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# Introduction

## How To Use This Book

*Eat Your Way Around the World* can be used in several ways. You can take your family on a whirlwind tour of the world, eating a meal from a different country each week of the month. Alternately, you could use the meals in this book to introduce each country as you study it. This should really help spark the imaginations of all the children in your home. How great it would be to have an English tea party before studying about Parliament!

One of my favorite ways to use this book is to use it at the end of the study of a particular country. Invite friends and family and treat them to an international meal. Have your kids tell what they have learned about the country. Be creative! Don't just limit them to reading a country report. Perhaps they could sing a song in the native tongue or read a popular children's story for that area.

## The Recipes

When researching this book, I tried to choose recipes that were historically the most popular for a country. As technology advances and the world becomes more and more connected, the culture of each country slowly meshes with the countries near it and even the countries on the other side of the world. This especially is apparent in a nation's cuisine. While at one time the food of England may have just been that—English food—now it is a mix of food that visitors and immigrants have imported from all over the world. I have tried my best to focus on what is traditionally eaten in a country, rather than giving a foreign recipe just because the English love Indian food or the Americans love Chinese!

I adapted recipes to be as simple as possible and to use ingredients widely available no matter what country you are in. You should be able to find the ingredients in any grocery store. No special trips to an ethnic or specialty food store needed! Each recipe is rated for ease of preparation. The simplest recipes are one fork, and the most complicated are four forks.

## Make More Than Dinner!

The more authentic the dining experience is, the more your kids will love it! Try the following suggestions and use the space provided with each country to jot down ideas for making it more than dinner:

- ❶ **Set the table.** Try to set the table with decorations and colors from that country. Visit your local fabric store for fabrics that might work. You can also visit an import store for affordable decorations from the country of your choice. Check out books from your local library that contain pictures of what life is like. Some other decoration ideas might include flags or maps of the country.
- ❷ **Set the tone.** One of the best ways to set the mood is to play music from the country you are studying. Visit your local library to see their selection of world music. If they don't have what you are looking for, talk to the librarian to see if they can request it through the InterLibrary Loan program. You can also look online at [worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com](http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com) and [www.smithsonianglobalsound.org](http://www.smithsonianglobalsound.org).
- ❸ **Learn the Language.** Learn a few words in the native language of the country you are studying. Say What! sections throughout the book will give you a jump start. See how many words you can use through the course of the meal.
- ❹ **Dress the part.** Research the native dress from the country. Make costumes for the whole family. These do not have to be elaborate. It could be as simple as a sheet wrapped like an Indian sari or a sombrero for Latin America.
- ❺ **Do the research.** Try to find someone in your community who has lived in or spent extensive time in the country. Most people would be more than happy to tell you about their experiences. Be sure to invite them to your dinner as a thank you for all their help!

## Food Activities

- ❶ **Be a food critic.** Have each child record their response to the meal. Sweet? Salty? Bitter? Creamy? Chunky? Rich? Descriptive adjectives are a must! A thesaurus would be helpful. This is a great way to expand their vocabulary. Some samples from a newspaper or magazine might help get the creative juices flowing. It is also helpful to compare new dishes with familiar tastes and textures.

- 🍷 **Be a travel agent.** Have your child create a brochure or poster advertising the country's culture. Be sure to highlight the local cuisine! If you are inviting guests, make these ahead of time and use as invitations.
- 🍷 **Be a travel journalist.** After each meal is over (and the dishes are done!), have your child record his thoughts about his "trip" to the country. What sights did he see and sounds did he hear? Be sure to include photos or even drawings!
- 🍷 **Fill a passport.** This is a great way to help picky eaters expand their horizons. Designate a small notebook as the child's "passport." For each country they "visit," let them add a stamp for the country. (Tasting all the foods is a requirement!) Use stamps you already have on hand, or let the kids draw their own. Check out the passport in the Appendix created just for this purpose. Copy the passport or cut out of the book. If you copy the stamps on adhesive paper you've created stamp stickers.
- 🍷 **Have a world travel night!** This is a great group project, perfect for school classrooms or homeschool co-ops. Have each child prepare a dish from a different country along with a creative poster telling important facts. (This would be a quick way to fill up the passports!) Although the recipes serve four to six people, they could easily be multiplied to serve more.
- 🍷 **Keep a food journal.** A food journal is a great way to keep track of your favorite meals and to remember your food experiences. You can start one by making copies of the sample page in the back of the book. Just fill in the blanks after each meal and you are ready to go! Keep the pages in a folder or three-ring binder. You don't have to limit your food journal to meals from this book. You can use it to record any memorable meal event!

Bon appétit,

*Jamie Aramini*

(Please note: I would be happy to hear your feedback about the book. Any questions, comments, or suggestions would be appreciated. If you prepare a special ethnic meal using this book, please let me know about it! I would love to hear all the details! email me at [jamiearamini@yahoo.com](mailto:jamiearamini@yahoo.com).)