

Improving the benefits of the food we eat

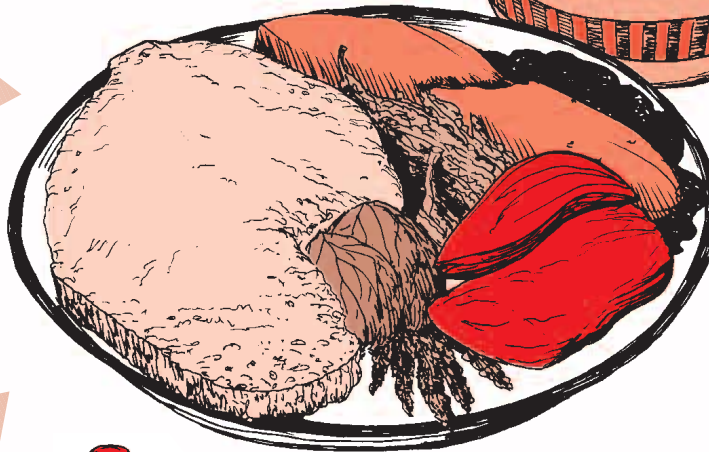
To add to the nutritional value of a meal, always try to mix the staple food (such as maize, rice, plantain, potato) with some kind of vegetable, beans, meat or nuts as a relish. Even small amounts of relish add taste and nutritional value (vitamins, minerals, protein). Remember that even though women and children may eat less staple food, everyone needs the same amount of relish.

Some ideas for relishes



Green leaves, edible wild plants and flowers, herbs

Dark green vegetables, especially many traditional plants, are good sources of vitamins A and C, which help protect against illness. Herbs add flavour and can be gathered wild or grown.



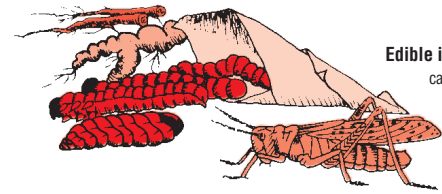
Moringa leaf sauce

The leaves of the moringa tree can be used to make a nutritious sauce. Steam two cups of fresh leaves for a few minutes in one cup of water. Add salt, chopped onions, butter or other seasonings according to taste.



A tablespoon of palm oil

Oil adds flavour and is good for children who are growing. You can also make cooking oil from crushed groundnuts, soya beans or moringa seeds.

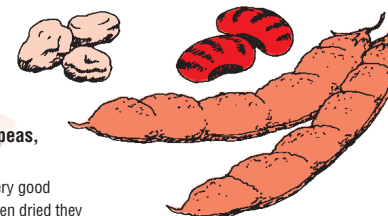


Edible insects such as ants, caterpillars, grasshoppers and locusts are often high in protein and vitamins.



Moringa leaf powder

Moringa leaves can be dried (out of direct sunlight to preserve vitamins) and crushed into a fine powder, which can be stored and added to soups and sauces. The powder is an excellent source of vitamin A. Add two or three spoonfuls of powder to rice, soups and sauces just before serving (see recipe on page 2).



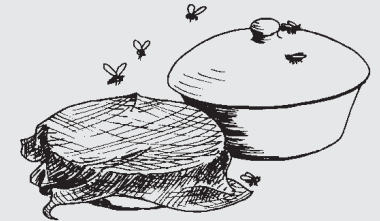
A handful of lentils, peas, groundnuts or beans

All kinds of pulses are very good sources of nutrients. When dried they can be stored for a long time.



Good hygiene

- Wash hands well with soap and water before preparing food.
- Make sure all pans, dishes and tools used in preparing food are clean.
- Keep uncooked meat and fish away from cooked foods.
- Serve food fresh – don't leave cooked food to sit around before eating. Milk, fish, cooked meat and cooked rice will spoil quickly.
- Flies carry disease, so always cover food to keep them away.



Preparing food

- **Don't overcook** or over-boil vegetables as this removes many vitamins.
- **Brown unmilled rice and wholewheat flour** contain more nutrients than white rice or flour.

Milling rice

Rice grains need processing before they can be eaten. The outer, inedible husk needs to be removed by pounding by hand or in a mill. The brown rice grains consist of an outer layer of bran and an inner white grain. Rice is usually milled to remove the outer layer to give white, polished rice. This is the preferred rice that is eaten by millions of people each day. However, milling removes a lot of valuable nutrients. Brown unmilled rice, like brown wholewheat flour, is a much better food nutritionally and has a delicious nutty flavour.

However, brown rice does not store as well as polished rice. In India, rice is traditionally steamed or boiled for a few minutes, dried and then husked. This loosens the husks, making them easier to remove, and reduces the loss of nutrients during polishing. The heating also prevents the rice from spoiling during storage. This process is known as *parboiling* and is widely used throughout India.