

Fairfield Refugee Nutrition Project

Cooking traditional foods in Australia

LESSON PLAN COOKING TRADITIONAL FOODS IN A NEW COUNTRY

Background

Eating is more than just nutrition. The foods people choose to eat help define them, and shape their identity maintaining links to their culture, traditions, beliefs, religion and family¹. For many refugees maintaining traditional food practices is very important for both their psychological wellbeing and physical health^{1, 2}. When food is adequate most traditional diets provide all the essential nutrition. However periods of food deprivation as a part of torture, in refugee camps, in besieged towns or cities, during economic sanction, or while in their first country of asylum are often endured by people from refugee backgrounds and can result in a compromise of their nutritional status and knowledge³.

“The ‘healthy immigrant effect’ refers to the observation that immigrants are often in superior health to the native-born population when they first arrive in a new country, but lose this health advantage over time due to changes in determinants of health such as diet, social support and stress¹.”

Factors which influence the dietary choice of migrants have been documented to include culture, access to information, and availability of healthy and acceptable foods, poverty and acculturation².

Messages

- Maintain traditional food practices
- Find health substitutes for difficult to access traditional foods
- Eat at least 2 fruit and 5 vegetables every day
- Eat a varied diet

Topic Healthy adaptations: cooking traditional in a new country

Focus Questions

How can I maintain traditional cooking methods at home?

What makes it difficult to maintain traditional food practices at home?

Why is it important to prepare healthy meals and have variety in my diet?

Learning Experiences

Competency	Activity	Resources
Knowledge, food groups and food pyramid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group leader discusses the concept of the healthy food pyramid. - Draw a large pyramid and divide into three; eat little, eat some, eat most. - Discuss how all foods fit into the pyramid and are a guide to healthy eating. - Place food items (cut-outs or food cards) on the board. - Discuss each food group and its position on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - White board or butchers paper and marker. - Food item cut-outs www.refugeehealth.org.au, or food cards www.rph.wa.gov.au/hpnetwork/GFNA/Goodfood.htm.

the food pyramid		
Reflection, traditional food practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group leader presents sample menu of traditional foods to the group and distributes associated food items (cut-outs or food cards). Or ask the group what constitutes a typical day's food. - Group leader draws a second food pyramid and assists the group to locate each of the food items from the traditional menu. - Discuss the difference between the two food pyramids. - Ask participants how the traditional menu could be modified to better reflect the food pyramid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sample menu plans by country www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural/health_workers/nutrition_resources.asp#Healthy - Food item cut-outs www.refugeehealth.org.au, or food cards www.rph.wa.gov.au/hpnetwork/GFNA/Goodfood.htm.
Vocabulary, modifying recipes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group leader introduces this section by discussing the reasons people change recipes and methods of cooking in a new country. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - www.refugeehealth.org.au
Vocabulary & Learning, Finding healthy substitutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group leader places traditional recipe (as cooked in Australia) on board. Read through each ingredient. - Ask participants which food items could be changed to make the recipe healthier and what would they use as a substitute. - Group leader places chart for food substitution on the board. Read through suggested food substitutes. - Discuss effects on taste and cost of substituting less healthy food items. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional recipes as cooked in Australia and modified version for health www.refugeehealth.org.au. - Chart; food substitution www.refugeehealth.org.au - Background information 'Function of ingredients' www.refugeehealth.org.au
Vocabulary & learning; healthier cooking methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group leader displays pictures of healthier cooking methods for group. - Discuss benefits for each method. - Using food fat cards display and discuss the impact of cooking method on the fat and fibre content of foods. - Discuss the effects on taste and peoples person experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Healthier cooking methods handout www.refugeehealth.org.au - Fat and fibre food cards www.eatwellbeactive.qld.gov.au/eatwellbeactive/eatwelltips/facts_on_fat.asp
Cooking and food sampling; healthier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-identified community leader prepares a popular traditional dish with attention to modified cooking technique and/or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional recipes as cooked in Australia and modified version for

traditional foods	ingredients. - Group to share meal and discuss changes and how they could be implemented at home.	health www.refugeehealth.org.au .
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Review Questions

Discuss if the recipes cooked are things participants could cook at home. Discuss limitations (like not knowing where to find food items in the supermarket) and possible solutions.

Discuss the new flavours and cooking methods, likes and dislikes, and ways to modify the recipes.

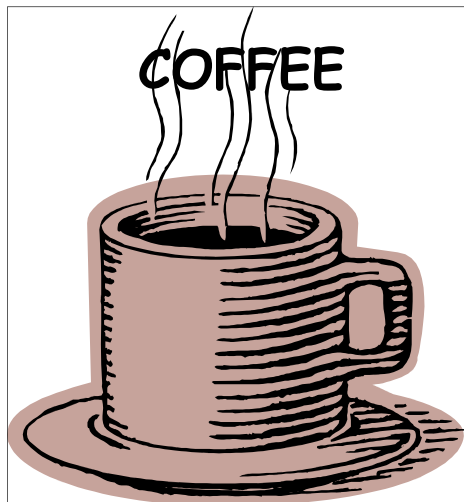
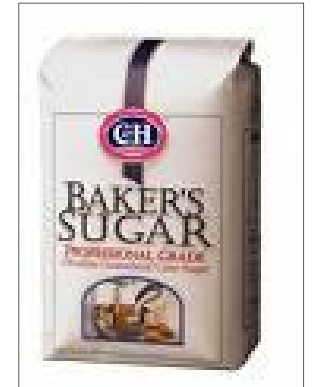
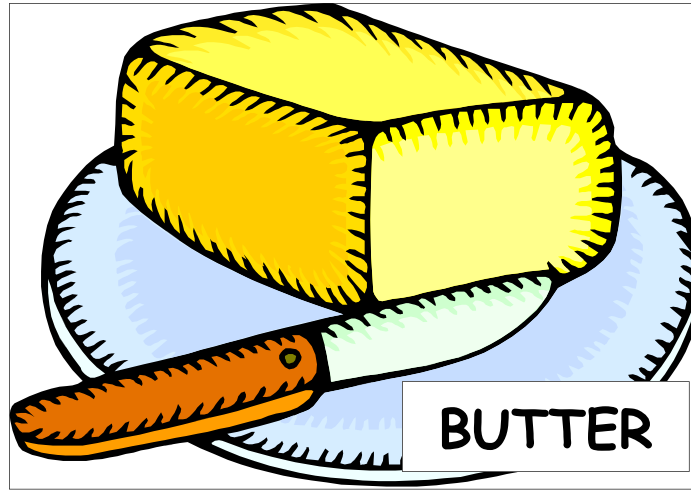
Evaluation

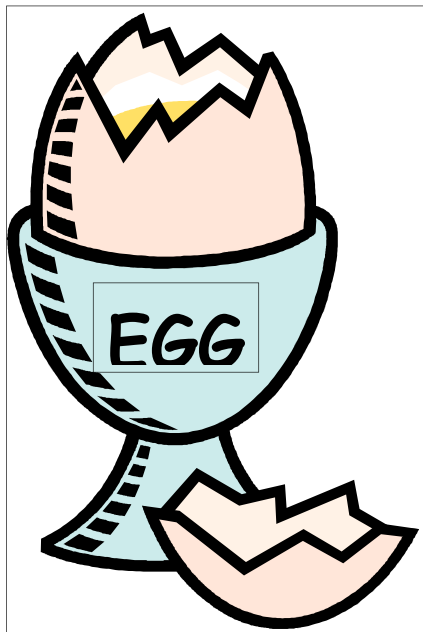
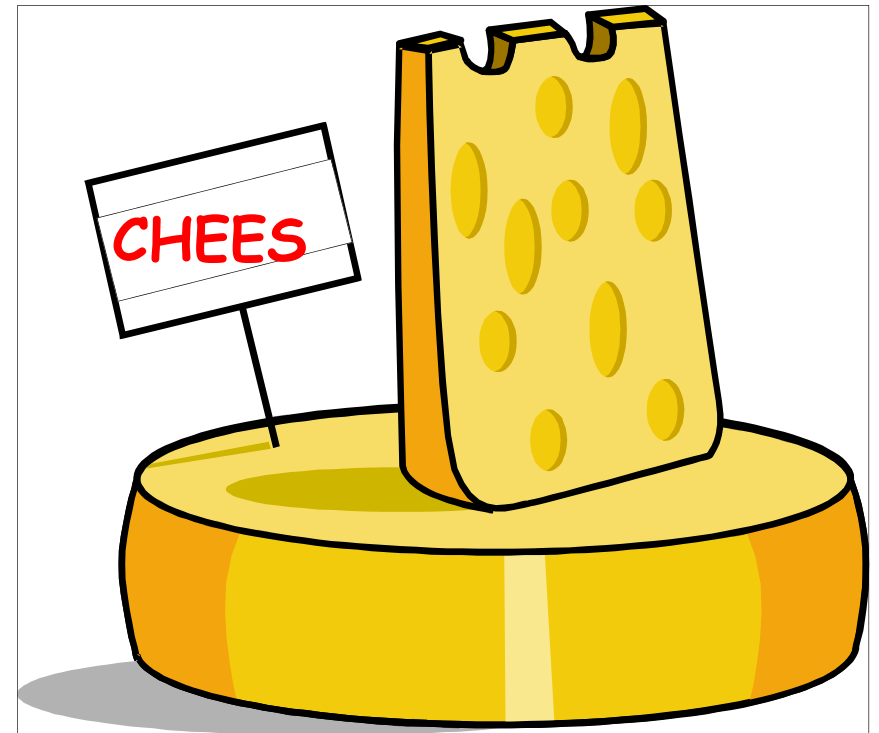
- Group discussion on likes, dislikes, limitations and barriers to including new foods and ways of cooking.
- Group critiques the recipes and gives them a score.

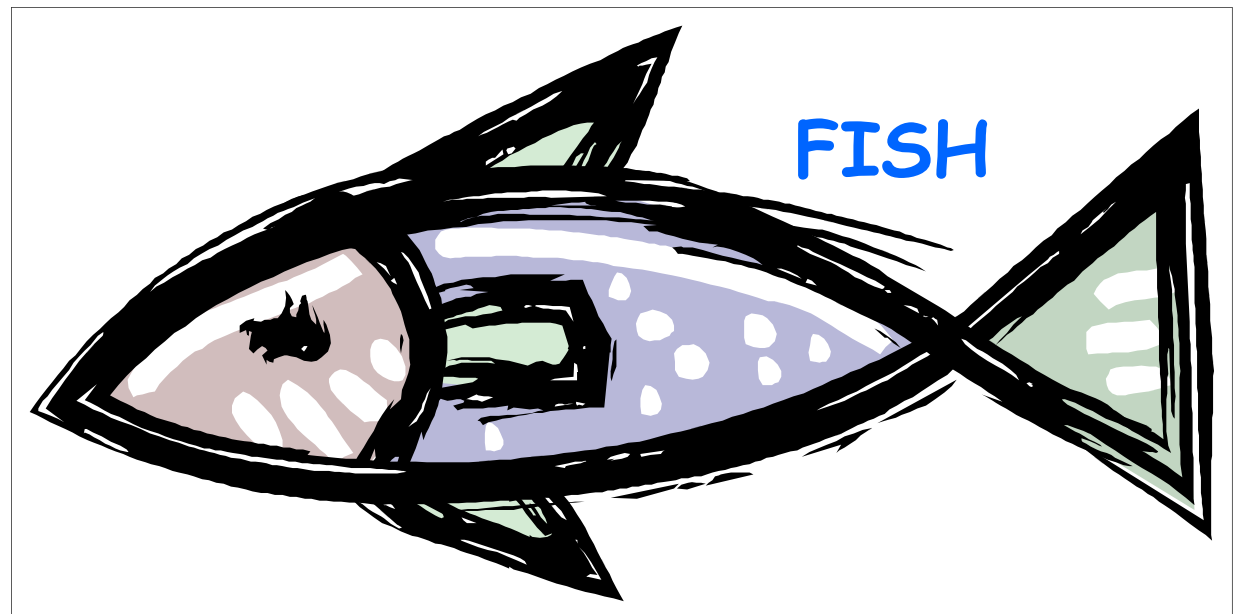
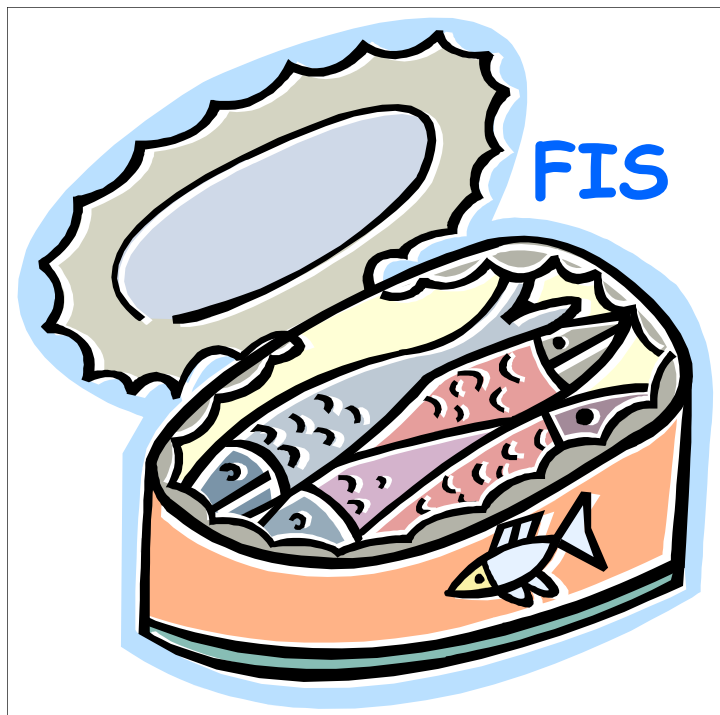
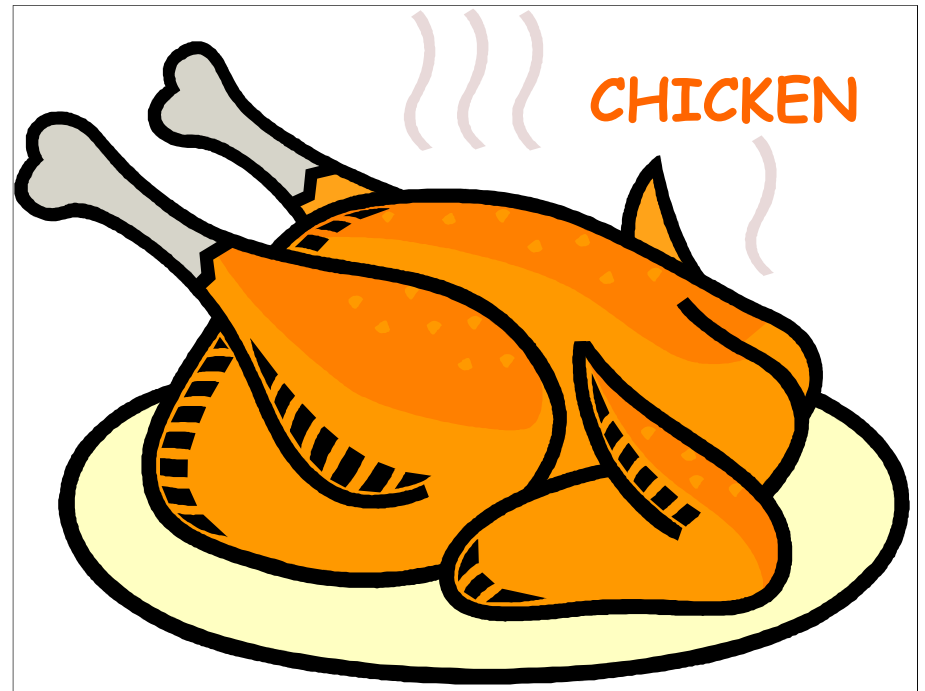
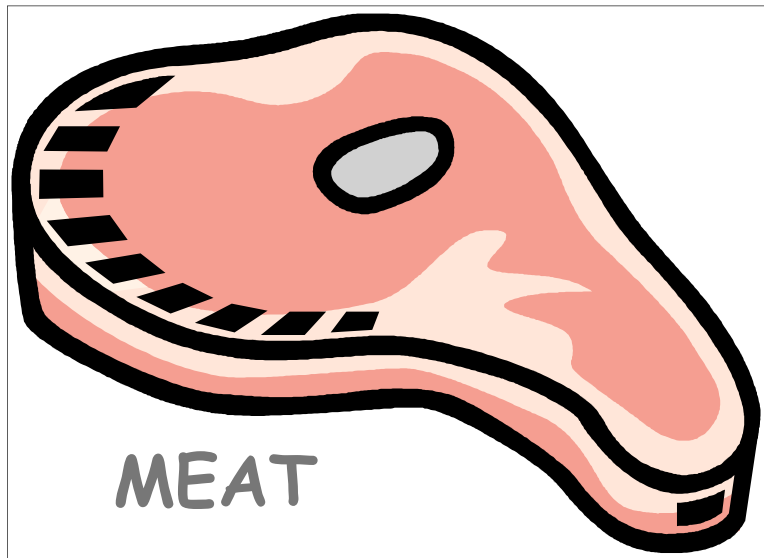
Other resources and lessons

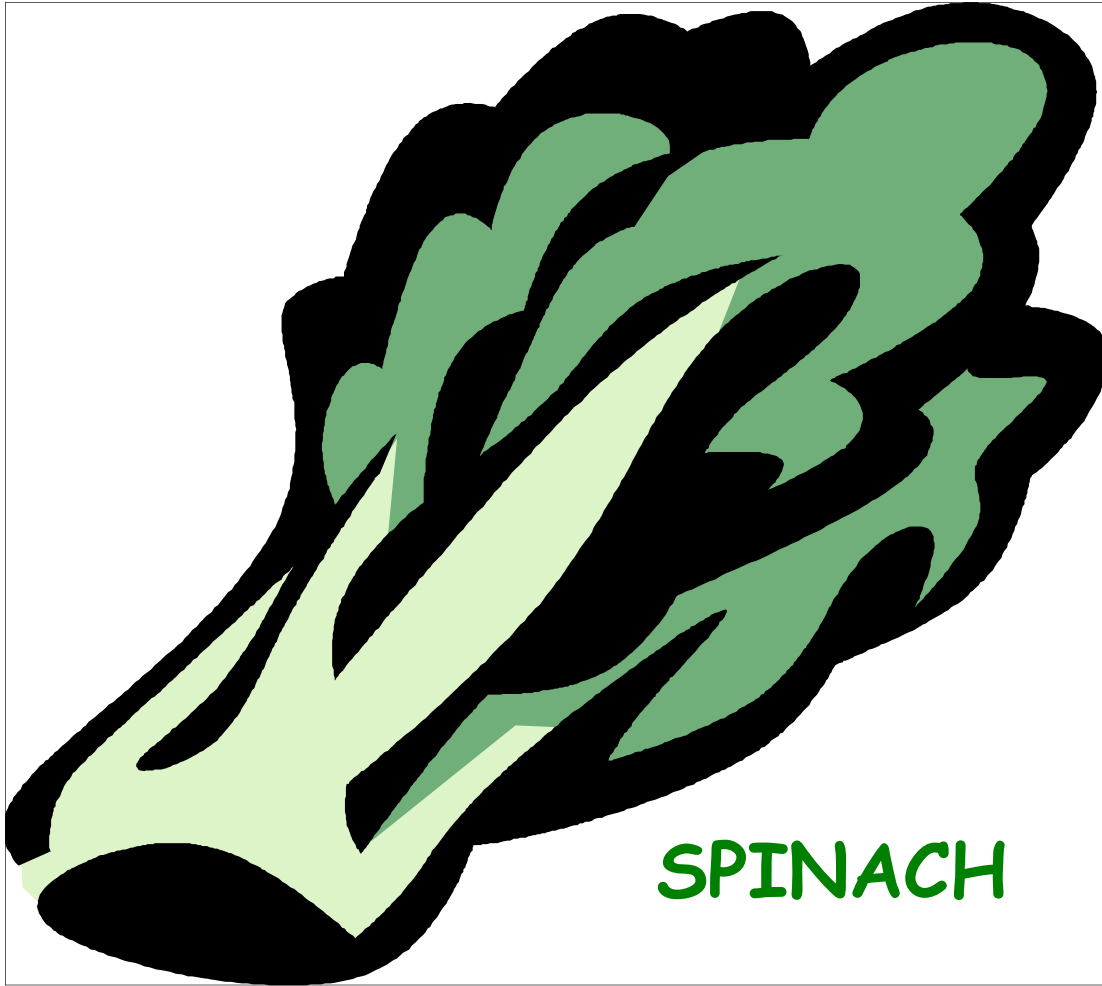
21. From 'Easing the Transition', p15 'The diet and lifestyle context for new arrivals 1.2'.
www.foundationhouse.com.au
22. Burns, C. Effect of migration on food habits of Somali women living as refugees in Australia. Ecology of Food and Nutrition, 2004 (Vol. 43) (No. 3) 213-229.
23. Simple budget recipes from 'Fruit and Veg Kit for Aboriginal Health', 'Fruit and Veg Cookbook'. Hunter New England Area Health Service, (02) 6554 8874.
24. Simple budget recipes from 'Foodcents'. <http://rph.wa.gov.au/hpnetwork/ATSI-FOODcents/AFC-Home.htm>
25. From 'Fruit and Veg Kit for Aboriginal Health', 'Fat and fibre food cards'. Hunter New England Area Health Service, (02) 6554 8874.
26. From Diabetes Australia, 'Healthy hints for modifying recipes'.
www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/lib/doc/pdf/resources/factsheets/HEALTHY_HINTS_MODIFYING_revised_Aug_06.pdf
- 27.
28. Recipes on a budget:
www.tastes.com.au
www.communitykitchens.org.au

1. Hadley C, Sellen D, 2006. Food security and child hunger among recently resettled Liberian refugees and asylum seekers: A pilot study. J Immigrant Health 8:369- 375.
2. Hyman I et al. 2002. Promotion of healthy eating among new immigrant women in Ontario. Can J Diet Prac & research 63 (3): 125.
3. Easing the Transition; A resource guide for health and settlement workers supporting those recently arrived in Australia to maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle. The Victorian Foundation for Survivor of Torture Inc. 2000.

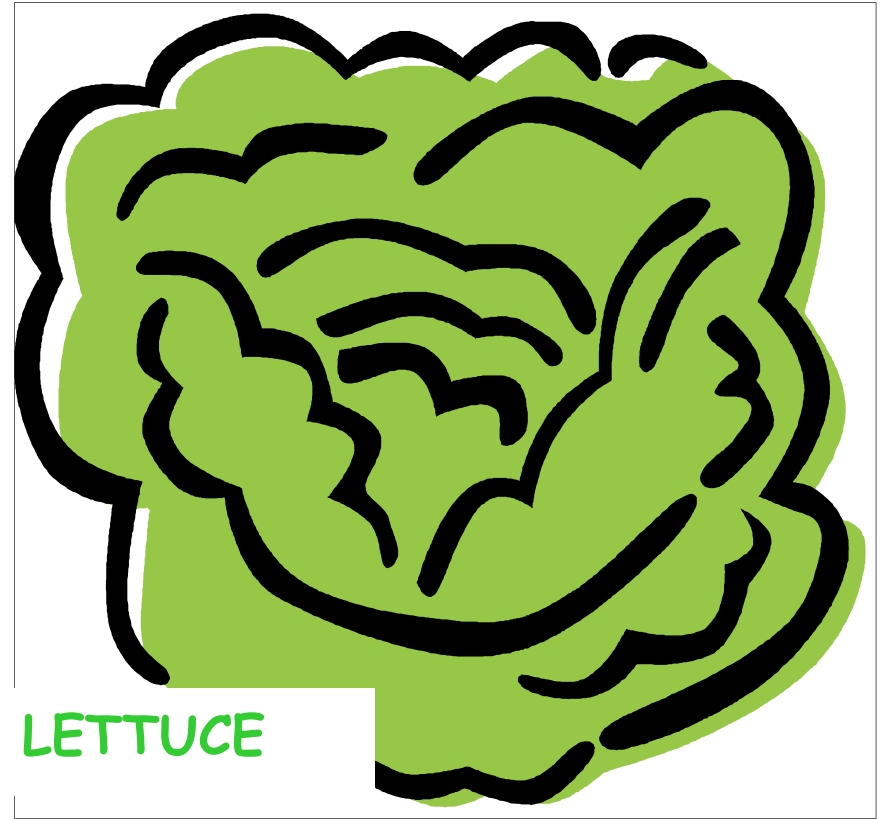




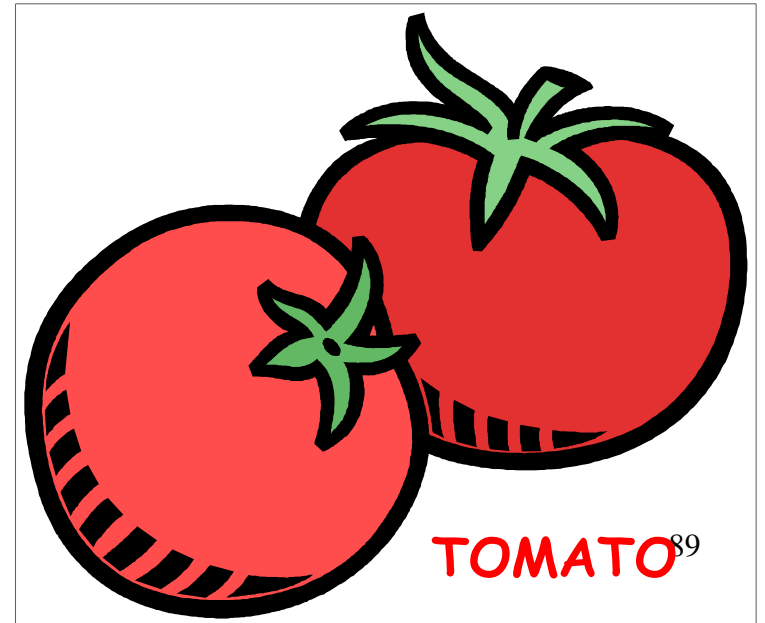




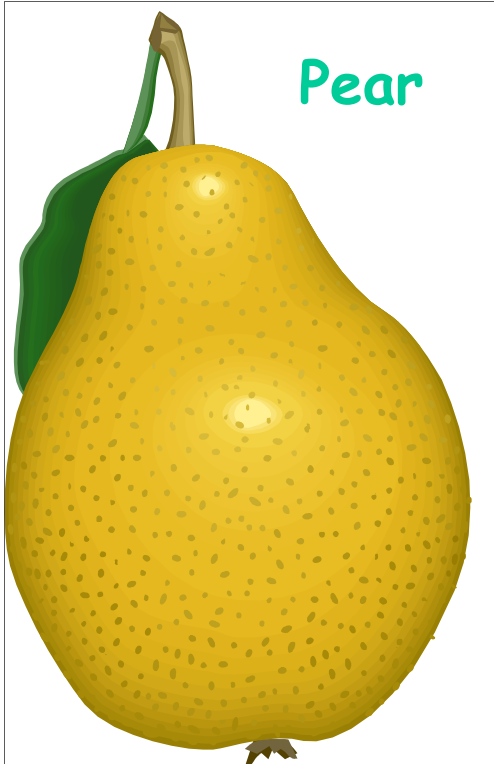
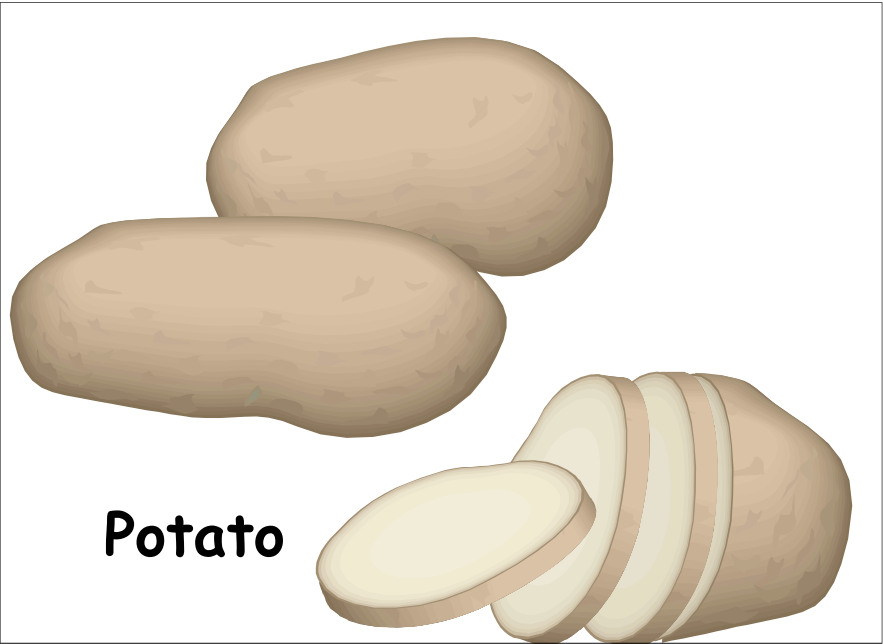
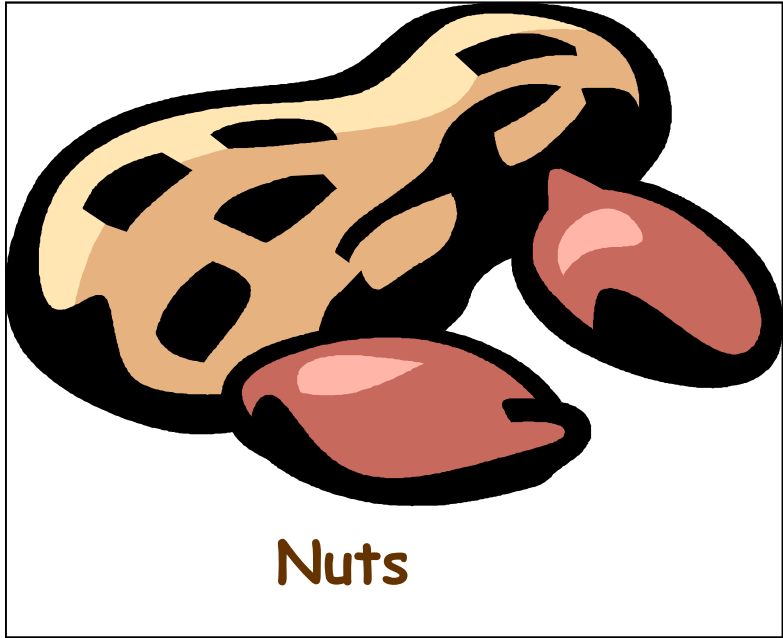
SPINACH

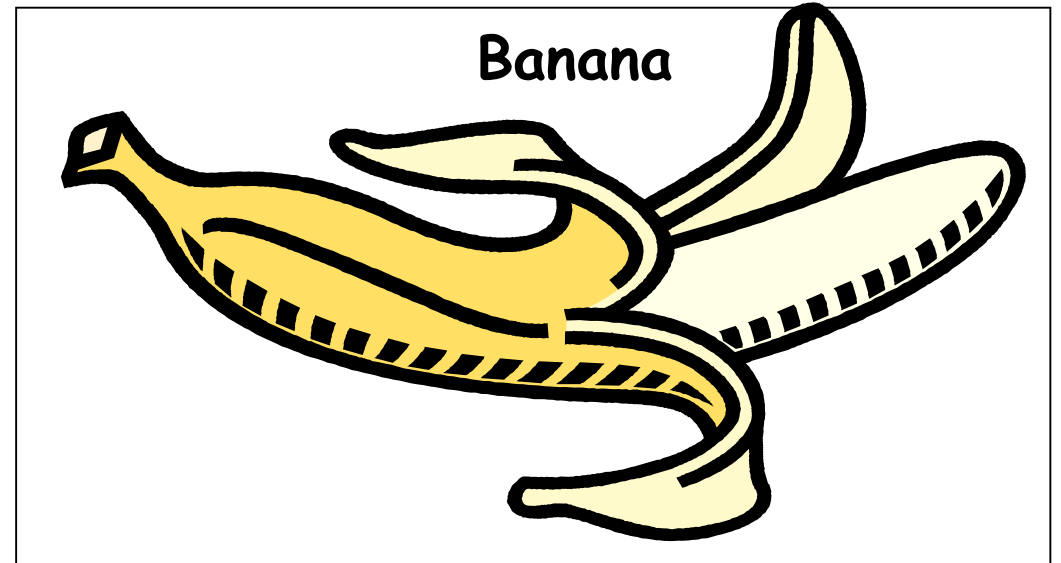
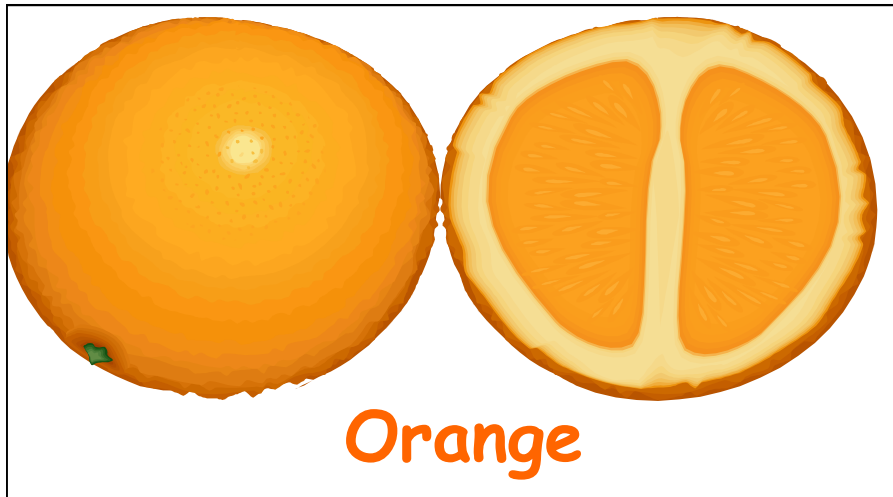
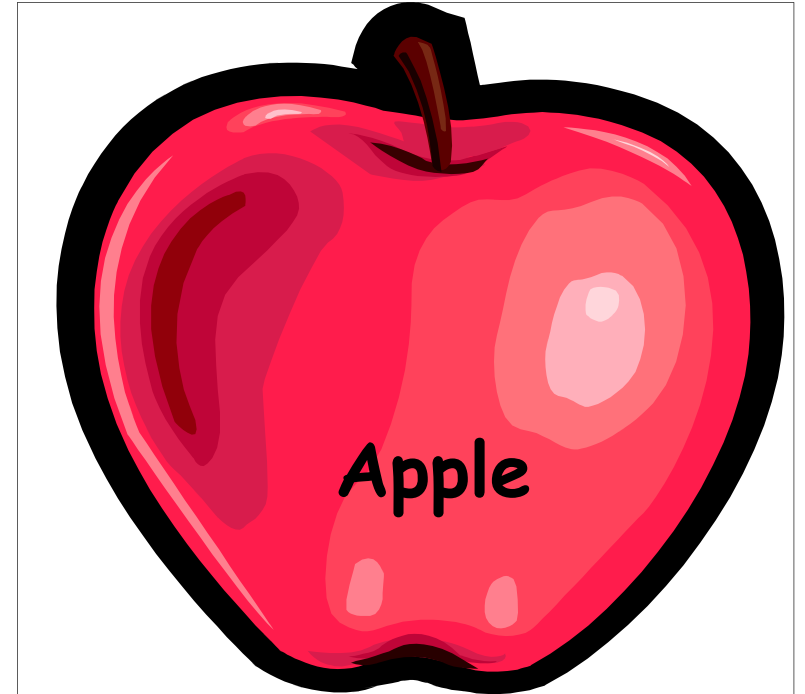
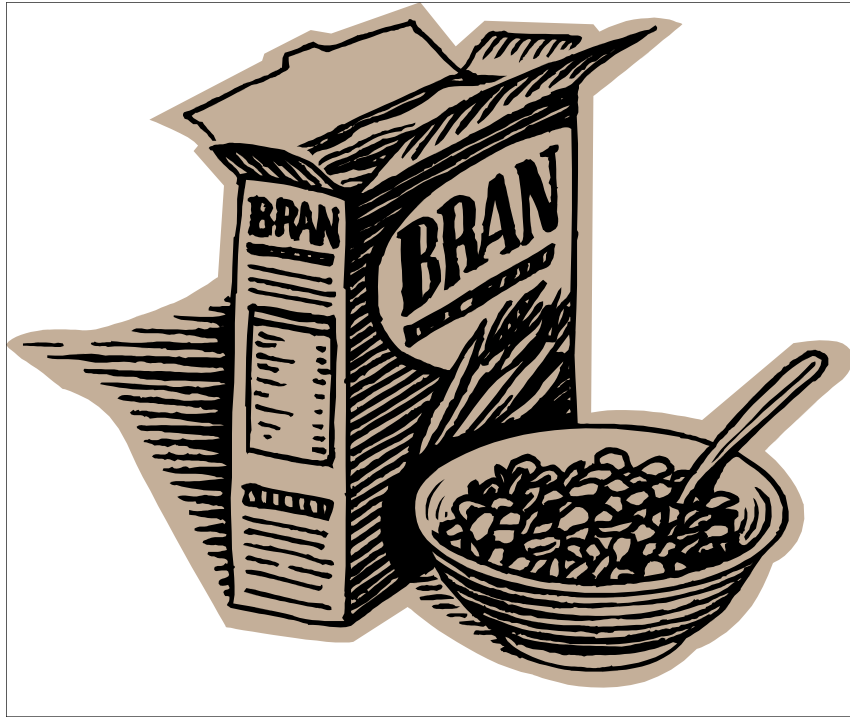


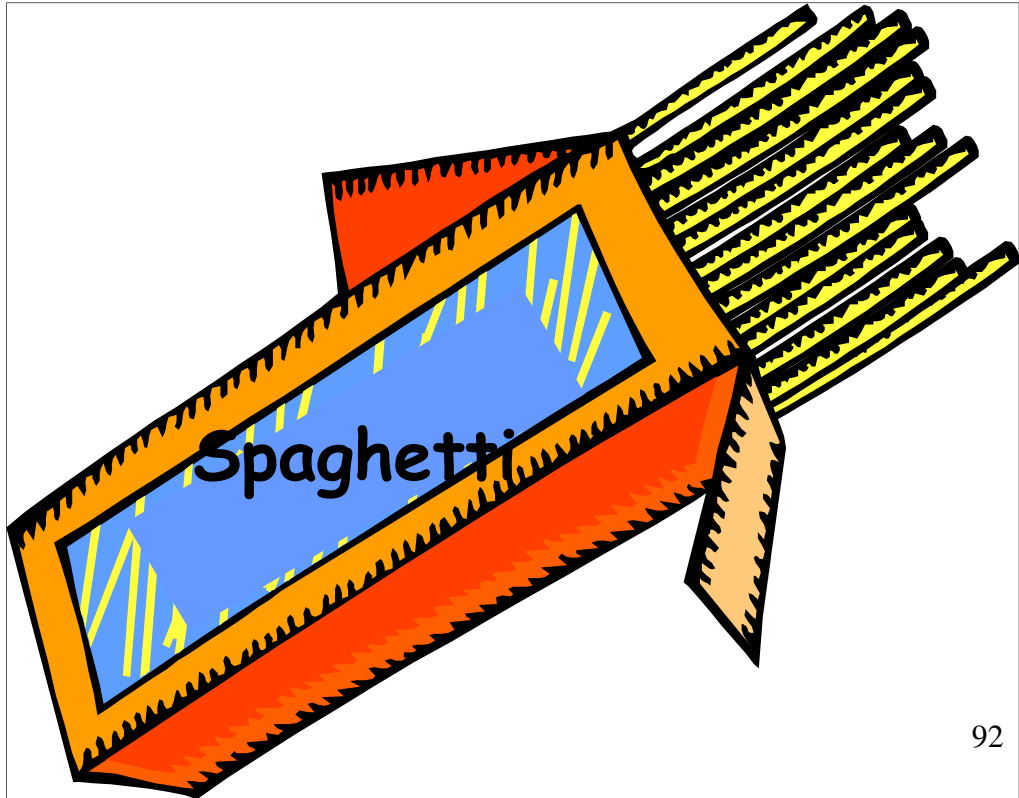
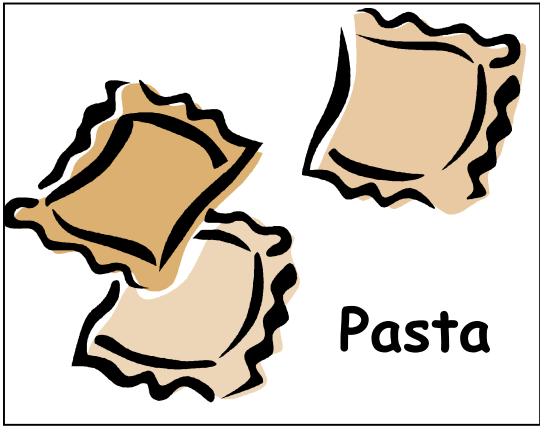
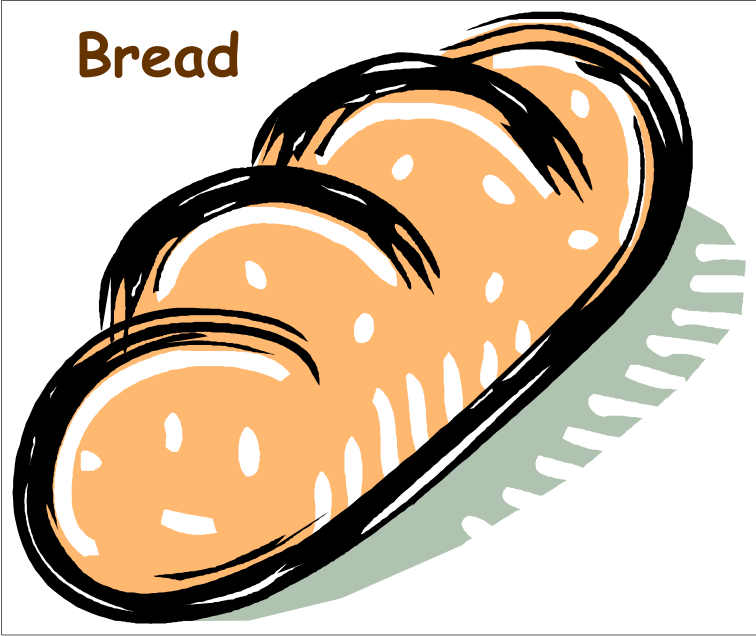
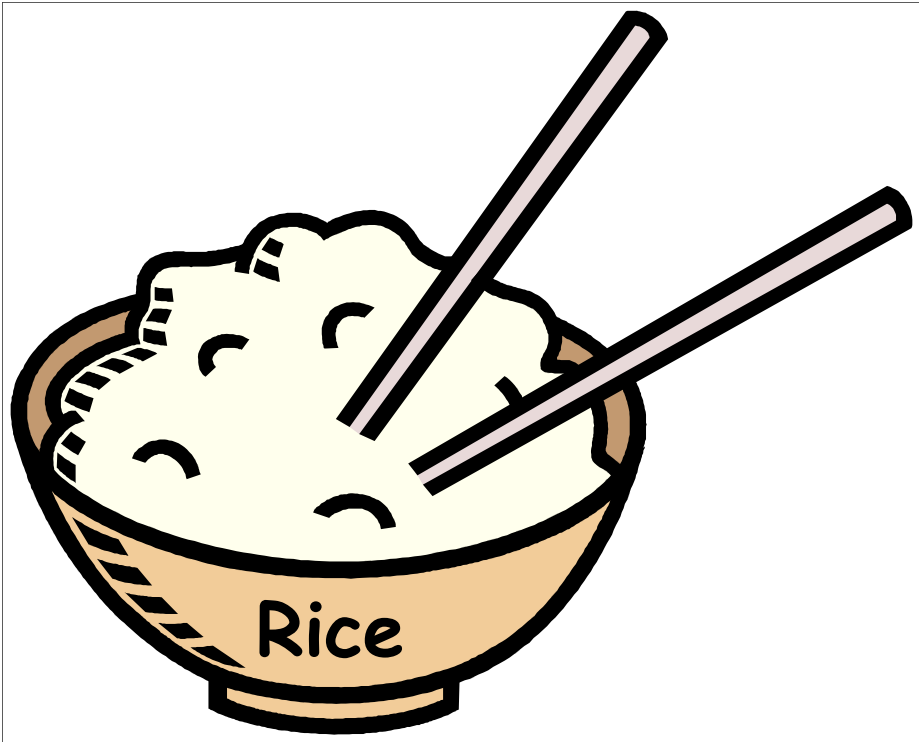
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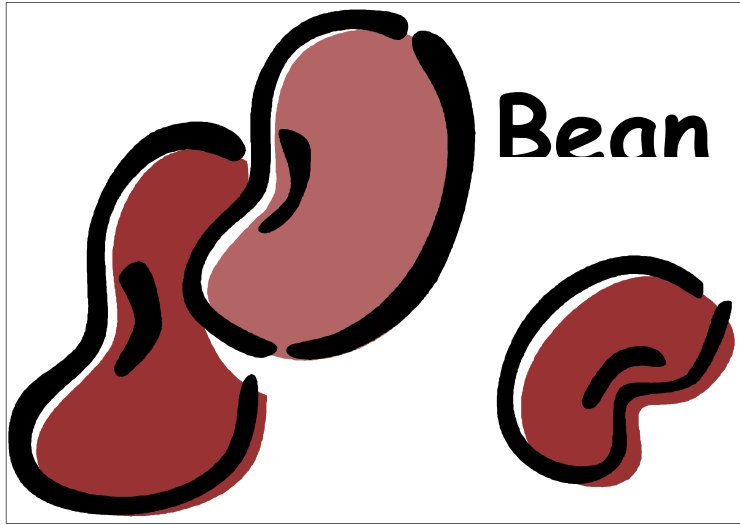


TOMATO⁸⁹

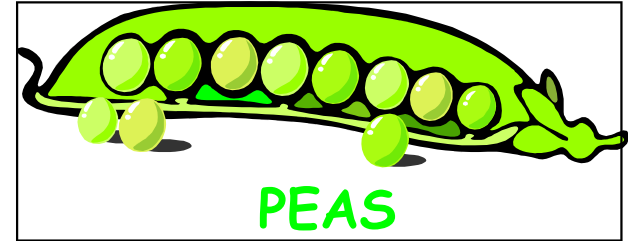




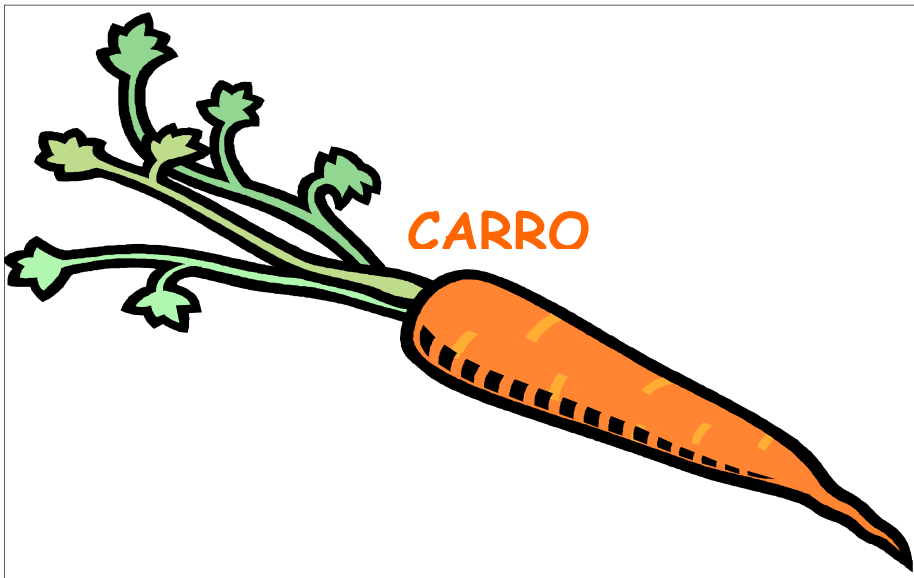




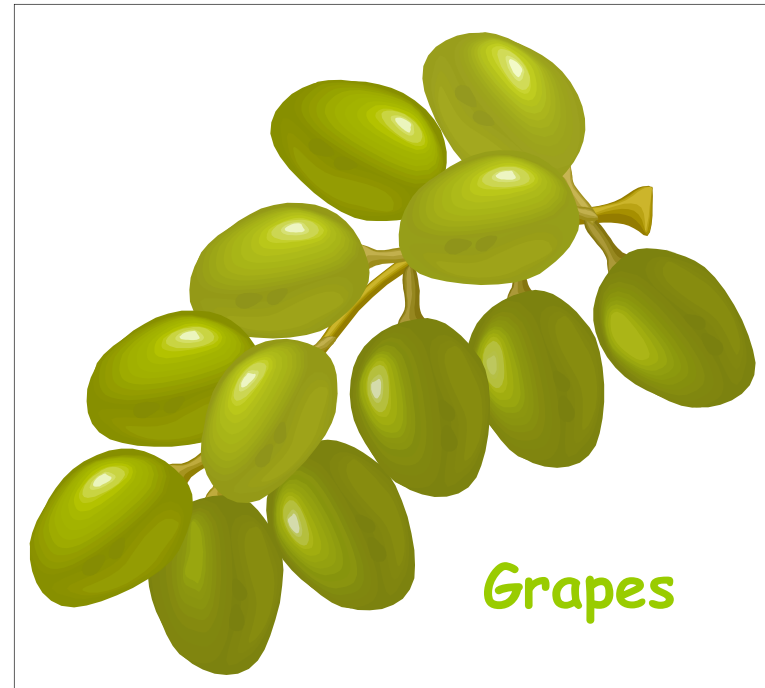
Bean



PEAS



CARRO



Grapes

Tips for Healthy Modifications

Here are a few ways to update recipes. These suggestions apply to most foods except when specific proportions of ingredients are essential to prevent spoilage (such as cured meats, pickles, jams and jellies).

Decrease Total Fat

<i>Instead Of</i>	<i>Try</i>
Butter, margarine, oil and solid fats	In baking reduce all recipes by 1/3. For example if a recipe calls for 1 cup, use 2/3 cup. In soups and stews avoid adding extra fat, oil, butter or margarine.
Full cream milk	Low fat or skim milk
Evaporated milk	Skim evaporated milk
Frying	Use spray oil and bake in the oven
Fat and flour to thicken sauces	Cornflour mixed with cold water. Add herbs, spices and flavourings.
Meat	Cut off all fat before cooking
Chicken	Remove skin before cooking
Cheese	50% reduced fat cheese
Sour cream and mayonnaise	Use low-fat sour cream and mayonnaise or replace with natural low-fat yoghurt
Butter and solid fats	Reduce by 1/3 in recipes and replace with vegetable oil

Decrease Sugar

<i>Instead of</i>	<i>Try</i>
Sugar	In sweets reduce sugar by 1/3. For example if a recipe calls for 1 cup, use 2/3 cup.
Sugar	For canning avoid adding sugar. Instead add water and 100% fruit juice.
Sugar	In baking replace 1/3 of the sugar with skim milk powder.
Soft drink	Avoid. Drink water and milk.

Decrease Sodium

<i>Instead of</i>	<i>Try</i>
Salt	Avoid adding salt to recipes. Add more herbs and spices.
Soup stock and gravy	Salt-reduced stock and gravy
Salt	Avoid adding salt when cooking past, rice or hot cereal.

Increase Fiber

<i>Instead of</i>	<i>Try</i>
White bread	Whole grain and wholemeal bread
White flour	Wholemeal flour
In main dishes	Add extra vegetable, beans and lentils
In sweet dishes	Add extra fruit

P. Kendall, Colorado State University Extension food and nutrition specialist and professor, food science and human nutrition. 3/00. Reviewed 1/03.

Background Information

Tips for Healthy Modifications

Here are a few ways to update recipes. These suggestions apply to most foods except when specific proportions of ingredients are essential to prevent spoilage (such as cured meats, pickles, jams and jellies).

Decrease Total Fat and Calories

- Reduce fat by one-fourth to one-third in baked products. For example, if a recipe calls for 1 cup hydrogenated shortening, try 2/3 cup oil. This works best in baked goods like breads, muffins and cookies.
- In recipes such as muffins, snack and cakes, try replacing half to all of the fat with prune puree, low fat yogurt or unsweetened applesauce. The pectin in these "fat replacers" helps hold the product together and gives the mouth-feel of fat. Because they add sugar calories, you also may want to decrease the added sugar by one-fourth.
- Cut back or even eliminate added fat in casseroles and main dishes. For example, browning meat in added fat is unnecessary because some fat will drain from the meat as it cooks. Use a microwave oven, non-stick pan or cooking spray.
- Sauté or stir-fry vegetables with little fat or use water, wine or broth.
- To thicken sauces and gravies without lumping, eliminate fat and mix cornstarch or flour with a small amount of cold liquid. Stir this mixture slowly into the hot liquid to be thickened and bring it to a boil, stirring constantly. Add herbs, spices and flavourings.
- Chill soups, gravies and stews; skim off hardened fat before reheating to serve.
- Select lean cuts of meat and trim off visible fat. Remove skin from poultry before cooking.
- Bake, broil, grill, poach or microwave meat, poultry or fish instead of frying.
- Decrease the proportion of oil in homemade salad dressings. Try one-third oil to two-thirds vinegar. Low-fat cottage cheese or buttermilk seasoned with herbs and spices also makes a low-fat dressing.
- Use reduced-calorie sour cream or mayonnaise. To reduce fat further, use plain low-fat or non-fat yogurt, buttermilk or blended cottage cheese instead of regular sour cream or mayonnaise for sauces, dips and salad dressings. If you heat a sauce made with yogurt, add 1 tablespoon of cornstarch to 1 cup of yogurt to prevent separation.
- Use skim or low-fat milk instead of whole milk. For extra richness, try evaporated skim milk.
- Choose low-fat cheeses such as feta, Neufchatel and mozzarella instead of high-fat ones such as Swiss or cheddar. Also use less cheese.

Decrease Saturated Fat and Cholesterol

- Use two egg whites or an egg substitute product instead of one whole egg. In some recipes, simply decrease the total number of eggs. This is especially true if the fat and sugar also are decreased in the recipe.
- Use margarine instead of butter. Look for margarines in which liquid vegetable oil is the first ingredient.
- Use vegetable oils instead of solid fats. To substitute liquid oil for solid fats, use about one-fourth less than the recipe calls for. For example, if a recipe calls for 1/4 cup (4 tablespoons) of solid fat, use 3 tablespoons of oil. For cakes or pie crusts, use a recipe that specifically calls for oil, because liquid fats require special mixing procedures.

Decrease Sugar

- Reduce sugar by one-quarter to one-third in baked goods and desserts. Add extra spice or flavouring to enhance impression of sweetness. This works best with quick breads, cookies, pie fillings, and custard, puddings and fruit crisps.
- Decrease or eliminate sugar when canning or freezing fruits. Buy unsweetened frozen fruit or fruit canned in its own juice or water.
- In cookies, bars and cakes, replace one-quarter of the sugar called for with an equal amount of non-fat dry milk. This reduces calories and increases calcium, protein and riboflavin in the recipe.
- Choose fruit juices, club soda or skim milk over soft drinks and punches. Make fruit juice coolers with equal parts fruit juice and club soda or seltzer.
- No sugar sweeteners can replace part or all of the sugar in many recipes. However, most have limitations. Aspartame (Equal) will not work well in products that are cooked or baked. Saccharin can be used in hot and cold foods but may leave a bitter aftertaste. Neither product can provide the volume or structure that sugar does so rather than substitute, it's best to choose recipes especially tested for use with no sugar sweeteners.

Decrease Sodium

- Salt may be omitted or reduced in most recipes. Do not reduce salt in cured meats or pickled or brined vegetables -- it acts as a preservative. A small amount is useful in yeast breads to help control the rising action of the yeast.
- Start with a gradual reduction. For example, if a recipe calls for 1 teaspoon of salt, try 1/2 teaspoon. If you reduce the amount of salt gradually, you'll soon adjust to a less salty flavour. Choose fresh or low-sodium versions of soups and broths, soy sauce, canned vegetables and tomato products.
- Rely on herbs and spices for flavour, rather than salt.
- Use garlic or onion powder instead of garlic or onion salt.
- Omit salt from water when cooking pasta, noodles, rice or hot cereals.
- Try fruit juice or wine for cooking liquid instead of broth or bouillon.
- Read labels. Any ingredient that includes sodium in its name contains sodium.

Increase Fiber

- Choose whole grain instead of highly refined products (whole-wheat flour and bread, bulgur, brown rice, oatmeal, whole cornmeal and barley).
- Whole-wheat flour usually can be substituted for part or all of the all-purpose flour. If a recipe calls for 2 cups of all-purpose flour, try 1 cup of all-purpose and 1 cup of whole-wheat flour. When completely substituting whole-wheat for white flour, use 7/8 cup whole-wheat flour for 1 cup of white flour.
- Add extra fruits and vegetables to recipes.
- Add fruits to muffins, pancakes, salads and desserts, and add vegetables to quiche fillings, casseroles and salads.

P. Kendall, Colorado State University Extension food and nutrition specialist and professor, food science and human nutrition. 3/00. Reviewed 1/03.

Background Information

Effects of food substitution on taste

Modifying recipes to make healthier food can sometimes affect the taste of the food. Before choosing which ingredients you would like to modify, it is important to understand the impact each of the ingredients has on the taste of the food.

Below is a list of the functions of several ingredients which you may consider modifying.

Fat

- Provides flavour and richness.
- Provides texture and tenderness in baked goods.
- Promotes flakiness and lightness.
- Promotes smoothness and creaminess.

Eggs

- Provide structure, elasticity and richness.
- Act as a thickener and emulsifier.
- Act as leavening agents when beaten.

Sugar

- Provides flavour, volume and texture.
- Increases tenderness and browning in baked goods.
- Acts as a preservative in jams, jellies and pickles.
- Acts as food for yeast.

Sodium

- Acts as a preservative in cured meats and in brined vegetables.
- Controls action of yeast.










Healthier cooking methods

Try these healthy cooking methods which can help to cut down use of fat or oil.

 <p>Boil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no oil is needed • soup is rich in nutrients and tasty • top layer of fat can be removed easily 	 <p>Grill/roast/bake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food is crisp & fragrant • flavour is not lost • little oil is needed • extra fat is drained off 	 <p>Stew/crockpot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • soup is rich in flavour • tough and cheaper cuts of meat can be made tender 	 <p>Steam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • food can be cooked without using any oil • flavour is not lost
 <p>Microwave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short cooking time • nutrients are not lost • no oil is needed 	 <p>Stir-fry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • little oil is needed • nutrients are not lost • meat and vegetables are not over-cooked 	 <p>Turbobroil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short cooking time • extra fat is drained off • food is crisp • oil is not needed 	 <p>Pressure cook</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short cooking time • flavour is not lost • good for tough meats, fruits, and nuts

How you cook your food can make a difference

to the amount of fat it contains. For each serving of the following food types, you can cut down the fat content by at least half by choosing a healthier cooking method.

Type of food	Fat content (g/teaspoons)	Type of food	Fat content (g/teaspoons)
Chicken		Egg	
Deep fried	26 	Fried	11 
Roasted	11 	Boiled	6 
Steamed	8 	Potato	
Fish		Chips	11 
Fried	9 	Mashed	5 
Steamed	4 		

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