

Foods Around the World

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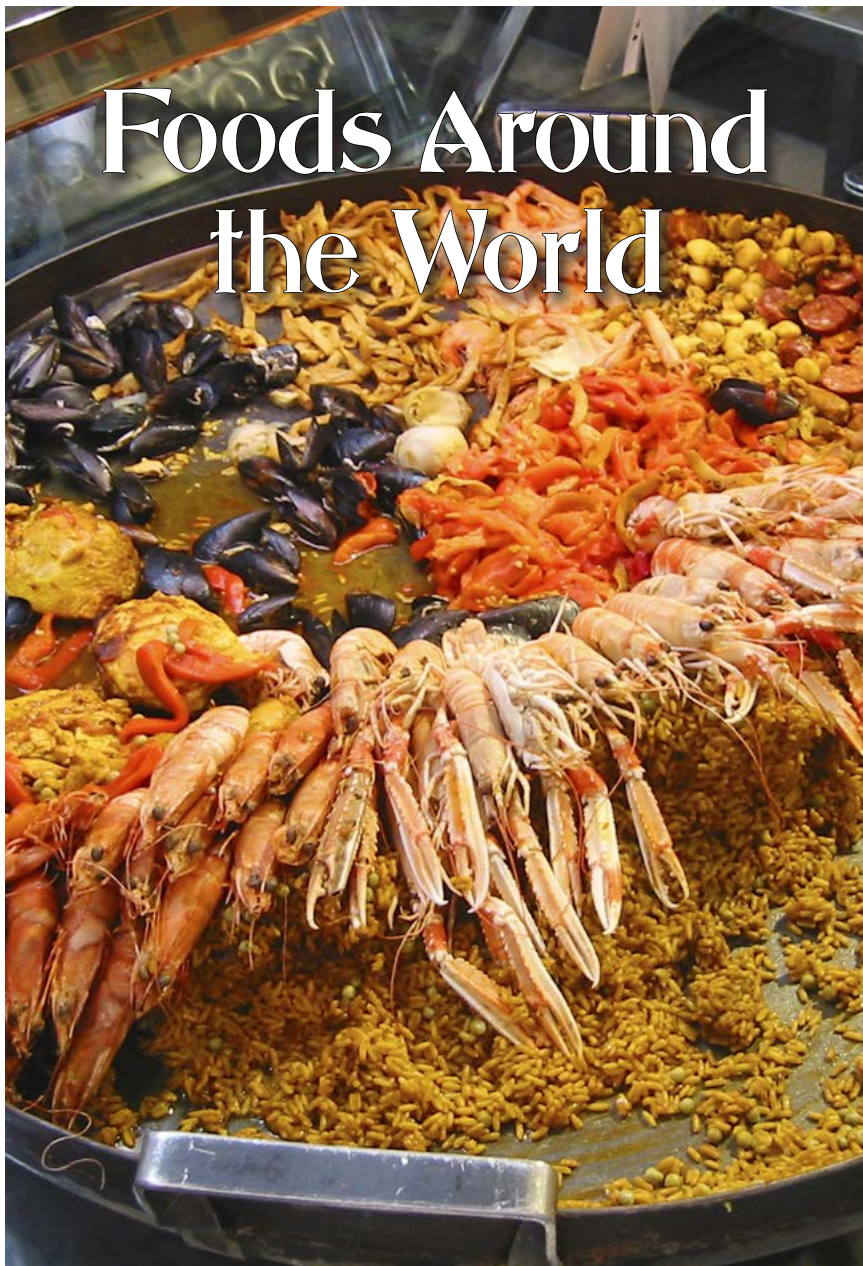
LEVELED BOOK • R

Foods Around the World



Written by Judy Braus

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fish pizza



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Introduction

What are your favorite foods? Pizza? French fries? Ice cream? Have you ever thought about what people in other parts of the world enjoy eating?

People usually cook foods that are naturally available where they live. As a result, many regions have special foods and snacks you may never have heard of. You might find someone eating crunchy caterpillars in Africa, raw fish in Asia, or honey ants in Australia!

Let’s take a taste trip to find out about some different foods and recipes found around the world.

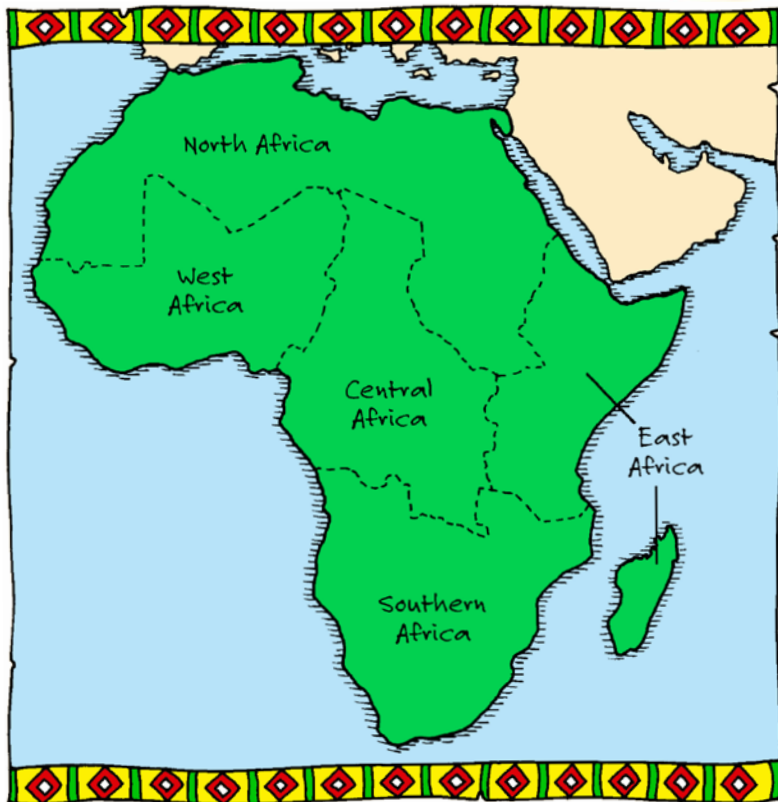
Africa:

A Mix of Flavors, Foods, and People

Africa is home to incredible wildlife, amazing forests, and all kinds of interesting foods. Africa has many different regions, and each one has its own special recipes.



African
kiwano
fruit



Tagine stew is kept in the covered pot until it's served.

In North Africa, many family meals are cooked in a special clay pot called a *tagine* pot. With its lid on, it's shaped like a volcano. The bottom of the pot becomes the dinner plate.

In West Africa, you can find lots of dishes made with peanuts. Peanuts flavor everything from fragrant chicken-peanut stew to peanut ice cream. You'll also find many rice dishes.

In Central Africa, many local recipes feature yams, squash, sweet potatoes, and honey. A special dish is made with dried caterpillars. The crunchy caterpillars, which are cooked with onions and tomatoes, taste very rich.

In Southern Africa, people near the coast eat a variety of fresh fish. They also like wild **game**, such as antelope. Families often barbecue steaks, chops, and special long sausages on big outdoor grills and invite the whole neighborhood to dinner.



Grilled meats, including wild game, are a tradition in South Africa.

Europe: Beet Soup to Rich Desserts

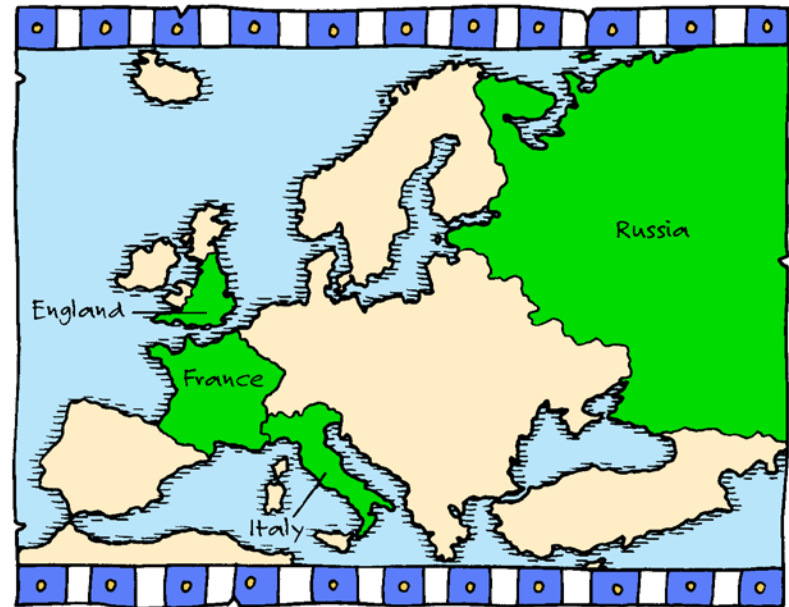
If you head north to Europe, you'll find that every country is known for its special foods.

People who live in Russia eat hearty stews with special dark breads like pumpernickel. Russia is also home to a famous cold beet soup.

A deep red color, this soup is often served with a drop of sour cream on top.



beet soup with bread



Italy is known for all kinds of pasta, fish, and tomato recipes. You will also find **cannoli**—thin, little dessert pastries filled with sweet, creamy cheese. Italy is also famous for its green and black olives, which come in all shapes and sizes.



cannoli



Outdoor lunch with fresh vegetables and breads

Do You Know?

Olive trees can live to be 1500 years old! The average life span is about 500 years. Most olives are grown in the countries around the Mediterranean Sea, such as Italy.



And if you like **rich** foods, France is the place to visit. It is known for a variety of cheeses, buttery sauces, and tempting desserts. Have you ever had a *croissant*—the buttery, flaky bread shaped like



croissant

a crescent? Or how about snails? In France, they're called **escargots** (es-car-GO) and are a special **delicacy**.



escargots

England is known for all kinds of foods whose names might sound weird. You'll hear people ask for kidney pie, blood pudding, and "bubble and squeak" (fried leftovers). For many English people, afternoon tea with buttery cookies or scones and jam is a real treat.



tea and a buttery cookie



A full English breakfast usually includes blood pudding, a special dark sausage.



The Spanish love strong flavors and spicy sauces. Small dishes called *tapas* are often only bite-sized. Paper-thin serrano ham is a rich treat.

Spanish octopus baked with vegetables is for special occasions.

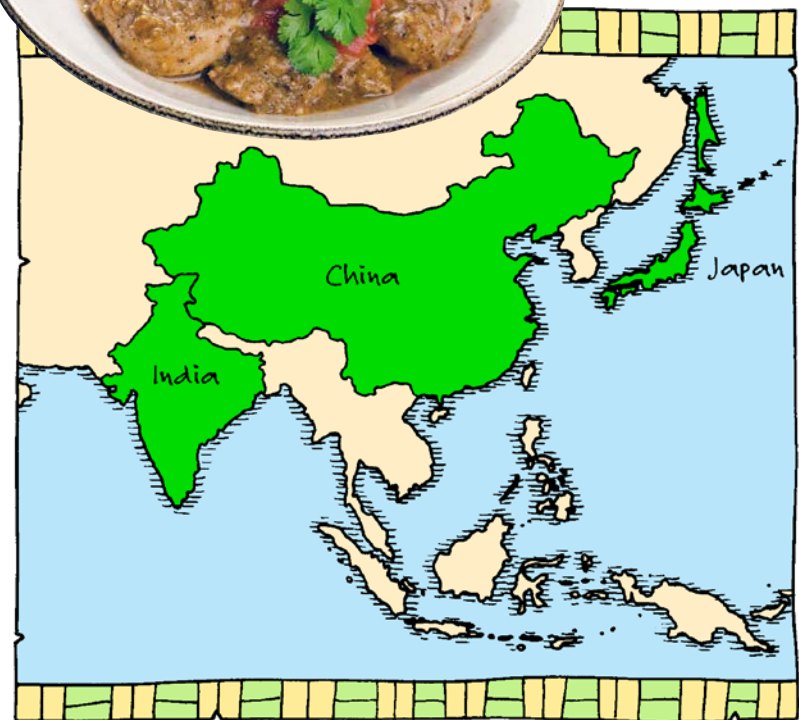


Asia: From Spicy to Sweet

If you keep heading east, you'll come to the countries of Asia. The exotic smell of curry, a mixture of many different spices, fills the air in India. There, you'll find all kinds of spicy vegetable and rice dishes, shish kabobs on a stick, and sweet desserts.



Indian pork curry





In China, each region of this large country has its own way of cooking spicy, flavorful foods and sauces. Rice is usually served with every meal, and favorite dishes include rich soups with noodles or dumplings. Vegetables and meats may be chopped and quickly stir-fried in a wide pan called a *wok*. Filled dumplings and bite-sized portions of food are stacked in small bamboo steamers for a light meal called *dim sum*.



pork buns

The island country of Japan is off the coast of China. The sea around Japan produces a variety of fish, shellfish, and other seafood.

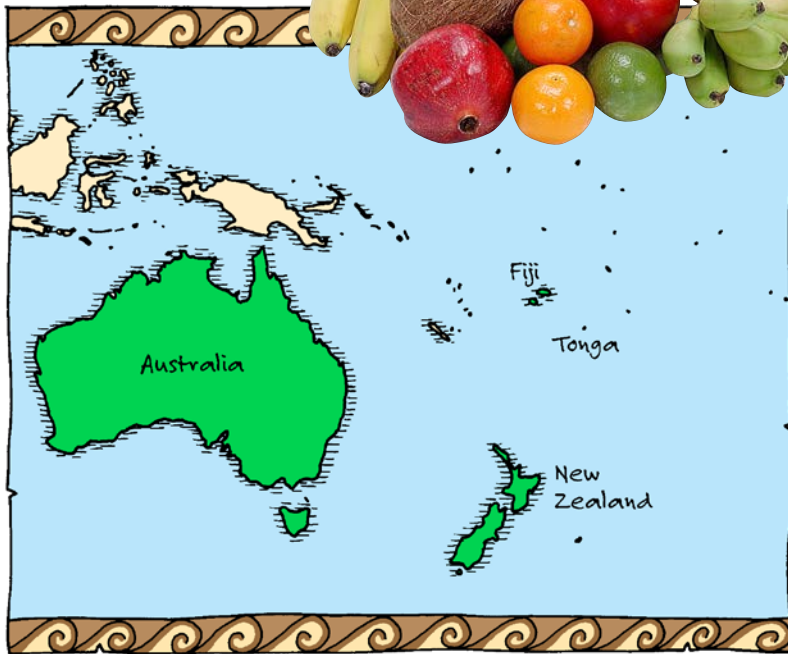
Sushi—tiny pieces of fish often wrapped in rice or seaweed—is a **specialty** there. Sushi chefs outdo one another to make the most beautiful sushi in Japan.

Sushi are only one or two bites. They are served with soy sauce, hot wasabi sauce, and thinly sliced ginger root.



The South Pacific: Land of Sun, Fish, and Fruit

If you head south from Asia, you'll come to a warm, tropical area called the South Pacific. Here you'll find countries like Australia and New Zealand as well as many smaller island countries, such as Fiji and Tonga.



New Zealand and Australia have many sheep ranchers, dairy farmers, and fruit growers. Many dishes here feature mutton



(sheep meat) and fresh fruits such as juicy pineapples, mangoes, papayas, and sweet, milky coconuts.

Australian sheep pot pie

Fresh fish is on every menu in the South Pacific. But people also eat some sea life that you may have never seen. Cooks make special dishes with giant clams and sea cucumbers, which are thick, squishy creatures that look more like plants than animals.



The odd-looking sea cucumber may not be pretty, but it's tasty.



Once close to extinction, flying foxes are no longer hunted as food.

In the past, some tropical islanders ate large bats called **flying foxes**. Some of these big bats have wingspans of more than two meters (6 ft)! But the tasty bats became endangered, so people have stopped eating them in order to protect the species.

The Americas: Latinos and North Americans

If you visit Central and South America, you'll get a real taste of Latino culture. Latin cooking can be spicy because people often use many kinds of chili peppers to flavor it. Recipes feature roasted meats, local seafood, beans, rice, tomatoes, and potatoes. Quick meals can be wrapped up in a *tortilla*, a thin,



flat, fried bread made with flour or ground cornmeal.

tortillas



And do you know what treat was discovered in Mexico? Chocolate! Chocolate comes from the beans of the **cacao** tree. The Aztecs, the native people of Mexico, crushed cacao beans to make a rich, bitter chocolate drink.

Mexico spent several centuries under foreign rule by Spain and France. These rulers brought royal cooks, and their recipes, with them to Mexico. The rulers left, but the recipes stayed. Today, in larger Mexican cities, you can still find elegant restaurants that serve formal, French-style cuisine.



You can get almost any type of food you want in the United States—Mexican, Chinese, Japanese, Italian, African, or anything else. Just as in other countries we've visited, each region in the United States has its own favorite dishes.



Cioppino with grated cheese

Coastal areas may feature seafood, such as a fish stew called *cioppino* (cha-PEE-no), created in San Francisco. Mountainous regions may offer wild game recipes. Barbecued ribs and corn on the cob are favorites nearly everywhere, and almost everyone loves apple pie and ice cream!



Conclusion

Discovering new foods is like going to another country for a few hours. Learning about the country's foods is part of learning about its culture. So visit the library or explore online to learn more. Try new restaurants or foods with your family. Learning about new foods and flavors from other places can be fun. Who knows, you might decide to become a world-famous cook!



Try This! Peanut Butter and Honey Balls

Peanut butter is a favorite food in parts of Africa and the United States.

And honey is a treat around the world. Try these treats for a healthy snack.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 cup powdered milk
- 1 envelope of unflavored gelatin (optional)

Sunflower seeds, raisins, nuts, dried cranberries, cherries, or anything else you want to add

Granola or wheat germ



With a wooden spoon, mix the first five ingredients together in a bowl.

Roll the mixture into 2.5-centimeter (1-inch) balls with your hands. Then roll the balls in the granola or wheat germ. Eat this crunchy, sweet, sticky snack with toothpicks or your fingers.

Do You Know?

Honeybees must travel to more than two million flowers to make just 1/2 kilogram (1 pound) of honey.





Try This! **An Italian Subwich**

Make an Italian sub and pretend you're in Rome. Take a hard sub roll and brush it with a little bit of olive oil. Then add slices of Genoa salami, provolone cheese, tomatoes, lettuce, and sliced black olives. Cut your sandwich in half and enjoy.



Almost every country has a favorite recipe for barbecued meat.

Glossary

- cacao** (*n.*) a tree that produces cacao beans, which, when roasted and ground, can be made into chocolate (p. 19)
- cannoli** (*n.*) Italian pastries with sweet, creamy cheese in the middle (p. 9)
- delicacy** (*n.*) an uncommon food served only on special occasions and thought to be very delicious (p. 10)
- escargots** (*n.*) snails, served in France (p. 10)
- flying foxes** (*n.*) large fruit-eating bats with foxlike faces; were sometimes eaten in the Pacific islands (p. 17)
- game** (*n.*) wild birds and mammals hunted and eaten as food (p. 7)
- rich** (*adj.*) heavy and filling; using lots of fat, oil, cream, or sugar (p. 10)
- specialty** (*n.*) something that one group of people makes very well (p. 14)
- sushi** (*n.*) Japanese delicacy; small pieces of fish or vegetables wrapped in rice or seaweed (p. 14)