



Dairy and food culture: enriching dietary patterns and multicultural Australia

Executive summary

Our sustainability **COMMITMENTS**



Enhancing economic viability
and livelihoods



Improving wellbeing
of people



Providing best care
for all our animals



Reducing
environmental impact

Embracing multiculturalism and culturally safe practice

Australia's rich multicultural society results in diverse health professionals, who come from and work with people from a wide range of vibrant, geographical and cultural backgrounds.

Culturally safe practice involves understanding the perspectives of all people and working with them ethically and effectively in culturally sensitive, responsive, and inclusive ways. People connect to their culture and ethnicity through food and culinary practices. Therefore, it is vital that healthcare professionals are competent in and consider a deep appreciation and understanding of cultural dietary patterns. This resource is designed to support your journey in building competencies in dairy and its place in culinary cultures.



Key messages



Australia is recognised as one of the most vibrant, multicultural societies in the world which, in turn, shapes our rich food culture



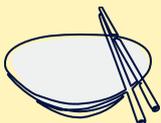
Embracing multiculturalism and diverse culinary cultures can have a positive influence on the dietary patterns and health of all Australians



Access to healthy, culturally appropriate food is critical for food security and sustainable diets in culturally, linguistically diverse populations



Culturally safe practice involves understanding the perspectives of all people and working with them ethically and effectively in culturally sensitive, responsive, and inclusive ways



Many migrant groups in Australia have a long, intricate history with dairy foods, as core components of their lifestyles and diets across the lifespan, but also as part of feasts, fasting, festivals, religious and celebratory events



Public health nutrition, dietary interventions and guidelines must embrace multicultural Australia and support the maintenance and honouring of cultural heritage

Changing trends in migration and maintaining cultural heritage

The richness of Australia's society and culinary culture is largely related to its position as one of the most multicultural countries in the world. A recent estimate shows that 30 per cent of Australia's population was born overseas.¹

- New migrants to Australia bring with them a wealth of knowledge and practices of the culinary culture of their homeland, and when able to, generally resist dietary acculturation, that is, they work to maintain their culinary heritage; this allows for transmission of culinary knowledge and can be health protective.²
- From vibrant multi-cultural food festivals to an abundance of cuisine choice when dining out, migrant culture has enviably shaped Australia's food landscape and is recognised globally.³

- 1 Australian Bureau of Statistics. Migration, Australia. Available from: abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/migration-australia/latest-release.
- 2 Australian Bureau of Statistics. Migration, Australia. Available from: abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/migration-australia/latest-release.
- 3 Satia-About J. Dietary acculturation: definition, process, assessment, and implications. *Int J Hum Ecol.* 2003;4(1):71-86.

Australia and the modern global dairy scene

Dairy is often described as a very Anglo-Saxon Australian tradition, with typical consumption of milk with breakfast cereal or yoghurt for dessert, when in fact mammalian milk products have an omnipresent role around the globe; many migrant groups to Australia have a long, intricate history with dairy foods, as core components of their lifestyles and diets across the lifespan, but also as part of feasts, fasting, festivals, religious and celebratory events.



Dairy around the globe - modern dietary guidelines

From English cheddar to Iraqi kashk, dairy foods have a significant history and modern use in cuisines, dietary patterns, and dietary guidelines in all corners of the globe.

Snapshot of examples of international dietary guideline recommendations on dairy⁴

Country	Dairy for adults
United States	3 serves/day (1 serve = 1 cup milk equivalent)
Brazil	No recommendation for number of dairy serves/day or what a serve of dairy is, but suggestion to avoid sweetened and flavoured dairy
United Kingdom	Some, choose lower fat options
The Netherlands	Sufficient dairy products, milk, cheese, and yoghurt (2-3 serves/day milk and dairy plus 40g cheese/day, where 1 serve = 150g)
France	2 serves/day (1 serve = 150mL milk, 125g yoghurt, 30g cheese)
Italy	3 serves/day (1 serve = 125mL milk, 125g yoghurt or other fermented milk products), 3 serves/week (1 serve = 100g cheese <25% fat, 50g cheese >25% fat)
Türkiye	500g milk or yoghurt, milk no or low fat, yoghurt, and cheese low salt
Greece	2 serves/day (1 serve = 150mL milk, 150g yoghurt, 30g hard cheese, 60g soft cheese)
Arab countries	2-3 serves/day (1 serve = 1 cup milk, 45g cheese, 1 tablespoon cream cheese)
China	300-500g milk and dairy products/day, with a variety recommended
India	3 serves/day (1 serve = 100mL milk or 100g milk products)
Pakistan	2-3 serves/day (1 serve = 1 cup of milk, kheer, feerni (or other milk-based products equivalent to nutrients supplied by 1 cup of milk), yoghurt or 1 slice of cheese)
Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Honduras	3 serves weekly recommendation
Australia	1.5-4 serves per day, depending on age/life stage. (1 serve = 250mL milk, 200g yoghurt, 40g cheese)

⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization. Food-based dietary guidelines. Available: [fao.org/nutrition/education/food-based-dietary-guidelines/regions/countries/en/](https://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-based-dietary-guidelines/regions/countries/en/).



Recommendations

Fostering culturally sensitive and safe practice involves continual professional development and training.

Health professionals are encouraged to:

- Advocate for dietary policy and practice, including food, nutrition, and dietary guidelines, to be culturally inclusive, representative and promote cultural heritage for all Australians
- Seek ongoing opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of the diverse diets and culinary cultures of our multicultural society through formal learning and informal activity, such as at multicultural festivals and events
- Track global food trends, dietary patterns, and international dietary guidelines particularly in relation to newly arrived migrant and refugee groups to Australia
- Embrace multiculturalism, ethnic cuisines, and culinary nutrition in professional practice to positively influence the dietary variety and patterns of all Australians
- Approach nutrition interventions and education with cultural sensitivity and safety and consider co-design and/or co-delivery with migrant or cultural representatives
- Recognise the role of dairy foods, their significant history and modern use in cuisines, dietary patterns, and dietary guidelines in all corners of the globe

Glossary

- Culinary culture – all the elements that make up and inform the culinary beliefs and practices of a group
- Food culture – a component of culinary culture that focuses specifically on the growth, production and consumption practices and behaviours of a group or population
- Dietary pattern – the quantity, variety, or combination of different foods and beverages in a diet and the frequency with which they are habitually consumed
- Dietary guidelines – informal nutrition education and formal tools that translate the evidence-based science of nutrient requirements to a practical pattern of food choices appropriate for a population
- Culturally safe practice – understanding the perspectives of all people and working with them ethically and effectively in culturally sensitive, responsive, and inclusive ways
- Dietary acculturation – a process where migrants or a minority group adopt the dietary practices of a host country, region or majority group, and at the same time the host population adopts dietary practices of the migrant or minority group