20 to 30 minutes or until chicken is fork-tender and tomatoes are reduced to a thick sauce.
4. Add parsley and cook another five minutes.
5. Serve with sauce spooned over chicken. Makes four servings.

### **Broccoli alla Romana** (*Roman-Style Broccoli*)

- 1 (10-ounce) package frozen broccoli spears
- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

1. Cook the broccoli in a small amount of water until tender, eight to 10 minutes.
2. Heat butter or margarine and lemon juice in a small saucepan.
3. Place drained broccoli on heated serving dish. Sprinkle with salt and lemon butter. Makes four servings

### **Antipasto**

Antipasto is a tray or platter of appetizers attractively arranged. Choose some of the following items:

- Green olives
- Black olives
- Garbanzos
- Celery hearts
- Radishes
- Green pepper rings
- Artichoke hearts
- Pickled mushrooms
- Thin slices of salami, prosciutto, or other ham
- Thin slices of cheese

### **Do as the Italians**

The Italians never break spaghetti before cooking or cut the cooked strands before eating, as Americans sometimes do. In cooking, ends sticking out of the water are pushed into the pot as the lower portions soften. Always cook al dente (ahl DEN-tay)—slightly resistant “to the teeth.” To eat, the long strands are wound around and around the fork—in some places with the help of a spoon, in others with the tine tips against the bottom of the dish.

### **Share a Custom**

Italians love the outdoors. In the country, simple wooden tables often are set outside for eating alfresco (ahl FRES-coh)—in the open air. Why not enjoy your minestrone alfresco, followed by a spirited game of bocce (BAW-cheh), one of the Italians’ favorite pastimes.

### **How to Play Bocce**

Bocce is the game from which bowling originated. In Italy, it is played on a precisely built, hard-packed court. But a smooth lawn or play area will do.

Two persons or teams can play. Each side needs four bocce balls of the same color (croquet balls may be used). One smaller ball, possibly a golf ball, is also needed. This is called the pallina (pah-LEE-nah).

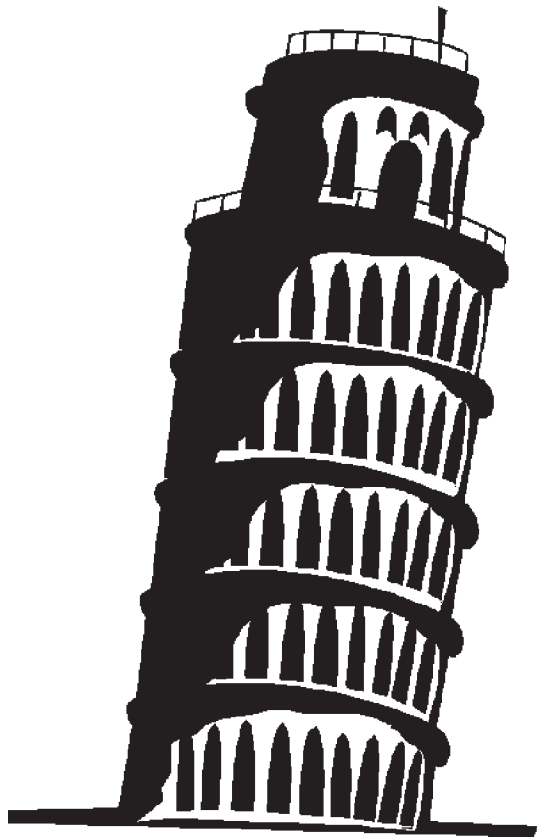
The starting player, chosen by the toss of a coin, bowls the pallina to any length he or she pleases. Each player then tries to bowl bocce balls as close to the pallina as possible. The starting player bowls one ball first. Each player in turn bowls until he or she has come closer or used all his or her bocce balls. Those with remaining balls keep playing.

The player who rolls bocce balls closer to the pallina than anyone else scores one point for each or eight points if all four balls are closer. The first player or team to make 21 points wins.

### **Holiday in Italy**

Italians celebrate holidays and church feast days with gay colorful festivals. On festa (FEH-stah) days, happy people crowd the streets eating roasted chestnuts, candies, fancy cakes, cookies, pastries, rich ice cream, and gelati (gel-AH-tee), or ices, purchased from street vendors.

Children in the city of Florence especially look forward to the Festival of the Cricket, which is held on Ascension Day 40 days after Easter. Families picnic in the Cascine Public Gardens, where vendors sell ices, soft drinks, sweets, balloons, and crickets in small wicker cages. Each child gets a caged cricket, a symbol of spring. If the cricket still sings when carried home, it is considered a sign of good luck.



### **More Things to Do**

- Plan an imaginary trip to Italy. What places would you most want to visit?
- Learn about famous Italian artists. Display pictures of their paintings or sculptures. Find out what is being done to protect these great treasures from such threats as air pollution and floods.
- Draw a map of the ancient Roman Empire. What modern countries were once under Roman control?
- Make a list of English words with Italian roots, such as cathedral, urban, veto, and capitol. Some of these words have a fascinating history. What can you learn about them?
- Listen to the music and learn the story of a famous Italian opera.

## **The Italian Daily Four**

**Milk Group**—Goats are more common than cows in Italy, except in parts of the north. Children are often served goat milk as a beverage and adults use it in coffee. A large amount of goat's milk, as well as cow's milk, is made into cheese, which may be included in every meal.

**Meat Group**—Higher-income families may have meat, poultry, or fish every day as a separate dish. For those on a lower food budget, meat may appear only on Sunday or holiday menus. The meat is made to go farther with pasta or rice or by serving smaller amounts in sauce.

Meat preferences depend on the region and seasonal prices. Young goat meat (kid) is popular in certain areas. Veal (calf meat) also is a favorite, as are smoked meats ranging from peppery sausages to delicately flavored Italian ham called prosciutto (proh-SHOO-toh). In the Italian diet, cheese is also a valuable protein source.

**Vegetable-Fruit Group**—Green salads are very important to the Italians and are served at almost every noon and evening meal. Greens include romaine, chicory, escarole, endive, fennel, spinach, dandelion leaves, and Swiss chard. Several of these are also cooked and served as vegetables. Other popular vegetables are tomatoes, broccoli, green peppers, onions, mushrooms, zucchini, beans, peas, and eggplant.

Fresh fruit is often served with cheese as the finishing touch to a meal. Italian favorites include oranges, tangerines, peaches, pears, apricots, bananas, figs, melons, grapes, and pomegranates.

**Bread-Cereal Group**—To most Italians, pasta makes the meal. Italians use dozens of different pasta shapes—from stovepipes, shells, bows, wide noodles, curly noodles, and thin strands to tiny tubes and other shapes used in soup.

Other favorite cereal dishes served in certain regions include polenta (po-LEN-tah), a cornmeal main dish served with meat or sauce; gnocchi (NYAW-kee), dumplings made from semolina flour and potatoes; and risotto (ree-SOT-toh), rice.

Bread is an important part of Italian meals. White crusty loaves, as well as bread sticks and pizza, are Italian favorites.

# Japan

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**J**apan, with its green wooded mountains, lovely lakes, and rushing streams and waterfalls, is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. It is composed of a chain of islands, the four main ones being Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Honshu, the largest, contains many important cities, including the capital, Tokyo.

Surrounded by scenic beauty, the people of Japan have a great appreciation for nature. Their homes, their art, the way they eat, even their association with each other reflects that appreciation.

Japanese culture evolved over many centuries. It emphasizes simplicity in homes and furnishings, a keen appreciation of beauty in all things, high regard for learning, close family ties, and respect for older people.

## The Japanese Way with Food

To the Japanese, food must please the eye as well as the palate. Meat, fish, and vegetables are cut uniformly and precisely into bite-size pieces, then arranged on separate dishes and trays in neat, parallel lines. Each dish is a work of art—a harmony of color, texture, and perfect symmetry.

A first rule of Japanese cookery is to develop the flavor while preserving the individuality of each ingredient. It is not the Japanese practice to blend flavors, as the Chinese do, but to combine them.

Most Japanese dishes require a minimum of cooking—an adaptation over many centuries to a shortage of fuel. Vegetables, for example, are thinly sliced or shredded, then cooked in minutes to a tender-crisp stage. Some meats and fish are meticulously cut to be eaten raw with a sauce.

Few foods are baked or roasted. Instead they are boiled, broiled, steamed, or fried. Often they are cooked at the table over a hibachi (he-BAH-chee), a utensil that holds burning coals.

## Favorite Foods

Fish and rice are the principal foods in both rural and urban areas. Soybeans also are important and appear in many forms, including: tofu (toh-foo), bean curd used in soups and stews; natto (nah-toh), steamed or fermented beans; and miso (meeso), bean paste. Still another form of soybean is shoyu (show-you), or soy sauce, a familiar seasoning in the United States, too.

Favorite vegetables include pickled radishes, white carrots, salted cabbage, dried mushrooms, and sweet and white potatoes. Long rice called for in some recipes is not rice but noodles made with bean or yam paste.

Some of the most popular Japanese dishes are kabayaki (kah-bah-yah-kee), split eel cooked in soy sauce and wine; tempura (tem-per-ah), deep-fried shrimp, fish, and vegetables; sukiyaki (skee-yah-kee), a stewlike combination of vegetables, thin-sliced beef, and tofu; and teriyaki (teh-ree-yah-kee), fish marinated in soy sauce and broiled.

Green tea and rice are served at every meal, and on festive occasions there may be a jug of sake (sah-keh) wine served hot.

Foods are most commonly flavored with: soy sauce; dashi (dah-shee), a light, clear fish stock; miso paste; and aji-no-moto, or monosodium glutamate (MSG). Families who can afford sesame oil use it for cooking.

## Japanese Meals

Mealtime in Japan is courteous and serene, a ceremony of ancient ritual. The Japanese prefer light, simple meals, three times a day, with many snacks in between. Although Western foods are widely served, traditional foods still are favored. In a typical day, these might include: rice and tea with each meal, along with miso soup for breakfast, vegetables for lunch, and a dinner of clear soup, fish or a main dish such as sukiyaki, and pickled vegetables. Desserts are not popular in Japan and, when served, are neither sweet nor rich.

Traditionally, meals and ceremonial teas are served on low wooden tables. Diners sit on cushions or the mat-covered floor, with their legs tucked under them. However, some families now use higher tables and no longer sit on the floor.

The Japanese pay more attention to tableware than any other people in the world. They do not use matched sets, as is the American way. Each serving dish is carefully

chosen to enhance the food it contains. Soup is always served in covered lacquered bowls. Chopsticks are used for eating, as well as for stirring and serving most foods. Different dishes are required for family dining, entertaining, and ceremonies. Not surprisingly, the average Japanese family's investment in tableware is proportionately the world's highest.

## Let's Cook Japanese

As you are about to see, Japanese food cooks very quickly, but it may take hours to prepare! Give yourself plenty of time to slice and arrange the ingredients for the sukiyaki. Prepare the pickled vegetables several hours ahead. For the soup, use bouillon cubes or canned broth. Add minced parsley, chives or green onions, or bits of chicken or fish. If a dessert is desired, canned mandarin oranges or other fruit can be served.

### Otsuyu

Oht-soo-you (Clear Soup)

### Sukiyaki

Skee-yah-kee (Beef with Vegetables)

### Goma Zu

Goh-mah Zoo (Pickled Vegetables)

### Gohan

Go-han (Fluffy Boiled Rice)

### Ocha

Oh-chah (Green Tea)

## Sukiyaki (Beef with Vegetables)

The Japanese usually cook this dish at the table. An electric skillet or wok (with control set at 325°F), chafing dish, or hibachi can be used. If these are not available, cook in a large heavy skillet on top of the stove.

1 pound lean tender sirloin, round, or chuck steak  
 1 (10-ounce) package frozen spinach  
 1 (4-ounce) can sliced mushrooms, drained  
 2 medium-size onions, cut in eighths and then thinly sliced  
 1 bunch green onions, cut in 1-inch pieces  
 4 stalks celery, cut in 1/2-inch diagonal slices  
 1 (8-ounce) can bamboo shoots, drained and thinly sliced (optional)  
 1 fresh soybean cake (3 inches square) cut in 1/2-inch cubes (optional)  
 2 tablespoons sugar  
 1 beef bouillon cube  
 1/2 cup hot water  
 1/2 cup soy sauce  
 2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
 3 cups hot cooked rice

1. Freeze beef slightly until firm but not solid. With a sharp knife, cut into very thin strips about 1 to 1 1/2 inches wide. Trim off fat and gristle. Then cut strips across the grain

into 1/8-inch pieces. Carefully lay all pieces at one end of a tray. Cover and refrigerate.

2. Defrost unopened package of spinach in cold water. If water leaks into the package, drain spinach thoroughly.
3. Prepare the vegetables and arrange attractively in separate rows on the tray. Arrange soybean cake cubes on tray. Use additional trays, if necessary.
4. Combine sugar, bouillon cube, and hot water; stir to dissolve. If you plan to cook this dish at the dining table, pour mixture into an attractive bowl. Place soy sauce in another bowl.
5. In a skillet or chafing dish, heat oil and fry meat until brown.
6. Add mushrooms, onion, and celery. Cover and cook about three minutes.
7. Add bamboo shoots and sugar solution. Cover and cook about three minutes.
8. Add spinach, soybean cake cubes, and soy sauce just before serving.
9. Serve immediately over hot rice. Makes four servings.

*Other vegetables that may be used in place of or in addition to those listed include carrots, green beans, water chestnuts, green pepper, and snow peas.*

## Goma Zu (Pickled Vegetables)

1 tablespoon sesame seeds  
 1 tablespoon sugar  
 1/2 teaspoon salt  
 1 teaspoon cornstarch  
 2 tablespoons water  
 1/2 cup white vinegar  
 1 medium cucumber  
 2 carrots or white radishes  
 1 large stalk celery

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (moderate). Spread sesame seeds on small baking pan and toast for five minutes.
2. Blend sugar, 1/4 teaspoon salt, cornstarch, and water in a small saucepan. Blend in vinegar.
3. Stir constantly and simmer until thick, about five minutes. Add sesame seeds. Cool.
4. Strain liquid through a double thickness of cheesecloth.
5. Peel cucumbers and carrots or radishes. Cut in thin crosswise slices. Sprinkle with salt. Chop celery fine.
6. Combine vegetables with vinegar mixture. Refrigerate several hours. Serve chilled in small porcelain or pottery dishes. Makes four servings.

*For variety, other fresh vegetables or raw, cooked, or canned fish also may be pickled.*

## **Gohan** (Fluffy Boiled Rice)

1 cup rice  
2½ cups cold water  
½ teaspoon salt

1. Place rice in a heavy, deep saucepan with a tight-fitting lid. Add water and salt.
2. Place pan over high heat and bring quickly to a full boil.
3. Reduce heat to lowest setting and let rice simmer about 25 minutes.
4. Turn off heat and let rice stand five minutes or longer. Do not remove cover until time to serve. Makes about 3 cups.

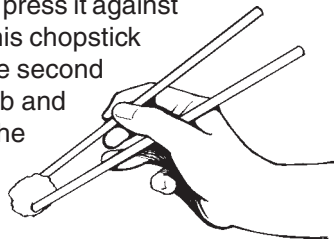
*To use precooked rice, follow directions on the package.*

## **Ocha** (Green Tea)

Place a scant teaspoon of green tea directly into the teapot for each cup to be made. Add freshly boiling water. Allow to stand a moment, then swirl gently to dampen all the leaves. Pour immediately into cups. To preserve the fragrance of the tea, do not add more water until more tea is desired.

## **Do as the Japanese**

Wouldn't it be fun to sit on cushions and eat low to the floor in the Japanese way? To make your Japanese dining experience even more authentic, use chopsticks (available at Asian restaurants and specialty shops). Here's how to use them: Place one stick in the "V" formed by thumb and first finger and press it against the end of the third finger. This chopstick remains stationary. Place the second chopstick between the thumb and first finger and move it with the tip of the second finger to open and close over a piece of food.

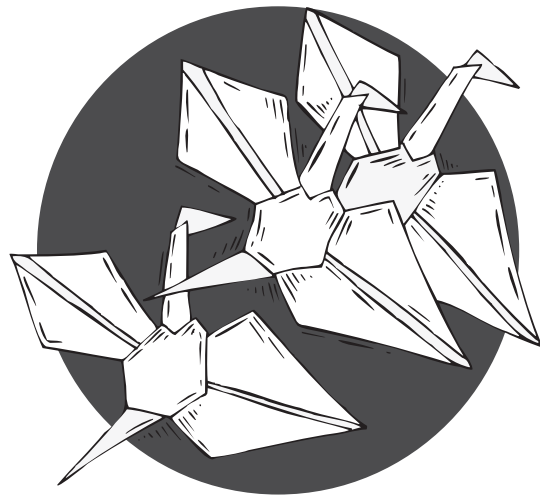


## **Share a Custom**

Tea ceremonies are such an important part of Japanese tradition that tea houses, in picturesque settings, dot the countryside. Some families have teahouses in their own gardens.

At a formal tea ceremony, guests (no more than five) are served a simple meal called *kaiseki* (kay-eesh-kee) and cakes. After eating, guests leave the tea room for a short time. Upon their return, they are served a thick dark green tea, *koicha* (koh-ee-chah). Finally, a thin tea, *usucha* (oos-chah), is served with cake.

Perhaps your group can obtain instructions for a simple tea ceremony from a Japanese family or the Japanese consul in your area.



## **Holiday in Japan**

The Doll Festival, or *Hina Matsuri* (Hee-nah Maht-soo-ree), on March 3 is an exciting day for Japanese girls. Prior to this day, homes, special doll stores, and department stores set up elaborate displays of *ningyo* (neen-yoh), dolls dressed in ancient costumes. In homes, treasured dolls, many of them family heirlooms, are arranged on a tiered stand in a raised alcove to honor the dolls.

A similar day for boys, May 5, is now called Children's Day, but traditional customs are still observed. Dolls are dressed to represent famous heroes of the past. Outside each home, tall poles support carp figures made out of colorful paper, one for each male member of the family. The carp, considered to be the most spirited fish, symbolizes strength and endurance to the Japanese—qualities parents hope their sons will have.

## **More Things to Do**

- Learn the art of Japanese floral arranging, *ikebana*, and make a centerpiece for your Japanese meal. If there is a garden club in your area, see if any of its members have studied *ikebana*.
- Have fun with origami—making balls, birds with flapping wings, and other objects out of folded paper.
- Try writing *haiku*—the form of Japanese poetry that contains exactly 17 syllables arranged on three lines.
- Dress dolls in traditional Japanese male and female costumes.
- Learn to count to 10 in Japanese.



# The Japanese Daily Four

**Milk Group**—Milk is rarely included in the Japanese diet. Fish, softened fish bones, soybeans in many forms, and a wide variety of other vegetables supply most of the calcium in their diet.

**Meat Group**—Fish and shellfish, both raw and cooked, provide a large part of the protein in the Japanese diet. Some beef, poultry, and eggs are used by those who can afford them. Soybeans—called the “fish of the field” by one of Japan’s most dominant religious groups, the Buddhists—provide a valuable and inexpensive source of protein and B vitamins.

**Vegetable-Fruit Group**—The variety and quantity of vegetables and fruits eaten by most Japanese provide adequate amounts of vitamins A and C. Their many green vegetables are important sources of iron and other minerals. Some vegetables and fruits popular in Japan are similar to those in the United States. Others are distinctively Japanese.

Japanese cooks prepare vegetables with little or no liquid and cook them for the shortest time possible. Thus the vegetables, still slightly crisp, retain their color, flavor, and nutritive value.

**Bread-Cereal Group**—To the Japanese, rice is the “staff of life”—a staple of their diet. Various kinds of noodles also are widely used for meals and snacks.

# Choose Another Country

**W**e hope you have enjoyed your visits to Mexico, Germany, Italy, and Japan. Now, here's your chance to sample the foods and traditions of a country of your own choosing. It might be a country from which your relatives originated, a land whose people settled your area, or a country whose food you especially like.

Whatever country you choose, see if you can find the answers to questions such as:

- What are the distinctive characteristics of the foods? How do foods and meals differ from those in the United States?
- How do the people obtain needed nutrients?
- How have land and climate conditions influenced the people, their food, and their customs?
- How has the country influenced American foods and traditions?

To make your meetings more meaningful, call on the people in your community who can give you firsthand information about the country and its customs. Invite them to your meetings. Many look forward to the opportunity to share their heritage and experiences with you.

## Let's Cook International

Now, to whet your interest as well as your appetite, here are more menus from all over the world. You'll notice that each menu represents food preferences and eating customs that are different from those you might be accustomed to. Yet, all the foods should be fun to prepare, and the recipes should be easy to find.

### A French Dinner

Beef Bourguignon  
Potato Souffle  
Parisian Green Peas  
Tossed Green Salad  
Rolls Butter  
Chocolate Pots de Creme

### A Swedish Supper

Swedish Meat Balls  
Brown Beans  
Carrot Ring  
Apple and Celery Salad  
Rye Bread Butter  
Cheesecake

### A Swiss Fondue Party

Cheese Fondue  
Bite-Size Chunks of French Bread  
Bowl of Fresh Fruit

### A Middle Eastern Meal

Shish Kebabs  
Pilaf  
Yahni ( A Green Bean Dish)  
Syrian Bread  
Fresh Fruit  
Cheese  
Strong Coffee

### An Indonesian Dinner

Chicken Curry  
Rice  
Chutney Relish  
Fresh Grated Coconut  
Raisins  
Nuts  
Sweets  
Tea

### Hawaiian Luau

Kamano Lomi Lomi (Salmon Appetizer)  
Chicken Luau  
Baked Sweet Potatoes  
Mango Chutney  
Pineapple Baskets  
Coffee  
Milk

### An African Dinner

Jolof Rice  
Groundnut Bread  
Lettuce and Tomato Salad  
Sliced Pineapple  
Tea

## International Farewell

Hasta la vista...auf Wiedersehen...sayonara. It's not "goodbye" but "till we meet again." Perhaps next year you would like to concentrate on one of the countries you've studied or one of your own choosing. Here are some study areas you might consider:

- History
- Art, culture, and crafts
- Form of government
- Currency and money system
- National and regional costumes
- Dating, courtship, and marriage customs
- Music
- Climate
- Sports
- Language
- Industries
- Education
- Religions

# International Foods Project Record



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street and Number/Rural Route*

School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

**A. Size and scope of project (List everything you have done in project.)**

International Foods Prepared	No. of Times Prepared	No. of Servings	Comments
Mexican			
German			
Italian			
Japanese			

**Total Foods Prepared** \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Activities (List any activity related to the foods project in which you participated, such as exhibits, demonstrations, and tours.)**

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C. Tell what you learned in the project (for example, you might have learned to use different cooking techniques or discovered the kinds of foods eaten in other countries.)

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D. Awards and Recognition (List the awards and recognition you have received in this project and indicate the level of recognition.)

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E. How many times did you attend group meetings to work on your project? \_\_\_\_\_

F. If you helped others with their food-nutrition projects, give the number of people you helped and what you did to help them.

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G. Attach a project that tells the story of what you did and learned, including how the project helped your family and who helped you with the project.

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Member Date Leader Date

*Appreciation is expressed to the national 4-H Council for these materials.*

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