Cooking With Care

developed in partnership with GOYA

Food is not only an important part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, but is a connection to cultures, heritage, countries, faith, and traditions founded years ago. The benefits of cultural foods, traditions, cooking methods and more are being rediscovered today. Learn about the foods of your culture and heritage, or that of others; discover the Center for Disease Control’s National Sodium Reduction Initiative, the USDA’s dietary guidelines, and Goya’s Better for You brochure; explore the existence of food insecurity in our communities and take action to help.

STEPS
Every step has three choices. Do ONE choice to complete each step.
Are you a go-getter? Do more! Complete all five steps to earn the patch.

1. Explore and discover
2. Take a closer look
3. Try out some alternatives
4. Look around your community
5. Take action

PURPOSE
When I’ve completed this patch program I’ll:

- Be aware of how food choices are influenced by cultural traditions; understand the importance of traditional cooking methods and flavors; learn to respect and honor those traditions.
- Practice following and adapting a recipe.
- Be aware of food insecurity in my community and take action to address it.
STEP 1  
Explore and discover

CHOICES — DO ONE:

☐ Select a culture you want to research: either from your own family, or others. Do some research to uncover the many traditions of the culture you selected. Where in the world does this culture originate? How is mealtime important to families that come from these places? What are foods that are native to that country or culture?

OR

☐ Select a culture you want to research: talk with three friends and their families who share the culture you selected. Find out what country their family originated from. What are traditional foods and meals eaten in that country? Is cooking meals together part of their family tradition? What about the traditions of their grandparents or great grandparents?

OR

☐ Select a culture you want to research: visit a museum or listen to an oral history to learn more about the cooking traditions, family life, and native foods of the culture you selected.

STEP 2  
Take a closer look

CHOICES — DO ONE:

☐ Create an infographic that explains the story of one of the native foods you learned about. Reference choosemyplate.gov/sodium and cdc.gov/salt for data to include. What’s that food’s cultural significance? How many varieties does it have? How can it be prepared and served to meet sodium recommendations for a healthy diet?

OR

☐ Visit choosemyplate.gov/sodium and cdc.gov/salt to understand more about sodium intake guidelines for Americans. What are the key recommendations to maintain a healthy diet? Do the cooking methods of the culture you are exploring fit within these guidelines?

OR

☐ Before you go, check out choosemyplate.gov/sodium and cdc.gov/salt to understand more about sodium intake guidelines for Americans, then visit an ethnic restaurant or grocery store. Talk with the staff to understand how they make choices when preparing their dishes. What are the portion sizes? What herbs and spices do they use? At the grocery store, look closely at the foods available: what is the country of origin listed on the labels? Do they carry low-sodium and reduced-sodium versions of the cultural foods?
**STEP 3** Try out some alternatives

CHOICES — DO ONE:

- Read through old world cookbooks from the culture you’re exploring and choose three recipes to combine into a meal. Prepare and sample the dishes using traditional ingredients and cooking methods. Read through Goya’s Better For You brochure, then recreate your recipes using low-sodium cooking methods and see how they compare.

OR

- Host a family dinner party where you serve low-sodium versions of traditional ethnic recipes based on tips you learned in Goya’s Better For You brochure. Invite each guest to bring a dish and then talk about the changes they made to the recipe to make it lower in sodium, yet maintain the traditional taste.

OR

- Find an adult relative, friend, or neighbor who is knowledgeable about the culture you’re exploring and ask that person to help you cook a traditional dish. Write down the recipe as you cook. After reading Goya’s Better for You brochure, create an alternate version of the recipe that uses healthier cooking methods; include ingredients that are low-sodium or have no added salt. Experiment with seasoning the food just before eating it.

**STEP 4** Look around your community

CHOICES — DO ONE:

- Tour a local food bank and food pantry. Find out how they operate and what the differences are. What is the heritage of their clientele? Ask what steps, if any, they take to offer low-sodium and low-sugar foods. How do they address cultural or religious preferences (Kosher, Halal, etc.)? What about food allergies?

OR

- Define “food insecurity,” and explore the cultural makeup of your community. What percentage of your community suffers from food insecurity? How close is a cultural grocery store? What is the availability of plain fresh, or frozen fruits and vegetables? What are local resources for these families?

OR

- Define “food insecurity.” Create a list of resources for families in your community suffering from food insecurity. Highlight sources of help for families affected by food allergies or who have religious and cultural preferences (Kosher, Halal, etc.).
STEP 5 Take action

CHOICES — DO ONE:

☐ Using all of your new knowledge create a cookbook or menu with updated, healthier recipes for traditional ethnic dishes. Include an educational section on dietary guidelines and sodium reduction techniques. Make a plan to share the cookbook with your family and local shelters, food banks, or soup kitchens who would benefit from these cooking methods.

OR

☐ Explore Goya’s MyPlate recipes online and, using your new knowledge and dietary resources, choose some to combine into meals. Collect ingredients for your selected recipes and create meal “kits.” Find a community partner to help you distribute the kits to families in need.

OR

☐ Talk with the General Manager at your local grocery store. Set up a meeting to discuss the store’s cultural food section and all that you’ve learned about making smart choices when cooking. What cultures are represented? Does the store carry low-sodium, low-sugar, low-saturated fat options of these cultural foods? What changes can be made to bring healthier items to their store shelves?