

# Food Guide for South Asians



## *Healthy Eating Guide and Food Log*

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### Developed in collaboration with:

Northwestern University Feinberg  
School of Medicine



Asian Human Services Family Health Center



**ASIAN HUMAN SERVICES**  
Helping Asian, Immigrants, & Underserved Communities

# Contents

Acknowledgement	3
Food Guide	4
Grains	5
Fruits and Vegetables	10
Fats and Oils	13
Proteins	17
Sodium & Cholesterol	20
Fiber & Sugars	22
Nutrition label	23
Healthy Plate	24
Recipes	27
Healthy Snacks	31
Food Log	32
Resources	38

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# Food Guide

This book has two parts – **Food Guide** and **Food Log**. **Please refer to both the parts.**

*Food Guide is a basic resource for you to eat healthy.*

*Food Log is to help you track your eating habits with your provider.*

These are general recommendations to eat healthy. Based on your health condition, whether hypertension, type 2 diabetes mellitus, borderline diabetes, high cholesterol, history of heart attack or stroke, or even just high BMI, please talk to your provider (doctor, dietitian, health educator) on how best to use this guide for your health condition.

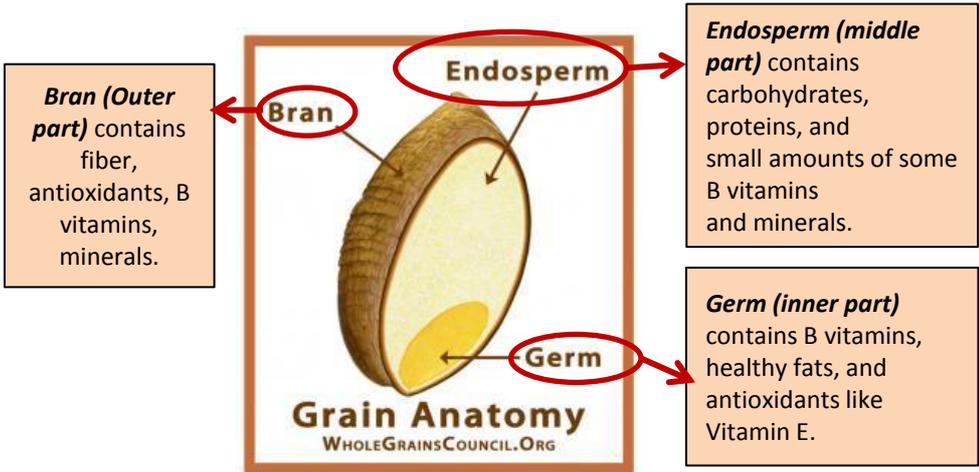
**At least try it. If you like it, switch to it.**

# Grains

Grains can be **WHOLE GRAINS** or **REFINED GRAINS**

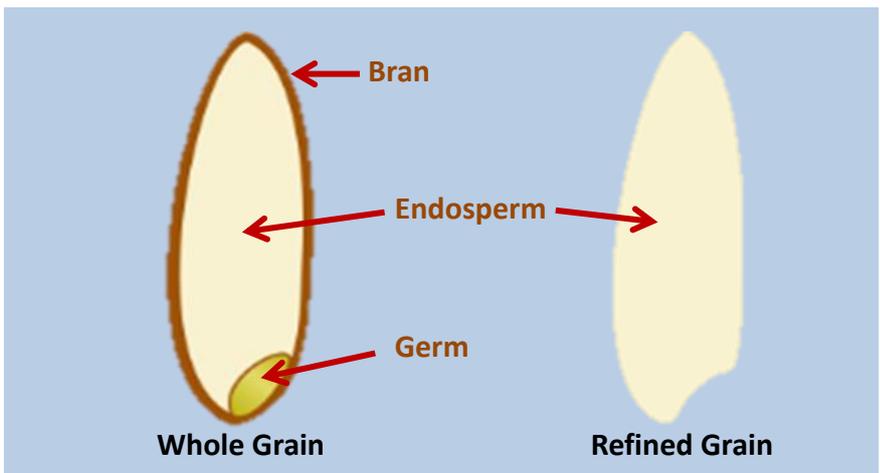
**WHOLE GRAINS** contain the entire grain kernel - the bran, germ, & endosperm (shown below).

*Some examples: brown rice, whole wheat breads, whole wheat naan, whole wheat pita bread, whole wheat roti/chapathi, and oats.*



**REFINED GRAINS** are processed to remove the bran and germ. Certain B vitamins and iron are added back after processing but the dietary fiber is not added back to refined grains.

*Some examples: white rice, and white breads (naan, pita bread).*



## Whole grains



Brown rice



Whole wheat bread



Whole wheat roti

**Some Other Whole Grains:**  
Oats, any bread  
(naan/pita/tortilla) that is  
made of 100% whole grains.

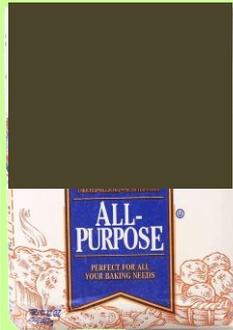
## Refined grains



White rice



White bread



Naan bread

**Some Other Refined Grains:**  
Pita bread, tortilla, sooji  
(cream of wheat).

## One serving of grains



One slice of bread



½ cup of cooked rice



One 7 inch roti

In one day, make at least half of your grains  
whole grains

# USE a Variety of Whole Grains

## Brown Rice



Brown rice kichdi

## Oats



Steel cut oats



Rolled oats



Oats Dosa

## Quinoa



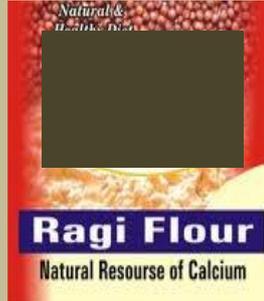
Quinoa



Quinoa upma

Dalia or broken wheat and whole barley can also be used to make kichdi or upma

## Whole grain flours



Jowar Rotis



Bajri Rotis

### TIPS to Increase Whole Grains

- Use variety of whole grain flours for your rotis
- Enjoy brown rice as kichdi, or biryani, or pulao
- Start by replacing white rice with brown rice for at least two times a week
- Buy bread that says 100% whole wheat
- Enjoy snacks that are made of whole grains

# Tips to Increase Whole Grains in Diet

Refined grains

Whole grains

## TRY BROWN RICE instead of WHITE RICE



For BIRYANI, PULAO,  
KICHDHI, Or plain with DHAL

## ROTI

Maida/  
All  
Purpose  
Flour



Try using bajra,  
ragi, jowar,  
100% wheat  
atta



## UPMA



Barley  
Dalia  
Brown Rice  
Oats  
Quinoa

To start off – try mixing equal parts of brown rice with white rice

# Fruits & Vegetables



Eat 5-7 servings of fruits and vegetables a day

## 1 serving



Uncooked vegetables



Cooked vegetables



Fruits



Uncooked leafy greens



Apple – size of tennis ball

## Tips to increase vegetable intake

- Try adding spinach (palak) to your kichdi in the last 5 minutes of cooking.
- Add vegetables like carrots, spinach, peas into meat curries.
- Add a bag of frozen vegetables to kichdi or upma.
- Enjoy raw vegetables like baby spinach, bell peppers (capsicum), cauliflower (gobi) in raw form.

## Use a Variety of Vegetables

The best way to enjoy the benefits is eating both raw and cooked vegetables

Enjoy raw vegetables in salads or as snack

Try some raw spinach



Add some color to your salad



Include some sprouted mung beans or rajma in your salad



Try to enjoy salads as meals. Add fruits and nuts



Mung salad with greens, fruits, and nuts



Chickpea salad

## Cooking vegetables

- Frying vegetables in a lot of oil can be unhealthy.
- Overcooking (or making vegetables very soft and mushy) can lead to loss of nutrients.
- Try not to fry vegetables in oil.

## Best ways of cooking vegetables



Steam vegetables



Microwave vegetables



In the pressure cooker



On the stove with less oil or  
with some water

# Fats & Oils

Fat is an important nutrient that our body needs but having too much fat can lead to weight gain and health problems. Fats are present in many foods. There are three types of fats.

**Three types of fats and its effect on cholesterol:**

- 1. Saturated fats – raises LDL (bad) cholesterol.**
- 2. Trans fats – raises LDL (bad) cholesterol and lowers HDL (good) cholesterol.**
- 3. Unsaturated fats – may decrease LDL (bad) cholesterol as well as maintain HDL (good) cholesterol.**

## Limit Intake of foods high in Saturated Fat



**Foods high in saturated fat: GHEE, MILK, PANEER, BUTTER, COCONUT OIL, PALM OIL, MEATS**

# AVOID foods that contain Trans Fat



Also known as **PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED OIL** (*Vanaspati*), Vegetable ghee or vegetable shortening, foods prepared with them, such as, samosas, puffs, and street sweets like jalebi and jamun.

## Choose foods that provide Unsaturated Fat (Good Fat) but eat in moderation



**OILS** – corn, sunflower, safflower, olive, canola



**FISHES** like sardines, salmon, mackerel



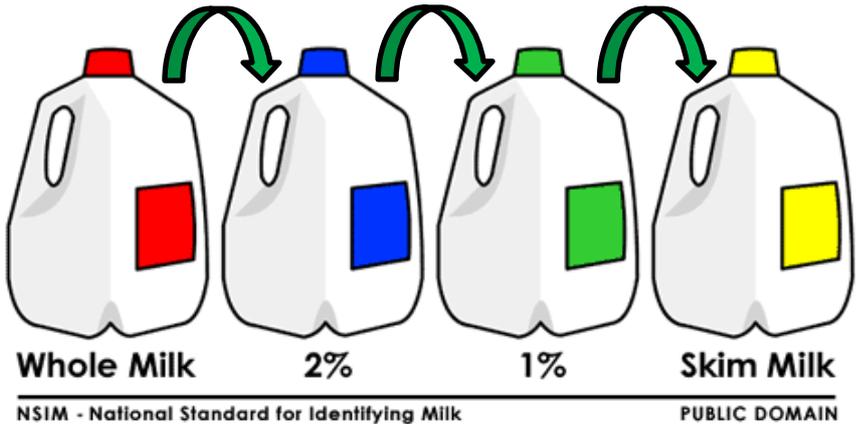
**NUTS & SEEDS** like walnuts, almonds, peanuts, sunflower seeds, flax seed



**Avocado**

# TIPS to reduce fat intake and eat healthy fat

- If you are drinking whole milk (full fat), try using 2% or 1% milk



- Try low-fat yogurt and low-fat paneer for a change
- Try replacing ghee and butter with vegetable oil, such as, corn, sun flower, olive oil.



Remember that very small amounts of oils are recommended

# TIPS to reduce fat intake and eat healthy fat

**Eat less  
fried foods**



**Steaming**



**Try**

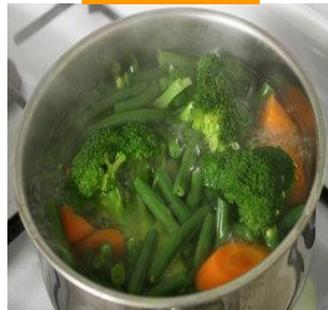
**Baking**



**Broiling**



**Boiling**



**Remember:** Choose foods that provide good fats (unsaturated fats) and eat in moderation.

# Proteins – Meats and Legumes

**Non-vegetarian**



**Vegetarian**

Beans, Peas, Dals  
Nuts & Seeds



**Try to include a variety of proteins in your diet.**

**Eat more of vegetarian protein.**

# USE

Use a variety of fish



Salmon



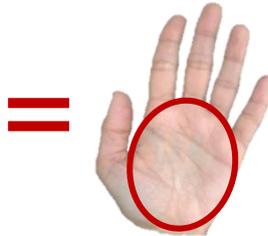
Mackerel



Sardines

**Eat at least 2 servings of 3.5 ounces of fish a week**

**One serving of 3.5 ounces of fish (size of your palm)**



**Fish and Nuts are good for your Heart**

**Include some unsalted nuts**



**One serving is one cupped hand**

**Have 4 servings of nuts & seeds a week**

**Use Legumes & Dhals**



**A serving of cooked beans is what fits your one hand**

**Eat more of vegetarian protein foods than meat**

## Use lean meats

- Skinless chicken breast
- For beef – round steaks and roasts, top loin, top sirloin, and chuck shoulder and arm roasts, choose 90% or 95% lean Keema

## Limit fried foods and preparation with ghee or added fat



Fried meat



Try to limit too much oil and ghee while cooking – too much will float on top.

## Healthy ways of eating meat



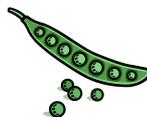
**Remove the skin**



**Trim fat**

- Instead of frying, bake, boil, or cook on stove top.
- Remove excess fat that floats on top.
- Whatever meat (chicken, mutton, beef, or fish) you like, remember to eat the right amount.
- Try adding fish to your diet two times a week.

## Remember to eat different kinds of proteins, especially beans and dhals



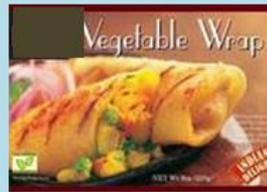
Serious Eats. Knife skills: How to debone a chicken thigh by J.Kenji Lopez-Alt  
<http://www.serious-eats.com/2014/04/knife-skills-how-to-debone-a-chicken-thigh.html>  
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# SODIUM

Limit sodium consumption

Where does sodium in our food come from?

Mainly from processed and prepared foods  
(packaged, frozen food, restaurants)



In the Kitchen and at the table

- cooking, masala packets, adding extra salt while eating



## Tips to reduce your sodium intake

\*Limit the use of processed, packaged, frozen and restaurant foods



\*Do not use the salt shaker at the table.



\*Limit the use of packaged spice mixes  
Try making homemade spices.

\*Think fresh! Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables are low in sodium.



## CHOLESTEROL

**Cholesterol** is an important substance that our body needs.

Cholesterol comes from two sources: **our body and food.**

Cholesterol is found only in animal food, such as meat, fish, shrimp, milk, eggs, paneer, and yogurt.

Our body produces more cholesterol when we eat a lot of foods high in saturated and trans fats.

### Remember:

- **Limit intake of foods high in SATURATED FAT** (ghee, milk, paneer, butter, palm oil, coconut oil, meats).
- **Avoid foods that contain TRANS FAT** (vegetable ghee, vegetable shortening).
- **Eat in moderation foods that contain UNSATURATED FAT** (fish, avocado, nuts, corn oil, sunflower oil).

(Refer pages 14-17)

# Fiber

***Fiber is found in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, dals/lentils, nuts and seeds.***



## **Benefits of Dietary Fiber:**

- Helps reduce blood cholesterol and lowers the risk of heart disease.
- Provides feeling of fullness and so may help with weight management.
- Promotes regularity and reduces constipation.

# Sugars

- Sugars are present naturally in food like fruits, vegetables, grains, and milk. Sugars can also be added to foods such as sweetened drinks, sweetened yogurt, and desserts.
- Too much sugar can lead to extra weight gain.

## **How to avoid extra sugar?**

**Reduce foods that taste very sweet.**



**Eat foods high in fiber like fruits, vegetables and whole grain products.**



# Nutrition label

**Step 1:** Look at the Serving Size

**Step 2:** Look at the fat and sodium

**Step 3:** Choose foods with low % Daily Value of fat and sodium

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1 oz. (28g/About 21 pieces)	
Servings Per Container About 2	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 170	Calories from Fat 110
	<b>% Daily Value*</b>
<b>Total Fat</b> 11g	<b>17%</b>
Saturated Fat 1.5g	<b>8%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 250mg	<b>10%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 14g	<b>5%</b>
Dietary Fiber less than 1g	<b>2%</b>
Sugars 0g	
<b>Protein</b> 2g	
Vitamin A 2%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	Iron 4%

The % DV can help you determine if a food is high or low in a nutrient - 5% or less is low, 20% or more is high.  
**Choose foods with low %DV of fat, saturated fat and sodium.**

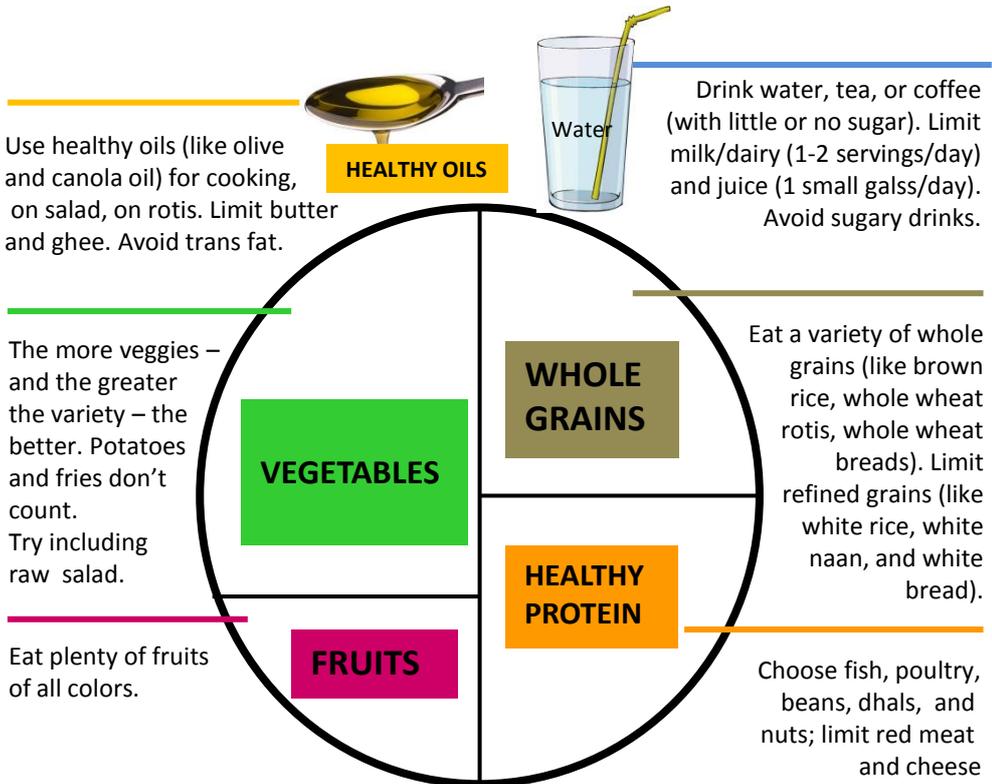


<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size ½ cup (40g)	
Serving Per Container 7	
Amount per Serving :	
<b>Calories</b> 250	Calories from Fat 180
	<b>% Daily Values*</b>
<b>Total Fat</b> 20.0 g	<b>31%</b>
Saturated Fat 14.0 g	<b>70%</b>
Trans Fat 0.0 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0.0 mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 350.0 mg	<b>15%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 13.0 g	<b>4%</b>
Dietary Fibre 3.0 g	<b>12%</b>

# Build a Healthy Plate for One Meal

*Below healthy plate is a 7 inch diameter plate*

1. Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruit. Try adding raw salad.
2. Fill one-fourth of your plate with whole grains.
3. Fill the other one-fourth with healthy proteins (dhals, or channa, or Chicken without skin, or fish)
4. Use healthy oils. Limit butter and ghee.
5. Drink plenty of water. Avoid drinks that are very sweet.

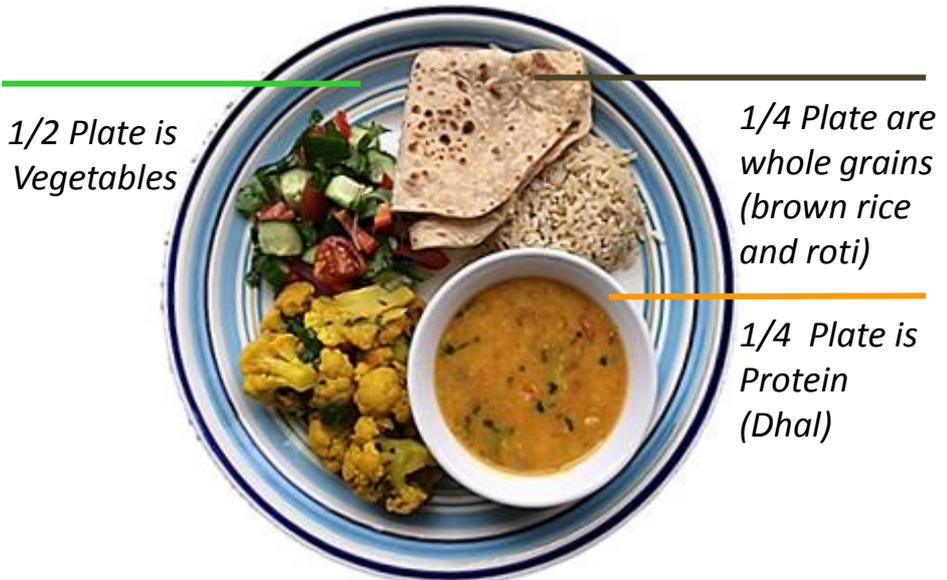


*Above plate is adapted from Harvard's Healthy Eating Plate; Original is on the last page.*

## Not Balanced vegetarian plate for One Meal



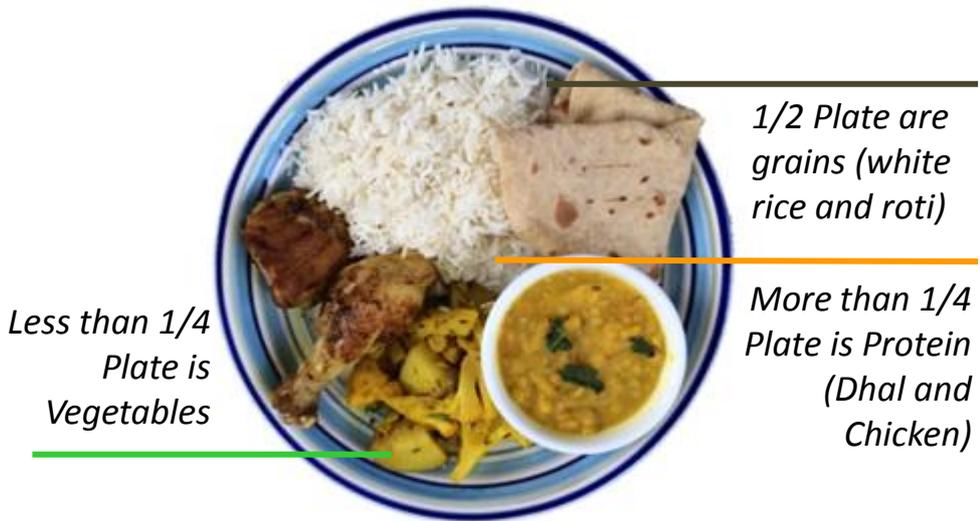
## Healthy and balanced vegetarian plate for One Meal



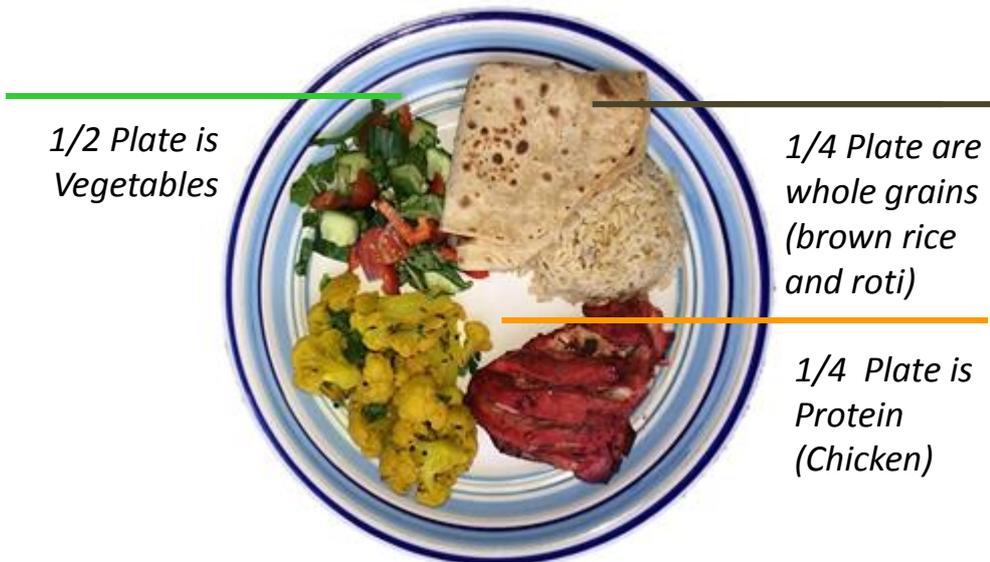
**Try to make half of your grains whole grains.  
Try to include raw salad.**

**If you still feel hungry,  
try adding fruits or low-fat yogurt (dahi).**

## Not Balanced non-vegetarian plate for One Meal



## Healthy and balanced non-vegetarian plate for One Meal



**Eat different kinds of protein. Include fish two times a week.  
Try to make half of your grains whole grains.  
Try to include raw salad.**

**If you still feel hungry,  
try adding fruits or low-fat yogurt (dahi).**

# Recipe modifications

## Palak Paneer

### Traditional



### Healthier



### Instead of

Ghee  
Whole milk  
Paneer  
Full fat cream

### Try

Reduced salt  
Replace ghee with vegetable oil  
Low-fat milk and paneer, or TOFU  
Low-fat cream

- As above, try replacing ghee and butter with olive oil or vegetable oil in other dishes like paneer butter masala, butter chicken, and other curries.
- Try to use less salt.
- Season with coriander and herbs on top for flavor instead of using packaged spice mixes

# Kebabs

## Traditional



## Healthier



Salt



Salt

## Instead of

Beef  
Ghee  
Too much salt



## Try

- Try lean meat, lean cuts of beef, or even chicken breast without skin.
- Try vegetable oil instead of ghee.
- Lower the amount of salt.
- Try making masala at home instead of ready packets.

- If you eat fish, try to include it in your diet two times a week.
- Try using healthier meats by cutting fat and removing skin.
- Take off excess fat from curries.
- Instead of deep frying, try pan frying with little oil.

# Barley Upma recipe

For about 20 people

## INGREDIENTS

4 cups uncooked Barley  
4 onions  
4 tomatoes  
4 carrots  
4 bell peppers  
2 tbsp canola oil  
4 tsp mustard seeds  
4 tsp urad dal  
Asafoetida  
Green chilies (finely cut  
without the seeds)  
Curry leaves  
Coriander leaves  
Lemons  
Salt to taste



## PREPARATION

1. Soak the barley the night before (for 8 to 10 hours)
  2. Cook the barley in boiling water for 15 minutes or in the pressure cooker
  3. Cut all the vegetables finely
  4. In a pan, heat oil and add mustard seeds, urad dal, chilies
  5. When the mustard seeds splutters add onions, bell peppers, carrots, and tomatoes and fry for a few minutes
  6. Add the cooked barley
  7. Add salt to taste and squeeze a lemon in it and cook it for another 5 minutes with the lid closed.
- Garnish with curry leaves and coriander leaves

Adapted from: <http://veenasvegnation.blogspot.com/2010/08/barley-upma.html>

# Salad Recipe

Makes around 8 servings

**Serving size: about 2 cups**

## Ingredients:

### *Salad*

- 2 cups cooked chickpeas
- 2 5 ounce bags of mixed salad greens
- 2 tomatoes, diced
- 2 cucumbers, diced
- 2 carrots, grated
- ½ bunch fresh cilantro, finely chopped
- 2 green chilies, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 pomegranate

### *Dressing*

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons mustard seed
- 2 tablespoons cumin seed
- 1 dried curry leaf
- 1 tablespoon asafetida

## Dressing preparation:

- Put olive oil in a large frying pan with mustard seeds, cumin seeds, asafetida, and dried curry leaf. Turn the heat up to medium and wait for the seeds to start sizzling.
- When the mustard seeds begin to pop, pour the oil and seeds in a separate bowl.
- Add salt and toss salad ingredients and oil together.

**Include a colorful and tasty salad at meal times**

# Healthy snack ideas

Traditional snacks	Healthy snacks
Bhel Puri	<b>Plain puffed rice</b> (mamra, moori, pori)
Corn pakora	<b>Roasted corn on the cob</b>
Potato vada or samosa	<b>Boiled potato chat or tikki</b>
Bajjia (deep fried gram flour) Dal vada	- <b>Green gram or chickpea chaat</b> - <b>Fresh sprouted mung beans</b> - <b>Dhokla</b>
Fish fry, chicken nuggets, cutlets	<b>Grilled tandoori fish, chicken or lamb kebabs or tikka</b>
Salted peanuts with fried chevda	<b>Roasted unsalted nuts with raw tomatoes and onions</b>
Jamun, Jalebi, Laddus	- <b>Fresh fruit salad</b> - <b>Fruit chaat</b> - <b>Fresh whole fruit</b>

# Food Log

Remember to use the food logs in the next pages to record the types of food and the amount of food that you eat to make small changes in your eating habits.

***Fill your intake for a whole week before your next visit with your provider. Show the filled portion to your provider.***

Try to include the time of eating and hunger levels. It doesn't have to be exact.

You can refer to this sample entry.

Meals	Monday
Breakfast	<i>9AM - 2 toasts - whole wheat bread and little butter (hungry)</i>
Snack	<i>11:30AM - 1 cup tea with 2% milk and sugar (not very hungry)</i>
Lunch	<i>1:30PM - 1 fist white rice with 1 cup dhal and green bean sabji (hungry)</i>
Snack	<i>5PM - 2 pieces of rusk (little hungry)</i>
Dinner	<i>7:30PM - 2 rotis with little ghee and channa masala with raw onions (little hungry)</i>

**Fill one week's food intake before you see your doctor**

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Snack							
Lunch							
Snack							
Dinner							

**Fill one week's food intake before you see your doctor**

Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Snack							
Lunch							
Snack							
Dinner							

**Fill one week's food intake before you see your doctor**

Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Snack							
Lunch							
Snack							
Dinner							

**Fill one week's food intake before you see your doctor**

Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Snack							
Lunch							
Snack							
Dinner							

**Fill one week's food intake before you see your doctor**

Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

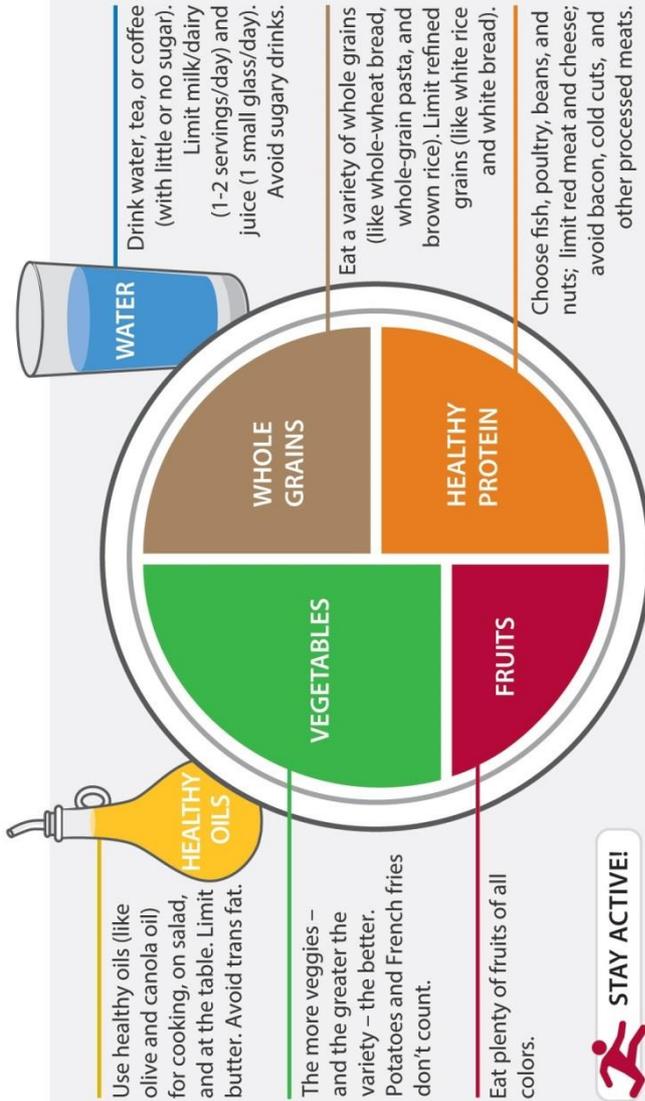
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Snack							
Lunch							
Snack							
Dinner							

## Resources for providers and patients for more information:

- Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, Patient Education Tools:  
<http://cch.northwestern.edu/edtools/heartdisease.htm>
- Heart & Stroke Foundation – Canada, South Asian Resources.  
[http://www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.iKlQLcMWJtE/b.3479045/k.6516/South Asian Resources.htm](http://www.heartandstroke.com/site/c.iKlQLcMWJtE/b.3479045/k.6516/South_Asian_Resources.htm)
- American Diabetes Association, Food and Fitness  
<http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/>
- **Healthy eating, Pakistani Cuisine:**  
[http://www.heartandstroke.com/atf/cf/%7B99452d8b-e7f1-4bd6-a57d-b136ce6c95bf%7D/314\\_PAKISTANI\\_FACTSHEET\\_SINGLE.PDF](http://www.heartandstroke.com/atf/cf/%7B99452d8b-e7f1-4bd6-a57d-b136ce6c95bf%7D/314_PAKISTANI_FACTSHEET_SINGLE.PDF)
- **Healthy eating, Gujrati Cuisine:**  
[http://www.heartandstroke.com/atf/cf/%7B99452d8b-e7f1-4bd6-a57d-b136ce6c95bf%7D/314\\_GUJARATI\\_FACTSHEET\\_SINGLE.PDF](http://www.heartandstroke.com/atf/cf/%7B99452d8b-e7f1-4bd6-a57d-b136ce6c95bf%7D/314_GUJARATI_FACTSHEET_SINGLE.PDF)
- **Healthy eating, North Indian Cuisine:**  
[http://www.heartandstroke.com/atf/cf/%7B99452d8b-e7f1-4bd6-a57d-b136ce6c95bf%7D/314\\_NORTHINDIANARTICLE\\_SINGLE.PDF](http://www.heartandstroke.com/atf/cf/%7B99452d8b-e7f1-4bd6-a57d-b136ce6c95bf%7D/314_NORTHINDIANARTICLE_SINGLE.PDF)
- **Healthy eating, South Indian Cuisine:**  
[http://www.heartandstroke.com/atf/cf/%7B99452d8b-e7f1-4bd6-a57d-b136ce6c95bf%7D/314\\_SOUTHINDIAN\\_FACTSHEET\\_SINGLE.PDF](http://www.heartandstroke.com/atf/cf/%7B99452d8b-e7f1-4bd6-a57d-b136ce6c95bf%7D/314_SOUTHINDIAN_FACTSHEET_SINGLE.PDF)

# Food Guide for South Asians

## HEALTHY EATING PLATE



Harvard School of Public Health  
The Nutrition Source  
[www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource)

Harvard Medical School  
Harvard Health Publications  
[www.health.harvard.edu](http://www.health.harvard.edu)

**Remember, try it slowly, by changing one thing at a time**

If you have any suggestions, please let us know.  
Contact email – [manasijayaprakash@gmail.com](mailto:manasijayaprakash@gmail.com)