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This newsletter is produced by the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington*, to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. *Energize* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

Tell Us What's New...

What's new with your organization? To submit news to *Energize*, call Martha Marino 206-817-1466, e-mail martha_marino@yahoo.com.

Deadline for submission is the last day of each month.

Subscription Information

Energize can be sent to you electronically each month. There is no charge.

To order or unsubscribe contact: Christa Albice, WSU Puyallup, 253-445-4541. Fax 253-445-4569, e-mail albice@wsu.edu.

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For more information about the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* or to access past issues of this newsletter, see <http://nutrition.wsu.edu>.

Reminder: Please complete our survey! Per our funder's request, all recipients of the *Energize* Newsletter for Nutrition Educators are required to complete the survey at this URL:
<http://nutrition.wsu.edu/survey/EnergizenewsletterSurveyFFY2011.htm>
Only those completing the electronic survey will continue to receive subsequent issues of the newsletter. Thanks for your cooperation.

This Month's Focus:

Food in Holidays Around the World

As we enter the holiday season, many of us look forward to preparing foods that are unique to our families' traditions. Although these may be top-of-mind in the winter months, food traditions around the world also extend around the year. As nutrition educators, we can use our knowledge of food holidays to enrich our classes and to understand the food-ways of many of the people we serve who have recently immigrated or who have been fortunate enough to retain the foods of their roots. If you are teaching a class, asking children and adults to share their own food celebrations can add to the richness of the experience for all.

Families that have lived in the United States for several generations may have lost some of their ethnic food holidays after many years of acculturation. Perhaps exposure to food holidays in various cultural groups may prompt them to adopt a tradition that sounds fun or meaningful to them. Or, given the seasonal bounty in the Northwest, they may start their own tradition, such as a special meal on opening day for the local farmers' market or the first snowfall.

In this issue of *Energize for Nutrition Educators*, we explore the ways that foods are used in a variety of cultural celebrations and holidays. Of course they may vary from region to region, from family to family, and may adapt to the availability of special ingredients. Let this serve as a starting point for the enjoyment of the many meanings of food to people around the world.

Happy holiday season and beyond to all our readers from the staff who produce the *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators*.

To compile the holiday information below, the following resources were used: [CM Goody and L Drago, Cultural Food Practices](#), Diabetes Care and Education Dietetic Practice Group, American Dietetic Association, 2010. Written for nutrition professionals counseling diabetic clients, this book is a valuable resource also for nutrition educators not specifically working in diabetes education. The book describes traditional food patterns and health beliefs, incidence of diabetes and other chronic diseases, and guidance when working with people from various ethnic, geographic, and religious groups.



**ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE!
EAT HEALTHY-BE ACTIVE**

Information provided by Washington State University Extension's NEN of WA. This material was funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local DSHS Community Service Office.

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B Kindersley, A Kindersley, and UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund, *Children Just Like Me: Celebrations! Festivals, carnivals, and feast days from around the world*, DK Publishing, 1997. This delightful picture book shows photographs of children from around the world, the ways their families and communities celebrate, and the special foods and traditions of each individual child.

PG Kittler and KP Sucher, *Food and Culture*, Fourth Edition, Thomson/Wadsworth Publishers, 2004. Beginning with defining food and culture, the authors describe traditional diets around the world, nutritional considerations, and the ways that traditional foodways have adapted in contemporary United States.

St. Lucia – In Sweden and Swedish American communities, St. Lucia is celebrated on December 13. In homes, a daughter wears a “crown” made of evergreens and candles, symbolizing new life and light during the bleak winter. She brings special buns to family members, often as breakfast in bed with coffee and cocoa. The traditional buns are made with saffron and dotted with raisins, called “lussekatts.” (Lucia cats). Some families use sweet rolls or gingerbread cookies instead. (Additional source: Nordic Heritage Museum, Ballard, WA, 206-789-5707.)

Hanukkah – Jewish people celebrate Hanukkah on the 25th day of the Jewish month of Kislev, generally in December. During this eight-day festival of lights, Jews remember the miracle when the Temple of Jerusalem was recaptured and cleaned more than 2000 years ago. “Latkes” are often served during this season, which resemble pancakes, and are made from potatoes, onion, flour, and eggs, then fried in oil. They are generally eaten with apple sauce and sour cream.

Ramadan – For Muslims, an annual religious tradition is fasting during the holy month of Ramadan, which takes place the ninth month of the lunar-based Islamic calendar. Because Ramadan shifts about 11 days earlier each year, Muslims experience this month at different seasons throughout their lives. The act of fasting is meant to remind Muslims of the less fortunate and to reinforce thankfulness, and it is mandatory for all healthy adult Muslim. Fasting during this period means no food or drink (including water) from dawn to sunset. Muslims eat a pre-fast meal called “sudhar” before sunrise, and a post-fast meal called “iftar” which often begins with dates and water or milk, followed by a dinner meal. After Ramadan, Muslims celebrate a three-day holiday called “Eid-ul-Fitr” when friends and family celebrate with special foods. One of these is a small cookie called “ma’moul” made from semolina flour, dates, and pistachio nuts. (Additional sources: Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America www.ifanca.org and S Elnakib, “Culinary Traditions of Islam,” American Dietetic Association Times, Autumn 2010, 11-14.)

Hmong New Year – Hmong peoples from the mountainous areas of northern Laos, Vietnam and Thailand celebrate their New Year generally in December or January. Traditionally, men and boys do most of the food preparation for this celebration, although women generally are responsible for daily food preparation. One special holiday food is “nqajj liab,” a mixture of ground pork chili peppers, green onion, Chinese parsley, and rice flour, served on lettuce or a cabbage leaf. Other foods may include papaya salad, smoked pork, noodles, sticky rice, and sticky rice wrapped in banana leaves.

Chinese New Year – Chinese New Year starts on the first day of the Chinese calendar, usually in February and lasts for 15 days. For many families, this is a time for feasting and visiting relatives and friends as they celebrate bringing luck, health, happiness and wealth to the coming year. Colorful tangerines and kumquats are enjoyed during this season in part because the word in Chinese for the kumquat tree is a play on the word “lucky.”

Russian Easter – A special salad called “olivie” is always on the table for Easter and other holidays in Russia, according to Svetlana Melnichuk, Nutrition Educator, Washington State University, Pierce County Extension. The salad includes meat, potatoes, peas, pickles, carrots, onions, eggs, and mayonnaise. Also on the Easter table is “Paska,” a special sweet yeast bread, round in shape and topped with frosting and sprinkles. This bread is commonly exchanged with friends and family. There is no “Easter Bunny,” but Easter eggs are considered a very holy thing in Russia, where Svetlana grew up. She also mentioned that on September 1, the Day of Knowledge, all students from elementary school through university, bring flowers for their teachers. Buckets of water are in place in classrooms for this colorful tradition. (Contact: Svetlana Melnichuk, WSU Extension, Pierce County, smelnichuk@wsu.edu.)

Korean “Chuk-Suk” – The Korean harvest festival is typically celebrated mid-October, following the end of the growing season. Family take newly harvested foods to the gravesites of family members to honor their ancestors. Many Korean Americans combine the American Thanksgiving meal with Chuk-Suk with both traditional American holiday foods and special Korean foods which might include song-pyun rice cakes, fresh pears or apples, or rice wine.

Day of the Dead – A Mexican tradition on November 1 is to honor the souls of deceased relatives so they will return to the land of the living for just one night. At homes and cemeteries, families build altars and decorate them with special foods such as intricately fashioned small skulls made of sugar, bread called “pan de muerto,” shaped like a person, typical foods such as tacos or enchiladas made out of sugar. Families prepare favorite dishes for themselves and to welcome the souls of their relatives, which could include tamales, or a special fish or fruit that the relative enjoyed.

OUR MISSION: The Nutrition Education Network coordinates nutrition education efforts to communicate consistent, positive and relevant messages to increase awareness of healthful and enjoyable eating among low-income families. Energize is one way that the Network shares information and resources to accomplish this mission.

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December Gifts of Food – According to Allrecipes' 2010 Holiday Survey, more than half of home cooks (52%) plan to give food gifts this holiday season. The top food gifts include baked goods (90%), fudge (35%), and canned foods (22%). Nutrition educators may make good use of the spirit of giving by offering recipes for healthful baked goods, and encouraging donating nutritious foods to local food banks. Allrecipes also found that 84% of the people surveyed "most likely" will bake holiday cookies, while 16% responded "probably not." (Source: Allrecipes "The Measuring Cup: What American Families are Eatingn and Cooking Q4 2010." Contact: Judith Dern, allrecipes.com, 206-859-0448, judithd@allrecipes.com.)

IN THE MEDIA

School Meals Position Paper – Joining forces to promote comprehensive nutrition services in schools and adequate funding for them, three top nutrition associations issued a joint statement this month. The Society for Nutrition Education, the American Dietetic Association, and the School Nutrition Association partnered in a position paper published in the journals of each organization. Being all "on the same page," the three organizations emphasize the value of nutrition services for children's health, the importance of nutrition education in the classroom, offering healthful choices throughout school campus, and reinforcing sound nutrition in the home and community. (Source: M Briggs, S Fleischhacker, CG Mueller, "Position of the American Dietetic Association, School Nutrition association, and Society for Nutrition Education: Comprehensive School Nutrition Services." *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 110(11):1738-1749, November 2010 and *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* 42(6):360-371, November/December 2010.)

Survey: More Families Eating at Home and Being More Active Together – The American Dietetic Association Foundation (ADAF) 2010 Family Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey found that since 2003, there has been a significant increase in daily family meals eaten at home, from 52% in 2003 to 73% in 2010. The survey released earlier this month also revealed a 93% increase since 2003 in the number of children being physically active with their parents three or more days a week. Even so, the rate of activity is far lower than recommendations. Taste is tops for children: aside from hunger, almost all children (91% Caucasian, 88% African-American, and 91% Hispanic) reported that taste was the reason that they ate "all, most, or some of the time."he reason they ate was taste. Most kids also indicated that it would be easier for them to eat more nutritious food if it tasted better. The ADAF survey was conducted nationwide and included 1,193 pairs of children aged eight to 17 and their parents, and compared results with a similar survey in 2003. (Source: American Dietetic Association Foundation, 800-877-1600, www.eatright.org.)

DID YOU KNOW?

Ethnic foods account for \$1.00 out of every \$7.00 spent on groceries, according to a study from Iowa State University. Many ethnic foods, particularly Hispanic foods, have become mainstream: salsa outsells ketchup and tortillas outsell white bread. (Source: M Geisler, "Ethnic Foods Market Profile," Agricultural Marketing Resource Center, Iowa State University, March 2010, malindag@iastate.edu.)

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