After introducing MyPlate in June 2011, USDA provided a series of one-page fact sheets to help consumers use the dietary advice of the Dietary Guidelines 2010. The USDA added new fact sheets in December 2011 and continued adding fact sheets in 2012, 2013, and 2014. These fact sheets are distributed by UF/IFAS Extension for Extension faculty, health professionals, and consumers. This fact sheet is Enjoy Food from Many Cultures, and it can be found on the following page.

Figure 1.
Credits: http://choosemyplate.gov

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enjoy foods from many cultures

10 tips to wisely celebrate healthier foods and customs

As a diverse Nation, we can embrace our cultural traditions for the foods we love and still prepare them in healthier ways. This involves being creative with favorite recipes by substituting foods and ingredients that are less healthy with flavorful and appealing choices that still help remind us of our treasured food ways.

1. **cook with others**
   Learn about cooking different traditional or regional foods from others who use authentic recipes and ingredients and explore ways to improve the nutrition of some of your own family favorites. Cooking dishes at home allows you to add variety to meals. If needed, adapt recipes by cutting back on gravies, creams, and sauces; adding more vegetables; or baking instead of frying.

2. **blend cultures**
   Many popular foods and beverages in America blend the cuisines of many cultures. Celebrate our Nation’s diversity and be inspired by dishes that include more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, seafood, lean meats, and low-fat dairy.

3. **add a touch of spice**
   Combinations of herbs and spices often remind us of dishes from our own heritage or our favorite ethnic food. Add flavor to meals with herbs and spices, such as chili, garlic, ginger, basil, oregano, curry, or cilantro, which can replace salt and saturated fat.

4. **use familiar foods to create exotic dishes**
   Use foods you know and prepare new recipes, such as adding curry to chick peas, cilantro to brown rice, or mango to your salad or smoothie. Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

5. **find the salt and sodium and go with lower numbers**
   All packaged foods are labeled to show amounts of sodium. Use “low-sodium” soy sauce, or broth or canned beans labeled “no salt added.” Check nutrition labels and use products that are lower in sodium or are salt-free.

6. **think about beverages**
   Many cultures offer tasty beverages, such as fruit drinks, alcoholic drinks, rich coffees, and sweet teas. Consider using frozen fruits to create a great tasting smoothie, or adding spices, low-fat dairy, and small amounts of sugar to make beverages. When buying prepared beverages, choose items with less sugar and fat. To manage calories, drink water or other unsweetened beverages instead of sugary drinks.

7. **delight in cultural gatherings**
   Celebrate traditions, especially those that help you stay physically active. Have fun with traditional dances, sports, and games that make you move. Balance what you eat with regular physical activity.

8. **show children what’s important**
   Children learn to cook from their elders. Show kids how meals and dishes from various traditions are prepared. Let them taste foods they made, as you share related stories and customs from your own heritage or expose them to other cultures, but consider ways to cut back on high-calorie foods and ingredients.

9. **make smart choices when dining out**
   Eating out offers tempting new dishes that make it easy to overeat. Choose lower calorie dishes, such as stir fries, kabobs, or whole-wheat pastas with tomato sauce. Split a dish or ask for a take-home container at the start of a meal to save part of what’s served on your plate.

10. **remember, all types of foods fit on MyPlate**
    MyPlate is designed to remind Americans to eat healthfully, using foods from the food groups. The MyPlate website provides practical information, tips, tools, and recipes that will help you build a healthier diet. Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.

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