

Around the World in 5 Days

A young boy with curly hair, wearing a red t-shirt, is smiling and pointing his right hand towards a globe. The globe is stylized with a grid of latitude and longitude lines. Two cartoon faces are superimposed on the globe: one is light blue with large white eyes and a small orange tongue sticking out, and the other is light green with large white eyes. The background is a solid bright blue.

Give student
customers
a tour of exotic
countries during
National School
Breakfast Week.

Are you ready for National School Breakfast Week (NSBW), March 5-9, 2007? This year's celebration promises to be an exciting adventure, as the theme explores "A World of School Breakfasts." As you prepare, be sure to check out the international menu suggestions, activity ideas and resources in your April 2006 issue of School Foodservice & Nutrition. Also, find merchandise from the Emporium at <http://emporium.schoolnutrition.org> or (800) 728-0728. This year, the Emporium will offer special stickers to give to students who discover the wide world of school breakfasts. And don't forget to take advantage of free media and promotion tools included in the NSBW Toolkit, sponsored by General Mills Bakeries and Foodservice and available at www.schoolnutrition.org/nsbw.



In addition, enjoy the following facts about breakfast around the world—perhaps you can add them to your NSBW menu backs, flyers or bulletin-board displays. While space does not permit *SF&N* to include *every* country and region around the globe, this is a fun taste of a few exciting cultures, with details provided by the CIA's *World Factbook*, CuisineNet.com and eDiplomat.com. Enjoy!

The Exotic East

Breakfasts in Asia vary widely, from China's *congee* (rice pudding), deep-fried dough or fish to Korea's *kimchi*, a fermented cabbage dish. You'll also find Singapore's *kaya* (pronounced "car-yah"), a coconut-vanilla-pandan jam that's typically spread on toast. Rice is popular throughout Asia, while some other foods actually may be restricted. In Indonesia, with its high Muslim population, sausage and other pork products never would be served at breakfast.

Some variances in table manners might surprise you, too. In China, when you finish eating, you should lay your dirty chopsticks on the table, *not* your plate. In nearby

Taiwan, some people will spit leftover bones on the table or floor to avoid using their fingers to remove them from their mouths. In Japan, some claim that noodles taste better when you slurp them loudly! Also, belching is considered complimentary in a few countries, such as China.

In Malaysia, the host will offer a drink while holding it with both hands, and it is considered polite to accept it with both hands. Malaysians never use their left hands to eat. It is similar in India. If your host doesn't use utensils, you should eat with the thumb and first few fingers of your right hand—but always use a spoon to take food from shared dishes. In Thailand, food often is eaten with a fork—and a tablespoon!

In the Philippines, it is polite to invite an individual to a meal, but the invitation isn't official unless it has been repeated about three times. At the meal, it's considered polite to decline the host's first offer of food but to accept the second offer. You should keep your hands above the table at all times. The way you use your hands in South Korea also can demonstrate good manners: Any time you pass or take food, use your right hand while holding your left hand under your right wrist or forearm. People in Vietnam also think it's best to hold

your rice bowl as you eat, rather than leaving it on the table.

Usually men are served first in Indonesia; the host is served last; and guests must wait to eat until they're asked to. When you finish the meal, put your fork, tines down, on your plate and cross your spoon over it. Indonesians enjoy hearing compliments about their meals. Indians similarly value humility on the part of their guests. They might greet you by placing flowers around your neck but appreciate it if you remove the garland after a few minutes and carry it instead.

In most Eastern countries, it's important to eat continually throughout the meal, but leave a little food on your plate, indicating that your host has more than satisfied you. One way to deal with this is to continually nibble at your meal! The Japanese in particular appreciate it if you try at least a little of every dish offered. Also, if you are offered the seat of honor in the East, it often is considered humble to refuse a couple of times before accepting.

Germanic Nations

In many Germanic countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands), breakfast is a smorgasbord! You might try cereal, eggs, different types of bread, cold meats, cheese, yogurt or fruits. Drinks range from light beverages like fruit juice to specialties like hot chocolate. In the Netherlands, you can drink a special treat called *anijsmelk*, which is milk flavored with aniseed. The Dutch also are crazy for herring, even in the morning! In Sweden, you might add *filmjolk*, a yogurt-like milk, to your cereal. In Germany, people tend to prefer soft-boiled eggs. Many Austrians eat two breakfasts—a light one early in the morning and a "fork breakfast" later on.

It's common for citizens of Germanic nations to insist on perfect punctuality for social meals, and they likely will expect you to be particular about the way you



use your knife. If you can, avoid cutting any cooked food with it, because that implies your host didn't cook the food all the way. In Germany and the Netherlands, however, it's okay to use your knife on sandwiches and fruit. Cut your fish with either a fish knife or use two forks.

Some etiquette rules in these countries are tricky. For example, from Austria to Switzerland, most agree that it is impolite to place your hands under the table. However, you can't allow your elbows to rest *on* the table! In Germany, it's considered rude to add sauce or spices to a meal someone else has cooked. And in the Netherlands, you should never leave the table until the meal ends—even to use the restroom!

Customs about socializing also vary. In Austria, Denmark, Finland and Norway, guests might linger long afterward to talk, but in Germany and the Netherlands, diners usually adjourn shortly after finishing their meals. In many Germanic countries, you can indicate that you are finished by placing your fork and knife side by side on your plate at a slight angle. Leaving an empty plate indicates you enjoyed the

meal—and did not waste your host's resources.

Latin America

In Central America, eggs are prevalent and featured widely in breakfast foods. For example, on the Yucatan peninsula, Central Americans relish *huevos motulenos*, which are fresh tortillas covered with refried beans, fried egg, ham, peas and cheese. People also enjoy chocolate and coffee drinks, such as *tascalate* (chocolate, pine nuts, sugar, vanilla and *achiote* spice) and *café de olla* (coffee with cinnamon and brown sugar). Costa Ricans take pride in their *gallo pinto* dish of fried rice, black beans, eggs, sour cream and spices. A few other popular breakfast items include fruit, *chorizo* (a spicy sausage), *pan dulce* (sweet bread), fried plantains (similar to fried bananas) and tortillas.

South Americans, on the other hand, tend to eat a lighter breakfast of bread and tea or coffee. They might eat a snack later in the morning; for example, Bolivians munch *saltenas*, which are pastries filled with meat,

peas, potatoes, eggs, raisins and olives. Some foods are meant specifically for breakfast, such as the *café con leche* (coffee with milk) Argentines enjoy only in the morning.

A European influence is clear in some areas. Chileans appreciate it if you hold your fork in your left hand only, as most Europeans do. Bolivians and Brazilians take it one step further, using utensils to touch *all* food items, even fruit!

While eating habits differ widely throughout Latin America, cultural habits are fairly consistent. Most social meals begin minutes or even hours after the official start time. To some, arriving on time is insulting! It's considered impolite to put your hands below the table. In Bolivia, complimenting the food usually means you want more. Latin Americans often linger after a meal to chat.

Many Latin Americans show affection by showering their guests with food. For example, Paraguayans typically encourage guests to eat seconds and truly delight in hearing that you are enjoying the meal. It is acceptable to clean your plate. But whatever you do, don't use a toothpick in Argentina, Chile or Uruguay; it's considered downright disgusting!

The United Kingdom

Multiple-course breakfasts are popular in the United Kingdom, especially ones that feature meat! The Brits love bacon and sausage, but also mutton chops, kidneys and smoked fish. And like Americans, they enjoy cereal, coffee, eggs, oatmeal, toast and, of course, tea. With a significant Indian population in the country, traditional Indian breakfast foods also are gaining popularity. Brits might eat *hoppers*, which are similar to Indian rice pancakes, or a meat-filled version of *kichri*, an Indian dish of lentils, rice and spices.

The Irish are even crazier for breakfast meat than the British, and they also enjoy meat puddings. The Scots reportedly



invented such breakfast foods as oatcakes, scones and *Arbroath smokies*, which are smoked haddock pieces. Among the sea-loving folk of Wales, you might try *laverbread*, which is seaweed that resembles spinach, or fried *cockles*, which are like clams!

As in Latin America, many hosts in England appreciate it when guests arrive 10-20 minutes *after* the official start time. Elsewhere in the United Kingdom, however, it's considered good manners to be punctual. As in Germanic nations, it's proper to keep your hands, but not your elbows, on the table. And similar to some parts of Asia, it's considered polite to leave a little food on your plate. Unlike many other regions, a guest of honor in the U.K. rarely eats first; you should wait for the host to begin. The host also signals the end of the meal by folding his or her napkin. However, the guest of honor initiates the end of the *visit* by being the

first of the guests to leave. While it's polite to show appreciation for the meal, the Brits tend to prefer understatement to wild enthusiasm.

Western Europe

Have you ever heard the term "Continental breakfast"? Western Europe is where it began! People in such nations as Belgium, France and Spain tend to enjoy a simple breakfast of coffee and bread. They often add sugar, spices or special twists to the

meal. For example, the Spanish might have *chocolate con churos*—hot chocolate served with cinnamon-sugar doughnuts. In France, cut your cheese vertically, without discarding its end. The French also believe you should peel and slice your fruit, rather than eat it whole!

Punctuality for arriving at a meal tends to vary. In Spain, it's not inconsiderate to be 30 minutes late; in Luxembourg, possibly 15 minutes; but in other places, be on the dot! Special seating arrangements apply for formal guests dining in Belgium and France: A male guest of honor is seated to the right of the hostess and a female guest of honor sits to the right of the host. A French host will signal the start of a meal, but elsewhere, the guest should begin.

If you have enjoyed your meal and want seconds, cross your utensils on your plate. In much of Western Europe, this signifies a request for more food. When you finish, place your utensils parallel to each other across your plate. It's usually considered polite to finish everything on your plate. An exception is Portugal, where it is complimentary to leave a bite or two. **SF&N**

Present Your Passport

As your student customers travel from country to country during National School Breakfast Week 2007, you will want to ensure that they are presenting official documentation of their journey! Among the many different resources you will find on the official "A World of School Breakfasts" web pages at SchoolNutrition.Org is the Breakfast Passport, which

you can download and distribute to students. The Breakfast Passport includes fun facts about breakfasts served around the globe and will help kids track how many times they ate school breakfast. Visit www.schoolnutrition.org/nsbw to learn more!

