

The African Heritage Diet Pyramid

A new healthy eating model
based on the traditional diets
of the African Diaspora



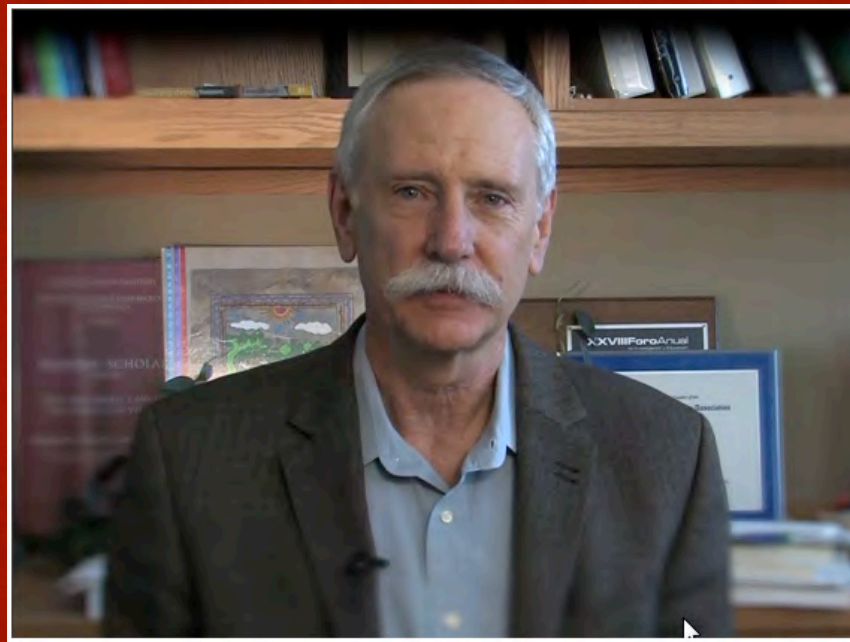
Webinar November 9, 2011



Special Introduction

Walter Willett, MD, DrPH

Harvard School of Public Health



Presenters

Sara Baer-Sinnott

Introducing Oldways and the
African Heritage Diet Pyramid

Jessica B. Harris

The Foodways & Culinary Traditions
of the African Diaspora

Constance Brown-Riggs

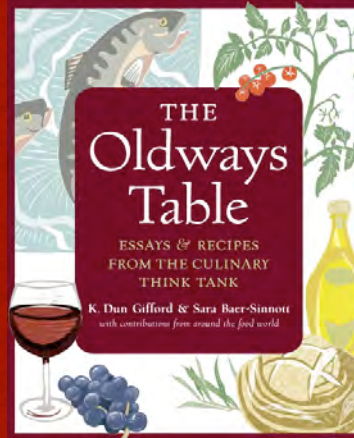
The Nutritional Power of the
African Heritage Diet Pyramid





Sara Baer-Sinnott

President, Oldways
Cookbook Author



Let the old ways be your guide to good health and well-being.

Oldways is a nonprofit food and nutrition education organization, with a mission to guide people to good health through heritage, using practical and positive programs grounded in science and tradition. Simply, we advocate for the healthful pleasures of real food.



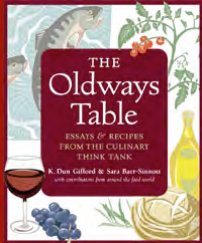
“I have yet to hear of a traditional diet — from any culture, anywhere in the world — that is not substantially healthier than the ‘standard American diet.’ The more we honor cultural differences in eating, the healthier we will be.”

Michael Pollan
The New York Times Magazine
Sunday, October 2, 2011



Oldways

Let the old ways be your guide to good health



Develops consumer-friendly health-promotion tools grounded in science like the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid and its signature book, *The Oldways Table*.



Created the Whole Grains Council and the Whole Grain Stamp, to help consumers achieve better health by increasing consumption of quick, easy, delicious whole grains.



Originated the Mediterranean Foods Alliance which improves public health by raising consumer awareness about the health benefits of following the Mediterranean Diet.



Oldways

Let the old ways be your guide to good health

Organizes ground-breaking scientific and culinary International Conferences featuring top scientists, chefs, culinary experts, and health experts

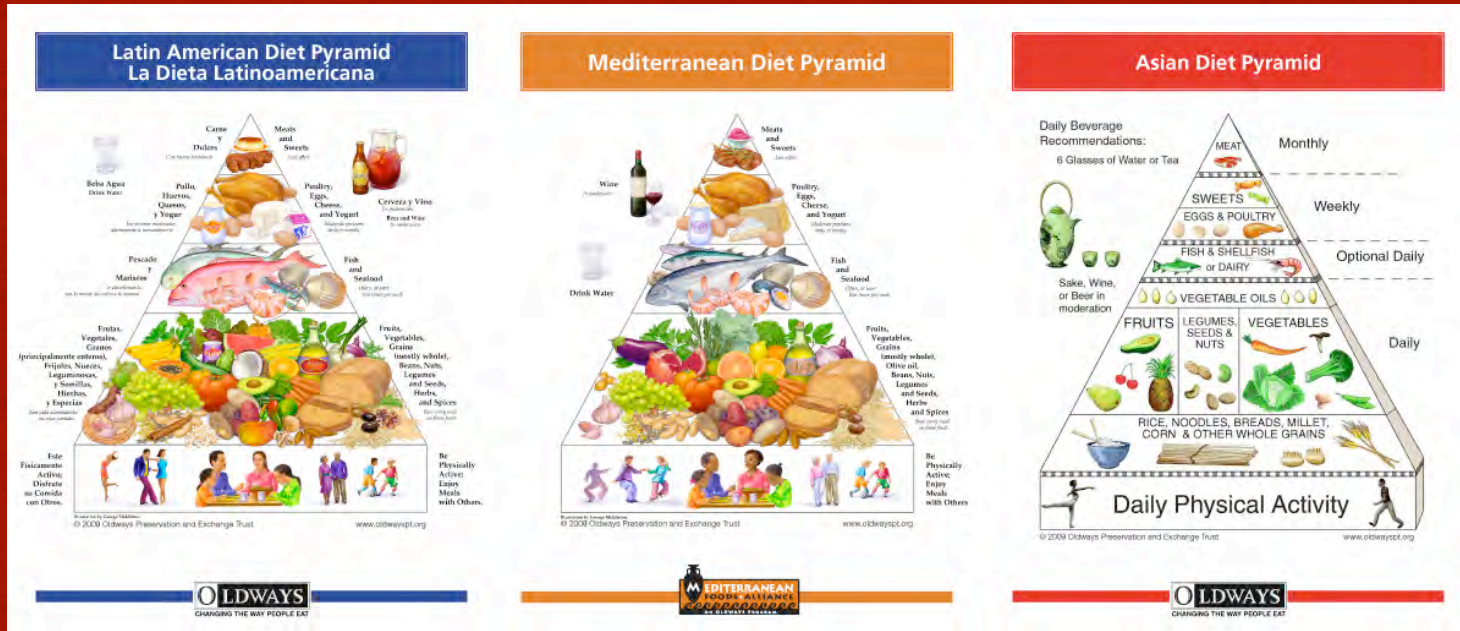
Offers regular continuing professional education programs for RDs and other health professionals

Serves as a credible, reliable information source for journalists, consumers and others eager to learn more about nutrition breakthroughs and timeless truths



Health Through Heritage

The Power of Traditional Diets



Oldways is known for its family of traditional diet pyramids supporting healthy eating based on cultural traditions (Mediterranean, Asian and Latin American Diet Pyramids).



Development of the African Heritage Diet

Based on the traditional healthy diets of:

Africa

South America

The Caribbean

The American South



The Sankofa Symbol



The African word and symbol *Sankofa* translates as “to go back and take.” The symbol of a bird arching its neck to take an egg from its back symbolizes *one taking from the past what is good and bringing it into the present in order to make positive progress through benevolent use of knowledge.*

The African Heritage Diet Pyramid aims to do just that, promoting positive progress in the health and diet of African Americans by reaching back and digging up their roots.

Development of the African Heritage Diet

a consensus approach

African Heritage Pyramid Expert Advisory Committee

- **Sara Baer-Sinnott**, President, Oldways
- **Constance Brown-Riggs**, MEd, RD, CDE, CDN, Author, *The African American Guide To Living Well With Diabetes*
- **Sarah Dwyer**, African Heritage Program Manager, Oldways
- **Angela Ginn**, RD LDN CDE, Diabetes Educator, University of Maryland Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology
- **Robert Hall**, PhD, Professor of African American Studies and History, Northeastern University
- **Jessica Harris**, PhD, Cookbook Author and Professor, Queens College
- **Allan Johnson**, PhD, Associate Dean and Professor of Nutrition, Howard University
- **Kristie Lancaster**, PhD, Associate Professor of Nutrition, New York University
- **Vivien Morris**, MS, RD, MPH, Dietitian and Director of Community Initiatives, Boston Medical Center
- **Frederick Douglass Opie**, PhD, Professor of African and African Diaspora History, Babson College
- **Toni Tipton-Martin**, Food and Nutrition Journalist, Founder of SANDE and President, Foodways Texas
- **Katherine Tucker**, PhD, Professor and Chair, Department of Health Studies, Northeastern University
- **Adrienne White**, Sr. Manager, Corporate Affairs – Constituent Relations Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
- **Gail Pettiford Willett**, Nutrition and Health Coach
- **Walter Willett**, MD, DrPH, Chairman, Department of Nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health
- **Akua Woolbright**, PhD, Whole Foods



Development of the African Heritage Diet

an evidence-based approach

Health Studies on The African Diaspora:

Health and nutrition deteriorate, as people in Africa and the African Diaspora move towards a modern diet

Blood Pressure Rises, as Traditional Diets Turn Western

A Loyola University study measured blood pressure and sodium levels in 2,704 people from Nigeria, Jamaica, and the United States. They found that both factors were lowest in Nigeria, where there is little added sodium in foods, mid-range in Jamaica, and highest in the U.S. Researchers concluded that the standard American diet, containing foods higher in sodium, is associated with a higher risk of abnormal blood pressure than traditional diets.

Journal of Human Hypertension, 2011 May 19 [Epub ahead of print]

Health Problems Follow East-West Movement

Another Loyola study compared West Africans to Caribbean populations and to African descendants in the UK and USA. Researchers noted that West Africans, though more often suffering under-nutrition, have lower rates of diabetes, hypertension, coronary heart disease and certain cancers, with the rates for all these Western diseases at their highest in the UK and USA.

Annual Review of Nutrition, 2001; 21:47-71



Development of the African Heritage Diet Pyramid

The Pyramid



1. A way to inspire and support healthier eating in the African American community through a culturally appropriate and personalized dietary model.
2. A way for health professionals to easily incorporate more culturally competent strategies into their dietary recommendations for African American patients.
3. A way to respect and celebrate the different cultures and regions of African Heritage.

Development of the African Heritage Diet Pyramid

The Plates



Development of the African Heritage Diet Pyramid

The Plates

Africa

1. Peanut Soup
2. Jollof Rice & Black Eyed Peas
3. Chicken Yassa

South America

1. Vegetable & Rice Soup
2. Black Beans & Rice with Hearts of Palm Salad
3. Moqueca De Peixe with Watercress Salad

The Caribbean

1. Hearty Pumpkin Soup & Spinners
2. Red Beans & Rice in Light Coconut Milk with Sauteed Spinach
3. Grilled Red Snapper & Mango with Cilantro Lime Vinaigrette & Green Beans

American South

1. Shrimp Gumbo
2. Hoppin' John, Braised Collard Greens and Cabbage Slaw
3. Pecan-Crusted Baked Catfish, Baked Sweet Potato & Okra-&-Corn Mix-Up



Other African Heritage & Health Resources

African Heritage 101 Brochure



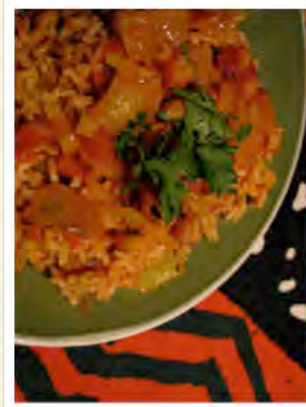
Other African Heritage & Health Resources

African Heritage & Health Website Portal

1. Setting Up Your Healthy African Heritage Kitchen: pantry, fridge, freezer, countertop
2. Downloadable African Heritage Grocery List
3. Recipe Search Engine
4. Food Glossary
5. Health Studies

Jollof Rice

Jollof rice is a traditional West African dish. It can be totally vegetarian, as in this version, or you can add chicken or seafood.



Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups brown rice
- 3 cups liquid (see step 1)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion (about 2 cups chopped)
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large carrot (about 1 cup chopped)
- cabbage (about 2 cups chopped)
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 can diced tomatoes, drained (save liquid)
- 1 can black-eyed peas, drained and rinsed
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (or to taste)

Next Steps: Phase II Plans

Organization Partnerships:

With the help of our Outreach Committee, Oldways will reach and support existing organizations dedicated to health and nutrition, with materials, partnership, and resources.

Funding:

The Walmart Foundation  has made it possible for Oldways to create the African Heritage Diet Pyramid. Success of the Pyramid's widespread adoption is dependent upon further support of organizations such as the Walmart Foundation to invest with Oldways to help African Americans return to their healthy culinary heritage.

Health Through Heritage Programs:

With partners, Oldways will design and implement a series of programs, based on all five of our Pyramids (Mediterranean, Latin American, Asian, African Heritage, and Vegetarian).



African Heritage & Health Program Planning

In Phase II of the African Heritage Pyramid project, Oldways is planning a series of community-based educational programs. Our goal is to create a movement around Health Through Heritage, starting with African Heritage & Health (AHH!). Oldways will build awareness and a new cultural perspective on optimal nutrition and health, and offer hands-on, practical tools to help people, organizations, and communities take action.

Faith-Based Heritage & Health Potluck Program

College Campus Heritage Cooking Clubs

Community Heritage Kitchen

Heritage Home Economics Curriculum

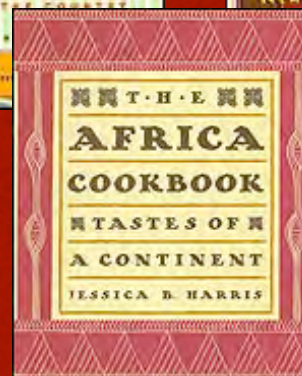
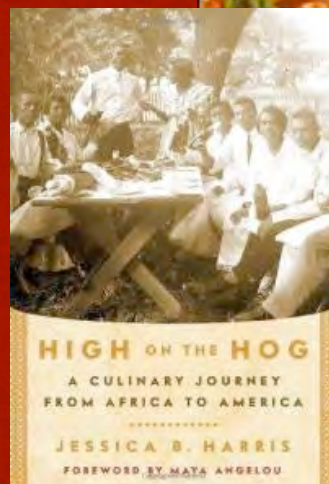
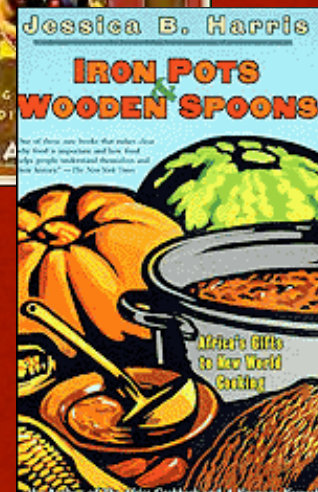
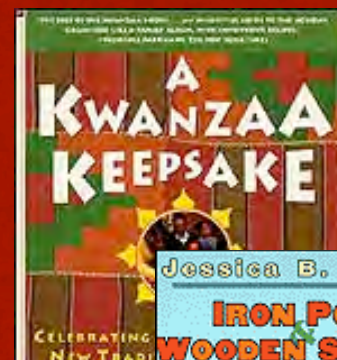
Healthcare Through Heritage Program





Jessica B. Harris, PhD

Cookbook Author and Professor



The African Diaspora

A crescent of influence spans across the African continent, the coasts of South America, the islands of the Caribbean, and the towns of the American South. Food, music, values, and traditions are all a part of this span.

Afro-(North) Americans

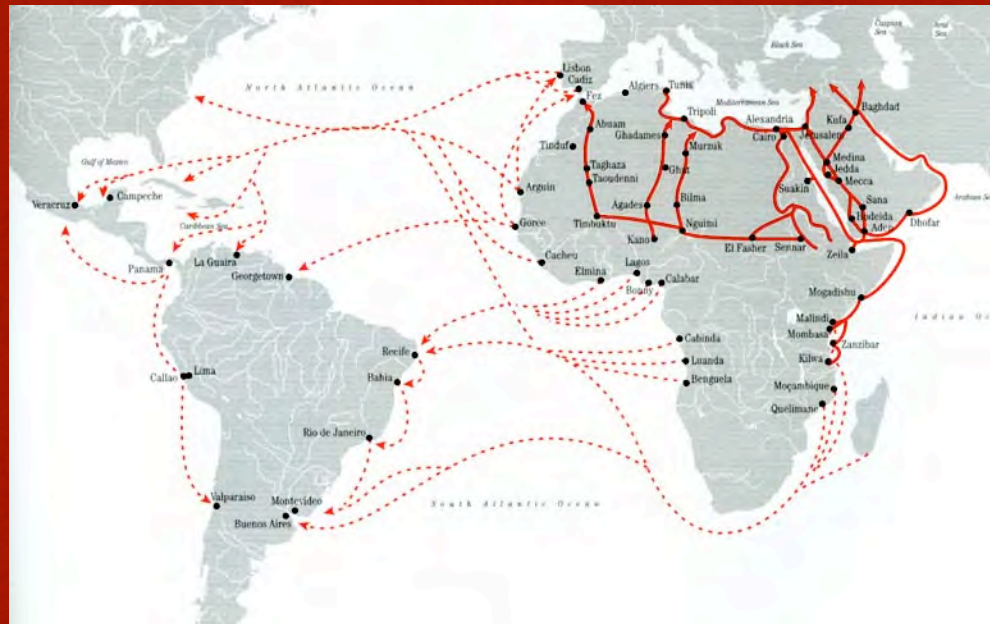
West African Origins, 16th century Atlantic Slave Trade to British & French Colonies; modern day Sub-Saharan immigration

Afro-Caribbeans

West African origins; 16th century slave ships to English, Dutch, French, and Spanish islands

Afro-(South) Americans

Portuguese slave workers; especially in Brazil



Afro-American Re-Migrants

moved from Americas to European colonizer nations (Surinamese to Holland, Haitians to France, Jamaicans to UK, Brazilians to Portugal)



The African Diaspora in America

Early Diaspora: Western & Central Africa

The majority of African Heritage culinary influences come from this part of the continent.



Modern Diaspora: Sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern, The Horn

The African Heritage Diet includes foods from these regions as well, including teff bread, curries, and lentils.



The African Diaspora: Culinary History

European arrival altered the local diet. The Portuguese brought Indian chiles, corn, cassava and white potatoes to West Africa. Chile peppers and tomatoes became two staples of more modern African cooking. Stews and sauces remained abundant – elaborated on with new ingredients.



During the Slave Trade transportations, on the ships themselves, slaves ate rice, beans, corn and yams widely with lemons, limes and vegetables occasionally; meat was rarely part of their diet in transport.

The African Diaspora: Culinary History

On New World Arrival, slaves were given the task of raising the produce that would feed themselves and their owners. They tried to reproduce their heritage foods but transformations took place due to:



- **Climate and agricultural means.** African American cooks were as resourceful as they were talented—they substituted cabbage leaves for banana leaves, and the rice and black-eyed peas that had sustained them for generations became Hoppin' John. One nutritional trick was to save the boiling water from the greens and to consume it for its nutrient value. These kinds of techniques and foodways are about to have their due revival.
- **Owners' culinary decadence.** A common plantation breakfast table often served "grilled fowl, prawns, eggs and ham, fish from the coast, potted salmon from England, preserved meats from France, varieties of hominy, mush and African vegetables." The "genius" of African American cooking in producing this bounty was widely acclaimed in the South.

African Diasporan Cuisines

1. Similarities
2. Traditional Western and Central African Foods
3. Diasporan Foods Rooted in African Traditions



Similarities in Traditional Foods Throughout the African Diaspora

- Healthy staple starches as a primary food: Squashes, pumpkins, tubers, root vegetables, and yams in certain places
- Vegetables in abundance (especially leafy greens), typically with these starches and stews
- Fruits plentiful, often eaten as or within desserts
- Rice & bean dishes common; nuts and seeds featured, as was seafood in fishing communities
- Meat, poultry and wild game eaten modestly and often as flavorings
- Herbs, teas and fermented drinks enjoyed moderately as a regular part of the diet



Traditional Foods of Western and Central Africa

- **Grains**, a staple: millet, sorghum, wheat and rice were the main grains, made into thick porridges, fritters, bread, pancakes and puddings
- **Beans**, another staple: black eyed peas, chickpeas, and lentils
- **Vegetables**: All types of leafy greens, and root vegetables like yams and other gourds. Yams were a major part of the local diet, having almost religious acclaim in many West African kingdoms.
- **Fruits**: West Africans were known to eat watermelon, tamarind, plums, dates, figs, and pomegranates.
- **Meats**: beef (in some parts), lamb, goat, camel, poultry and varieties of game
- **Oils**: shea butter, sesame oil, palm oil
- **Seasonings**: melegueta pepper, cubebs, ginger, other aromatic spices from North Africa
- **Stews and sauces**: starch as base; water (plain or sweetened); milk – cow's, goat's, sheep's or camel's (fresh & sweet or sour); alcohol – millet beer, mead or palm wine



Traditional Diaspora Foods: African-American

Numbers: Around 40 million people of African descent live in the U.S.

Influences: French, Spanish, African, Haitian and British cuisines, intertwined with Southern cooking to co-brand some of its major staples

- Grains: Rice, grits, cornmeal
- Vegetables: Cabbage, okra, tomatoes, peppers, sweet potatoes and green beans
- Greens: Dandelion, mustard, collards, turnip greens, kale, watercress
- Beans: Black-eyed peas, kidney beans
- Pickles: Beets, radish, cabbage, carrots, green beans, cucumbers
- Louisiana's Creole cuisine: "Holy Trinity" (onions, peppers, celery)
- Traditional coastal cooking from the Low Country states, the Gulf and Georgia coasts: Oysters, crabs, shrimp, etc.

African-American cuisine has been called "food to fall in love with."



Traditional Diaspora Foods: Afro-Caribbean

Numbers: Around 23 million people of African descent live in the Caribbean.

Influences: French, African, British, and Spanish culinary influences; the islands bring tropical accents and seafoods to the Pyramid

- Seafood, such as salt fish and conch
- Tropical fruits, such as papaya and guava
- Greens: especially callaloo
- Rice-and-peas dishes, typically with pigeon peas, black beans, kidney beans
- Coconut milk for sauces and stews
- Tubers & healthy starches: breadfruit, yams, plantains, pumpkins
- Vegetable roll-ups: Southern Caribbean, *roti* filled with curried vegetables and shrimp, or bean dishes, as a warm, soft roll-up



Traditional Diaspora Foods: Afro-South American

Numbers: Around 100 million people of African descent living in South America, with the largest majority in Brazil.

Influences: Native American, Spanish, Portuguese

- Traditional seafood stews very popular, e.g. *Moqueca Baiana*, a traditional Brazilian seafood stew, featuring palm oil, coconut milk, shrimp and crab, onions, garlic, peppers, tomatoes, and cilantro
- Rice-and-beans dishes with black beans, pinto beans, red beans
- Tubers, like yucca and cassava
- Okra, peanuts, squashes and plantains appear on many plates
- Fruits and fruit juices like mangoes, cashew fruit juice, acerola
- Common favorites: red snapper, avocado, cilantro, and tapioca
- Native American roots seen in corn/maize use; tamales using peas, carrots, potatoes, rice, and various spices as fillings



The African Heritage Diet

Plates of Expression

Africa

1. Peanut Soup
2. Jollof Rice & Black Eyed Peas
3. Chicken Yassa

The Caribbean

1. Hearty Pumpkin Soup & Spinners
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South America

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The Importance of Cooking Traditions for Modern Health

Cooking *empowers* us to choose what we want for ourselves and our families.



Cooking *connects* us to

- the earth and our food
- our roots
- good health
- our creativity
- each other



The Importance of Sharing Meals

Traditions for Modern Health

Eating healthy foods together benefits everyone at the table

- Families who eat well feel well.
- Kids benefit *physically, mentally* and *emotionally*.
- Healthy couples are happy couples.
- Parents connect with each other and children.
- Friends grow old together over healthy food.
- Sharing faith and healthy foods after services or during events serves the whole community.

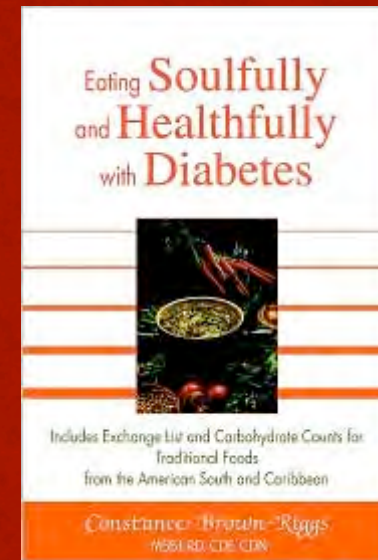
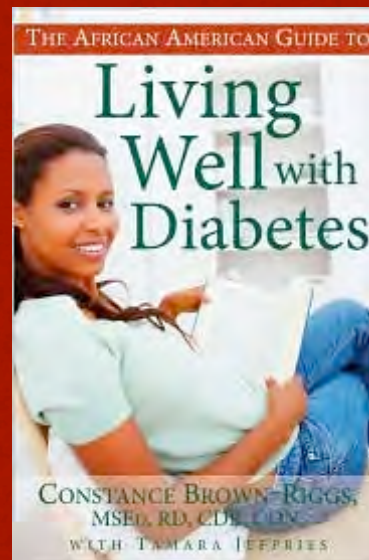




Constance Brown-Riggs

MSEd, RD, CDE, CDN

ADA National Spokesperson & Author



African American Health

Compared to the general population, African Americans are disproportionately affected by several major chronic diseases in incidence, aggressiveness, and mortality:

Hypertension

More than 40% suffer from high blood pressure.

Diabetes African Americans are twice as likely to be diagnosed with diabetes and twice as likely to suffer from diabetes related complications, such as blindness, kidney disease, amputations, stroke, heart failure, and nerve damage.

Obesity

Over half of African American, aged 20+, are obese. (40% for Men)

Certain Cancers

African American men have a higher risk of prostate cancer than any other demographic.



A Modern Diet of Excess

Shifts from traditional to modern eating patterns include an increase in:

- Sodium
- Unhealthy Types of Fats
- Sugar
- Fast Food

As well as a more sedentary lifestyle.



Starting From The Top

Sweets:

Enjoying sweets *occasionally* keeps refined sugars and unhealthy types of fats low, and pleasure high.

Dairy (if tolerated):

Dairy was not traditionally consumed in high amounts; buttermilk and yogurt are featured on the Pyramid. Non-lactose sources are encouraged: almond milk, rice milk, soy milk. Other calcium & vitamin D sources include small fish, beans, greens, and more.

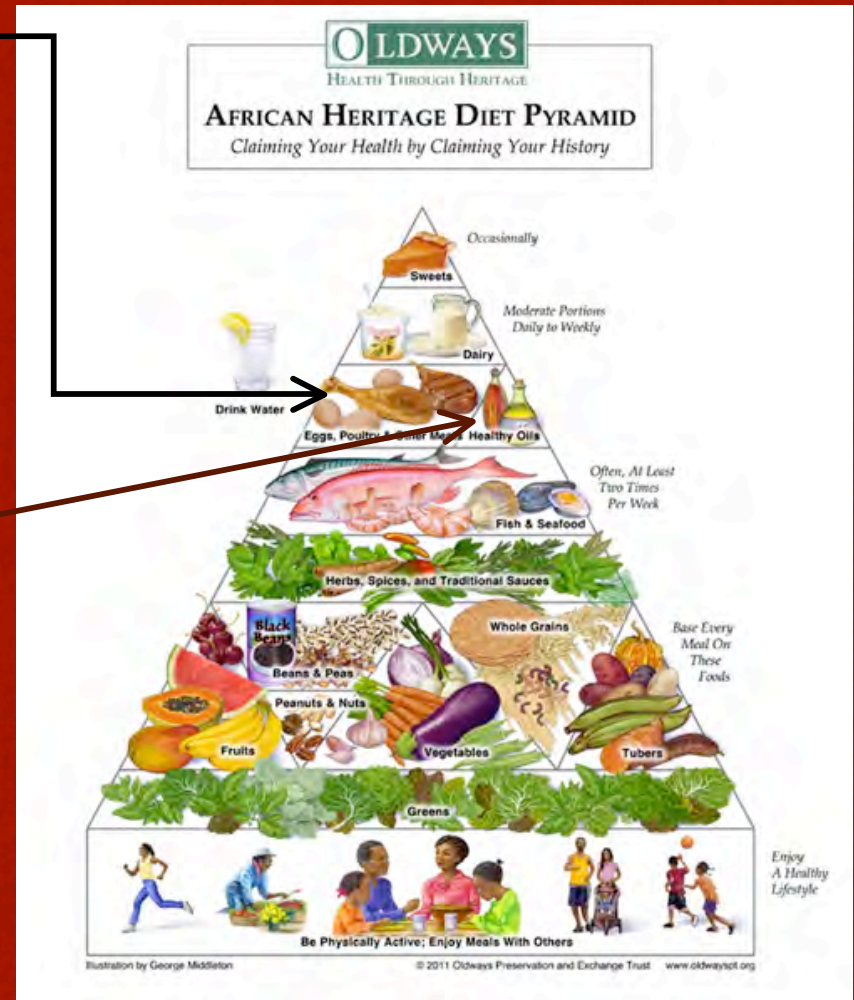


Poultry, Eggs, & Other Meats:

- Traditionally meat was used in small amounts for flavoring.
- Lower consumption helps combat heart disease, hypertension, kidney disease, prostate cancer, and other conditions related to high intake of animal products.
- Enjoy healthy, lean meats, eaten modestly: turkey, chicken, eggs.

Oils:

Healthy fats and oils have a place in a healthy diet, in moderate amounts. Many studies show the heart-healthy aspects of extra-virgin olive oil, and research grows on similar benefits from unrefined red palm oil and coconut oil.



Fish & Seafood:

A plant-based diet combined with fish and seafood offers many health benefits. Low in saturated fat, tuna, mackerel, and other fish are rich in heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Sardines and other small, boned fish are rich sources of calcium and vitamin D.

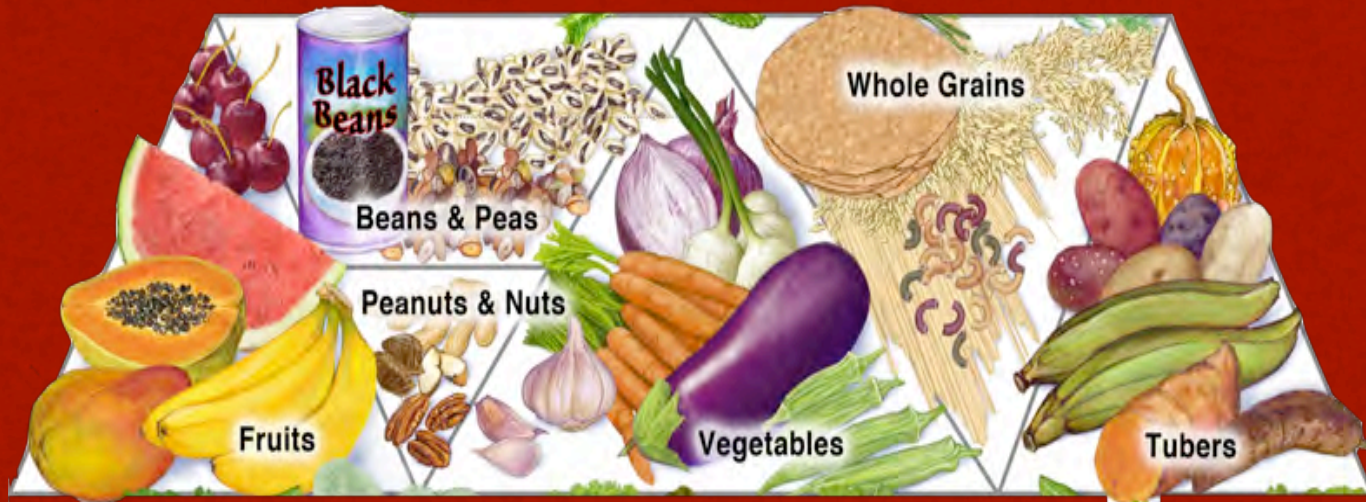
Herbs, Spices, Homemade Sauces:

Wonderful sources of nutrients and antioxidants and flavor--especially when used in place of sodium. They also provide defining flavors to the plates of expression of the different regions of African Heritage.



The Plant Foods

Beans & Peas • Whole Grains • Fruits • Peanuts & Nuts • Vegetables • Tubers



Plant Based Diets have been shown to offer significant health benefits. They are recommended today to help prevent and treat many chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and certain cancers.

Leafy Greens:

Greens have been placed in a category of their own because of their nutritional benefits and overwhelming appearance in African Heritage meals. They are a good source of countless minerals and vitamins.

Healthy Lifestyle:

The Pyramid depicts a holistic approach to a healthy life, including *enjoyable* activities & exercise, gardening, cooking and sharing meals. Plenty of sleep, sunlight, art and dance, and other nourishing hobbies go hand and hand with good food to promote good health.



New Messages of the African Heritage Diet

Boost Flavor with Spices and Herbs

Make Vegetables the Star of Your Plate

Change the Way You Think About Meat

Make Rice & Beans Your New Staple

Embrace Leafy Greens Beyond Just A Garnish

Incorporate Easy One-Pot-Cooking

Find Real Foods Everywhere

Gather Family Support & Healthy Food Fellowship

Make Room For Celebration Foods

Jazz Up Fruits for Dessert

Healthy Drinks to Your Health



The African Heritage Diet Pyramid

An Effective Tool for Bettering Health

- Fills the need for a new approach to diet and health for African Americans
- Helps eliminate barriers to achieving better health and nutrition in the African-American population
- Depicts real foods and food groups
- Innovative messaging
- Comprehensive yet accessible
- Celebratory and inspiring
- Addresses specific issues
 - a. Physical: lactose intolerance, vitamin D deficiency
 - b. Social: “healthy eating” belongs to everyone
 - c. Historical: community fellowship, meaningful memories connected to food





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We Welcome Your Questions

For more
African Heritage & Health
resources and information,
visit www.oldwayspt.org





HEALTH THROUGH HERITAGE

AFRICAN HERITAGE DIET PYRAMID

Claiming Your Health by Claiming Your History

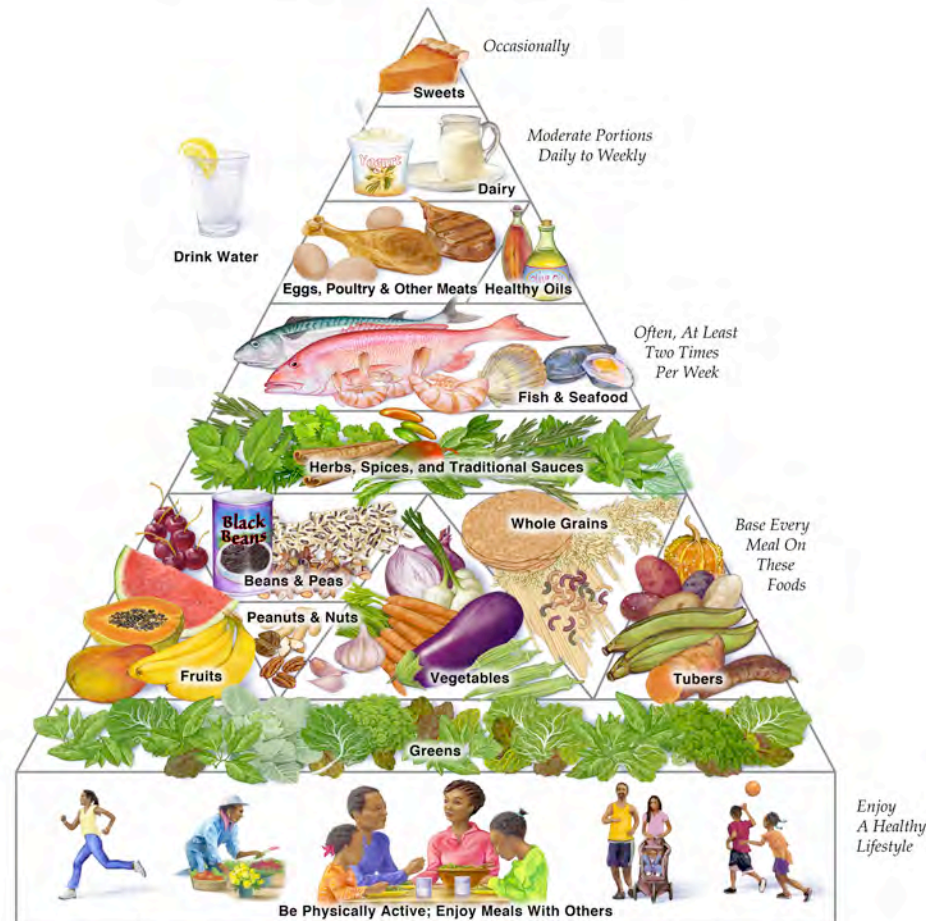


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For additional
questions or
program information
please contact
Program Manager,
Sarah Dwyer:
sdwyer@oldwayspt.org

For press inquiries
please contact
Communications
Manager,
Rachel Greenstein:
rachel@oldwayspt.org

