Chapter 2: Factors That Affect Food Choices
Vocabulary

• Culture – refers to the beliefs and social customs of a group of people. It affects all aspects of your life, from where you live to how you dress.

• ethnic food – are foods that are typical of a given racial, national, or religious culture.

• soul food – is a traditional food of the African American ethnic group. Soul food includes such dishes as chitterlings, collard greens, and ham hocks.
• food norm – typical standards and patterns related to food and eating behaviors.

• food taboo – In most ethnic groups, social customs prohibit the use of certain edible resources as food.

• kosher food – Jews follow dietary laws based on their interpretation of the Old Testament. These laws forbid the eating of pork and shellfish. They also specify that meat and dairy foods may not be stored, prepared, or eaten together.
• Value – are beliefs and attitudes that are important to people.
• status food – are foods that have a social impact on others. Often serves at special occasions to influence or impress important people.
• staple food – a mainstay food in the diet. A staple food supplies a large portion of the calories people need to maintain health.
• technology – the application of a certain body of knowledge that have influenced how food gets from farm to table.
• aseptic packaging – a packaging technology that preserves quality and extends shelf life of food.
What Food Tells Us

- where people live
- what they do
- what they hold important
- reflects history and affect future
Factors That Affect People’s Food Choices

- taste
- where you live
- the people around you

What other things affect people’s food choices?
Food and Culture

You may guess where people come by the way they speak.

You can guess where they come from by what they eat.

Like speech patterns, food habits reflect our culture.

culture: the beliefs and social customs of a group of people

- affects all areas of your life, from where you live to how you dress

- example—foods people service for a meal is an example of cultural influence
Food and Culture

Factors that have helped shaped your culture:

- family members
- friends
- schools
- religious organizations
- media
Historical Influences on Food

• Many people in the U.S. have roots based in other culture.

• When our ancestors came here, they brought many foods and food customs with them.

• Native Americans already had foods being grown here before the settlers arrived (corn, beans, potatoes, tomatoes).
Ethnic Influences on Food

Name some of your favorite ethnic foods.

*ethnic groups*: groups of people who share common blood ties, land ties or racial and religious similarities

*what pulls group members together is their shared beliefs and group norms*
Ethnic Influences on Food

**ethnic foods**: foods that are typical of a given racial, national or religious culture

*sharing common foods helps build a sense of ethnic pride*
Ethnic Influences on Food

food norms: typical standards and patterns related to food and eating behaviors

Example: most meals among the PA Dutch include something sweet and something sour
Ethnic Influences

1. Some ethnic groups have special ways of selecting, buying, cooking, serving or eating and storing foods.

*these customs are ways of expressing deep-rooted ties to a common heritage

Examples:

• many Italians cook and shop for food each day to get the freshest ingredients

• some Indian cooks prepare foods in a special oven called a tandoor

• the British serve tea with cookies or sandwiches as a light meal in the afternoon
Ethnic Influences

2. Ethnic food traditions help build bonds of togetherness.

*many ethnic groups serve special foods on certain days of the year to build positive emotions

Examples:

• Japanese eat black beans on New Years Day for good health and fortune

• Jewish people eat apples and honey as part of their New Year celebration so the New Year will be sweet

What foods are part of your family’s ethnic tradition?
Ethnic Influences

3. You can recognize ethnic foods by their ingredients, seasonings and preparation methods

Examples:

• corn and beans grow well in Mexico

• Spanish dishes are often flavored with onions, garlic and olive oil

• Middle Eastern foods are often seasoned with saffron, cumin and ginger

• Chinese dishes are often stir-fried or steamed
Ethnic Influences

Remember:

In most ethnic groups, social customs prohibit the use of certain edible resources as food

Examples:

• Hindu and cows

• Asian countries and dogs
Regional Influences on Food

People choose what to eat because it is popular in your area.

Examples:

• Asians helped settle the Pacific Coast, so they contributed to the rice dishes and stir-fry cooking method

• Southwest has a large Mexican-American population—tortillas, tacos and tamales are popular
Religious Influences on Food

Certain religious groups have rules of what their members may or may not eat.

Examples:

• fish on Fridays for Catholics

• Jews follow dietary laws of the Old Testament so they cannot eat pork or shellfish

• Jews also specify that meat and dairy foods may not be stored, prepared or eaten together (kosher foods)

• Muslims fast during the days of the 9th month of the calendar year

• Seventh-Day Adventists eat a vegetarian diet (they also avoid alcohol, tea and coffee)
Social Influences on Food—Family

Food often plays a role in social relationships with family and friends. These people may influence the food you choose to eat.

- family is the major influence on the diets of young eaters
- family teaches table manners
- family shows us how to eat certain foods
- learn food traditions for holidays, birthdays or other special occasions
- you adopt some of your families likes and dislikes
Social Influences on Food—Family

New trends in what, how or when families eat:

• more households are headed by working single-parents
• many dual-worker families have more income at their disposal
• the average family is smaller (smaller portion sizes available)
• family members are increasingly mobile (serving selves when hungry)
Values make a difference in the kinds of changes seen in family food behaviors.

- traditions such as making special foods and eating together are important values in some families

- half of all families in the U.S. still eat at least one meal per day together
Social Influences on Food—The Status of Foods

Sometimes people choose foods to tell a story about their social status (money, wealth, position in the community).

Example: caviar

The status of food often affects the cost, but has little to do with its nutritional value.
Social Influences on Food—Media Influences

• prepare foods the way it was prepared on TV or in a magazine

• choose to buy foods reported to have certain benefits

• buy foods we see in an ad
Emotional Responses to Food

Food evokes many emotional responses.

Example: What feelings come to mind when you hear the words—chocolate, liver, spinach, ice cream?

Some emotional responses to food may be associated with gender.

Example: quiche, steak and potatoes, finger sandwiches
Using Food to Deal with Emotions

Food not only evokes emotions, but it can express emotions.

Example:

• macaroni and cheese equals comfort
• chicken soup equals cold
• chocolate bar equals depression
Using Food to Deal with Emotions

Frustration can lead people to eat more or less food than their bodies need.

Example:

• anorexia/bulimia

• obesity
Using Food to Deal with Emotions

Give examples of situations in which food is used as a reward by individuals, parents, teachers and others.

Consequences of using food as a reward:

• can lead to weight management problems (always rewarding self with food)

• withholding dessert from a misbehaving child can cause children to develop negative emotions towards food and eating
Other Impacts on Food Choices

Agriculture, technology, economics and politics are all factors that can affect what items are sold in the stores.

In the U.S., we can get just about anything, but that is not true for many people throughout the world.
Resources Needed to Grow Crops

• fertile soil
• adequate water supply
• favorable climate
• technical knowledge
• human energy
Staple Foods

The typical diet of a region is based on the foods that grow well in that area.

**staple food:** a mainstay food in the diet

Examples:

- rice in Asia
- rye in Russia
- corn in South America
Technology and Food

• Technology allows for foods from many lands to be in your local grocery store

• Technology allows food to be stored for extended periods of time and used during food shortages
The Economics of Food

• it takes money to buy food
• it takes money to grow food
• it takes money to process and store food
• without money, poor countries won’t have food available
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