

A Guided Discovery of *Canada's Food Guide*

Eat Meals with Others



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This lesson is designed to be completed as part of the series of lessons included in *A Guided Discovery of Canada's Food Guide*. We strongly encourage you to complete the *Canada's Food Guide* Plate and other lessons before beginning. 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 topic “Eat Meals with Others.”

The Student Workbook gives students the opportunity to build connections between their experiences and CFG's 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.

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



Key Learning Objectives

- Identify the benefits of eating meals with others.
- Apply the concepts of CFG when planning meals with others.
- Identify the steps in planning and preparing meals with others.

Materials

- Student Workbook (fillable PDF or printed copy)
- Device with internet access
- Access to the *Canada's Food Guide* website: 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:** Provide each group with a computer with internet access. Students can each fill in their individual workbook or the group can fill in one workbook.
- **As a class or in large groups:** Provide each student with an individual workbook to complete on their own. As a class or large 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 INFO

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.”¹ 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.^{2,3}

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.⁴

PART I: WEB EXPLORATION

- Introduce *Canada's Food Guide* using a copy of the Food Guide Snapshot PDF (available at 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, referred to as the “Snapshot,” and all of 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 *Eat Meals with Others*. This is the topic you will explore today.
- Have students complete either the fillable PDF or printed workbook.

Access *Canada's Food Guide* at Canada.ca/FoodGuide.

Click the *Eat Meals with Others* tab on the left. This is the topic you will explore today.

Answer the following questions as you navigate the webpage:

1

Canada's Food Guide explores the benefits of eating together. Fill in the blanks to complete the sentence below using *Canada's Food Guide's* suggestions.

When we eat with others, we can

- add enjoyment to our life,
- enjoy quality time together,
- share food traditions across generations and cultures , and
- explore new healthy foods that we might not normally try.



2

What is one benefit of eating meals with others that is not listed in *Canada's Food Guide* that you could add?

Examples:

- *Share new recipe ideas*
- *Have conversations with friends and family*
- *Create new food traditions*
- *Improve connection and relationship*
- *Learn from others*

3

Canada's Food Guide states that **food is often a main part of celebrations and special events. However, eating with others doesn't have to be saved for special events.**

a

When is your favourite time to eat with others? This could be a certain meal each day, a special celebration, or a favourite weekly tradition.

Examples:

- *Lunch at school with classmates*
- *Breakfast program at school*
- *Family dinners*
- *Passover dinner*
- *Community feast*

b

Who do you enjoy eating your meals with?

Examples:

- *Family*
- *Neighbours*
- *Friends*
- *Sports teams*
- *Teachers*

4

Read the section, **how to eat with others more often**. *Canada's Food Guide* suggests that the **key to making it happen often starts with a plan**. The guide provides many examples of ways to eat with others more often.

a

What is one example you could add to this list?

Examples:

- *Invite a classmate to eat lunch with you.*
- *Ask if you can invite a friend over for dinner or join them at their home.*
- *Help plan a meal or snack to eat with your family.*
- *Bring a snack to an after-school activity to share with friends*

b

For your example, what is one thing you would need to do to prepare for your meal together?

Students can brainstorm what they would need to do to plan their meal with others. Answers will vary depending on the meal they chose.

Examples:

- *Invite friends/family to the meal.*
- *Plan what meal to prepare.*
- *Make a grocery list.*
- *Find a recipe.*
- *Ask if your guests have any food allergies.*

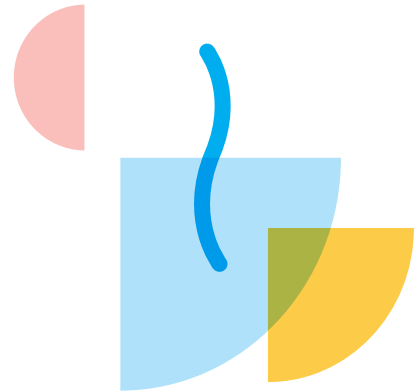
PART 2: CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE IN ACTION

Click on the *Canada's Food Guide* logo in the top left corner to go back to the main screen. On the left side toolbar, click **Recipes**.

5

Look through the recipes listed on this page and choose one you would like to make for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

Students can choose any recipe included on the "Recipes" page. If you have completed another lesson in the Guided Discovery series previously, encourage students to choose a different recipe than they chose before.



6

Why did you choose this recipe?

Examples:

- *I've never tried a recipe like this before.*
- *I've tried something similar and liked the taste.*
- *I like an ingredient in this recipe.*
- *The recipe instructions seem easy to follow.*
- *I recognize some of the ingredients.*



Think back to what you learned about planning meals with others. Answer the following questions using the recipe you chose in question 5.

7 If you plan to eat this meal with others, consider the following:

a When would you like to share this recipe (time of day, day of the week, holiday/celebration, etc.)?

Students can choose any occasion to share this meal with others.

Examples:

- *Friday night dinner with family*
- *Lunch with my classmates*
- *Summer community potluck*

b Who would you like to share this meal with?

Students can choose any group to share this meal with.

Examples:

- *Extended family*
- *The whole class*
- *A new friend at school*
- *Neighbours*

c Is there anything you would change in this recipe (for example, remove ingredients, replace ingredients, or add a side dish, beverage, dessert, or sauce)?

Examples:

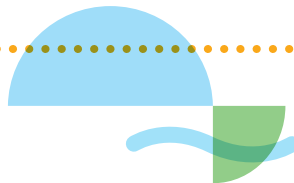
- *Add shredded cheese on top.*
- *Replace apples with strawberries.*
- *Bake instead of steam broccoli.*
- *Add a dip for vegetables.*

d What steps would you need to do to plan your meal with others? Consider both the planning of your meal together as well as the food preparation.

Students can explore what they would need to plan for their meal with others.

Example:

1. *Talk with a parent or caregiver to pick the best time for the meal.*
2. *Invite my neighbours to come over Friday night for dinner.*
3. *Adjust the recipe to feed 10 people instead of four.*
4. *Make a grocery list.*
5. *Go to the store with a parent or caregiver to get ingredients.*
6. *Ask a parent or caregiver to help me prepare the recipe.*
7. *Follow the recipe instructions.*
8. *Set the table.*

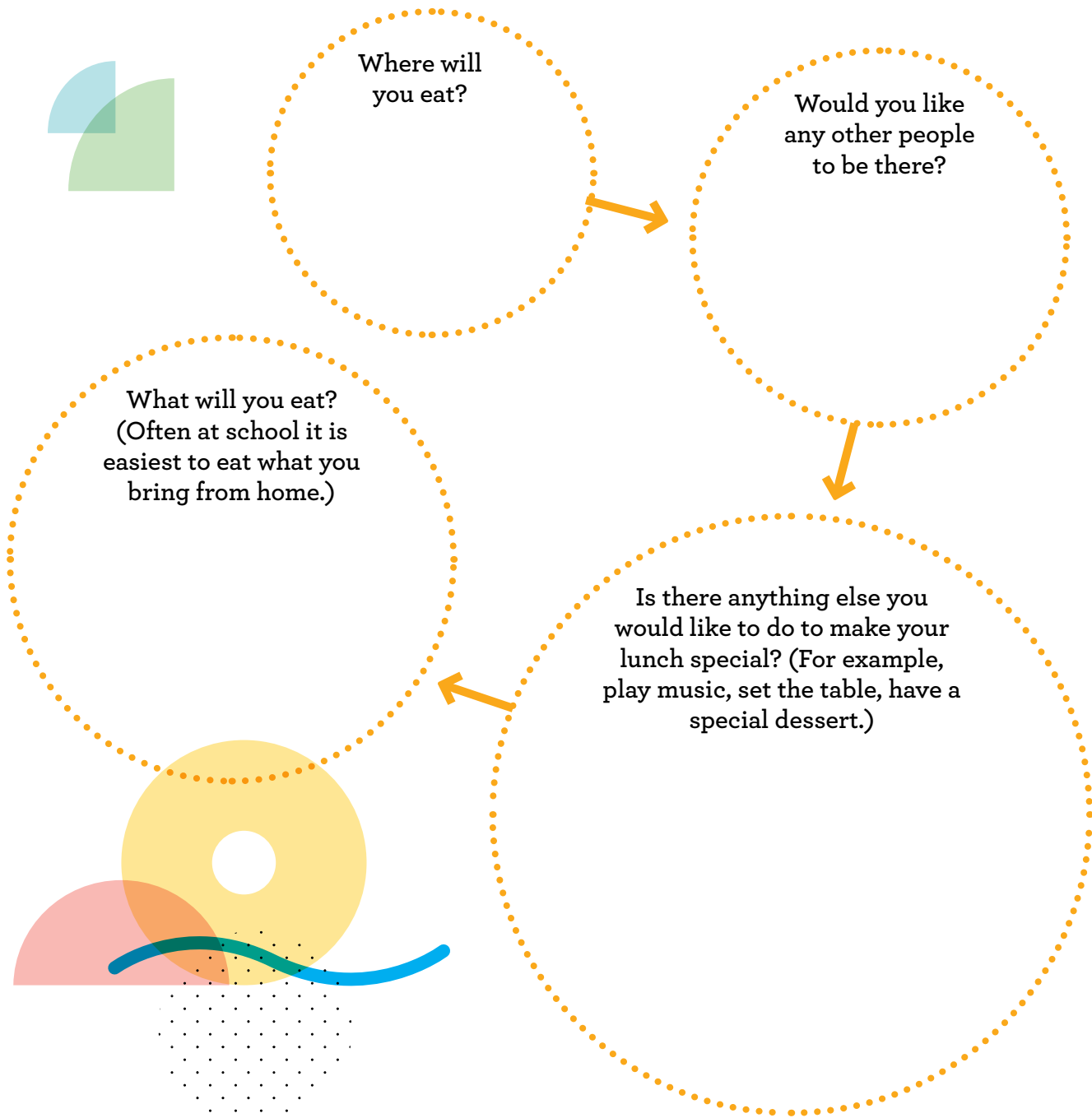


OPTIONAL: KEEP THE LEARNING GOING

Create an invitation to invite another student at your school to eat lunch with you.

Before writing your invitation, consider these questions:

Provide students with blank paper and markers, crayons, pencil crayons, etc. Students can get creative making their invitation and share with another student at the school. Encourage students to include a description of their lunch to connect to literacy outcomes.



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. Accessed Jan. 18, 2021.
3. Health Canada. 2020. Canada's Dietary Guidelines. food-guide.canada.ca/en/guidelines. Accessed Jan. 18, 2021.
4. Pinhas et al. Trading health for a healthy weight: the uncharted side of healthy weights initiatives. *Eat Disord* 2013;21:109-116.

