

This is what one American teen ate in a typical week. But what—and how—do kids in other countries eat? Come take a peek at what's on their plates. (Warning: This story might make you hungry!)



IT'S A TOTAL CLICHÉ: Teens in all corners of the world love pizza, pig out on fries, and suck down so da. And while it's true that the American diet has penetrated the planet (witness: McDonald's, Starbucks, and Dunkin' Donuts now dot the globe), teens in other countries still open the pantry or fridge and see totally different stuff from you. To challenge you to break out of your own nutrition rut, we collected food snapshots from far-flung destinations. The menus may surprise you and even encourage you to adopt new healthy ways of eating. Ready? Let's dig in!

FRANCE

Breakfast rarely includes meat or eggs. Instead, teens might have hot or cold chocolate milk and a sliced baguette (bread in the shape of a long roll) with butter and jam.

Lunch is the day's main meal—

teens take a two-hour break for it! Schools observe strict nutrition rules—not serving fries more than once a week, limiting ketchup portions, and making meat or fish available. At home, lunch is usually three courses.

Dinner is later (often around 8 p.m.) and lighter (no meat!) than it typically is in the U.S., and a very important time for families to get together. French parents love to make a big pot of vegetable soup and serve it for a few days straight. There are often several courses: salad, soup, fried or omelet-style eggs, baguette slices, and yogurt and fruit for dessert.

France's Healthy Secret:



French teens often start their meals with salad or soup.

"Vegetables are rich in fiber, which helps you feel full," explains registered dietitian nutritionist Mary Brighton. It's common to eat three meals a day and one snack, called *le goûter*, like a sweet biscuit or a baguette with some chocolate.

NEW DELHI, INDIA

Breakfast here includes egg bhurji—scrambled eggs with onions, green chilies, tomatoes, fresh ginger, and cilantro, with toast or baked naan or roti (flatbreads); cereal with milk; paratha (pan-fried whole-wheat bread) stuffed with potatoes or cottage cheese; or idli, soft, small pancakes made with steamed rice and lentils.

Lunch School ends at 1 p.m. for most New Delhi students, who have lunch at home. It might be idli; vegetable or chickpea curry or lentils with a salad of onions, cucumbers, and tomatoes; or vegetables cooked with tomatoes, onions, and spices. How to lessen that spicy heat? Homemade yogurt, as a side or poured on top.

Snack time! Morning or mid-evening snack is typically fruit. Students bring their own to school.

Dinner is like lunch, only more elaborate—with an extra dish (most non-vegetarian families prefer to eat meat, poultry, or fish at dinner) and perhaps a dessert like ice cream in the summer or kheer (rice pudding).

India's Healthy Secret:

Indian teens often eat legumes like lentils and chickpeas—as opposed to just meat or poultry—as a source of protein. Registered dietitian nutritionist Linda Arpino, the CEO of Life Focus Nutrition LLC, says a half cup of lentils has the protein of 3 ounces of meat, 10 grams of fiber and only 1 gram of fat.

TOKYO, JAPAN

Breakfast often includes rice, grilled fish, miso soup, and vegetables (such as “sea vegetables” like edible seaweed).

Lunches on Japanese school menus have lots of color and vegetables, like rice cooked with barley plus grilled sardines, carrot salad, winter melon miso soup, edamame, and asparagus dusted with bonito (tuna) flakes.

Dinner in Japan could be curry rice with pork and vegetables, ramen-like noodles stir-fried with pork and vegetables (called yakisoba), soy-and ginger fried chicken nuggets (karaage), or breaded and deep-fried pork cutlets (tonkatsu). These dishes are often served with soup (like miso or corn), plus pickles or another vegetable. It's all about balance.

Japan's Healthy Secret:

Colorful meals! A traditional Japanese bento box will have five colors.

“You’re getting important nutrients from fruit, vegetables, and whole grains that help power your immune system,” Arpino explains. Japanese teens also don’t drink a lot of soda, and they are encouraged to take a bite of everything—picky eating is

KUMASI, GHANA

Breakfast isn’t a big meal among Ghanaian teens. When they do have it, it usually includes bread, rice porridge, or koko—fermented maize (corn) porridge.

Lunch is a starchy staple with a sauce or soup and includes a protein such as tilapia, a fave fish. Sides include cassava (a root vegetable), banku (made of corn and cassava dough), and plantains (a less sweet banana look-alike). Ghanaians add flavor with spices like hot red pepper and ginger.

Dinner is the biggest meal of the day and often families just eat larger portions of what they had at lunch. But at least a few times a week, they’ll go out for street food. There are thousands of local vendors and “chop bars” that offer Ghanaian dishes such as kenkey (a dumpling usually served with pepper sauce, fried fish, or a soup or stew), red-red (a stew traditionally made from beans and red palm oil and served with fried ripe plantains), and waakye (rice and beans).

Ghana's Healthy Secret:

Ghanaians are big on communal living—extended family is treated as immediate family—and food is often served from one large bowl (typically, Ghanaians eat with their right hand, scooping food with the thumb and first two fingers).

“Studies have shown that the people who live the longest and healthiest are the ones who sit down at mealtime, without rushing through meals or grabbing-and-going,” says Arpino.

ICKY, STICKY, OOEY, GOOEY ... AND DELICIOUS!

Our donuts and Doritos may seem crazy to teens in other countries. Don't reject these foreign foods so fast!



Cricket tacos

South America



Haggis, meat pudding cooked in a casing from a sheep's stomach

Scotland