



TRADITIONAL EATING FOR WEIGHT LOSS

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INTRODUCTION

As an African dietitian many people come to me with request for a more “South African” diet plan. We have been brought up eating a specific way and when an eating plan deviates hugely from what we are used to, it can be hard to follow. So how do you go about losing weight while still enjoying traditional South African food?

WHERE IS THE PROBLEM?

Whether you are a Tshabalala or Van der Merwe, urbanisation has played a big part in the way South Africans eat. Our lives are more hectic and therefore there is no time to cook the healthy potjie (stew) or Morogo (wild spinach). We rely on fast food and convenient processed foods as our source of nutrition. These food are often high in sugar, fat and very low in other nutrients such as vitamins and minerals.

Westernisation has also made us stop eating foods that are traditional to us as a nation. But traditionally the South African diet has always been maize and starch heavy and of course we love a good braai vleisie! We need to relook at our own foods as well.

THE SOLUTION

There are many diets out there based on the eating habits of other areas in the world such as the Mediterranean diet. But what then is the overall rainbow “South African diet”? We may not have a diet that fits all parts of our rainbow nation but we have guidelines specific to the needs of living in a vibrant country such as ours.

The South African Food Based Dietary Guidelines or FBDGs are compiled by South African experts in line with scientific evidence. Healthy eating is a key component of a healthy lifestyle. Use the Food Guides to learn more about the best food choices for your healthy eating plan.

Enjoy a variety of foods

Food is meant to be enjoyed. Eating a variety helps get in different nutrients. Experiment with the food of different cultures. Try a healthy Bobotie recipe if you're tired of stamp and beans.



Make starchy foods part of most meals.

Pap, rice potato, stomp and bread are all examples of common starches that we consume in South Africa. We need starch as it provides us with energy. Just be sure to choose your starches wisely. Choose high Fibre, low GI starches that will keep you fuller for longer and of course watch your portion size.

Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit every day.

Strive for five vegetables and fruit a day. Have a fruit at breakfast and one as a snack during the day. Not only can vegetables and fruit add variety to the food you eat but are also packed with vitamins and minerals that the body needs.

Eat dry beans, split peas, lentils and soya regularly.

Beans, split peas, lentils and soy are plant-based proteins that provide protein without all the fat that meat can have. Add these to stews to increase the protein content.

Have milk, maas or yoghurt every day.

As kids we told that milk gives you strong bones and teeth. Still true as adults. Choose low fat dairy options and avoid those with added sugar.

Fish, chicken, lean meat or eggs can be eaten daily.

Yes you can still have a braai here and there or a nice lamb curry but beware of the fat. Choose lean cuts of meat or trim excess fat off meat and chicken before you cook it. Avoid frying with extra oils and where possible drain any excess oils that you can see.

Drink lots of clean, safe water.

Our bodies are made of up to 50-70% water. In a country as hot as ours we lose a large amount through sweating and keeping cool. It's important to keep hydrated so that the body works well. Drink about 8 glasses of water per day.

Use fats sparingly. Choose vegetable oils, rather than hard fats.

Don't go too crazy with the oil when making that omelette. Try to use non-stick pans and avoid frying foods. Have some avocado in your salad to get in those good fats. Sprinkle a little olive oil on your grilled vegetables to add some essential fats to your meal.



Use foods high in sugar and salt sparingly

Although salty and sweet foods often taste the “best” these two ingredients, when consumed in excess, can lead to lifestyle diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. So avoid adding too much sugar to your morning coffee and too much salt when cooking.

Be active!

Although not a nutrition guideline per se, being active helps to control your weight and keep your body strong. Take a walk, ride a bicycle, play with your kids. You don't have to be a gym fanatic. Just doing moderate amounts of exercise can do wonders for your body.

CONCLUSION

So next time you're thinking of going on a diet, rather skip the diet and use these guidelines that were created by South Africans for South Africans. They are easy to use and easy to remember and they can help you plan any meal.

WHERE DOES FUTURELIFE® FIT IN?

FUTURELIFE® is proudly South African. Created by South Africans, for South Africans. We have a range of delicious, nutritious and convenient products that can fit perfectly into your healthy eating plan, based on the principles of the Food Based Dietary Guidelines. For more information visit www.futurelife.co.za.

REFERENCES:

1. <http://www.adsa.org.za/Portals/14/Documents/FoodBasedDietaryGuidelinesforSouthAfrica.pdf>