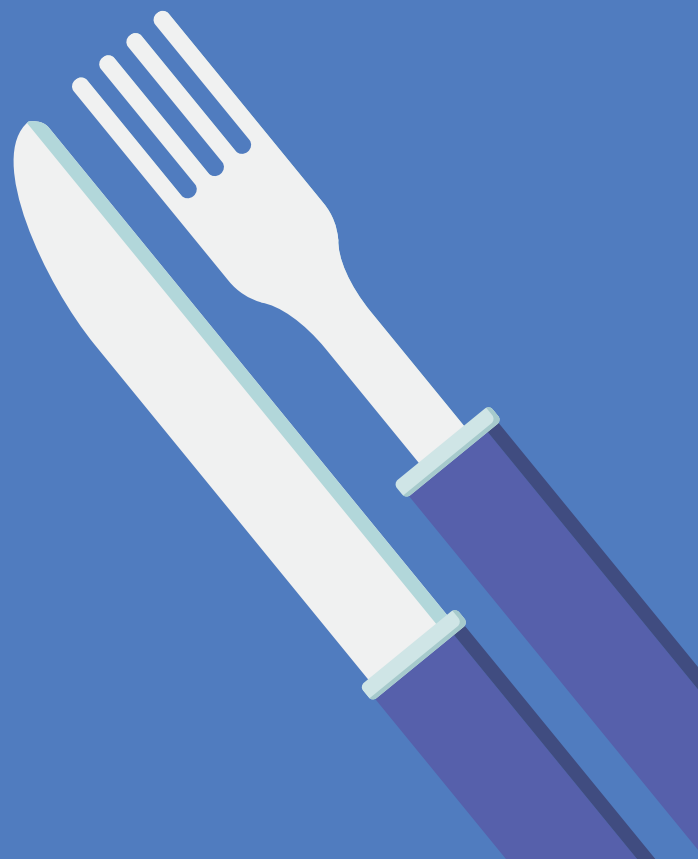




Highland Food Guide

Everyday Eating



This guide has been produced to help you think about the food you eat. It is designed to help you eat well. By 'eating well' we mean:

- Enjoying the food you eat.
- Eating foods that nourish you.
- Choosing foods that support your health & wellbeing.
- Eating foods that are sustainable.

We all know that eating well can help to keep your heart and bones healthy in the long term. How we eat and what we eat can help us feel good today, next week and over the next few months. Our energy levels and mood are all affected by *what* and *how* we eat.

What We Eat

The image in Figure 1.0 shows what should be on our plates every day. The smaller circles shown for fruit and dairy are outside of the main plate. This is because they are often eaten as a snack, dessert or drink. Sometimes, they will be part of the main plate.

The different sections of the plate, side dishes and glasses are shown in the way we typically eat these foods. The main plate shows just three main groups of food. These are:

- Potatoes & cereals
- vegetables & salads
- and protein foods.

Figure 1.0
Plates with everyday foods



Potatoes & cereals (starchy foods)

A large section of the main plate is made of potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other cereals or grain based foods. These are all high in starchy carbohydrates. They give us energy. Some types also give us fibre.

Vegetables & Salad

Vegetables and salad give us fibre, water and lots of vitamins and minerals. This is also a large part of the plate because we need plenty of these foods to stay healthy.

Protein

Only a small amount of our plate needs to have high protein foods, e.g. beans, nuts, cheese, fish and meat. This is shown as the smallest group. Protein is needed for growth, repair and many other functions of the body.

Fruit & Nuts

Fruit and nuts are shown together as common snack foods. Fruit gives us fibre, water and lots of vitamins and minerals. Nuts are a good snack as they are high in fibre and minerals. They are also high in protein and can be used instead of meat, fish or pulses, but in Scotland they are more likely to be eaten as a snack.

Milk & Yoghurt

Milk and yoghurt are high in calcium. This is important for healthy bones. They are also high in protein. People who cannot tolerate dairy foods can choose a milk substitute that has added calcium. Cheese is also high in calcium and protein but we've shown it on the main plate as an alternative to meat, fish, beans and pulses.

Oils & fats

We've not shown oils or fats on our plate as we tend not to eat them separately. Many people like butter or spread on their bread, dressing on their salad, stir fried vegetables, or oil for shallow frying. Use what you like in the amounts that make sense to you.

Your plate does not need to look like this every meal. The point is that eating each of these four groups everyday will help us feel good and stay well.

The sizes of the different groups are a useful guide. If you are active and very hungry, you might want a lot of potatoes or grain based foods with your meal. If you are not so active, make that group smaller and fill up more on the veg. The protein group is small as we don't need much. Keeping the meat portion small is a good way to eat more sustainably. Meat production has a big impact on the environment.

Have **less** red and processed meat, sugar, salt and alcohol and **more** vegetables, fruit, fish, nuts and seeds.

Switch to rapeseed or olive oil, and high fibre wholegrain foods.

How We Eat

Eating food we enjoy is the most obvious way that food makes us feel good.

Try new foods – often we need to try new foods a few times before we like them. Eating a wide variety of different foods gives you taste, texture and colour. It helps you get all you need from food.

Eat when you are hungry, and stop when you are full. Gauge what your body needs. Over time we often learn to ignore these signals so it is important to tune in to them.

Eat with friends and family when you can. It can be more enjoyable than eating alone.

Take time to cook and eat, and share recipes and cooking tips.

Shopping thoughtfully and being wary of advertising and marketing may mean we buy fewer highly processed foods. Instead, we are more likely to buy fresh and locally produced food. It may also mean that we don't fall into the trap of buying food we don't need. This reduces waste and helps us stick to budgets.

Shopping

Highland Food Shopping Guide - Food Group Basket

We've made a shopping basket to inspire you next time you go shopping.

Our (trolley sized!) basket contains the kinds of food that are important for your health & wellbeing. You don't need to eat all of them at every meal but they could be eaten over the course of a week. It also contains some of the things you might want to use to turn these ingredients into tasty meals.



As you think about what to buy, you'll need to think about the best place to get these things. You'll also probably have a limit to how much you are willing or able to spend on food. If money is really tight, eating well can be hard as it's often the only thing you can cut back on. Eating less meat is often a healthy and sustainable way to save money on food. It can take a bit of "trial and error" to find tasty alternatives.

There are lots of cheap nutritious foods to choose from but they are not always as obvious, heavily promoted, or as simple to prepare as the less healthy alternatives. If you are good at planning and cooking, and you have a wide range of tastes, you might still be able to eat quite well on a tight budget. Of course, if time is tight, you might decide to pay a little more for convenience. Just bear in mind that foods that are both cheap **and** convenient aren't always that nourishing or even that enjoyable.

As well as supermarkets, think about any local, small shops you have. Is there a fish van that comes to your area? Is there a take-away? What about produce straight from the farm, an allotment, your garden or even your windowsill! Don't forget box schemes and online shopping. Maybe some of these would help you eat well but you are not in the habit of using them?

Contents of the basket		
Content	Nutrient	Comment
Vegetables	Vitamins, magnesium, fibre	Varied, regularly & in large portions
Fruit	Vitamins & fibre	Whole fruit is better than juice. Limit juice to 1 small glass a day
Potatoes & Grains (eg: breads, oatcakes, porridge, breakfast cereals, rice, pasta)	Fibre & energy	Wholegrain & high fibre versions are best
Fish and seafood	Protein, Iodine, Selenium, omega 3	Twice a week (unless vegetarian!) Include oily fish
Beans, nuts, lentils & other pulses	Protein, Fibre, Zinc, Iron, B vitamins	If you eat meat, try making a meal with these instead & twice a day for vegetarians
Meat	Iron, Zinc, B vitamins	White or red meat. Limit red meat and processed meat like sausages, ham and bacon.
Eggs	Iron, selenium, B vitamins	Try to eat weekly or daily. Good alternative to meat.
Dairy (Milk, cheese & yoghurt)	Protein, Calcium, Iodine, B Vitamins	Try to eat daily. Full fat or lower fat – your choice!

Cook's ingredient	
Butter or spread	For spreading, cooking or baking. Choose whichever you prefer the taste of but not too much.
Oil and fat	Rapeseed oil and olive oil are good for salads, cooking and even in some home baking. Vegetable oil is OK too. Hard fats like lard are OK to include in small amounts. Try to avoid too many deep fried foods.
Vinegar, lemon or lime	Vinegar and juice from citrus fruits are a great way to give your food a fresh tang. They can help flavour almost any food. Plain yoghurt will have a similar effect.
Herbs	Dried herbs like oregano are great as a store cupboard ingredient. Try growing some fresh herbs on your window sill or in the garden.
Spices	Most people have pepper, but a number of other spices are great for curries, chillies, soups and home baking.
Salt, soy sauce, fish sauce, stock cubes	These are all useful for seasoning food as you cook it. They are all high in salt so go easy on them!
Flour	If you want to thicken a sauce or home bake, you'll probably want to have some flour in the cupboard. Ground almonds are a good alternative.
Sugar, honey, syrup, treacle	Desserts and home baking often use quite a bit of sugar or syrup. Very small amounts of sugar or honey can also enhance savoury dishes. Most of us already have more sugar in our diet that is healthy so use sensibly.

Shopping Guide - Convenience Food

Convenience meals and snacks might be in our basket if we are short of time or we just fancy them! We are not suggesting you need these things all the time. It's really just to make the point that most of us eat and drink some of the things in this basket some of the time. These can be classed as 'sometimes' food. They are OK to eat sometimes, but not everyday.

Type of food or drink	
Take-Away & "Ready Meals"	Take-aways are often high in fat and salt and lacking in veg. So add vegetables, salad, and potatoes or bread to these meals.
Alcohol	Low risk drinking recommendations are to have no more than 14 units a week, with several alcohol free days per week.
High sugar snacks & drinks (Squash, sweetened fizzy drinks, jam, cakes, biscuits, chocolate, sweets, etc)	Sugary drinks and snacks give us sugar but little nutrition.
Savoury snack foods and sauces (Crisps, olives, salted nuts, meat pies, sausage rolls, salami, ketchup, brown sauce)	These foods tend to be high in fat and/or salt.

Top Tips

- Enjoy eating and being active
- Eat when you are hungry and stop when you are full
- Try new foods when you can
- Eat with friends or family when you can
- Shop thoughtfully, make a list (think about waste, local, fair trade etc)
- Be wary of food advertising and marketing
- Take time to cook when you can
- Share recipes and cooking tips
- Base most of your diet on whole foods (unprocessed food)
- Have more vegetables, fruit, oily fish, nuts and seeds
- Switch to rapeseed or olive oil, and high fibre wholegrain foods
- Have less red and processed meat, sugar, salt and alcohol
- Drink about 2 litres of water a day

Notes

