



Cultural Cuisines

OF CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

A Food Guide for the Charitable Food System

Developed in Partnership by



Cultural Cuisines OF CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

A Food Guide for the Charitable Food System

Overview	3
Central Pennsylvania Food Bank Statement	
REACH Statement	
Disclaimers	4-5
Non-Discrimination Statement	
Funding Statement	
How this Guide was Developed	4-5
Ten Ideas on How to Use the Food Guide	6
Similarities Between Cultural Cuisines	7
Top Foods Across Cultures	8-10
Top 25 Foods	8-9
Top Foods by Food Group	10
Cultural Cuisine Food Lists	11-39
African American	12-13
Arab	14-15
Caribbean	16-21
Dominican Republic	16-17
Haiti	18-19
Puerto Rico	20-21
Central American	22-23
Central & South Asian	24-29
Afghanistan	24-25
Nepal & Bhutan	26-27
Pakistan	28-29
East & Southeast Asian	30-31
Eastern European	32-33
Mexican	34-35
South American	36-37
Sub-Saharan African	38-39
Resources for Agency Partners	40-43
Cultural Familiar Food Preference Survey & Focus Group Toolkit	40
Increasing Access to Culturally Familiar Foods	41-42
Creating a Culturally Welcoming Pantry	43
Conclusion	44
For Further Reading	45
Appendix	46-52
Overview of Religious Food Observances	46-47
Glossary of Holidays	48-54

Across central Pennsylvania, there is a rich diversity of cultures, races and ethnicities. There are neighbors from more than 65 different countries, and more than 15 different languages are spoken, according to data collected as part of the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank's Community Hunger Mapping research initiative. Yet, despite this rich diversity, culturally familiar foods are not always easily accessible across the charitable food network.

Culturally familiar foods are meals and ingredients that support the wellbeing of and reflect the traditions, heritage and geographic origins of a specific cultural, ethnic or religious community. They provide a sense of identity, belonging, comfort, and nostalgia, and they are shaped by history, migration, and other current and world events. In the most simplified form, culturally familiar foods are foods neighbors from diverse cultures like and prefer.

To take action, the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and Penn State REACH (Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health) teamed up to strategize how we could better serve our neighbors. We believe that the provision of culturally familiar foods is essential to providing a welcoming experience and meeting the unique needs of every household.

In partnership, we created this guide, which is intended to increase cultural awareness and serve as a tool for the charitable food system to tailor their food sourcing to the neighbors in their community based on cultural food preferences. Our hope is that this guide will be informative and empower the charitable food network in central Pennsylvania to increase access and availability of culturally familiar foods.

This guide highlights the top foods that are enjoyed and preferred among many different cultures as well as 14 cultural cuisine food lists, representing racially and ethnically diverse communities living in central Pennsylvania. Each cultural cuisine list details preferred foods by food group (Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Beans/Legumes, Proteins, Dairy, Cooking Essentials, Herbs, Spices & Seasonings, and Drinks), foods that may not be preferred, notable meals, holidays observed and a brief list of foods that pantries could provide during the listed holidays. Each list was informed by feedback given by neighbors served at food pantries in central Pennsylvania.

Culturally familiar foods

Meals and ingredients that support the wellbeing of and reflect the traditions, heritage and geographic origins of a specific cultural, ethnic or religious community



The Central Pennsylvania Food Bank is committed to reducing hunger and improving health equity through 1,100 local partners stretching from the New York border to the Maryland line. Through strategic leadership, community partnerships, and healthy food initiatives, the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank works to expand capacity and ensure every neighbor can feed their family with dignity.



REACH (Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health) is a national program administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities. In 2023, Penn State College of Medicine was one of the recipients of a 5-year REACH award to work with the communities of Berks, Dauphin, Lebanon, and York counties - advancing health equity through community partnerships in central Pennsylvania.

HOW THIS GUIDE WAS DEVELOPED

The Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and Penn State REACH developed this guide in partnership, using a multi-layered, data-driven approach to curate the included food lists.

The cultural cuisines included in this guide were determined by comparing census tract data and Central Pennsylvania Food Bank Community Hunger Mapping data, which at the time of this project surveyed over 3,700 neighbors across 16 counties in central Pennsylvania. Most of the cultural cuisines in this guide are grouped into geographic regions instead of nationality. By grouping cultural cuisines in this way, we are able to represent more countries while focusing on the key overlapping foods across countries and cultures in a particular region of the world.

To learn about each cultural cuisine, we conducted qualitative interviews, focus groups and surveys with cultural organizations and neighbors receiving services at food pantries to gather insights and feedback. Our understanding of cultural cuisines was also supplemented by in-depth readings and information gathering through textbooks and cookbooks written by subject matter experts. In all, the team met with 9 cultural organizations, gathered feedback from 150 neighbors of diverse backgrounds via surveys and focus groups, and conducted 19 in-depth individual interviews.

The final food lists in this guide were chosen with consideration toward food available within the charitable food system. The food lists are not exhaustive lists of culturally familiar foods, but rather collated to create a practical, implementable and educational tool.

We thank everyone who contributed their time and expertise to creating this guide.

- Every neighbor who completed a survey, participated in a focus group and sat for an interview
- Central Pennsylvania Food Bank Culturally Familiar Foods Action Team
 - With special thanks for the Action Team Leadership — Emma Wong RDN, LDN, Jazmine Gorham and Cydne Shull, and team members who helped gather feedback from neighbors and reviewed drafts of the guide — Maria D'Isabella, Lori Goldmann, Rebecca Fisher, Katie Lengyel, Mamar Maga, Bri Thompson & Zach Zook MPA.

Non-Discrimination Statement

The goal of this guide is to increase awareness of cultural cuisines and diverse eating patterns across central Pennsylvania. We recognize that not all food preferences and holidays detailed in this guide will be observed by each individual. Food preferences within a culture are not homogenous, with variations occurring across communities, families and individuals, as well as additional variations by religion, acculturation, age, geographic region and other factors.

This food guide should not be used to make assumptions about neighbors but rather used as a tool to increase understanding of and engagement with neighbors, and to gain information about the unique food preferences within your community.

- Penn State REACH Nutrition Team
 - With special thanks to Nirmal A. Ahuja DrPH, MPH, Morgan Flood, Jose Agustin Garcia-Avila, Steven Negron-Candelario MPH, Zach Zook MPA, Susan Veldheer DEd, RDN & Emma Wong RDN LDN, all of whom were integral in conceptualizing this guide, designing the data collection process and reviewing drafts of this guide, and to Jennifer Kraschnewski MD, MPH, the Principal Investigator of the Penn State REACH Grant.
- Cultural Organizations who shared their expertise:
 - African American Alliance of Lancaster
 - Bhutanese Community of Harrisburg
 - Church World Service Harrisburg
 - Church World Service Lancaster
 - International Service Center
 - Islamic Society of Central Pennsylvania
 - Mortel High Hopes for Haiti
 - Professor Lynn Johnson, lecturer of “African American Foodways” at Dickinson College
 - Spanish American Civic Association (SACA)
- Food Pantries who hosted surveys and focus groups:
 - Chestnut Street Community Center, in partnership with IU 13
 - Church World Service Harrisburg
 - Crispus Attucks Community Center
 - Ephrata Area Social Services
 - Harvest of Blessing
 - Lancaster County Food Hub
 - Lebanon County Christian Ministries
 - Salvation Army Harrisburg
 - Salvation Army York
 - St Paul Lutheran Church Food Pantry

Funding Statement

This toolkit was supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through Cooperative Agreement NU58DP007618. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, CDC/HHS or the U.S. Government.



10 Ideas

ON HOW TO USE THIS FOOD GUIDE

1

For food pantries serving neighbors from a wide range of cultures and nationalities, use the “Top Foods Across Cultures” lists to create a staple list of foods to stock your food pantry.

2

For food pantries serving neighbors predominantly from one to three different cultures, pair this guide with your pantry’s demographic data and refer to specific cultural cuisine lists included in this guide. Prioritize procuring foods that best reflect the most common cultures represented in your community.

3

Increase your confidence in ordering decisions from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank. Foods commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank are **bolded** in this guide. Additionally, when placing food orders on PWW (Central Pennsylvania Food Bank’s online food ordering system), agency partners can use the “filter” tool to search for “Cross Cultural” foods.

4

Customize food drive requests to source culturally familiar foods.

5

At the appropriate time of year, provide holiday foods that meet cross cultural preferences.

6

Use this guide to identify culturally familiar foods received through food rescue.

7

Use this guide as a reference to strengthen grant and funding requests. This guide may be particularly useful when requesting funding from grantors who prioritize health equity and elevating the voices of neighbors with lived experience.

8

Reference the guide when developing partnerships with local groups who may help source culturally familiar foods.

9

Share this guide with food pantry staff and key volunteers. Incorporate the guide into onboarding for new staff or key volunteers to build cultural awareness from day one.

10

Initiate conversations with neighbors at your food pantry to learn about culturally familiar foods.

Similarities

BETWEEN CULTURAL CUISINES

While this food guide contains 14 distinct cultural cuisine food lists, there is significant overlap of food preferences and eating patterns across cultural groups and geographic regions. This section highlights similarities across cultures while the following page highlights foods commonly eaten across cultures and regions.

- Each cultural cuisine included in this guide emphasizes whole, minimally processed ingredients and scratch cooking. Because of this focus on whole foods, neighbors prefer to receive ingredients and cooking staples from food pantries instead of pre-made meals and sides. For example, cooking oil, sugar and flour are highly desirable at food pantries while canned soups and meal start kits, like beef stroganoff & cheesy helper, are not.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables are preferred by neighbors of culturally diverse backgrounds. When fresh is not available, frozen produce is the preferred substitute.
- Beans, Lentils, and Eggs are important non-meat protein sources across cultures.
- Preference varies for canned and dried beans, with many families using both. When dried beans are preferred, it is for quality and because they are perceived as healthier.
- A wide variety of meats are enjoyed by neighbors of all cultures, and it is common to cook with bone-in meat.
- Multigenerational households and large household sizes are common among many cultures, with grandparents, parents and children all living under one roof and sharing meals together. These households may cook in large quantities and need a greater amount of food or a specific staple ingredient than pantry staff or volunteers might expect.
- Neighbors are hesitant to take foods that are unfamiliar to them to prevent food waste. At choice pantries, neighbors often opt not to take items they are not familiar with. If they receive unfamiliar items in a pre-packed box, many neighbors will pass the food forward to a friend or neighbor. In many cases, unfamiliar items are canned or packaged foods.
- Acculturation impacts what foods are preferred. Length of time in the US and age at arrival will impact food preferences.



Top 25 Foods

ACROSS CULTURES

The following foods are the top 25 foods that show up most frequently across the cultural cuisine lists.

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

Foods on all 14 cultural cuisine lists

Bananas
Chicken
 Cooking Oil
Eggs
Fish
Onions
 Oranges
Rice
Tomatoes

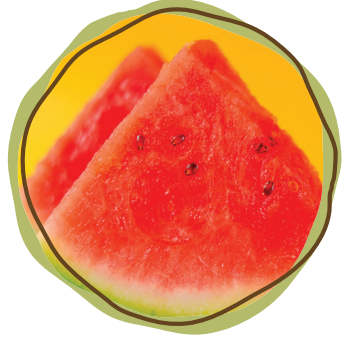


Foods on at least 12 cultural cuisine lists

100% Fruit Juice
All Purpose Flour
Apples
Beef
Bell Peppers
Butter

Carrots
Cinnamon
Garlic
Mangoes
Milk
Potatoes

Salt & Black Pepper
Strawberries
Sugar
Watermelon



Top Foods Across Cultures

BY FOOD GROUP

The following foods are commonly enjoyed and regularly used across at least 10 cultural cuisines included in this guide and/or are the top 5 most common foods by food group.

To meet the food preferences of neighbors from many different backgrounds, food pantries could **consider stocking at least 3 items from each food category in the pantry, based on availability and neighbors' food preferences.**

Top Foods by Food Group

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, and we are seeking to increase availability of these foods.

VEGETABLES

Fresh & Frozen preferred

Bell Peppers: Green &
Other Colors

Cabbage

Carrots

Corn

Cucumbers

Onions: Yellow & Red

Potatoes

Tomatoes

PROTEIN

Beef

Chicken

Eggs

Fish

Pork

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Cilantro

Cinnamon

Cumin

Garlic: Fresh & Powdered

Paprika

Salt & Black Pepper

Turmeric

FRUITS

Fresh & Frozen preferred

Apples

Bananas

Limes

Mango

Oranges

Raisins

Strawberries

Watermelon

BEANS/LEGUMES

Dried & Canned preferred

Black Beans

Black Eyed Peas

Chickpeas/Garbanzo Beans

Kidney Beans

Lentils

Pigeon Peas

Pinto Beans

Red Beans

White Beans

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Bouillon & Broth

Cooking Oil

Distilled White Vinegar

Sugar: White & Brown

Tomato Paste, Tomato Sauce &

Tomato Puree

DRINKS

Coffee

100% Fruit Juice

Tea

DAIRY

Butter

Cheese: Mozzarella

commonly preferred

Evaporated Milk

Milk

Plain Yogurt

GRAINS

All Purpose Flour

Bread

Oats

Rice: White & Basmati

Spaghetti

Cultural Cuisine

FOOD LISTS

African American..... page 12

Arab page 14

Caribbean

Dominican Republic..... page 16

Haiti..... page 18

Puerto Rico..... page 20

Central American..... page 22

Central & South Asian

Afghanistan..... page 24

Nepal & Bhutan..... page 26

Pakistan..... page 28

East & Southeast Asian..... page 30

Eastern European..... page 32

Mexican..... page 34

South American..... page 36

Sub-Saharan African..... page 38

Sources: Feedback gathered from 169 neighbors to create these food lists, including feedback from 21 African American neighbors, 14 Arab neighbors, 89 Caribbean neighbors (including 51 Dominican neighbors, 4 Haitian neighbors & 21 Puerto Rican neighbors, 4 neighbors from Central America, 15 neighbors from Central & South Asia (including 7 Afghan neighbors, 2 Nepali neighbors, 5 Pakistani neighbors), 7 Ukrainian neighbors, 8 Mexican neighbors, 6 South American neighbors and 3 Sub-Sahara African neighbors.

African American

For the purpose of this list, African American refers to Black Americans who have African ancestry, but due to the transatlantic slave trade, have multigenerational roots in the United States and often cannot trace their ancestry to a specific African country or ethnic group. Eating habits vary within the African American community by religion, health and individual preference. Soul food is often enjoyed during holidays and celebrations.

Food List

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

VEGETABLES

Assorted Greens:
Collard Greens, Turnip
 Greens, Mustard Greens,
 Spinach
 Broccoli: Fresh & Frozen
Cabbage
Carrots
 Cauliflower
 Celery
Corn
 Cucumbers
Green Beans
 Okra
Onions
Potatoes
 Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes

FRUITS

Apples
 Bananas
 Blueberries
Grapes
 Lemons
 Oranges
Peaches
Pears
 Pineapple
 Strawberries
 Watermelon

DRINKS

100% Fruit Juice:
 Orange, **Apple**, Pineapple
 Tea, including Green Tea
 Coffee
 Lemonade

PROTEIN

Bacon & Turkey Bacon
Beef:
 Roast, Steak, **Ground Beef**
Canned Fish
Chicken:
 Breast, Thighs, Wings,
 Drumsticks
Eggs
Fish:
 White, Salmon, Catfish
Ham
 Nuts
Peanut Butter & Peanuts
Pork
 Turkey & **Ground Turkey**

BEANS & LEGUMES

Black Eyed Peas
 Great Northern Beans
Kidney Beans
 Lima Beans
 Navy Beans
Pinto Beans

DAIRY

Butter
Cheese:
 Shredded, American,
Cheddar, Mozzarella, Swiss
Milk
 Yogurt

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Bay Leaves
 Cajun seasoning
 Cinnamon
 Crushed Red Pepper Flakes
 Cumin
 Garlic: Fresh & Powdered
 Low Sodium Spice blends
(like Perfect Pinch & Mrs. Dash)
 Meat Tenderizer
 Onion Powder
 Oregano
 Paprika & Smoked Paprika
 Salt & Black Pepper
 Sazón Goya

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Baking Soda
Broth
 Cooking Oil:
 Vegetable, Olive, Avocado,
 Canola & High Temp Oils
 Hot Sauce
 Lemon Juice
 Sugar: White & Brown

GRAINS

Bread: White & Whole Wheat
Cereal
Flour: All Purpose
Oats
Pasta:
 Elbow Macaroni, Spaghetti
Rice
 Barley

African American

Notable Meals

- **Collard Greens with Smoked Meat**

- **Hoppin' John**

A dish of black eyed peas, simmered with garlic, onion and ham hock or bacon, served with rice

- **Navy Bean Soup**

- **Homemade Macaroni & Cheese**

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

New Year's

Easter

Juneteenth

Thanksgiving

Christmas

Kwanzaa

INGREDIENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

New Years

Black Eyed Peas

Thanksgiving, Christmas & Easter

Elbow Macaroni, Butter, Cheddar Cheese, Milk, Collard Greens, Sweet Potatoes & Green Beans, in addition to traditionally distributed meats like turkey and ham

LESS PREFERRED FOODS

Pork: Some African American neighbors may avoid pork & pork products for religious or health reasons.

Canned Beans: Some African American neighbors may avoid canned beans and prefer dried beans due to their lower sodium content.

Sources: Feedback gathered from 21 African American neighbors during focus groups and surveys at food pantries, insight from the African American Alliance of Lancaster County, Professor Lynn Johnson at Dickinson College, and information from Culture, Foodways & Counseling. Second Edition: A Guide to Culturally Sensitive Nutrition Care in the United States by Early et al.



Arab

Arab individuals are members of the Arab ethnic group, with roots in countries across the Middle East, North Africa, and northern regions of West and East Africa. Neighbors with Arab heritage who are served by the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank network are often from Egypt, Syria, Sudan, and Somalia. Modern Standard Arabic is the shared language of these nations. Islam is the most practiced religion in the Arab world. For families practicing Islam, Halal food practices are noted (refer to Appendix 1 for more information).

Food List

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

VEGETABLES

Bell Peppers
Carrots
 Cucumbers
 Eggplant
 Lettuce
 Molokhia (*Malabar Spinach can be a substitute*)
 Okra
Onions
Potatoes
Tomatoes
 Zucchini (*small preferred*)

PROTEIN

Beef*
Chicken*
Eggs
Fish: Salmon & White Fish
 Lamb*
 Nuts
**Halal meat may be preferred by Muslim neighbors*

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Aleppo Pepper
 Allspice
 Baharat (*Seven Spice*) Mix
 Cinnamon
 Cloves
 Coriander
 Cumin
 Garlic, Fresh
 Ginger
 Mint: Fresh & Dried
 Nutmeg
 Paprika
 Salt & Black Pepper

FRUITS

Apples
 Bananas
 Dried Dates
 Dried Fruits (*including Raisins*)
Grapes
 Lemons
 Mangoes
 Oranges
 Strawberries
 Watermelon

BEANS & LEGUMES

Canned & Dried beans are both used, but dried beans may be preferred.
 Black Eyed Peas
Garbanzo Beans/Chickpeas
 Fava Beans
 Lentils: Brown, Black, Red & Yellow. Red lentils especially preferred during Ramadan

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Distilled White Vinegar
 Ghee
 Honey
 Oil (*Olive Oil preferred*)
 Sugar
 Tomato Sauce, Tomato Puree & Tomato Paste

DRINKS

100% Fruit Juice
 Coffee
 Homemade Yogurt Drinks:
 Farawla bel Laban & Mowz
 bil-Laban
 Tea

DAIRY

Butter
 Cheese
 Labneh
Milk: Fresh & Shelf Stable
 Yogurt (*Plain & Thick preferred*)

GRAINS

Bulgur
Flour:
 All Purpose & Whole Wheat
Rice: Basmati & Medium Grain
Pasta:
 Elbow Macaroni, Spaghetti & Vermicelli

Arab

Notable Meals

- **Molokhia**

A flavorful stew made with molokhia and chicken, flavored with lemon & cilantro

- **Kousa Mahshi**

Small zucchinis stuffed with ground meat and rice, simmered in a tomato sauce

- **Maqluba**

Sometimes known as an “Upside Down Pot,” layers of vegetables, meat and rice are cooked together in a pot & then flipped over for serving, creating a beautifully layered dish.

- **Koshari**

The national dish of Egypt, it is made with rice, lentils, pasta and chickpeas topped with a tomato sauce & cumin sauce.

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

Ramadan

Eid al-Fitr

Eid al-Adha

INGREDIENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Ramadan

Dried Dates & Dried Red Lentils

Eid al-Fitr

Dried Fruits, Nuts, Sugar, Flour

Eid al-Adha

Halal Meats, Basmati Rice

LESS PREFERRED FOODS

For neighbors observing Halal eating practices:
Pork & Foods with Pork Derivatives

Meal Starter Kits, like Beef Stroganoff & Cheesy Helper

Canned Soups

Sources: Feedback gathered from 14 Arab neighbors during focus groups and surveys at food pantries, interviews with the Islamic Society of Central PA and Church World Service: Harrisburg & Church World Service: Lancaster, and information from Culture, Foodways & Counseling. Second Edition: A Guide to Culturally Sensitive Nutrition Care in the United States by Early et al.



Caribbean | Dominican Republic

The Dominican Republic is the second largest nation in the Caribbean. The Dominican Republic comprises the eastern two thirds of the Island of Hispaniola, sharing a border with Haiti. The most commonly spoken language is Spanish. In central Pennsylvania, neighbors of Dominican descent are the third largest non-European ancestry group, after Puerto Rico and Mexico. Dominican cuisine reflects its history, having roots in African, Spanish, and Indigenous (Taino) cultures.

Food List

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

VEGETABLES

Avocado
Beets: Fresh & Canned
Bell Peppers: Green & Other Colors
Cabbage
Carrots
Cucumbers
Eggplant
Green Olives
Lettuce
Plantains
Potatoes
Okra
Onions: Red & Yellow
Scallions
Starchy Root Vegetables:
Batata, Malanga (*known as Yautía in DR*), Yam (*white insides*), Yuca/Cassava
Tomatoes

FRUITS

Apples
Bananas
Coconuts
Guava
Limes
Mangoes
Oranges
Papaya
Pineapple
Raisins
Strawberries
Watermelon

DRINKS

100% Fruit Juice
Coconut Water
Coffee

PROTEIN

Beef: Ground beef
Chicken
Eggs
Fish:
Tilapia, Bacalao (*salted codfish*),
Canned Tuna, Sardines
Goat
Peanuts
Pork:
Leg, Shoulder, Chop
Salami
Shrimp

BEANS & LEGUMES

Canned & Dried beans are both used, but dried beans may be preferred.
Black Beans
Garbanzo Beans/Chickpeas
Kidney Beans
Lentils
Pigeon Peas
Pinto Beans
Red Beans

DAIRY

Butter
Cheese (*Mozzarella is popular*)
Coconut Milk
Condensed milk
Evaporated Milk
Milk
Yogurt

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Adobo
Allspice
Cilantro: Fresh
Cinnamon
Cloves
Culantro: Fresh
Cumin
Garlic: Fresh & Powdered
Nutmeg
Oregano
Paprika
Salt & Black Pepper
Sazón Goya
Turmeric

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Bouillon Cubes & Broth
Cooking Oil:
Coconut, Olive & Vegetable Oil
Distilled White Vinegar
Mayo
Sugar: White & Brown
Tomato Sauce

GRAINS

Bread
Cornmeal: Yellow
Flour:
Masa (*Masa Harina*), **All Purpose**
Oats
Pasta, including **Spaghetti**
Rice

Caribbean | Dominican Republic

Notable Meals

- **Sazón Dominicano (also known as Sofrito)**

A flavor base for many recipes, made by blending green bell peppers, red onion, scallions, cilantro, culantro, garlic, oregano and lime juice. Variations exist.

- **Moro con Gandules**

Pigeon peas & rice, simmered with bouillon, tomato sauce, coconut milk & homemade sazón, topped with green olives.

- **La Bandera Dominicana**

The national dish of the Dominican Republic, it is a plate of rice, red beans, meat (beef, chicken, pork), and a salad.

- **Pollo Guisado**

Chicken based stew with onion, garlic, green olives, and homemade sazón

- **Espaguetis**

A Dominican version of spaghetti, made with salami, bell peppers and olives.

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

New Year's Celebrations

Independence Day (*February 27*)

Lent & Easter

Mother's Day & Father's Day

Thanksgiving

Nochebuena & Navidad

(*Christmas Eve & Christmas*)

INGREDIENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

All Holidays

Pork Shoulder, Potatoes (fresh),
Beets (canned or fresh), Rice, Pigeon Peas

Lent

Frozen Fish

LESS PREFERRED FOODS

Canned Chicken

Canned Potatoes

Brown Rice

Sources: Feedback gathered from 43 Dominican neighbors during focus groups at food pantries, 9 qualitative interviews with Dominican Neighbors, information from Culture, Foodways & Counseling. Second Edition: A Guide to Culturally Sensitive Nutrition Care in the United States and Belly Full: Exploring Caribbean Cuisine Through 11 Fundamental Ingredients and Over 100 Recipes by Lesley Enston.



While there is significant overlap of common ingredients and foods used in the Caribbean islands, Haitian food tends to be spicier than foods popular in Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic, the other Caribbean islands included in this food guide. The quintessential ingredient to add spice to Haitian food is Scotch Bonnet Peppers. Haitian neighbors most often speak Haitian Creole and French.

Food List

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

VEGETABLES

Avocado
Bell Peppers: Green & Red
Cabbage
 Calabaza (*Butternut squash can be substituted*)
Carrots
 Celery
 Chayote
 Eggplant
 Green Beans (*Fresh, not canned*)
 Hot Peppers: Scotch Bonnet Peppers
 Malanga
 Okra
Onions
 Plantains
 Scallions
 Spinach
Tomatoes
 Yuca/Cassava
 Zucchini

FRUITS

Apples
 Bananas
 Berries: Strawberries, Blueberries & Raspberries
 Limes
 Mangoes
 Melon
 Oranges
 Papaya
 Pineapple
 Watermelon

DRINKS

100% Fruit Juice, including **Apple**, Orange & Mango
 Coffee

PROTEIN

Chicken
Eggs
Fish: Bacalao (*Salted Cod*)
 Goat
Beef: Oxtail
Pork
 Shrimp

BEANS & LEGUMES

Dried beans are preferred
 Lima Beans
Black Beans
 Pink Beans
Pinto Beans
 Red Beans
Kidney Beans
 Pigeon Peas

DAIRY

Butter
Cheese
Milk
Yogurt
 Evaporated Milk

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Bay Leaves
 Black Pepper
 Cinnamon
 Cloves, Whole
 Culantro
 Garlic
 Ginger: Fresh
 Parsley: Fresh
 Thyme: Fresh

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Bouillon (*Maggi Seasoning is popular*)
 Coconut Milk
 Cooking Oil
 Sugar: Brown Sugar
 Tomato Paste
 Vinegar: Apple Cider Vinegar & Distilled White

GRAINS

All Purpose Flour
Bread
 Cornflakes
 Cornmeal: Yellow
Oats
Pasta: Elbow Macaroni & Spaghetti
Rice: Jasmine

Caribbean | Haiti

Notable Meals

- **Epis**

A flavor base for many Haitian recipes, it is made from blending bell peppers (red and green), onion, scallions, fresh parsley & thyme, garlic, olive oil, apple cider vinegar, fresh lime juice and black pepper into a smooth sauce to be added to recipes.

- **Pikliz**

Homemade spicy pickled cabbage & vegetables

- **Diri Sos Pwa Legim**

Rice served with a bean stew

- **Pork Griot**

Fried Pork Shoulder

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

Independence Day (*January 1*)

Easter

Christmas

FOODS NOT PREFERRED

Box Macaroni & Cheese

Canned Potatoes

Meal Starter Kits, like Cheesy Helper & Beef Stroganoff

INGREDIENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Independence Day

Beef Stew Meat, Calabaza or Butternut Squash, Carrots, Cabbage, Spaghetti

Sources: Feedback gathered from 4 Haitian neighbors during focus groups and surveys at food pantries, insight from Church World Services and Mortel High Hopes for Haiti Foundation, and information from Culture, Foodways & Counseling. Second Edition: A Guide to Culturally Sensitive Nutrition Care in the United States by Early et al., and Belly Full: Exploring Caribbean Cuisine Through 11 Fundamental Ingredients and Over 100 Recipes by Lesley Enston.



Caribbean | Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico is a self-governed territory of the United States. The official languages of Puerto Rico are English and Spanish. In central Pennsylvania, neighbors of Puerto Rican descent are the largest group of non-European ancestry. More than half of all Hispanic neighbors in central Pennsylvania are of Puerto Rican descent. Natural disasters, along with limiting economic and political conditions, have forced many individuals to leave and displaced communities throughout the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico. The most commonly practiced religion by Puerto Rican neighbors is Catholicism.

Food List

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

VEGETABLES

Ají Dulce peppers (*Bell peppers can be substituted*)

Avocado

Bell Peppers: Green & Other colors

Broccoli

Cabbage

Calabaza

Carrots

Celery

Chayote

Corn

Green Beans

Green Olives

Lettuce

Onions: Red & Yellow

Plantains

Potatoes

Starchy Root Vegetables:

Batata, Malanga (*known as Yautía in PR*), Yam (*white insides*) & Yuca/Cassava

Tomatoes

FRUITS

Apples

Bananas

Berries: Strawberries & Raspberries

Coconut

Grapes

Kiwi

Limes

Mangoes

Melon

Oranges

Papaya

Pears

Pineapple

Raisins

Watermelon

PROTEIN

Beef

Chicken

Eggs

Fish: (*Salted Cod*) and **Canned**

Tuna

Goat (*enjoyed during holidays*)

Pork

Shrimp

BEANS & LEGUMES

Canned & Dried beans are commonly used

Black Beans

Garbanzo Beans/Chickpeas

Kidney Beans

Lentils

Pigeon Peas

Pinto Beans

Red Beans

DAIRY

Butter

Cheese

Condensed milk

Evaporated Milk

Milk: Fresh & Shelf Stable

Yogurt

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Adobo

Allspice

Cilantro, Fresh

Cinnamon

Cloves

Culantro

Garlic: Fresh & Powdered

Paprika

Salt & Black Pepper

Sazón Goya

Sofrito (*Homemade or Premade*)

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Bouillon & Broth

Cooking Oil:

Avocado, Olive, Peanut & Corn

Mayo

Sugar

Tomato Sauce

GRAINS

Bread

Cornmeal: Yellow

Flour: Masa (*Masa Harina*) &

All Purpose

Oats

Rice

Spaghetti

DRINKS

100% Fruit Juice: Apple, Orange, Passion Fruit, Grape

Coffee

Caribbean | Puerto Rico

Notable Meals

- **Sofrito**

Flavor base for many Puerto Rican recipes, Sofrito is made from blending green bell peppers, cilantro and/or culantro, yellow onions, ají dulce peppers and garlic

- **Arroz con Gandules**

Rice with pigeon peas, flavored with tomato sauce, sofrito and olives. Pork or Ham are also typically added

- **Mofongo**

Fried mashed plantains mixed with garlic and chicarrón (*fried pork skin*)

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

New Year's Celebrations

Día de Los Reyes (*Three Kings Day*)

Lent & Easter

Mother's Day & Father's Day

Thanksgiving

Nochebuena & Navidad

(*Christmas Eve & Christmas*)

INGREDIENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

All Holidays

Pork Shoulder or Pork Leg, Rice, Pigeon Peas, Plantains, Masa Harina

Lent

Frozen Fish

LESS PREFERRED FOODS

Boxed Macaroni & Cheese

Meal Starter Kits, like Beef Stroganoff

Sources: Feedback gathered from 15 Puerto Rican neighbors from focus groups and surveys at food pantries, 6 qualitative interviews with Puerto Rican neighbors, research from *Culture, Foodways & Counseling. Second Edition: A Guide to Culturally Sensitive Nutrition Care in the United States* by Early et al., and *Belly Full: Exploring Caribbean Cuisine Through 11 Fundamental Ingredients and Over 100 Recipes* by Lesley Enston.



Central American

Central America is a region made up of seven countries that lie between Mexico in the north and Colombia in the south: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. In the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank network, neighbors from Central America are most often from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. While cuisine varies across those countries, the following list highlights commonly used ingredients across these three countries' cuisines.

Food List

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

VEGETABLES

Avocado
Bell Peppers
Cabbage
Carrots
 Chayote
Corn
 Green Chili Pepper
 Lettuce
Onions
 Plantains
Potatoes
 Starchy Root Vegetables:
 Malanga, Yam (*white insides*) &
 Yuca/Cassava
 Tomatillos
Tomatoes

PROTEIN

Beef: Stew Meat
Chicken
Eggs
Fish: Salmon & Sardines
 Hot Dogs
 Pork
 Pumpkin Seeds
 Sesame Seeds

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Bay Leaves
 Cilantro: Fresh
 Cinnamon
 Clove
 Coriander
 Cumin
 Garlic
 Ground Annatto Seeds
 (*mixing Paprika & Turmeric can
 be a substitute*)
 Oregano
 Parsley
 Salt & Black Pepper
 Sazón Goya
 Turmeric

FRUITS

Apples
 Bananas
Grapes
 Limes
 Mangoes
 Oranges
 Papaya
 Pineapple
 Watermelon

BEANS & LEGUMES

*Canned & Dried beans
 are commonly used*
Black Beans
Chickpeas
 Lentils
 Pigeon Peas
 Red Beans

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Bouillon
 Cooking Oil:
 Avocado, Coconut & Olive Oil
 Distilled White Vinegar
 Sugar

DRINKS

100% Fruit Juice
 Atol de Elote (*Blended corn &
 milk drink*)
 Hot Chocolate
 Lemonade
 Tea
 Coffee

DAIRY

Milk: Fresh, Powdered Milk &
 Evaporated
Butter
 Cheese: Queso Fresco & Shredded
 mozzarella
 Sour Cream
Yogurt
 Coconut Milk

GRAINS

Bread
Oats
Rice: White
 Flour:
 All Purpose & Masa Harina
 (*Maseca is a popular brand*)
 Corn Tortillas
 Fideo, short vermicelli noodle
 (*Spaghetti is a substitute*)

Central American

Notable Meals

- **Pupusas**

Considered the national dish of El Salvador, pupusas are cornmeal dough stuffed with meat and cheese

- **Curtidos**

Homemade Pickled Vegetables

- **Tamales**

Minced meat or beans, stuffed in cornmeal dough, wrapped in corn husks or banana leaves

- **Guatemalan Platter**

A meal that includes meat, fried plantains, rice and mashed black beans

- **Plato Típico**

A national dish of Honduras, it includes meat, refried beans, fried cheese, rice, avocados, fried plantains, curtido, lime & tortillas

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

New Year's Celebrations

Día de Los Reyes (*Three Kings Day*)

Lent & Easter

Mother's Day & Father's Day

All Saints Day

Thanksgiving

Nochebuena & Navidad

(*Christmas Eve & Christmas*)

INGREDIENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

All Holidays

Pork Shoulder, Fish, Masa Harina,
Rice, Potatoes, Fresh Corn

Lent

Frozen Fish

FOODS NOT PREFERRED

Boxed Mac & Cheese

Shelf Stable Meal Kits

Canned Green Beans

Sources: Feedback gathered from 4 Central American neighbors during focus groups and surveys at food pantries, insight from Church World Services Lancaster, and information from Culture, Foodways & Counseling. Second Edition: A Guide to Culturally Sensitive Nutrition Care in the United States by Early et al.



Central & South Asian | Afghanistan

The Afghan community in the United States was small until the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which caused many to seek asylum as refugees. More recent events, including the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan's government in 2021, have prompted additional immigration and refugee resettlement, especially for individuals and families who assisted the U.S. government during operations in Afghanistan.

Neighbors speak Pashto and Dari. The most practiced religion is Islam. For families practicing Islam, Halal food practices are noted (refer to Appendix 1 for more information).

Food List

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

VEGETABLES

Bell Peppers
 Broccoli
Cabbage
Carrots
Corn
 Cucumbers
 Eggplant
 Green Beans
 Lettuce
 Okra
Onions
Peas
Potatoes
 Pumpkin (*Winter squash can be substituted*)
Tomatoes

PROTEIN

Beef*
Chicken*
Eggs
Fish
 Lamb*
 Nuts, like Almonds & Pistachios
**Halal meat may be preferred by Muslim neighbors*

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Cardamom: Green & Black
 Char Masala (*a common spice mix in Afghanistan, made from cumin, black cardamom, cinnamon and clove. Whole spices are used & ground before using.*)
 Cilantro: Fresh
 Cinnamon
 Clove
 Coriander
 Cumin
 Dill
 Garlic
 Ginger
 Mint
 Salt & Black Pepper
 Turmeric

FRUITS

Apples
 Bananas
 Dried Dates
 Dried Fruits (*including Raisins*)
Grapes
 Mangoes
 Oranges
 Peaches
 Pineapple
 Strawberries

BEANS & LEGUMES

Dried beans preferred
Black Beans
Chickpeas
Kidney Beans
 Lentils
 Split Peas
 White Beans

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Cooking Oil:
 Corn Oil, Sesame Oil
 Sugar: White
 Tomato Paste, Tomato Puree & Tomato Sauce

DRINKS

100% Fruit Juice:
Apple & Orange
 Tea, including Green Tea

DAIRY

Cheese, including
 Mozzarella cheese
 Cream
Milk: Cow & Sheep Milk
 Yogurt: Plain

GRAINS

Bread
Flour: All Purpose and Whole Wheat
Rice: Basmati

Central & South Asian | Afghanistan

Notable Meals

- **Kaddo**

Sauteed pumpkin simmered in a tomato sauce and served with a garlic yogurt sauce

- **Kabuli Pulao**

The national dish of Afghanistan, Kabuli Pulao is spiced rice with chunks of lamb, garnished with shredded carrots and raisins

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

Ramadan

Eid Al-Fitr

Nowruz (*Afghan New Year – March 21*)

Eid Al-Adha

LESS PREFERRED FOODS

For neighbors observing Halal eating practices:
Pork & Foods with Pork Derivatives

Meal Starter Kits, like Beef Stroganoff &
Cheesy Tuna Helper

INGREDIENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Ramadan

Dried Dates

Eid al-Fitr

Dried Fruits, Nuts, specifically almonds,
Sugar, Flour

Eid al-Adha

Halal Meats, Basmati Rice

*Sources: Feedback gathered from 7 Afghan neighbors during surveys at food pantries, insight from Church World Services, and information from the cookbooks *Arman: From a Kitchen of Longing* by Mirriam Zary Seddiq and *Afghan Food & Cookery* by Helen Saberi.*



Central & South Asian | Nepal & Bhutan

Nepal and Bhutan are small countries in the Himalayas, situated between India and China.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Bhutanese government expelled more than 100,000 individuals of Nepalese heritage who had been living in Bhutan, forcing them to move to refugee camps in Southeast Nepal. Beginning in the early 2000s, the U.S. began a resettlement program for Bhutanese Nepalese refugees. Neighbors from Nepal, settling in the US are often coming from this background.

Neighbors speak Nepali.

Food List

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

VEGETABLES

Bell Peppers

Bitter Gourd
Broccoli

Cabbage

Cauliflower
Chili Peppers: Red & Green Chilies
Cucumbers
Mushrooms
Okra

Onions: White & Red

Peas

Potatoes

Pumpkin
Scallions
Spinach
Tomatoes

PROTEIN

Chicken

Eggs

Fish

Goat

Pork

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Bay Leaves
Cardamom
Cilantro, Fresh
Cinnamon
Coriander: Ground & Whole Seed
Cumin: Ground & Whole Seed
Dried Chilies
Garlic: Fresh
Ginger: Fresh
Masala Curry Powder
Sichuan Peppercorn
Turmeric

FRUITS

Apples

Bananas

Grapes

Kiwi
Lemons
Limes
Mangoes
Oranges
Raisins
Strawberries
Tamarind

BEANS & LEGUMES

Dried beans preferred

Black Eyed Peas

Chickpeas/Garbanzo Beans

Kidney Beans: Red & Purple
Speckled

Lentils

White Beans: Navy Beans

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Bouillon & Broth

Cooking Oil:

Corn, Olive Oil & Mustard Oil
Honey
Sugar

DRINKS

100% Fruit Juice

Tea

DAIRY

Butter

Cheese

Curd

Ghee

Milk: Whole Milk preferred

Yogurt: Plain

GRAINS

Barley

Bread

Buckwheat

Flour: Rice & **All Purpose**

Oats

Rice: Basmati

Central & South Asian | Nepal & Bhutan

Notable Meals

- **Chatamari**

Sometimes called Nepali pizza, a thin dough is made from rice flour (similar to a crepe), and it is topped with ground meat, egg and vegetables

- **Aloo Chop**

Fried potato fritters

- **Momo**

Nepalese dumplings

- **Carrot Pudding**

Grated carrots made into a pudding by adding ghee, milk, sugar and cardamom

- **Mushroom Choila**

Mushrooms sauteed with garlic, ginger, onion, spring onions, green chilies, tomatoes & spices, like turmeric, cumin, coriander and chili powder

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

The Bhutanese Nepalese community is religiously diverse, with neighbors practicing Islam, Hinduism, Christianity or Buddhism. Religion will determine celebrations.

INGREDIENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Goat and chicken are celebratory meats.

LESS PREFERRED FOODS

Neighbors who observe Hinduism may avoid beef (For more information, refer to Appendix 1: "Overview of Religious Food Observances")

Meal Starter Kits, like Beef Stroganoff

Prepared/Pre-seasoned Foods

Sources: Feedback gathered from 2 Nepali neighbors at food pantries, insight from Bhutanese Community of Central Pennsylvania and information from the cookbook Ayla: A Feast of Nepali Dishes from Terai, Hills and the Himalayas by Santosh Shah.



Central & South Asian | Pakistan

Like other South Asian countries, Pakistan lies at a crossroads. It is bordered by Afghanistan, India, China and Iran, which are home to diverse cultures and have all had an influence on one another's cuisines. In general, Pakistan cuisine is spicy, with a focus on fresh ingredients and home cooking.

Urdu is the most commonly spoken language.

The majority of Pakistani neighbors practice Islam. For families practicing Islam, Halal food practices are noted (refer to Appendix 1 for more information).

Food List

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

VEGETABLES

Bell Peppers
Carrots
 Cauliflower
Corn
 Cucumbers
 Eggplant
 Okra
Onions
Peas
Potatoes
 Radish
 Spinach
Tomatoes
 Turnip

PROTEIN

Beef*
Chicken*, including small whole chicken
Eggs
Fish*
 Lamb/Mutton*, including ground
 Nuts, including Almonds
**Halal meat may be preferred by Muslim neighbors*

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Bay Leaves
 Cardamom
 Cilantro: Fresh
 Cinnamon: Whole
 Cloves: Whole
 Coriander: Ground
 Cumin: Ground & Whole Seeds
 Dried Chillies: Green & Red
 Garam Masala
 Mint
 Paprika
 Red Chili Powder
 Salt & Black Pepper
 Turmeric

FRUITS

Apples
 Bananas
 Dried Dates
Grapes
 Kiwi
 Lemons
 Limes
 Mangoes
 Melon
 Oranges
Pears
 Raisins
 Strawberries
 Watermelon

BEANS & LEGUMES

Dried Beans may be preferred
Chickpeas
Kidney Beans
 Lentils

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Cooking Oil
 Sugar: Brown & White
 Tomato Paste, Tomato Puree & Tomato Sauce

DRINKS

100% Fruit Juice
 Skanjabeen (*Fresh lemonade, often served with fresh mint*)

DAIRY

Butter
 Cheese
Milk: Whole Milk

GRAINS

Flour: Whole Wheat/Multigrain
Oats
Rice: Basmati
 Vermicelli Noodles

Central & South Asian | Pakistan

Notable Meals

- **Aloo Gosht**
Pakistani Meat & Potato Curried Stew
- **Kheer**
Rice pudding made from Basmati Rice, full fat milk & cardamom
- **Mutton Karahi**
A type of curry that emphasizes tomato, ginger and garlic and omits onion and yogurt that many other Pakistani curries include
- **Pulao/Pilau**
One pot rice and meat dish, often flavored using whole spices
- **Biryani**
Layered Rice & Meat dish

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

New Year's Celebrations
 Ramadan
 Eid Al-Fitr
 Eid Al-Adha

INGREDIENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Ramadan

Dried Dates

Eid al-Fitr

Dried Fruits, Nuts, Sugar, Flour

Eid al-Adha

Halal Meats, Basmati Rice

LESS PREFERRED FOODS

Canned Beans
 Pancake Mix
 Canned Vegetables
 Canned Soup

For neighbors observing Halal eating practices:
 Pork & Foods with Pork Derivatives (refer
 to Appendix 1: "Overview of Religious Food
 Observances" for more information)

Sources: Feedback gathered from 5 Pakistani neighbors at focus groups and surveys at food pantries, and information from Culture, Foodways & Counseling. Second Edition: A Guide to Culturally Sensitive Nutrition Care in the United States by Early et al.



East Asian and Southeast Asian

East and Southeast Asia span a huge geographic region comprised of more than 15 countries. In the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank network, neighbors from East Asia are often from China and neighbors from Southeast Asia are often from the Philippines and Vietnam. Like so many cultural cuisines included in this guide, there is an emphasis on fresh, minimally processed ingredients and home cooking. This region is religiously diverse, with neighbors observing Islam, Buddhism and Christianity, as well as other religions. Religious observances will impact dietary choices.

Food List

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

VEGETABLES

Bean Sprouts
Bell Peppers
 Bok Choy
Cabbage (*Napa is popular*)
Carrots
Corn
 Cucumbers
 Leafy Greens: Mustard Greens
 & Spinach
 Lettuce
 Mushrooms: Fresh & Dried
 Okra
Onions
 Plantains (*common in
 Filipino cuisine*)
Potatoes
 Scallions
 Seaweed
 Sweet Potatoes
 Taro
Tomatoes

FRUITS

Apples
 Bananas
 Dragon Fruit
 Durian
 Jackfruit
 Limes
 Mangoes
 Oranges
 Papaya
 Pears
 Raisins
 Tamarind
 Watermelon

DRINKS

Tea
 Coffee

PROTEIN

Beef
Chicken
Eggs
Fish
Pork: Shoulder, Belly, Ground
 Pork, Tenderloin & Ribs
 Peanuts
 Shrimp
 Tofu
 Sardines

BEANS & LEGUMES

Black Beans
 Black Eyed Peas
 Edamame
 Red Beans
 Soybeans

DAIRY

Coconut Milk
 Condensed Milk
 Evaporated Milk
 Soy milk

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Cilantro: Fresh
 Cinnamon
 Cloves
 Curry powder
 Dried Chili Peppers
 Garlic: Fresh
 Ginger: Fresh
 Mint: Fresh
 Thai Basil: Fresh
 Turmeric
 White Pepper

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Chili Garlic Sauce
 Cooking Oil
 Cornstarch
 Fish Sauce
 Hoisin Sauce
 Oyster Sauce
 Sesame Oil
 Shrimp Paste
 Soy Sauce
 Sugar: White
 Tomato Paste
 Vinegars: Rice, Black,
 Distilled White

GRAINS

Assorted Noodles
 Bread (*Baguettes are popular
 in Vietnam, to make Banh Mi
 sandwiches*)
Flour: All Purpose
Rice
Spaghetti (*Enjoyed in the
 Philippines*)

East Asian and Southeast Asian

Notable Meals

- **Phở**

A staple in the Vietnamese kitchen, Pho is a noodle soup made with vegetables, broth and meat, with bean sprouts, fresh herbs and fresh lime

- **Banh Mi**

A baguette sandwich, popular in Vietnam, stuffed with pickled vegetables, cured meats and sauces

- **Pancit**

A traditional Filipino stir fry

- **Hot Pot**

Common in China, during this meal, individuals boil meats, seafood, vegetables, tofu, and noodles directly at the table in a small pot filled with broth

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

Nochebuena (*Philippines*)

Three Kings Day (*Philippines*)

Lunar New Year (*called Tết in Vietnam*)

Easter (*Philippines*)

Mid-Autumn Festival

INGREDIENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Lunar New Year

Fresh fruit, particularly oranges

LESS PREFERRED FOODS

Milk & Dairy Products: Lactose Intolerance is common in individuals from East & Southeast Asia, so they may avoid milk and dairy products at the food pantry.

Beef: Individuals who practice Buddhism (common in Vietnam), are likely to avoid eating beef. Strict adherents may follow a vegan diet (For more information, refer to Appendix 1)

Pork: Individuals who practice Islam often do not eat pork or pork products.

Sources: Information from *Culture, Foodways & Counseling. Second Edition: A Guide to Culturally Sensitive Nutrition Care in the United States* by Early et al., *Feeding America's Cultural Conversations* initiative, the cookbook *The Woks of Life: Recipes to Know and Love from a Chinese American Family* by Bill, Judy, Sarah & Kaitlin Leung and conversations with neighbors and family.



Eastern European

Many residents of central Pennsylvania have ancestors from Eastern European and Slavic countries, including Poland, Russia, and Ukraine. The majority of Eastern European neighbors who are recent arrivals to the United States are Ukrainian, as many have immigrated as refugees in the wake of the 2022 Russian invasion and ensuing, ongoing war. Ukraine cuisine emphasizes fresh ingredients and homemade, scratch cooking.

Ukrainian and Russian are commonly spoken languages.

Food List

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

VEGETABLES

Avocado
Beets
Bell Peppers
Broccoli
Cabbage
Carrots
Cucumbers
Corn
Mushrooms: Fresh & Dried
Onions
Peas
Potatoes
Pumpkin
Tomatoes

FRUITS

Apples
Bananas
Berries: Blueberries,
Raspberries & Strawberries
Cherries
Dried Fruits
Kiwi
Lemons
Oranges
Plums
Raisins
Watermelon

DRINKS

100% Fruit Juice: Apple, Orange
Coffee
Tea
Kompot (*made by boiling fruits, fresh or dried, in water with sugar*)

PROTEIN

Beef:
Roast, **Ground Beef** & Stew Meat
Chicken
Eggs
Fish
Lamb
Pork:
Sausage, Ground, Roasts & Stew Meat
Shrimp
Turkey
Nuts

BEANS & LEGUMES

Canned & Dried are commonly used
Chickpeas/ Garbanzo Beans
Lentils
White Beans
Lima Beans
Kidney Beans

DAIRY

Butter
Cheese (*Homemade Farmers Cheese is popular, made using milk & vinegar*)
Cottage Cheese
Milk
Sour Cream
Yogurt

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Pepper: Black & White
Basil
Bay Leaves
Dill: Fresh & Dried
Garlic: Fresh & Powdered
Ginger
Onion powder
Paprika
Parsley
Salt

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Broth
Cooking Oil:
Sunflower Oil, Vegetable Oil,
Corn Oil, Olive Oil
Distilled White Vinegar
Honey
Mayo
Sugar
Tomato Paste & Tomato Puree

GRAINS

Barley
Bread: Rye & Wheat
Buckwheat
Cornmeal: Yellow
Flour: All Purpose
Millet
Oats
Rice
Pasta: Spaghetti

Eastern European

Notable Meals

- **Borscht**

A hearty soup made with beets, cabbage, potatoes, carrots, onions and meat (such as beef or pork). It is traditionally served with sour cream and fresh dill. This dish is so important to Ukrainian culture that in July 2022, UNESCO added the “Culture of Ukrainian Borscht Cooking” to its list of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

- **Holubtsi**

Stuffed Cabbage Rolls, filled with ground meat, rice and vegetables, and simmered in a tomato sauce

- **Varenyky**

Ukrainian dumplings that can be filled with a variety of sweet or savory ingredients, like fruit, potatoes, cheese or meat.

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

New Year's Celebrations

Easter

Thanksgiving

Christmas

LESS PREFERRED FOODS

Meal Starter Kits, like Hamburger Helper

Canned Green Beans

Canned Potatoes

Canned Soup

INGREDIENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

All Holidays

Cabbage, Potatoes, Beets, Baking ingredients like Flour, Sugar, Dried fruit & Nuts

Christmas

Fish, in addition to all holiday list

Easter

Ground Pork, in addition to all holiday list

Sources: Feedback gathered from 7 neighbors during focus groups and surveys at food pantries, insight from the International Service Center, and information from the cookbook The Authentic Ukrainian Kitchen by Yevhen Klopotenko.



Mexican

Nearly 18 million immigrants from Mexico have arrived in the United States since 1965, making Mexico the country of origin for the greatest wave of immigration to the United States. In central Pennsylvania, neighbors of Mexican descent comprise the second largest non-European ancestry group, only after Puerto Rican neighbors.

Spanish is the official language of Mexico. Catholicism is the most practiced religion.

Food List

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

VEGETABLES

Avocado
Bell Peppers
Carrots
 Celery
 Chayote
 Cucumber
Corn
 Jalapeño peppers
Onions
 Plantains
Potatoes
 Tomatillos
Tomatoes
 Scallions
 Yuca/Cassava

PROTEIN

Beef
Chicken
Eggs
Fish: Fresh & **Canned Tuna**
Pork
 Shrimp

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Bay Leaves
 Cilantro: Fresh
 Cinnamon
 Cloves
 Cumin
 Garlic
 Ginger
 Nutmeg
 Oregano
 Salt & Black Pepper
 Thyme
 Turmeric

FRUITS

Apples
 Bananas
 Berries: Strawberries & Blueberries
 Coconuts
Grapes
 Limes
 Mangoes
 Oranges
 Papaya
 Pineapple
 Raisins
 Watermelon

BEANS & LEGUMES

Canned & Dried are commonly used

Black Beans
Chickpeas/Garbanzo Beans
Kidney Beans
 Lentils
Pinto Beans
 Red Beans
 White Beans

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Bouillon
 Cooking Oil:
 Vegetable, Coconut & Corn
 Honey
 Mexican chocolate

DRINKS

100% Fruit Juice:
 Apple, Orange & Pineapple
 Coconut Water
 Coffee
 Horchata
 Lemonade

DAIRY

Butter
Cheese (*Queso Fresco is popular*)
 Condensed milk
 Evaporated Milk
 Heavy Cream
Milk

GRAINS

Bread
 Cereal
 Corn Tortillas
 Flour: including Masa (*Masa Harina*) & **All Purpose**
Oats
Pasta
Rice
 Sorghum

Mexican

Notable Meals

- **Barbacoa**
Slow cooked flank steak marinated with guajillo chiles, ancho chilies, puya chilies, cumin, allspice, cloves, marjoram and thyme
- **Mole, including Red, Green, and Yellow**
A sauce and marinade made from chiles, cumin, allspice, onions, cloves, tomatoes and tomatillos
- **Pozole**
A stew made from pork shoulder and hominy, flavored with garlic and adobo
- **Tamale**
Masa dough stuffed with protein (usually chicken or pork), steamed in a banana leaf
- **Taco**
A small tortilla stuffed with fillings, like meat and cheese

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

New Year's Celebrations
 Día de Los Reyes (*Three Kings Day*)
 Lent & Easter
 Cinco de Mayo
 Mother's Day & Father's Day
 Mexican Independence Day (*September 16*)
 Thanksgiving
 Noche Buena & Navidad
 (*Christmas Eve & Christmas*)

INGREDIENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

All Holidays
 Pork Shoulder, Hominy, Masa Harina,
 All Purpose Flour

Lent
 Frozen Fish

LESS PREFERRED FOODS

Canned Vegetables
 Meal Starter Kits, like Mac & Cheese and
 Hamburger Helper
 Peanut Butter

Sources: Feedback gathered from 5 Mexican neighbors from focus groups and surveys at food pantries, 3 qualitative interviews with Mexican neighbors, and information from Culture, Foodways & Counseling. Second Edition: A Guide to Culturally Sensitive Nutrition Care in the United States by Early et al.



South American

The cuisine of South America is influenced by indigenous cultures, Spanish colonizers (Portuguese colonizers in Brazil) and Black Africans brought to South America as slaves. It is also influenced by geography, impacted by proximity to the coast and Andes mountains. In central Pennsylvania, neighbors from South America are often from Colombia, Venezuela and Peru. While variations of food preferences exist within each country, this list highlights common overlapping ingredients.

Neighbors from Colombia, Venezuela and Peru most often speak Spanish.

Food List

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

VEGETABLES

Avocado
Beets
Bell Peppers: Green & Other colors
Broccoli
Cabbage
Carrots
Corn
Cucumber
Lettuce
Onions
Plantains: Green &
 Maduros (*very ripe*)
Potatoes
Spinach
Tomatoes

FRUITS

Apples
Bananas
Grapes
Lemons
Limes
Mangoes
Oranges
Papaya
Pineapple
Raisins
Strawberries
Watermelon

DRINKS

100% Fruit Juice:
 Apple & Orange
Coffee
Tea

PROTEIN

Beef
Chicken
Eggs
Fish: Salmon & **Canned Tuna**
Goat
Pork
Sausage
Shrimp

BEANS & LEGUMES

Canned & Dried are commonly used
Black Beans
Green Split Peas
Lentils
Red Beans
White Beans
Zaragoza (*Colombia Red/Pink Bean*)

DAIRY

Butter
Cheese: Mozzarella, Queso
 Campesino (*fresh cheese from Colombia*)
Milk
Yogurt

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Adobo Seasoning
Cilantro, Fresh
Cinnamon
Cumin
Garlic
Onion Powder
Panca pepper
 (*Peruvian Chili Pepper*)
Paprika
Salt & Black Pepper
Sazón Goya
Turmeric

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Cooking Oil: Coconut & Olive
Distilled White Vinegar
Ketchup
Mayo
Sugar: White & Brown

GRAINS

Bread
Fideos, Short vermicelli noodle
 (**Spaghetti** can be substituted)
Flour: **All Purpose** & Masa Harina
 (*Maseca is a popular brand*)
Masarepa (*Corn Flour for making Arepas. Harina P.A.N. is common brand name*)
Oats
Pasta
Rice: White & Brown

South American

Notable Meals

- **Pandebono**
Colombian Cheese Bread
- **Sancocho (called Hervido in Venezuela)**
A hearty stew made with meat, large pieces of starchy vegetables like plantain, potato, cassava or corn, often served with fresh cilantro and fresh lime.
- **Bandeja Paisa (Colombia)**
The national dish, bandeja paisa is a large plate of rice, stewed red beans, meat, fried plantain, an arepa, avocado, onion & tomato sauce.
- **Arepas (Venezuela)**
Corn cakes stuffed with meats, beans or cheeses

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

New Year's Celebrations
 Día de Los Reyes (*Three Kings Day*)
 Easter
 Mother's Day & Father's Day
 Independence Days
 Nochebuena & Navidad
 (*Christmas Eve & Christmas*)

LESS PREFERRED FOODS

Mac & Cheese
 Meal Starter Kits, like Beef Stroganoff

INGREDIENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

All Holidays

Masarepa, All Purpose Flour, Beef or Pork
 (for stew), Starchy Vegetables

Lent

Frozen Fish

Sources: Feedback gathered from 6 South American neighbors from focus groups and surveys at food pantries, insight from Church World Services Lancaster and Harrisburg, and information from Culture, Foodways & Counseling. Second Edition: A Guide to Culturally Sensitive Nutrition Care in the United States by Early et al., and the cookbook The Art of South American Cooking by Felipe Rojas-Lombardi.



Sub-Saharan African

Sub-Saharan Africa is made up of 54 countries, and divided into four regions – West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa and South Africa. While this food list covers a vast geographic territory, there are similarities between ingredients used frequently across this region.

The most common language spoken by neighbors from Sub-Saharan Africa living in central Pennsylvania is Kiswahili.

Food List

Bolded foods are commonly available for order from Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

VEGETABLES

Avocado
African Eggplant
Bell Peppers
Cabbage
Carrots
Chili Peppers: Habanero
Collard Greens
Corn
Maize (*large kernel of corn, different than sweet corn commonly found in US*)
Okra
Onions
Peas
Plantains
Potatoes
Spinach
Sweet Potatoes &
Sweet Potato Leaves
Tomatoes
Yuca/Cassava & Cassava Leaves

PROTEIN

Beef*
Chicken*
Eggs
Fish, including **Canned Tuna**
Goat
Peanut Butter
Peanuts
Sardines
Shrimp
**Halal meat may be preferred by Muslim neighbors*

SPICES, SEASONINGS & HERBS

Cinnamon
Cloves
Cumin: Whole Seeds
Garam Masala
Garlic: Fresh
Ginger: Fresh
Paprika
Salt & Black Pepper
Turmeric

FRUITS

Bananas
Lemons
Limes
Mangoes
Oranges
Papaya
Raisins
Strawberries
Watermelon

BEANS & LEGUMES

Canned & Dried are used
Black Eyed Peas
Chickpeas/Garbanzo Beans
Kidney Beans
Lentils
Pigeon Peas
Soybeans

COOKING ESSENTIALS

Bouillon (*Maggi brand is popular*)
Cooking Oil: Vegetable Oil, Palm Oil & Olive Oil
Sugar
Tomato Paste, Tomato Puree & Tomato Sauce

DRINKS

100% Fruit Juice
Coffee
Tea

DAIRY

Butter
Cheese
Coconut Milk
Milk
Yogurt

GRAINS

Flour: All Purpose
Spaghetti
Oats
Rice: White & Brown
White Cornmeal (*Fine*), sometimes called Maize Meal, used to prepare Ugali

Sub-Saharan African

Notable Meals

- **“The Holy Trinity”**

The cooking base of many recipes in Sub-Saharan Africa. In West Africa, the base is onion, fresh ginger and hot peppers pummeled into a paste and mixed with tomato. In East Africa, the base is onion, tomato and hot peppers.

- **Fufu & Ugali**

There is a version of this pounded dough in every Sub-Saharan African country, often with a different name. Fufu is made from cooked cassava pounded into a stiff dough. To eat, a small piece is torn off and used as a utensil to scoop stew, meat and vegetables (whatever else is being served with the meal). Ugali is similar but made from fine white cornmeal.

- **Wali Pilao/ Pilau**

Also called Jollof Rice in West Africa, this dish is influenced by Indian Biryani. It is a dish made with spiced rice often enjoyed on holidays and special occasions.

Peanut Sauce Stew

A stew popular in Democratic Republic of Congo, it is made from tomato sauce, peanut butter and meat, served with rice, fufu or fried plantains.

HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

The two most commonly observed religions in Sub-Saharan Africa are Christianity and Islam. Religion will influence which holidays are observed. In Niger, Somalia, Nigeria and much of West Africa, over half the population observes Islam, whereas the remaining countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of the population observes Christianity.

New Year's Celebrations

Ramadan

Eid al-Fitr

Easter

Eid al-Adha

Christmas

INGREDIENTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Goat, Chicken, Basmati Rice

Sources: Feedback gathered from 3 Sub-Saharan African neighbors at food pantries, insight from Church World Services Lancaster and Harrisburg, and information from Culture, Foodways & Counseling. Second Edition: A Guide to Culturally Sensitive Nutrition Care in the United States by Early et al., and the cookbook The Contemporary African Kitchen: Home Cooking Recipes From the Leading Chefs in Africa by Alexander Smalls.

LESS PREFERRED FOODS

Meal Starter Kits, like Beef Stroganoff



Cultural Food Preference

SURVEY & FOCUS GROUP TOOLKIT

If you would like to learn more about the cultural food preferences common at your specific food pantry, the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank can provide resources and guidance to implement your own survey and/or focus group.

To learn more, email the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank Culturally Familiar Food Action Team at cffactionteam@centralpafoodbank.org.

WHAT WE CAN PROVIDE

- Translated Recruitment Flyers, available in 10 different languages
- Translated Surveys- digital and hard copy, available in 10 different languages
- Focus Group Lesson Plan & accompanying materials, available digitally

SUGGESTIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT

- Advertise the focus group in multiple languages
- Incentivize participation, such as gift cards to grocery stores ranging from \$10 - \$30
- Hire an interpreter
- Schedule the focus group to coincide with pantry hours to decrease commute times
- Provide a reminder the day before

Increasing Access TO CULTURALLY FAMILIAR FOODS

In addition to culturally familiar foods available to order from the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, agency partners can increase their availability of culturally familiar foods through food drives and partnerships with local gardeners.

HOST CULTURALLY FAMILIAR FOOD DRIVES

Food drives can be an effective way of soliciting donations of food that are difficult for the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank to procure. One way in which food pantries could increase availability of culturally familiar foods in their inventory is to curate food drive requests, specifically focusing on spices and cooking essentials. Food pantries could request spices and cooking essentials common across cultures or customize food drive requests by the cultures most commonly represented at your food pantry.

EXAMPLES

Cross Cultural Spice Food Drive

Top 10 Spices Used Across Cultural Cuisines

1. Garlic – Minced & Powdered
2. Cinnamon
3. Salt & Black Pepper
4. Paprika
5. Turmeric
6. Cumin
7. Cloves
8. Bay Leaves
9. Oregano
10. Sazón Goya



Cultural Cuisine Specific Food Drive

*(Example: Dominican
Republic & Puerto Rico)*

- Adobo
- Sazón Goya
- Cinnamon
- Cloves
- Oregano
- Salt & Pepper



Cross Cultural Cooking Essential Food Drive

Top 10 Cooking Essentials Across Cultures

1. Cooking Oil
2. Sugar (White & Brown)
3. Distilled White Vinegar
4. Tomato Paste
5. Bouillon Cubes
6. Flour (All Purpose, Whole Wheat, Masa Harina & Masarepa)
7. Evaporated Milk
8. Honey
9. Coconut Milk
10. Mayo



Increasing Access

TO CULTURALLY FAMILIAR FOODS

PARTNER WITH LOCAL GARDENERS

Partnering with gardeners and farmers is another way to increase inventory of culturally familiar foods at food pantries. Seek to develop partnerships with local gardeners, Penn State Extension Masters Garden program or with university farms, to explore the possibility of them growing produce and herbs specifically for your food pantry.

Grow Culturally Familiar Food

Gardeners interested in growing culturally familiar food could cultivate produce and herbs on the **Top Foods Across Cultures** list, such as:

- Strawberries
- Bell Peppers
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Corn
- Cucumbers
- Onions
- Potatoes
- Tomatoes
- Cilantro
- Garlic



Customize by Local Demographics

Or food pantries could customize requests specifically to local demographics.

*For example, for food pantries that serve a large population of neighbors from **Dominican Republic**, they could work with local gardeners to grow Sazón gardens, including:*

- Green Bell Peppers
- Scallions
- Cilantro
- Culantro
- Garlic
- Oregano



*Or for a food pantry serving a large population of neighbors from **Sub-Saharan Africa**, they could work with local gardeners to grow the following:*

- Tomatoes
- Onions
- Hot Peppers
- Tomatoes
- Okra
- Collard Greens
- Sweet Potatoes



Creating a Welcoming Pantry

In addition to food sourcing, creating an environment within the food pantry that neighbors of diverse backgrounds feel comfortable entering is an important part of cultivating a welcoming pantry. To support agency partners in this work, the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank created three tools:

1. TRANSLATED CHARITABLE FOOD SYSTEM WORD BANK

This list includes common words and phrases used in a food pantry, to help staff and volunteers create signage and communicate in different languages. The list is translated into the 14 most commonly spoken languages in central Pennsylvania.

2. TRANSLATED SERVICE INSIGHTS INTAKE TOOL

For agency partners that use Service Insights for registration and check in, we created multilingual and visual intake tools, translated into the 14 most commonly spoken languages in central Pennsylvania, to assist with neighbor registration at your agency.

3. CREATING A CULTURALLY WELCOMING PANTRY GUIDE

This guide provides ideas on how to create a welcoming environment for neighbors from diverse cultural backgrounds. From providing ideas on how to design signs for comprehension for individuals with Limited English Proficiency, to easing the intake process with translation tools, to providing volunteer training to increase confidence in cross cultural interactions, this guide will share tools and equip agency partners to create a welcoming environment.

All these tools can be found on our website at
centralpafoodbank.org/agency-resources

Conclusion

Central Pennsylvania has become home to an increasingly diverse group of neighbors in the last few decades. Over the years, Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and its network of agency partners have warmly welcomed new arrivals, whether they are immigrants in search of opportunity, refugees escaping war, conflict, and discrimination, or simply neighbors from other parts of the United States seeking a new beginning in central Pennsylvania. Food pantries have been responsive and adaptive to this demographic change, but the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and Penn State REACH teams also recognize that pantries and community organizations could use more support in their work to provide culturally competent services and increase access to culturally familiar foods. Our hope is that this food guide and accompanying tools are steps in the right direction, to equip food pantries and community organizations with increased knowledge and access to culturally familiar foods, so that as a community we honor cultural differences, provide a welcoming experience and meet the unique needs of every household.

We again express thanks to the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank Culturally Familiar Food Action Team, Penn State REACH Nutrition Team, cultural organizations, food pantries and neighbors who contributed their time and expertise in the development of this guide.

If you would have questions or would like support in brainstorming how to begin implementing culturally familiar food work at your organization, please contact the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank Culturally Familiar Food Action team at cfactionteam@centralpafoodbank.org.

FOR FURTHER READING

In addition to interviews with cultural organizations and neighbors, the following resources were integral in increasing our understanding of culturally familiar foods:

Afghan Food & Cookery
by Helen Saberi

*Arman-From a Kitchen of Longing:
An Afghan Cookbook*
by Mirriam Seddiq

*Ayla: A Feast of Nepali Dishes
from Terai, Hills and the Himalayas*
by Santosh Shah

*Belly Full: Exploring Caribbean
Cuisine Through 11 Fundamental
Ingredients and Over 100 Recipes*
by Lesley Enston

*Culture, Foodways & Counseling,
Second Edition: A Guide to Culturally
Sensitive Nutrition Care in the United
States* by Kathalenn Briggs Early, PhD,
RDN, CDCES, Kamaria Mason, MS,
MPH, RDN, LDN, Shamera Robinson,
MPH, RDN, CDCES & Roberta Duyff, MS,
RDN, FADA, FAND of the Academy of
Nutrition & Dietetics

The Art of South American Cooking
by Felipe Rojas-Lombardi

*The Authentic Ukrainian Kitchen:
Recipes from a Native Chef*
by Yevhen Klopotenko

*The Contemporary African Kitchen:
Home Cooking Recipes From
the Leading Chefs of Africa*
by Alexander Smalls

*Community Hunger Mapping: Identifying
Localized Food Access Gaps and Increasing
Understanding of Intersecting Issues for
the Charitable Food System. By Zach Zook,
Morgan Flood, Ashleigh Lucas, Dawn
Watson, Evan Armstrong, & Lo Whitaker
Escobar. Central Pennsylvania Food Bank,
2023-2026.*

*Appendix 1***Overview of Religious Food Observances**

This section includes a brief overview of religious food observances, by major religions represented among neighbors living in the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank's service territory. While this overview can provide a general understanding, strictness of adherence varies by community and individual.

BUDDHISM

Buddhism is most commonly practiced in East Asia, South Asian and Southeast Asia and by individuals with cultural ties to those areas. While Buddhism does not prohibit any foods, avoidance of beef and adherence to a vegetarian diet is common in Buddhism due to the philosophy of right actions, one of which is "Not taking the life of any living creature." Dietary practices will vary by individual.

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is a commonly practiced religion by African American neighbors and neighbors from Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Central America, the Philippines, Eastern Europe, Mexico, South America and Sub-Saharan Africa. For neighbors who specifically observe Catholicism, during Lent, they may refrain from eating meat on Fridays and will eat fish instead.

HINDUISM

Hinduism is most commonly practiced in South Asia and by individuals with cultural ties to South Asia. While there is no specific prohibition of any food, avoidance of beef and adherence to vegetarian diets is a common practice among Hindu neighbors. This dietary pattern emphasizes the practice of ahimsa - nonviolence, love, respect, and compassion for all living creatures.

ISLAM

Many neighbors from Arab nations, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sub-Saharan Africa observe Islam. As practicing Muslims, neighbors follow Islamic dietary law which outlines foods that are Haram (prohibited) and Halal (permissible).

Haram foods include:

- Pork, pork products and pork-derived products, including lard, gelatin and rennat
- Alcohol and alcohol derivatives, like vanilla, extracts, etc
- Any meat from animals that are not slaughtered according to Halal regulations

Halal foods include:

- Meat that is slaughtered according to Halal regulations
- Fish
- Beans, Nuts, Seeds
- Dairy – except dairy that has gelatin or rennat
- Fats and Oils
- All other foods

As with all religious food observances, strictness of adherence varies by individual and communities. Some individuals only eat meat that is certified Halal, while other individuals may eat meat that is not labeled Halal as long as it is not a pork product.

Lastly, there are Mashbooh (doubtful) foods, which are foods that may contain haram ingredients and are considered doubtful unless they have a Halal certification. These ingredients are: Lecithin, monoglycerides and diglycerides, glycerin, gelatin, natural flavors, artificial flavors, enzymes, whey, magnesium stearate, stearic acid, folic acid, niacin, thiamin, vitamin A, vitamin C and vitamin D.

JUDAISM

While no neighbors who participated in surveys, focus groups or qualitative interviews follow Judaism, Judaism dietary laws are included in this guide to be inclusive and provide information for food pantries that do serve neighbors following this religion. Judaism dietary laws are called Kashrut Laws. Kashrut Laws outline what is kosher (meaning “fit or suitable”), treif (meaning “unfit”) or pareve (“Neutral”).

To eat kosher, the following guidelines must be observed:

- Meat and dairy should be kept separate. They are not to be eaten together at the same meal, nor should they be cooked or prepared at the same time.
- All meat should be from a kosher animal, defined as having a split hoof or chews its cud or a non-predatory bird. Kosher animals are cows, sheep, goats, deer, bison, chickens, duck and turkeys.
- All meat must be slaughtered and processed in a way that follows Jewish law.
- Kosher fish has fins and gills with easily removable scales.
- Secondary animal products (like eggs, milk, etc.) must come from kosher animals.

Foods that are treif and should be avoided are:

- Pigs
- Rabbits
- Catfish
- Shellfish
- Lobster
- Crab
- Derivatives of any of these foods

Foods that are considered pareve are:

- Eggs, Fruits, Vegetables, Grains, Nuts, Seeds & Legumes and specific fish

There is a spectrum of how closely Kashrut Laws are upheld, with Orthodox and Conservative Jews following Kashrut Laws most closely.

Appendix 2

Glossary of Holidays

This glossary contains a brief description of holidays celebrated by neighbors in central Pennsylvania. This list is not exhaustive but rather highlights holidays that neighbors indicated as important to them during surveys, focus groups and qualitative interviews.

The glossary of holidays is organized by religious affiliation and grouped together by affiliation (they are not listed in alphabetical order). Each holiday description includes a list of cultures in the guide that observe the holiday, date of holiday and a curated list of celebratory foods and meals.

Christian Holidays

CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS

(called Nochebuena and Navidad in Spanish-speaking cultures)

Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday

African American, Dominican Republic, Central American, Haitian, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South American, Southeast Asia (Philippines), Sub-Saharan Africa (if practicing Christian), Ukrainian

Date: December 24 & December 25, Orthodox Christmas January 7

- In Spanish speaking cultures (including Dominican Republic, Central America, Mexico, Puerto Rico & South America) and the Philippines, the main celebration occurs on Christmas Eve, known as Nochebuena.
- In 2023, Ukrainian Orthodox Christians began celebrating Christmas on December 25, instead of the more traditionally observed date of January 7, to distance themselves from Russian heritage.

Description

A celebration and remembrance of the birth of Jesus Christ

Celebratory Foods

- **African American neighbors** may enjoy Soul Food on Christmas, like Baked Mac & Cheese, Collard Greens and Sweet Potato Pie
- **Dominican and Puerto Rican neighbors** may enjoy a variety of dishes, including:
 - Pernil: Roasted pork shoulder or roasted pork leg
 - Ensalada Rusa: A classic Dominican potato salad made with beets
 - Pastelones: Layered dishes, similar to Lasagna, but the layers can be made from plantains, potatoes or eggplants instead of pasta
 - Moro con Gandules (also called Arroz con Gandules): Rice with Pigeon Peas
 - Habichuelas Dulces: A dessert made from red beans, milk, sugar, cinnamon and condensed milk

- **Neighbors from Mexico, Central America & South America** may enjoy:
 - Tamales: Masa stuffed with fillings (savory or sweet), wrapped in a corn husk and steamed
 - Bunuelos: Fried dough sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar
 - Traditional Stews (Pozole in Mexico, Caldos de Res/Sopa de Res in Central America)
- **Neighbors from Sub-Saharan Africa** may enjoy chicken, goat and pilau (a spiced rice dish) on Christmas.
- **Ukraine:** On Christmas Eve, traditionally 12 meatless dishes are prepared and eaten, corresponding to the number of apostles. The first, and most important dish, is Kutia, a sweet porridge made from winter wheat berries, poppy seeds, honey, raisins, walnuts & sugar. Other of the 12 dishes include vegetarian versions of Borscht and Holubtsi.
- **Filipino** neighbors may enjoy pork, specifically Lechon- a roast pig with crispy skin

DÍA DE LOS REYES

(Three Kings Day, also known as Epiphany)

Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday

Dominican Republic, Central American, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South American, Southeast Asian (Philippines)

Date: January 6

Description

This day marks the end of the Christmas season, and it commemorates the three wise men visiting baby Jesus

Celebratory Foods

Similar to celebratory foods on Christmas Eve

LENT

Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday

Neighbors who observe Catholicism, which is commonly practiced in Hispanic cultures & Philippines

Date: Changes every year. Begins on Ash Wednesday and continues for 40 days (excluding Sundays) until Easter

Description

A period of 40 days before Easter, in which many Christians fast, reflecting on the 40 days Jesus fasted in the wilderness

Celebratory Foods

Many Catholics fast from eating meat on Fridays and eat fish instead

EASTER

Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday

African American, Dominican Republic, Central American, Haitian, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South American, Southeast Asia (Philippines), Sub-Saharan African (if Christian), Ukrainian

Date: Changes every year. Orthodox Easter is a different day than Catholic/Protestant Easter

Description

The celebration of Jesus' resurrection

Celebratory Foods

- Celebratory Foods for **African American, Dominican, Central American, Mexican, Puerto Rican & South American** neighbors mirror foods eaten at Christmas
- **Ukraine:** Dishes commonly enjoyed during the holidays are Borscht, Holubtsi, Baked Fish, Meat & Potatoes, and desserts (such as cheesecake). Additionally, Aspic, meat suspended in gelatin, is commonly enjoyed.

Islamic Holidays

EID AL-ADHA

Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday

Arab nations, Afghan, Pakistani, Sub-Saharan African (if practicing Islam)

Date: Changes every year. It occurs during the 12th month of the lunar Islamic calendar.

Description

Translated as "Festival of Sacrifice," Eid al-Adha is a 3 day celebration that marks the end of Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. It is celebrated by observing the practice of Qurbani, which is the ritual sacrifice of an animal, using humane practices, and then sharing the meat with family, neighbors and those in need.

Celebratory Foods

Halal Meats, Biryani (spiced basmati rice with meat)

RAMADAN

Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday

Arab nations, Afghan, Pakistani, Sub-Saharan African (if practicing Muslim)

Date: Changes every year. Occurs during the ninth month of the lunar based Islamic Calendar

Description

A period of fasting, in which Muslims fast from dawn to dusk for 30 days

Celebratory Foods

Each evening, the fast is often broken by eating a dried date, followed by a meal.

EID AL-FITR

Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday

Arab nations, Afghan, Pakistani, Sub-Saharan African (if practicing Muslim)

Date: Changes every year. Directly follows Ramadan.

Description

Translated as “Festival of Breaking Fasts,” Eid al-Fitr is a 3 day celebration that occurs after Ramadan.

Celebratory Foods

Eating sweets and desserts is a common way to celebrate.

- Sweets & Desserts, like Arabic Petit Fours
- In **Pakistan** - Sheer Khurma is a popular sweet to eat on holidays. It is a creamy pudding made from vermicelli noodles, milk, nuts, dried dates and raisins.
- In **Egypt** – Lupin beans & Kahk, traditional cookies, are popular

Holidays Without a Religious Affiliation

INDEPENDENCE DAYS

Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday

African American, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, South America

Date: January 1: Haiti
 February 27: Dominican Republic
 July 4: USA
 July 5: Venezuela
 July 20: Colombia
 July 28: Peru
 September 16: Mexico

Description

Just like July 4th celebrations in the US, Independence Days are meaningful and fun days of celebration for many different cultures, especially in the Caribbean, Mexico and South America. Independence Days are included in this list of holidays due to how frequently they were mentioned during the data collection process.

Celebratory Foods

Dominican Republic: Parrilladas (a cookout) & mixed salads like Ensalada Rusa (Dominican potato salad)

Haiti: Soup Joumou. This soup is made of beef, calabaza, root vegetables and pasta. When French colonists ruled Haiti, enslaved Africans were responsible for growing and cooking calabaza but were not allowed to eat it themselves. When independence was won, the former slaves ate joumou (calabaza) to celebrate their new freedom.

Mexico: Enchiladas, Tacos, Sopas (fried masa dough, like a thick corn tortilla, layered with toppings like beans, meat & cheese). The foods eaten often includes the colors of the Mexican flag.

JUNETEENTH***Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday***

African American

Date: June 19

Description

This holiday honors this day in 1865 when the Emancipation Proclamation reached enslaved people in Galveston, Texas, almost three years after the proclamation was originally issued in 1863. This day marks the end of slavery in the US.

Celebratory Foods

Barbeque and red foods, like strawberries, watermelon and red velvet cake

KWANZAA***Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday***

African American

Date: December 26 – January 1

Description

Meaning “First Fruits” in Swahili, Kwanzaa is a 7 day celebration of harvest and prosperity, celebrated from Dec 26 through Jan 1. It focuses on gratitude and celebrating African American heritage.

Celebratory Foods

The foods eaten during Kwanzaa symbolize the foods that Africans brought to the US. While the foods may vary, common foods are roasted peanuts, roasted pumpkin seeds and white rice.

LUNAR NEW YEAR

(called *Tết* in Vietnam)

Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday

East Asia & Southeast Asia

Date: Changes every year. Occurs the first day of the first month of the Lunar Calendar, typically falling between end of January and February

Description

A celebration of the new year

Celebratory Foods

Fresh fruit, particularly oranges

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday

East Asia & Southeast Asia

Date: Changes every year. Occurs on the 15th day of the 8th month of the Lunar Calendar, typically falling between mid-September and early October

Description

A celebration of harvest, it also coincides with when the moon shines brightest in the month, so it is sometimes called the Moon Festival.

Celebratory Foods

Mooncakes (typically store bought. Food pantries do not need to provide ingredients)

MOTHER'S DAY & FATHER'S DAY

Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday

African American, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Central America, Mexico, South America

Date: Mother's Day: Second Sunday in May. In Mexico, Mother's Day is observed on May 10 every year

Father's Day: Third Sunday in June. In Guatemala, Father's Day is observed on June 17 and in Honduras, it is observed on March 19.

Description

Mother's Day and Father's Day are included in this list of holidays due to how frequently they were mentioned during the data collection process, which highlights the familial nature of cultures included in this list. While the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank does not recommend providing specific foods for these holidays, an acknowledgement to parents on these holidays can be a meaningful way to engage with neighbors.

Celebratory Foods

No specific foods are associated with Mother's Day & Father's Day, with preference varying by family

NEW YEARS

Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday

All. It is an especially popular holiday in Hispanic cultures. While New Year's, on January 1, is not commonly celebrated in Muslim cultures, and Central and South Asian cultures, the holiday may be celebrated by neighbors who move to central Pennsylvania, based on their level of acculturation.

Date: January 1, observed by Afghan neighbors on March 21 (Nowruz)

Description

The celebration of a new calendar year.

Celebratory Foods

Food preferences vary. A popular dish in the **African American** community is Hoppin' John, a dish of black eyed peas, simmered with garlic, onion and ham hock or bacon, served with rice, eaten to bring luck and prosperity for the coming year.

THANKSGIVING

Cultures in Guide that Observe this Holiday: All

Date: 4th Thursday of November

Description

While Thanksgiving is an American holiday, many neighbors who have immigrated to the US have adopted the holiday.

Celebratory Foods

- **African American** – ingredients to make soul food sides, in addition to turkey
- **Hispanic neighbors** – may prefer whole chicken or pork shoulder/leg as an alternative to turkey



centralpafoodbank.org



reachcentralpa.org