

# A Guided Discovery of *Canada's Food Guide*

## Cook More Often



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This lesson is designed to be completed on its own or as part of the series of lessons included in *A Guided Discovery of Canada's Food Guide*. To download the other lessons, visit [TeachNutrition.ca](https://www.teachnutrition.ca).

## OVERVIEW

*Canada's Food Guide* (CFG), developed by Health Canada, is an online suite of resources in the form of videos, recipes, and tips that provide guidance about eating habits. Many elements of CFG can be explored with your students, including food choices and eating habits. This lesson will guide students through the CFG section "**Cook More Often.**"

The student workbook gives students the opportunity to build connections between their experiences and CFG recommendations. To complete this activity, students require internet access and a device (e.g., computer, tablet, or laptop) to access CFG online. The activity can be done individually, in pairs or small groups, or as a class, depending on the format of your class.

*Note: Throughout this workbook, language used in Canada's Food Guide is identified by **this style**.*



## Key Learning Objectives

- Identify and apply CFG recommendations for planning and preparing meals and snacks.
- Identify the food skills required to prepare various meals and snacks.

## Materials

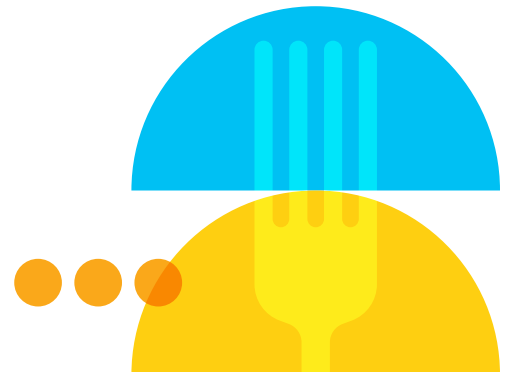
- Student workbook (fillable PDF or printed copy)
- Device (computer, tablet, or laptop) with internet access
- Access to the Canada's Food Guide website: [Canada.ca/FoodGuide](https://Canada.ca/FoodGuide)

## USING THIS RESOURCE IN YOUR CLASS

You can use this resource in multiple ways depending on your class's needs and the resources available:

- **Individually:** Each student completes the workbook on their own using a computer with internet access.
- **In pairs or small groups:** Divide students into pairs or small groups. Provide each group with a computer with internet access. Students can each fill in their individual workbook or the group can fill in one resource.
- **As a class or large groups:** Provide each student with an individual workbook to complete on their own. As a group, navigate the website using one computer.
- **In an online learning environment:** Provide each student with the fillable PDF to complete on their own at home. During online class meetings, review answers and discussion topics.

***Suggested answers are provided in italics in this Teacher Guide.***





## TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### HOW TO TALK ABOUT FOOD WITH STUDENTS

Teachers know the value of creating a safe and respectful classroom environment. Consider how this principle relates to the messages you share about food and eating. You can help students feel relaxed and supported by talking about all foods in an inclusive way rather than as “good” or “bad.” Neutral food conversations mean there is no judgement of the food or the person eating it.

#### Roles food plays in eating and life

Food is more than nutrients. But often, foods that do not fit neatly into the categories in CFG are considered nonessential or “junk” foods.

*But what would curry be without turmeric or chilis? Salad without salad dressing?  
Consider how a chewy cookie or crispy chips can add flavour and texture to a meal.*

None of these ingredients or foods belongs to a Food Guide category, yet they all have value. Health Canada does not support labelling foods “healthy” or “unhealthy.”<sup>1</sup> Calling foods “unhealthy” or “junk” can harm a child’s relationship with food and their relationships with caregivers who provide food. Making space for a variety of foods contributes to a positive relationship with food and recognizes that factors such as taste, culture, and food traditions play a role in students’ food choices. This view is communicated in CFG and in Canada’s Dietary Guidelines through advice on enjoying food.<sup>2,3</sup>





## Factors that affect food choices

The aim of *A Guided Discovery of Canada's Food Guide* is to explore Health Canada's recommendations and apply them to real world experiences and to making food decisions that respect the reality of students' needs and resources.

Food choices can be based on many things, including taste, hunger, food traditions, what's available, and personal health. The ability of students and caregivers to meet these needs is tied to access to resources such as money, time, space, skills, equipment, and support. These and many other factors influence what foods students eat at school.

If concerns about a student's food choices come up, pause to consider what the underlying cause for the concern might be rather than commenting on the healthfulness of particular food items. For example, family stressors such as a medical condition may affect a caregiver's capacity to shop for groceries or prepare meals. Like you, caregivers are trying their best to support children. You can help families by fostering a safe food environment at school and encouraging experiential learning with nutrition in the classroom.

If you suspect a family does not have enough food, we recommend speaking to your educational counsellor to help facilitate a conversation with the family about potential supports. This conversation is appropriate for adults; students should not be involved.

## Reducing the risk of harm

While this resource includes discussion about nutrients and the benefits of eating a variety of foods, we encourage neutral food exposure and conversation about all foods to preserve and foster a positive relationship with food. Being mindful of how health messages are delivered and avoiding techniques such as food tracking and food monitoring are recommended to minimize the risk of disordered eating behaviour that is associated with these practices. <sup>4</sup>





## PART 1:

# WEB EXPLORATION

- Introduce *Canada's Food Guide* (CFG) using a copy of the Food Guide Snapshot PDF (available at [Canada.ca/FoodGuide](https://Canada.ca/FoodGuide) or download from <https://food-guide.canada.ca/artifacts/CFG-snapshot-EN.pdf>).
- CFG is more than just pictures of food on a plate. The image of the plate and all the tabs on the left of the Snapshot webpage are part of CFG. The bottom of the Food Guide Snapshot page, “discover your food guide at Canada.ca/FoodGuide,” guides readers to the website where the complete CFG is found.
- From Canada.ca/FoodGuide, have students click the “**Eating Habits**” tab on the left, then click “**Cook More Often**.” This is the topic you will explore today.
- Have students complete the first section in their workbook using either the fillable PDF or printed workbook. We recommend completing the workbook in the order it is presented and pausing for class discussions so students can get the full benefit of learning about this topic.

## QUESTIONS:

*Canada's Food Guide* (CFG) states “**cooking and preparing food can support healthy eating habits. Cooking allows you to learn new skills.**”

1 Can you think of a benefit of learning to cook?

- *Learning new skills safely, including stirring, mixing, cutting, chopping, slicing, grating, using a can opener, using a peeler, using an oven and microwave*
- *Planning and preparing meals and snacks with resources available (e.g., budget, ingredients, access to resources)*
- *Making foods you enjoy eating*

2 Using the following list, place a checkmark beside the skills you have learned that help you to prepare food. Circle one or more skills you would like to learn. You can add more skills you already have or would like to learn at the bottom of the list.

*This is an opportunity for students to reflect on what they already know and would like to learn.*

- Wash vegetables and fruit
- Fry an egg
- Cut vegetables and fruit using a knife
- Use a can opener
- Use a vegetable peeler
- Use a blender
- Use a whisk
- Store leftovers in containers
- Use a salad spinner
- Create a grocery list
- Measure ingredients using measuring spoons
- Learn how to care for plants in planters or a garden
- Cut meat and vegetables and put them on a skewer
- Follow a recipe
- Cut cookies using a cookie cutter
- Practise multiplication to adjust recipe quantities
- Cut bread using a bread knife
- Use measuring cups to work with fractions
- Grate cheese using a grater

Other skills I know \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Other skills I would like to learn \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3 Canada's Food Guide (CFG) recommends getting “**creative with leftovers to make a whole new meal.**” What is one example of planning for leftovers from cook once and eat twice?

- *Cook double rice for stir-fry and use the extra for rice pilaf.*
- *Cook twice the chicken or ground turkey and keep extras for chicken salad, enchiladas, chili, or spaghetti sauce.*
- *Keep flavours similar so foods can be used for many meals.*
  - *For example, chili can be used in tacos or as spaghetti topping.*

4 Read each scenario and think of two meals or snacks that use the leftover food or ingredient.

An example has been provided in the first scenario.

For dinner on Tuesday, Tony helped his grandpa make tacos using ground beef. Before adding the taco seasoning to the cooked meat, Tony noticed he would likely have too much meat to use up at dinner, so he set some aside.

How could Tony use the leftover ground beef in another meal or snack?

**Spaghetti with meat sauce**

*Other examples:*

- *Hamburger soup*
- *Chili*
- *Sloppy joes*
- *Sprinkled on nachos*

Angela was packing her lunch for school the next day. She sliced some Cheddar cheese to put on her sandwich. When she was finished, she realized she had cut too many slices.

How could Angela use the cheese in another meal or snack?

*Examples:*

- *Cheese and crackers*
- *Add to scrambled eggs*
- *Grilled cheese sandwich and tomato soup*
- *Macaroni and cheese*
- *Add on top of pasta*
- *Sliced apples and cheese*

Priya is preparing a snack. She washes blueberries and slices bananas. After her snack, she has leftover blueberries.

How could Priya use this fruit in another meal or snack?

*Examples:*

- *Blend with milk, yogurt, and ice for a smoothie*
- *Layer with yogurt and cereal for a parfait*
- *Have on the side with toast and peanut butter*

Felipe is making lunch for himself and his younger brother. His favourite meal to make is macaroni and cheese. After boiling the macaroni, he realizes he has made too much.

How could Felipe use the extra pasta in another meal or snack?

*Examples:*

- *Macaroni salad*
- *Add to soup*
- *Macaroni and broccoli casserole*
- *With tomato sauce*





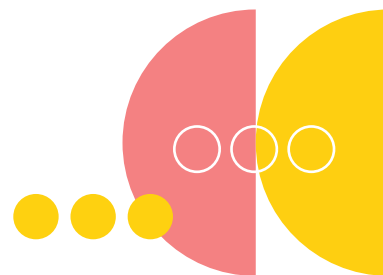
Click the page titled “*Involve Others*” and answer the following questions:


- 5 List three benefits that *Canada’s Food Guide* (CFG) gives for involving others in planning and preparing meals.

- *Share food and cooking traditions*
- *Spend quality time with loved ones*

- *Learn and share important food skills*
- *Make preparing meals and snacks more fun and less work*

- *Explore healthy new foods that you might not normally try*
- *Feel more connected to those around you*





*Canada's Food Guide (CFG) encourages sharing food and cooking traditions. Food traditions can be foods, dishes, or ways of preparing food you enjoy regularly or for special celebrations. Cooking traditions could include making perogies with your baba once a year, having Friday pizza night, or eating your favourite meal for lunch.*

6 What is one food or cooking tradition you have?

*Students can choose any food tradition from holidays such as Christmas, Eid, or Passover or more informal traditions such as taco Tuesday, family pizza night, or a favourite lunch they bring to school.*

7 What makes this food or cooking tradition meaningful?

*Students can share their own experiences with these traditions and why they are important.*

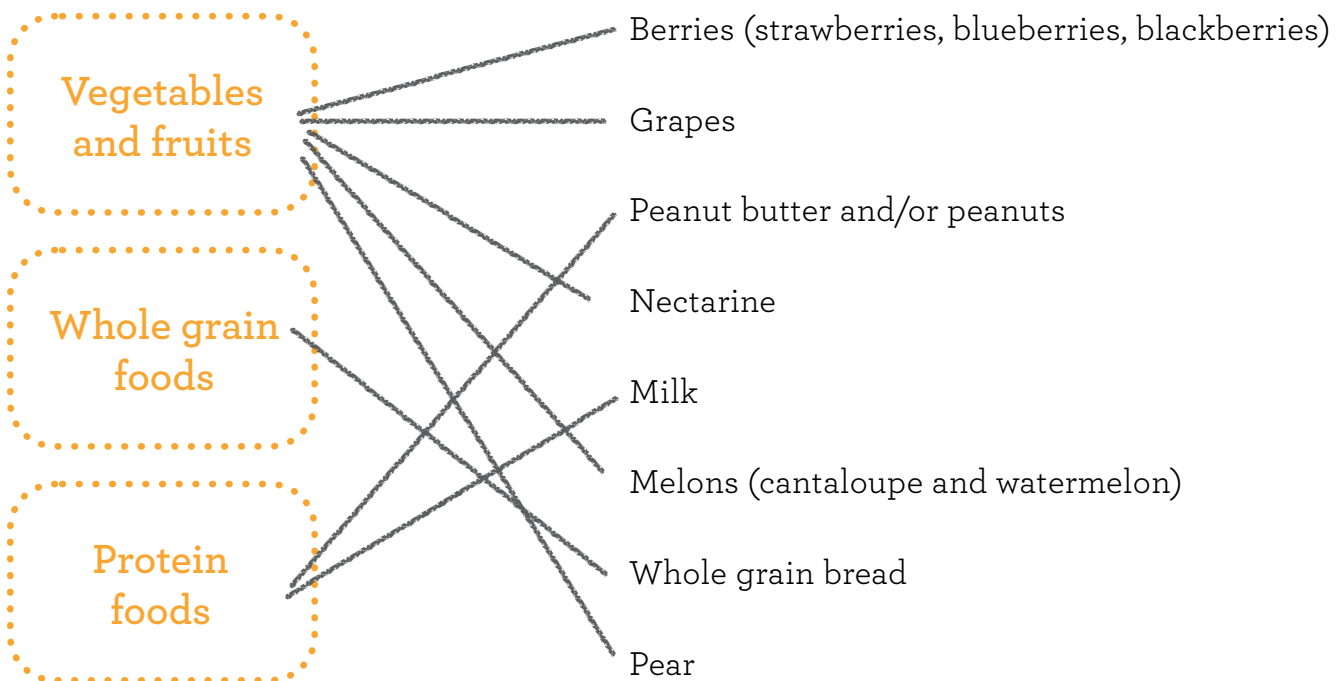
## PART 2: MEAL INGREDIENTS

This image shows ingredients used to create a meal.



To extend your learning on where foods come from, consider ordering the Food Picture Cards and Study Prints resource for your classroom, available at [TeachNutrition.ca](https://www.teachnutrition.ca).

8 Connect the ingredient to the correct food category.



9 What meal would you create using these ingredients?

*Examples:*

- *Toast topped with peanut butter with milk and fruit salad*
- *Toast and a smoothie made from fruit, milk, and peanut butter*

10 Is there anything you would add to or change in the meal to make it more enjoyable?

*Students can choose any changes or additions they would enjoy.*

*Examples:*

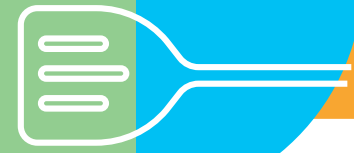
- *Remove strawberries. I don't like them.*
- *Add butter to put on toast.*
- *Replace bread with cereal because I like to eat that with milk and fruit in the morning.*

11 What skills would be required to create your meal?

*Answers will vary depending on the meals students create using these ingredients.*

*Examples:*

- *Using a blender for a smoothie*
- *Using a toaster for toast*
- *Using a knife and cutting board to cut and/or core fruit*
- *Using a knife and cutting board to slice bread*



## **PART 3:**

# **CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE IN ACTION**

Watch the video “*Canada’s Food Guide in Action.*”

*This video explores how students can use their food skills to create meals using the CFG Plate. The video includes four meal options. After each meal is presented, the video asks, “What foods do you like to eat together?”*

*If time allows, consider pausing the video and facilitating a class discussion. These questions can help guide the conversation:*

- *Have you ever eaten these foods together?*
- *If so, did you enjoy it?*
- *Are there other foods you would like to eat with this meal?*
- *Are there any foods you would remove from this meal to make it more enjoyable?*
- *Is there a particular time of day you would like to eat this meal?*
- *What other foods do you like to eat together at that time of day?*

**12** If you were to create your own meal for a “Canada’s Food Guide in Action” video, what meal would you create? Aim to include at least one food from each food category.

*Students can choose any meal they would like to create.*

13 Use the table below to identify the ingredients in the meal you chose.

*Students can assess and categorize their chosen meals.*

INGREDIENT	WHAT FOOD CATEGORY DOES THIS FOOD FIT INTO? (vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods, protein foods)

14 What is one food skill you already have that would help you prepare this meal?

*For questions 14 and 15, students can explore the meal they choose and assess which skills they would need to create the meal. Some students may not know any of the skills needed to create the meal; that's okay.*

15 Are there any food skills you need to learn, or would need an adult to help you with, to prepare this meal?

*Some students may not need to learn any of the skills needed to create the meal; that's okay.*

16 A complete meal may include foods in addition to those included on the *Canada's Food Guide* (CFG) Plate (for example, drinks, an appetizer, dessert). Is there anything you would add to complete your meal?

*This is an opportunity for students to get creative and add foods to match their own preferences.*

*Examples:*

- *Greek salad to start*
- *Tomato soup on the side*
- *Glass of milk*
- *Fruit salad with ice cream for dessert*

## REFERENCES

1. Office of Nutrition Policy and Promotion/Health Products and Food Branch. Sept. 2020. Personal communication.
2. Health Canada. 2021. Canada's Food Guide. [www.food-guide.canada.ca](http://www.food-guide.canada.ca). Accessed Jan. 18, 2021.
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4. Pinhas et al. Trading health for a healthy weight: the uncharted side of healthy weights initiatives. *Eat Disord* 2013;21:109-116.



