

Examining Food Pyramids

Image	Description
	The Healthy Eating Plate was created by nutrition experts at Harvard School of Public Health and Harvard Medical School. The plate is based exclusively on the best available science and was not subject to any commercial or political pressures from any food industry lobbyists. The Healthy Eating Plate was designed to address deficiencies in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s MyPlate. The Healthy Eating Plate provides detailed guidance, in a simple format, to help people make the best eating choices. The main message of the plate is a focus on diet quality. For example, the Healthy Eating Plate encourages consumers to use healthy oil. It does not set a maximum on the number of calories from fat, pushing against the low-fat message promoted for decades by the USDA.
	The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) introduced MyPlate in 2011 as an entirely new graphic of a portioned plate aimed to provide a visual reminder of the importance of nutrition. Several leading nutrition experts say the guidelines were influenced too much by food manufacturers, food producers, and special interest groups. Many experts say some of the government's diet advice is based on out-of-date research from years past. Since its initial design, however, several revisions have been made to provide users with more current nutritional information regarding food choices. For example, the current version of the plate now suggests consumers make at least half of their grain consumption whole grains.

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Image	Description
	The Double Food and Environmental Pyramid was developed by the Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition (a nonprofit organization with ties to Barilla Foods, the world’s largest pasta manufacturer). The pyramid shows both food’s contribution to a healthy diet and food’s environmental impact. The food pyramid on the left is based on the Mediterranean diet and is rich in vegetables, fruits, nuts, unrefined grains, and small amounts of fish and other meats. Many studies have shown the Mediterranean diet to be effective in helping to lower the risk of chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease. The environmental pyramid on the right reclassifies each food relative to its environmental impact with the foods that use the most resources at the top of the pyramid. The Double Pyramid is designed to communicate the relationship between nutritionally recommended foods and their environmental impact.
	This version of the Navajo Food Pyramid shows how traditional foods helped Navajo ancestors stay healthy. The Navajo pyramid emphasizes the importance of fruits and vegetables in the diet and stresses consumption of edible plant items. The pyramid also includes meat, but Navajo community members recognize that meat is not the only source of protein, and people should consider the impact that meat consumption has on the planet. The pyramid was an attempt to use a Western concept (a food pyramid) to communicate the traditional Navajo approach to food.

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