

## Survival Topic #6: Food and Nutrition

### Questions to Ask:

What kinds of foods do you usually like to eat?  
What kinds of foods are your children getting in school?  
Can you find the fruits and vegetables you like?  
Where do you shop for food?  
What foods did you used to have that you don't have now?  
What is a dish that is special to you and your traditions?

### Topics to Share:

Discuss your favorite kinds of food or the kinds of food your family makes. What do you normally eat?

### English Language Learner Tips:

Cooking lessons are also language lessons! You can show them how to make an American dish they'd like to try. You can teach your mentees about measurements used in cooking and teach the vocabulary for the foods in your recipe. Help them understand conversions from the metric to the imperial measuring system. You can ask them to teach you how to cook something and expand that idea to have them write out the recipe for you.

Flashcards for a wide variety of foods can be used to practice and memorize the names of foods.

Use coupons and advertisements to do some comparison-shopping. Ask them questions and have them ask questions. "How much is the corn at Jewel? How much is it at Mariano's?"

Role-play going to the supermarket and asking for various foods. They will need to know various weights and how to handle money.

Bring play money to practice and pictures clipped from magazines. Take your mentees to a local supermarket to practice!

### Other Notes:

Family meals and traditional food are at the heart of every culture. Long after other cultural traditions are gone, the food remains as an important part of ethnic identity. Food is a great way to share culture!

Some mentors invite their mentees to eat at their home or to meet them at an inexpensive restaurant. Often, mentees invite mentors to share meals in their homes.

Many refugees come from a tradition of eating much healthier foods than many Americans, but you can help some families stay on track by discussing the importance of nutrition and balanced diets. Americans eat a lot of milk products, which can be unusual for your mentee.

The range of choices in an average American grocery store often astounds refugees. Even people from westernized cultures are confused by the decisions they have to make. Since they don't recognize much of the food, they may make ill-informed food choices. What they are seeing on TV might inordinately affect their choices. Refugees who cannot read well might choose to buy the highest price brands because of the pictures on the packages. They may not know about how to save money through coupons or store promotions.

If mentees are interested in gardening, mentors can encourage this by helping them to find the right equipment and a place to garden if they have no yard. Many urban areas have community plots for gardening.