

World Kids

Fun for kids! True stories!



PAL Project

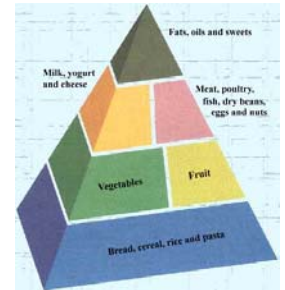
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I hope you had a happy Christmas and New Year! This is the time of year when many of us have enjoyed lots of special meals and good food. What is YOUR favorite meal, I wonder? One thing that makes such meals special is that we DON'T eat them regularly, and so appreciate them on special occasions. The rest of the time we all have our daily routines when we tend to eat certain regular, basic foods which often depend on what part of the world we live in. A "staple food" is one that is eaten regularly and forms the main part of the diet, although it doesn't supply all the nutrition we need, so we must also eat other foods. Sadly though, over 1 billion people, about one sixth of the world population, face chronic hunger and starvation that often lead to death. Famine and wars cause about 10% of these deaths, but the majority is due to chronic malnutrition - or not getting enough of the right kinds of food.



About 24,000 people around the world die each day from hunger and $\frac{3}{4}$ of these are children under the age of 5!

Many of us learn in school about the importance of a balanced diet - with cereals and grains, vegetables and fruit, meat, fish and other kinds of protein. Such a good diet will help us stay healthy, resist disease, and have plenty of energy to work and grow. Wherever we live in the world, we have grown up with traditional food dishes we have come to love - but when we learn about foods in other countries we are often surprised at how different they are! One study shows that in **Western Europe** the staple diet consists of 33% animal protein (chicken, beef etc), 26% cereals (such as wheat and oats) and 4% roots and tubers (such as potatoes). But the average diet in **Africa** consists of 46% cereals (millet, maize or wheat), 20% roots and tubers (especially yams) and only 7% animal protein.



It is said that for protein **Americans** mostly eat chicken, beef, pork and some fish - and so get their protein from less than 10% of the protein sources available! But around the world, people eat many additional kinds of animals - and some provide surprisingly even MORE protein ounce for ounce than beef or chicken! Another study shows that of the 50,000 edible plants in the world, 90% of the world's energy foods are provided by only 15 of them, and just THREE (rice, maize and wheat) provide 60%! So this month we want to take a quick look at what the average day's meal is like for children in other parts of the world.

Almost HALF of the world's population eats rice as a staple food - including people in **Asia, Latin-America** and **Africa**! Roots and tubers (such as potatoes, yams, cassava and taro) are important staples for over a billion people, especially in **Africa**, but although these are filling, they are low in protein and other foods are also needed to avoid malnutrition. When I visited **Kenya** three years ago, we drank a kind of thin porridge for breakfast and then the main meal each day was "UGALI" (a kind of thick cooked paste made from maize) and kale (a kind of green cabbage plant). Sometimes a sauce of groundnuts (peanuts) was served with it. This photo shows me with our partner, Mike, eating ugali in a pastor's home (with our fingers of course!). Later, in **Togo** (West Africa), I ate very similar food, often with a type of sauce made from dried fish, which was very tasty. Just because food may be strange doesn't mean it can't be delicious! But then again, sometimes it can take a long time to get accustomed to the taste or texture of a new dish!

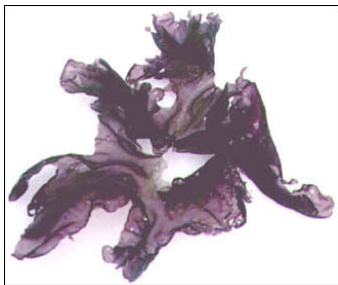


People living in rural areas where there is little choice of food often search for wild plants and animals to add to their diet. Seeds, nuts and berries can be eaten as snacks; some roots, leaves and mushrooms can be taken home and cooked to make stews and soups; and often the leaves of plants are boiled as tea - often helping heal medical ailments. Occasionally wild animals are trapped or hunted to provide a special meal, but more often smaller animals including reptiles, amphibians and insects are caught and eaten with enjoyment.



Can you name all the animals pictured above? Maybe you've never eaten any of them, but there are millions of children around the world who would eat them every day if they could get the chance! In fact at least HALF the world's population eats insects!

Did you know that some big roaches have 3X more protein, ounce for ounce, than chicken?



In Asia, where many people live on islands or near rivers that often flood, fish, frogs, shellfish and other sea creatures add greatly to the protein in their diet. In fact fish provides the major source of animal protein for over one billion people, mostly in countries like **Indonesia, Japan, Vietnam and the Philippines**. Several types of plants that grow in the sea (called kelp or seaweed) are also often eaten as they provide an excellent source of protein and are high in vitamins. This picture shows one well-known variety.

Visiting food vendors on the streets of many countries you can see lots of strange foods as every part of an animal is used rather than wasted. You may find roasted chicken feet; soup with various internal organs floating in it; fried pigs tails - and even possibly some sheep eyes, which are often considered a delicacy in **Arab** countries. But even in **Europe** and the **USA** these "leftover" pieces of animal protein are used in dishes that are eaten and enjoyed by many - including sausages, bologna, pâté, hotdogs and haggis! We are all happy to eat our favorite foods - as long as we don't know exactly what is in them!

In the Bible we know that God gave Moses very strict laws about what the Israelites could eat, and many Jews today still follow these "Kosher" food laws, as described in Leviticus 11. Then in other parts of the Bible God gives us further teaching about food; and the famous vision He gave to Peter in Acts 10 shows us that we must be willing to take the Gospel to people whose customs are very different - and if it means we have to eat strange food then we should do so with prayer and thanksgiving (1 Timothy 4:3-5). That is why we should "say grace" and bless our food as we eat it.

See if you can unscramble this Bible verse:

FI UOY RETNE A NWOT DNA TI SEMOCLEW UOY, TAE REVETAHW SI TES EROFEB UOY.

This is an important verse to remember, especially when we don't want to eat what our mother has prepared for us! Life is so much more than food - but we should all be thankful for the food we have. Pray for those around the world who go to bed hungry at night, and if you get the chance to help in some way, do so joyfully.

Until next time,

Your Friend, Shirley