Nutrition around the World

This month you have learned about different games that children around the world play. In the spirit of learning about different cultures, this month your club can research a country and prepare a presentation for an international celebration at your school or community center. Your club can research activities that are popular in the country, as well as healthy snacks or recipes that come from that country. Below is some information about food choices in countries around the world.

**Latin America:** Foods from plant sources are abundant in Latin American diets, including corn and potatoes (both white and sweet). Rice was introduced in later years. Locally grown fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts and seeds are also included. Fish, chicken and turkey are used when they are available. Red meats are used less often in most Latin American diets, except in Argentina.

**Africa:** Foods from Africa are a combination of traditional native foods and the influences of many other cultures. One of the main characteristics of many native African meals is the use of starchy food as the main part of the meal. Yams, corn, millet, sorghum and porridges made from those foods are common. Stews made with some meat and many locally grown vegetables are often served with the starchy food. In coastal areas, seasoned fish is available. European and Indian flavoring and cooking techniques are strong in some African areas.

**Mediterranean areas:** The traditional diet of this area includes a great variety of fruits, vegetables, breads and other grains, beans, nuts and seeds. Foods from animal sources are found less often. Mediterranean diets use olive oil as a major source of fat. A variety of cheeses and yogurt are used in low to moderate amounts. The fruits and vegetables are usually locally grown and eaten raw. Garlic and a variety of other herbs are used for seasoning foods. Fish is eaten in areas where it is available and red meat is used in small amounts.

**Western Europe:** Meat and potatoes are very popular, but in coastal countries fish is popular. Most of the countries feature different types of bread. In the southern regions where the weather is milder, locally grown vegetables and fruits are used often. In the colder areas, the diet contains more meats, cheeses, sausages and breads. Going to the market daily to get food for meals is a common practice.

**Asia:** Eating in Asian areas of the world is tied to rich traditions and religious practices. Traditional healthy diets are built around rice dishes. Rice can provide from ¼ to ⅔ of the energy in Asian diets. Most foods are plant-based, mixed with low to moderate amounts of animal foods. The richness of Asian diets comes through the many different seasonings and flavorings used to prepare the food.

Source: [www.citnews.unl.edu/NFY/myfood/aroundworld.html](http://www.citnews.unl.edu/NFY/myfood/aroundworld.html)