

Is Eating One's Cultural Foods A Healthy Option?

Mable Everette, DrPH, Registered Dietitian

The United States of America has a mixture of cultural groups that come from all over the world. These populations bring to America the richness of their cultures including a variety of tasty foods. Everyone is being encouraged to incorporate cultural foods into their eating plans. There is no one right or set standard eating plan that needs to be followed. Instead, consumers should follow the dietary recommendations and the serving sizes from each of the food groups in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food guide pyramid(mypyramid.gov). The food guide pyramid gives a wide selection of cultural food items that can be used in the daily eating plan. Cultural foods can be incorporated; many of the food items from different cultures are the same as those found in the pyramid.

Cultural foods can be healthy, we just need to make an effort to use healthy preparation methods by including foods and recipes that are lower in fat, salt, and sugar. It is a matter of being informed about healthy eating but there is no doubt that these foods can be healthy, it is just a matter of selecting wisely! See the cnesinc.org website for "Traditional Cultural Recipes with a Healthy Twist."

Excerpted from "Evolution of Family Health including 20 commonly asked questions Food, Nutrition & Health Questions."

Available: www.cnesinc.org