

A Guided Discovery of *Canada's Food Guide*

Enjoy Your Food



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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 “Enjoy Your Food.”

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 and apply CFG recommendations for adapting meals based on taste, culture, budget, and lifestyle.
- Identify the benefits of including culture and food traditions as part of eating.
- Explore ways to include culture and food traditions as part of planning and preparing meals and snacks.

Materials

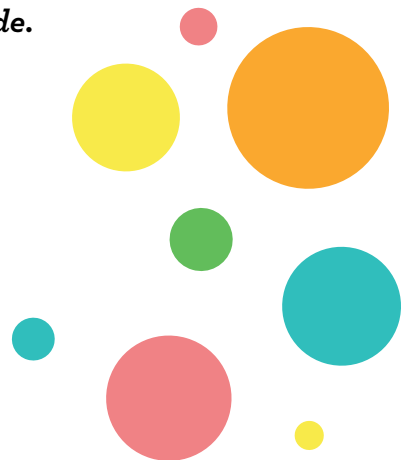
- Student Workbook (fillable PDF or printed copy)
- Device with internet access
- Access to the *Canada's Food Guide* website: Canada.ca/FoodGuide

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

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.”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

CREATING A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM

How do our own cultural experiences affect the way we interact with and learn from others? Culture is a lived experience unique to each individual. It can include values, traditions, communication styles, language, learning styles, social norms, and more.⁵ The way we reflect on our own experiences and approach conversations about culture with students can help to foster connections.

A culturally responsive classroom helps students feel comfortable, secure, and respected. It can help them feel they have a voice and that they are listened to. When we create a culturally responsive classroom we can celebrate the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and strengths of our diverse students to make learning more engaging and effective.⁵ The table below provides examples of ways you can create a culturally responsive classroom.

A culturally responsive classroom...	What might this look like?
Treats students with compassion, dignity, and respect.	Welcoming multiple viewpoints and encouraging others to make decisions that align with their own values, needs, and resources.
Meets diverse learning needs with various approaches to instruction. ⁵	Providing students with choice in how they want to learn – individually, in pairs, in small groups, or as a class.
Considers each student’s cultural experiences with food and how these experiences influence their beliefs, values, and preferences.	Inviting students to explore their personal, family, and community food stories. Let students choose whether they would like to share.
Invites students to share their experiences through storytelling.	Creating opportunities for students to share – for example, starting a discussion with a sharing circle that allows voices to be heard respectfully.

In this lesson, students are invited to share information about their culture and food traditions. These may be private experiences that students would like to keep to themselves or something they are excited to share with others. As you work through the lesson with your students, consider the different perspectives and experiences of each student. Not all experiences are positive. By allowing students to decide whether they would like to share, we can continue to consider each student’s experiences and learning needs.

PART I: WEB EXPLORATION

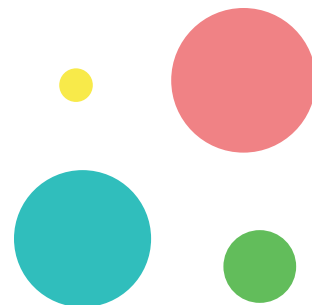
- Introduce *Canada's Food Guide* using a copy of the *Food Guide Snapshot PDF* (available at Canada.ca/FoodGuide).
- CFG is more than just pictures of food on a plate. The image of the plate, referred to as the “Snapshot,” and all of the tabs on the left of the Snapshot webpage are part of CFG. The 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 *Enjoy Your Food*. This is the topic you will explore today.
- Have students complete either the fillable PDF or printed workbook.

Student Questions:

- 1 What are five benefits of enjoying your food? These can be examples from *Canada's Food Guide* or your own ideas.

Examples:

- *Tasting the flavours*
- *Being open to trying new foods*
- *Developing a healthy attitude about food*
- *Making eating more positive*
- *Developing food skills as you cook your favourite foods*



Having a healthy attitude about food means we can think about food in ways that support our overall health, including our physical, emotional, and social wellbeing. Students will be given the definition below and asked to explore how this concept may be similar to or different from what they have heard in the past.

When we talk about developing a healthy attitude about food, we are focusing on developing an eating attitude where you are comfortable with and relaxed about mealtimes and eating.⁶ You give food some thought but are able to be flexible, try new things, and adapt eating with what is happening in your life at that moment (e.g., enjoying a meal at a friend's house).⁶ Overall, you feel it's okay to eat the amounts and types of food that you like and find satisfying, and that nourish your body.⁶ This will be different from day to day and from person to person.

Asking students to explore how this view of "healthy" may be similar to or different from what they have heard in the past prompts them to explore and perhaps challenge some of the messages about healthy eating they hear regularly. Through critical thinking about these messages, students may reflect on their own eating attitude and the impact that attitude has on their relationship with food and eating.

Canada's Food Guide refers to a *healthy attitude about food*. This includes:

- Feeling comfortable with and relaxed about mealtimes and eating
- Giving food some thought but being able to adapt to what's happening in your life at that moment
- Feeling it's okay to eat the amounts and types of food that you like and find satisfying, and that nourish your body.

Adapted from Satter E. Eating competence: definition and evidence for the Satter eating competence model. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* 2007;39:142-153.

2 How is this similar to or different from what you have heard about "healthy eating" in the past?

Students can reflect on similarities and differences between this definition and what they have heard before and their previous view on healthy eating.

3 Canada's Food Guide provides examples of what enjoying your food includes. One of these examples is **getting to know the people who grow or produce your food**. Choose one food you enjoy eating and think of three things you could do to get to know more about the people who grow or produce this food.

Students can choose any food they like and come up with creative ideas to learn more about the people who grow or produce the food. An example is provided below.

Food I enjoy eating: _____ *Yogurt*

I could get to know the people who grow or produce this food by:

- *Watching videos of dairy farming such as "A Dietitian Visits a Dairy Farm" on TeachNutrition.ca*
 - *Writing a letter to a dairy farmer to ask questions about farms*
 - *Learning about dairy farming [SaskMilk](#), and [Dairy Farmers of Canada](#) websites*
 - *Asking my family what they know about dairy farming in Saskatchewan*
 - *Looking for farm tours and agriculture events in our area*
- *Looking for farm tours and agriculture events in our area*

KEEP THE LEARNING GOING

If students are interested in learning more about how food is grown and produced in Canada, consider directing them to credible information sources such as [Ag in the Classroom](#), [AITC Saskatchewan Real Dirt on Farming](#), or [Canadian Food Focus](#).

4 Enjoying your food involves many elements. *Canada's Food Guide* highlights four of these considerations: **taste, culture, budget, and lifestyle**. Think of an example of what each aspect might look like in action.

Examples are given below. Encourage students to answer differently than suggested below as they explore how various factors influence individual food choices.

- **TASTE**

Examples:

- *Adding your favourite salad dressing to your salad*
- *Making a smoothie with your favourite fruits*
- *Eating cheese with your crackers to enjoy the different textures and tastes together*

- **CULTURE**

Examples:

- *Learning your grandma's favourite recipe to share with your friends*
- *Exploring a new cuisine at a local restaurant*
- *Learning about traditional ways of gathering food*

- **BUDGET**

Examples:

- *Choosing frozen vegetables as part of your stir fry at dinner*
- *Shopping for foods on sale or in season*
- *Comparing the cost of two choices when deciding which snack to buy*

- **LIFESTYLE** (how much time you have for meals, consideration of eating patterns such as vegetarianism, allergies, etc.)

Examples:

- *Packing an extra snack with your lunch to prepare for an after school activity*
- *Replacing meat with lentils in your favourite recipe to fit a vegetarian eating pattern*

PART 2: CULTURE AND FOOD TRADITIONS

On the left side toolbar, click *Include culture and food traditions*. Read this section and answer the following questions.

- 5 Thinking about what you know about traditions, how would you describe a food tradition? Come up with your own definition.

Students can reflect on what they already know about traditions to connect this to food traditions, which may be a new term.

- 6 How do you think your family and community food traditions affect your own food traditions?

Students can reflect on how the food traditions of people around them may affect their own traditions.

Examples:

- *Traditions are often passed down for many generations, so many of my food traditions originally came from generations of my family before me.*
- *My community makes new food traditions around holidays and celebrations that we continue to practise every year.*
- *My food traditions were learned from my family and community, but I have adapted them to fit my lifestyle.*
- *I like to include my family and community in my food traditions.*

7 What aspects of an eating experience may be important, other than the food itself?

Examples:

- *The people you share the food with*
- *Where you are eating*
- *Activities before or after the meal*
- *What you talk about at mealtime*



PART 3: CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE IN ACTION

Click 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**.

8 Look through the recipes listed on this page and choose one you would like to make.

*Students can choose any recipe on the Recipes page. If you have completed another **Guided Discovery lesson**, encourage students to choose a different recipe than they chose for that lesson.*

9 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.*

Encourage students to reflect on what they learned in the Guided Discovery of Canada's Food Guide: Canada's Food Guide Plate lesson as they answer the following question.

10 Does this recipe include foods from all three food categories? Yes No

Students review the recipe they chose and assess whether it includes a food from each of vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods, and protein foods.

- If yes, name one food in the recipe from each food category.

- Vegetables and fruits: _____

- Whole grain foods: _____

- Protein foods: _____

Students can review their chosen recipe and identify the foods from each food category.

- If no, which food category is missing and what could you add to ensure this recipe includes all three food categories?

Students identify the missing food category and choose any food from that category to include in their recipe.

Think back to the four considerations *Canada's Food Guide* gives for enjoying your food.

TASTE

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

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*
- *Ice cream topped with strawberries for dessert*

CULTURE

- 12 If you were to share this meal with your family or community,

- Who would you like to share it with?

Examples:

- *Friends*
- *A neighbour*
- *Family*
- *The class*

- When would you like to share it?

Examples:

- *The first night of Hanukkah*
- *A friend's birthday*
- *Tuesday before school*

- How could you make the experience memorable?

Examples:

- *Set the table*
- *Play a game with everyone at the table after the meal*
- *Listen to your favourite playlist as you eat*

BUDGET

13 Using frozen or canned foods is one way to save money when grocery shopping. Which of the ingredients in your recipe (if any) could be replaced with a frozen or canned alternative?

Examples:

- *Replace fresh broccoli with frozen*
- *Replace fresh pears with canned pears*
- *Replace meat or fish with canned meat or legumes (beans, peas, or lentils)*



LIFESTYLE

14 If you were serving this meal to a friend who is a vegetarian, would you have to make any adjustments to ensure they could enjoy this meal too? Yes No

- If you answered yes, how might you make it vegetarian?

All meat would need to be replaced with a vegetarian (non-meat) protein food (examples below).

- If you answered no, what vegetarian protein food is included, or could you add to the meal?

Examples of vegetarian protein foods:

- *Beans* • *Milk*
- *Cheese* • *Tofu*
- *Eggs* • *Yogurt*
- *Lentils*

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