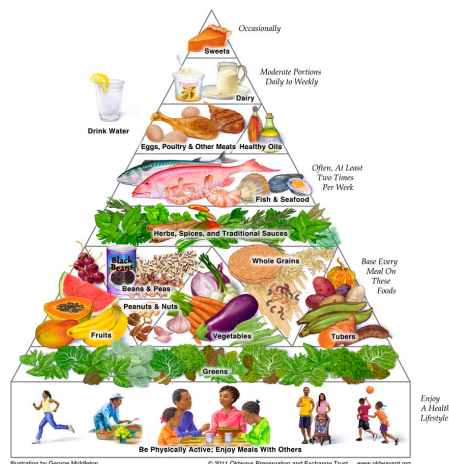


## African Heritage Diet Pyramid



The African Heritage Diet Pyramid is a guide to the healthy traditional diets of African American ancestors. Base your meals mostly on a variety of foods nearest the base of the pyramid.

- ♦ **Go For Greens.** Greens like **spinach, collards, mustards** and **turnip greens** are a big part of African heritage cuisine; they help keep your blood, liver, and kidneys in top health. Cook them lightly to retain all of their extraordinary nutrients!
- ♦ Every day, enjoy **vegetables, fruits**, mostly **whole grains** and cereals, **beans, herbs and spices, peanuts and nuts**, and healthy **tubers** like **sweet potatoes**. These are the core African Heritage foods to shop for, prepare, and eat most often.
- ♦ **Tuna, mackerel**, and **salmon** are rich in heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. **Sardines** and other small, bony fish are rich sources of **calcium** and **vitamin D**. Enjoy them grilled, broiled, or lightly pan cooked in water and a tiny bit of oil.
- ♦ Use small amounts of **healthy oils**, like sesame or olive oil for dressings, and canola, red palm oil, or extra virgin coconut oil for cooking.
- ♦ Eat **eggs, poultry** and other meats moderately, in **small portions**, or use as **garnishes** for other dishes.
- ♦ Consume **dairy** in **small portions**, and if you are lactose intolerant, enjoy other **calcium-rich foods** like **greens, beans, and almonds**.
- ♦ **Sweets**, at the top of the pyramid, are foods to **eat less often**, limiting them to once a week or at special meals.
- ♦ Drink **plenty of water** throughout the day. If you drink alcohol, limit it to one glass per day for women, two for men.

## Health Through Heritage

The diseases we know today, like diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and obesity, were much less common with traditional diets in earlier times. Scientific studies show that conditions like these skyrocket as traditional diets are left behind.

The African Heritage Diet Pyramid is based on scientific research that shows eating like your ancestors can help:

- ♦ Lower your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke
- ♦ Avoid or help treat diabetes
- ♦ Fight certain cancers and many chronic diseases
- ♦ Reduce asthma, glaucoma, and kidney disease
- ♦ Nurture healthy babies
- ♦ Achieve a healthy weight and avoid obesity
- ♦ Reduce depression
- ♦ And more!

## Easy African Heritage Recipes

Use healthy African heritage foods to style any meal:

- ♦ Hearty Pumpkin or Squash Soup
- ♦ Delicious Rice and Bean Medleys
- ♦ Stewed Tomatoes and Okra
- ♦ Healthy Potato Salad and Corn Bread
- ♦ Plus dozens more!



To find recipes and details on the latest scientific studies for enjoying health through heritage, visit the African Heritage section of the Oldways website at:

[www.oldwayspt.org](http://www.oldwayspt.org)



HEALTH THROUGH HERITAGE  
266 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02116 USA  
617-421-5500

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# Welcome to the African Heritage Diet

*Claiming Your Health  
by Claiming Your History*



*Red Tomatoes*, 1992, Oil on Canvas, 16" x 10" © Jonathan Green

*Diabetes is not part of your heritage.  
Neither is heart disease.*

What is in your heritage is a healthy heart,  
a strong body, extraordinary energy, vibrant  
and delicious foods, and a long, healthy life.

*You have the power to claim all of this,  
using heritage as your guide.*

Brought to you by



## Your Healthy Heritage

The ancestors of African Americans brought many wonderful food traditions to parts of the Caribbean, South America, and the southern states of the U.S. Maybe these were your great, great, great grandparents.

Over the generations, many of these food traditions have been lost, with the influences of modern, American eating habits. And health has suffered because of this loss.

The African Heritage Diet is a way of eating based on the healthy food traditions of people with African roots. This healthy way of eating is powerfully nutritious and delicious, and naturally meets the guidelines that health professionals promote today.



## Healthy Heritage Living

Good health is not just about food. Good Health = healthy eating + healthy living. Healthy living doesn't just mean joining a gym. Rather, find simple and fun ways to fit physical activity in every day—a walk alone or with family, gardening, or dancing. Consider adding creativity to your life through art and music, writing, cooking or other fulfilling hobbies. Family meals and family time, plus community activities add to well-being. Also, get plenty of sleep every night.

In other words, activate your body, mind, and heart each day to keep your body working at its best.

## 10 Steps For Your Health Through Heritage



**1. Boost Flavor With Spice.** Curries, peppers, coconut, fresh herbs, garlic, onions, fresh lemon, and all spices are low-sodium ways to add incredible flavors to grains, beans, vegetables, and seafood. Try a different herb every week for a touch of African heritage.



**2. Make Vegetables the Star of Your Plate.** Steamed, sautéed, roasted, grilled or raw, enjoy veggies like okra, cabbage, green beans, or eggplant in larger portions than the other parts of your meal. If you're grabbing seconds, go for the veggies!

**3. Change the Way You Think About Meat.** Use lean, healthy meats in smaller amounts for flavor. Replace ham-hocks with smoked turkey or fish, or pile on the herbs and spices instead! With the zesty flavors of African heritage, you may not even notice the meat's not there. We've got plenty of vegetarian recipes and a guide to help you on the Oldways website.



**4. Make Rice & Beans Your New Staple.** Fiber-filled Rice-and-Beans is a favorite meal all over the world. Add African heritage whole grains like millet, sorghum and teff to your soups, or partner them with peas.

**5. Mashies & Medleys.** Bake or boil sweet potatoes, yams and potatoes or mash them with eggplants, beans, grains, onions and seasonings. One-Pot Cooking lets flavors sing together! Let okra, corn and tomatoes collide in a "Mix Up," or add extra color and flavor to your greens with purple cabbage and leeks.

**6. Find Real Foods Everywhere.** At a corner store, buy peanuts or fruit; at a lunch buffet, load up your plate with salad, veggies, fruit, and beans. Look to African heritage whole foods, in their natural state, to crowd out processed and packaged "convenience foods."



**7. Family Support & Food Fellowship.** Food is meant to be shared, and so is good health. Think of your dinner table as a "healing table," a place where people come to share beautiful, fresh foods and reinforce a long, happy and healthy life.

**8. Make Room for Celebration Foods.** We all have special foods that have always been in our families. Some of these foods may fall outside the guidelines of the African Heritage Pyramid. Save these foods of meaning and memory for special occasions. Enjoy them infrequently, but when you do have them, enjoy them whole-heartedly!



**9. Jazz Up Fruits for Dessert.** Fresh or frozen fruits like melons, peaches, berries, and mangos—plain or sprinkled with chopped nuts or coconut—add a sweet taste of satisfaction at the end of a meal.

**10. Drink to Your Health.** A splash of flavor can make water your go-to drink. Add crushed fruits or small amounts of 100% fruit juice to water or sparkling water to make refreshing "ades" (like lemonade!). Iced tea with a little honey is another refreshing alternative to soda and other highly sugared drinks.

