



Celebrate a World of Flavors

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"Celebrate a World of Flavors" is this year's National Nutrition Month theme. Food is used to celebrate holidays, rituals, and family gatherings throughout the world. Our culture often determines what, when, and how we eat for special occasions- and even daily meals. These traditions connect us to our history, locale, one another, and ultimately our health. We can broaden our view of the world by celebrating cultural heritage and embracing global cuisines. In the process, our diets can be diversified and enhanced.

There are many ways to experiment with global cuisine. Here are some ideas to introduce a whole new range of authentic flavors and foods into your day, meals, and life.

Have you ever thought about enrolling in a cooking class, either virtually or in-person? This website provides both options: <https://www.cozymeal.com/>. Leave it to Amazon to provide a virtual course on how to make sushi and miso soup: [Amazon.com: Sushi 101: learn to prepare sushi & miso soup with experts in Japan: Amazon Explore \(virtual\)](#). Both of these experiences include a small fee. Also, your local recreation department or community center might offer some culinary classes. Many are starting to offer onsite programs for the spring.

Cruising the cookbook isles in a bookstore or online is very fun. But you can also visit your local library and speak with the reference librarian for cookbook ideas. Here are some that may interest you: [The New Book of Middle Eastern Food](#) by Claudia Roden, [The Breath of a Wok](#) by Grace Young, and Rick Bayless's [Mexican Kitchen](#).

Another way to explore the world's cuisine is to try a familiar ingredient in a new way. Familiar rice and beans can be prepared in a variety of ways. Google any of these dishes and try something new: Indian dal and basmati rice, West African jollof rice with black-eyed peas, Jamaican coconut rice with azuki beans, Mexican rice with black beans and corn, and South Carolina's Hoppin' John. You may ask why is this dish called Hoppin' John? Here's a bit of Americana:

"There are many tales or legends that explain how Hoppin' John got its name: It was the custom for children to gather in the dining room as the dish was brought forth and hop around the table before sitting down to eat. A man named John came "a-hoppin" when his wife took the dish from the stove."

[Hoppin' John Recipe and History - What's Cooking America](#)

During the month of March go on a field trip and search out ethnic markets for inspiration.

Use this search tool to find the type of cuisine you are interested in that is closest to you: [Ethnic Food Store Near Me \(near-me. store\)](#). Or pick out a new recipe to try. Go to [Allrecipes | Food, friends, and recipe inspiration](#), for recipe ideas. Once on the site, click on the explore button (on the left), scroll down to "world cuisine" which includes the following options: Chinese, German, Indian, Japanese, Russian, Thai, Filipino, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Mexican, & Global (Ethiopian).

There are so many benefits to eating a variety of foods and flavors. If you eat the same food every day, you could be missing out on nutrients that different foods provide. The same idea pertains to the color of your food too. Each color provides a unique nutritional profile. By eating a variety of colors &/or adding a new color variation into your meals, you will be fortifying your diet. If you're not sure where to start, consult with a dietitian. Celebrating cultural heritage, traditions, and recipes from all over the world is a tasty way to nourish ourselves, learn about one another and find appreciation in our diversity. As Deborah Cater once said, "You have to taste a culture to understand it".