

# Nutrition Edition

Your Guide to Child Health and Nutrition



January 2023  
Volume 34 Issue 1

[CocoKids.org](https://CocoKids.org)

## New Year's Food Traditions Around the World

CELEBRATING with family and friends includes time-honored traditions to say “goodbye” to the old year or “hello” to the new one. Different



cultures celebrate the New Year at different times of year, following calendars based on the lunar or solar cycle or the Gregorian calendar. The Persian New Year, Nowruz marks the arrival of spring with the vernal equinox, the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah is celebrated in the fall and the Chinese New Year is between late January and mid-February. Diwali, the festival of lights is celebrated by Hindus and Sikhs between October and November, while the Islamic New Year, Ramadan fluctuates each year following the phases of the moon. Though the traditions and foods vary

from place to place, the desire for happiness, health and wealth unites us all.

### NEW YEAR'S DAY FOOD TRADITIONS IN ASIA AND OCEANIA

#### Japan

A bowl of soba noodles is a must have to welcome the new year in Japan. The long length of the noodle symbolizes a long life.

#### Philippines

In the Philippines, they celebrate with piles of fresh fruit on the table and people eat 12 round fruits such as oranges and grapes while avoiding fruits with sharp thorns like pineapple.

#### China

A popular tradition is to make homemade dumplings or pot stickers that are boiled, steamed or fried.

#### Australia

Since it's summer in the southern hemisphere, many Australians celebrate with a trip to the beach and a picnic lunch of favorite sandwiches, salads and soft drinks.

(continued on page 2)



### Origins & Roles of Food

Polish cuisine in the Middle Ages was based on dishes made from agricultural produce and the cereal crops millet, rye, wheat and groats as well as meat from wild and farm animals, fruits, berries, honey, herbs and spices. It was also known for an abundant use of salt from Wieliczka, one of the oldest salt mines in the world, dating back to the 13th century.

### Food Customs

It's common to eat two dishes during dinner: one is always soup and the other either potato, rice, groats or pasta along with meat, stews or sweet dishes. Bread is one of the most important foods in the Polish cuisine, mainly rye or wheat. Pickled herring is traditionally eaten on New Year's eve.

### Staple Foods

Polish cuisine is hearty and heavy in its use of butter, cream, eggs and extensive seasoning. It is also rich in meat, especially pork, chicken, game and sausage. Vegetables include potatoes, beets, cabbage, carrots, mushrooms and cucumbers. Pierogi, a traditional boiled dumpling, is filled with savory or sweet fillings, such as meat, sauerkraut, cheese and potatoes or fruit. Cucumbers are seasoned with dill to make dill pickles.

### Dining Etiquette

Eating starts when everybody is seated and the host says "Smacznego!" (enjoy your meal!)

## INSIDE:

- Healthy Family Goals
- Fuel and Fitness

- Recipes
- Food Funny

# New Year's Food Traditions Around the World

—Continued from front page

## NEW YEAR'S DAY FOOD TRADITIONS IN EUROPE

### Spain

In Spain, it's customary to eat 12 grapes exactly at midnight on New Year's Eve, representing good luck for each of the coming 12 months. Many other Latin American countries have adopted this tradition including Costa Rica, Peru, Ecuador and Chile.



### Germany & Austria

Marzipan is shaped into pigs and gifted around New Year's to symbolize good fortune.

### Italy

Lentils are eaten in Italy after midnight on New Year's Eve, with their coin-like shape nodding to luck and prosperity.

### Greece

Vasilopita cake, full of warming spices, is typically baked in Greece. Sometimes, a coin or other trinket is hidden inside for one lucky guest to find.

### Bulgaria

Savory comfort foods are a New Year's tradition in Bulgaria. Dinner is typically pork and cabbage or a baked turkey. A special cheese-stuffed pastry, called banitsa, is also enjoyed.

### France

The new year is celebrated in France with a huge feast of decadent foods, including oysters, foie gras, lobster and escargot.

### Denmark

Boiled cod with a mustard sauce is a common dish served at New Year's dinner, with a tower of marzipan donuts for dessert.

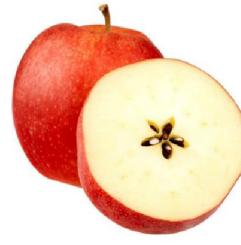


### Estonia

Families in Estonia indulge in meals comprising either seven, nine or twelve foods since all three numbers are considered lucky in the culture. A little bit of each food is left on plates to feed additional guests who are there only in spirit.

## The Netherlands

Residents of the Netherlands eat deep-fried bits of dough, often filled with raisins or apples, called oliebollen.



### The Czech Republic

Families in the Czech Republic cut open a fresh apple to predict the year ahead. If the inside resembles a star, they will have a happy and healthy year. When the inside looks like a cross, someone at the table will fall ill during the coming year.

## NEW YEAR'S DAY FOOD TRADITIONS IN NORTH AMERICA & SOUTH AMERICA

### Canada

The French-Canadians eat tourtiere, a meat pie filled with ground meat, potatoes, onions and spices like cinnamon and nutmeg.

### Mexico

Families in Mexico welcome the New Year with a large meal including tamales, pozole and buñuelos.

### Brazil

Seven is an auspicious number in Brazil. To be well-prepared for the new year, Brazilians eat seven grapes, seven pomegranate seeds and make seven wishes while jumping over seven waves in the ocean.

### United States

In the melting pot that is America, people celebrate the New Year at all different times of the year according to their culture. In the South, New Year's Day, January 1st, is celebrated eating Hoppin' John, a meal of black-eyed peas, ham hock, rice and greens. It's believed to beckon wealth and good luck in the year to come.

Many cultures today see the New Year as a unique time to make changes to their lives, to say goodbye to unwanted habits and set new goals in honor of new beginnings. How ever you celebrate, we wish you a Happy New Year filled with peace and prosperity.

— Adapted from ProLingo, Instacart and Epicurious.com

## KIDS' HEALTH &amp; SAFETY

# Healthy Family Goals

**IT'S A NEW YEAR!** Set healthy family goals together. Focus on what you can add to your life this year instead of what you can take away.



## SUGGESTIONS:

- Eat together once a day. Studies show many benefits from having regular family meals, including healthier food choices.
- Eat mindfully. Encourage family members to slow down, enjoy every bite, eating when hungry and stopping when full.
- Eat to nourish the body. Don't use food as a reward, bribe or punishment.
- Get everyone involved in preparing meals. Those who participate in meal preparation tend to try more foods and eat healthier meals.
- Eat more plant forward meals by planning one or more plant based (or vegetarian) meals every week.
- Serve more whole fruit and limit juice to no more than once a day.
- Choose higher fiber foods like 100% whole grains, beans, legumes and fruits and vegetables with the skins on. Most people do not get enough fiber.

- Schedule meals and sit-down snacks for growing children to prevent all day grazing on unhealthy choices.
- Add more color to your meals. Eat a rainbow by including a wide variety of fruits and vegetables at every meal and be sure they fill up half your plate.
- When eating out choose menu items with vegetables and fruit and try splitting meals between two or more people. Most restaurant portions are too large.
- Plant a vegetable(s) in a pot or garden bed and nurture it together. When it is time to harvest, share the fruits of your labor together. Gardening encourages an interest in fruits and vegetables.
- Take a walk after dinner together. Consider wearing pedometers or putting a star on a calendar after every walk.
- Keep the television off during mealtimes. Talk about your day, an upcoming event or anything positive and give everyone a chance to contribute to the conversation.

— *Catherine Stafford  
Child Health and Nutrition Manager, CocoKids*



## Polish Potato Pancakes

Russet potatoes, large.....	2
Onion.....	1/4 cup
Egg.....	1
Flour .....	1 Tbsp
Salt .....	1/2 tsp
Pepper.....	to taste
Oil, divided, for pan frying.....	3 Tbsp

1. Place peeled and chopped potatoes and onion into a food processor for about 30 seconds, or grate by hand.
2. Place potatoes and onions in a fine-mesh strainer over a bowl and let drain for about 5 minutes. Carefully pour off the drained liquid but keep the white starch that's settled on the bottom.
3. To the starch, stir in the drained potato mixture, egg, flour, salt and pepper.
4. In a cast iron skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of oil over medium heat. Spoon 1/4 cup mounds into pan, flattening each one to an even thickness. Cook about 3 minutes per side, adding 1 tablespoon oil as needed.

Serve with applesauce and sour cream.

Yield: 4 servings (8 pancakes)

Meets requirement for vegetable

— jennycancook.com

## Hoppin' John

Black-eyed peas, dry .....	1 pound
Ham hocks.....	1 pound
Onion, diced.....	1
Celery, diced.....	2 stalks
Red pepper flakes, crushed .....	1/2 tsp
Salt .....	to taste
Pepper .....	to taste
Water.....	5 cups
White long grain rice, enriched .....	1 1/2 cups

1. Rinse black-eyed peas. In a large pot place the peas, ham hocks, onion, red pepper flakes, salt and pepper. Add water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook for 1 1/2 hours.
2. Remove ham hock and cut meat into pieces. Return meat to pot. Stir in the rice, cover and cook until rice is tender, 20–25 minutes. Season to taste, sprinkle with shredded smoked cheddar cheese if desired.

Yield: 5 servings

Meets requirement for meat/meat alternate and grains

— Allrecipes.com

Food **Q.** What is an angry polar bear's favorite food?  
Funny **A.** Brr Grr!



## Fuel & Fitness

### SNOWMAN SNACKS

No snow? No problem!

Children will enjoy making snowmen from healthy foods and then gobbling them up for a healthy activity/snack. Feel free to use what you have; eyes could be made from blueberries or dried cranberries. Add a scarf with some slivered bell pepper or use half a grape or strawberry to make a fun hat.



1 Set out a plate of thick banana slices, thin pretzel sticks, raisins and small carrot chunks. Let children get creative and design their own snowmen from the ingredients available.

2 Give each child round crackers or a rice cake, soft cream cheese, halved black olives and baby carrots. Help children spread the cream cheese as needed and let them create their very own snowmen to eat.



Child Health & Nutrition Program  
1035 Detroit Avenue, Suite 200  
Concord, CA 94518  
(925) 676-6117 (Fax) 676-5829

Program Director ..... Paula James  
Graphic Designer ..... Abe Cruz  
Co-Editor ..... Donna Green  
Manager, Co-Editor ..... Catherine Stafford  
CHILD HEALTH & NUTRITION SPECIALISTS  
Co-Editor ..... Rachel O'Neal  
..... Alejandra Marín Santos  
..... Cecilia Sequeira  
..... Vicki Leslie  
..... Xiuling Goble