

**Topic: Food Is For the Stomach**

**Let's get started . . .** Draw a picture of a food or meal that you like to eat or cook:

Talk about your picture.

**Story:** Jhumpa Lahiri did NOT learn to cook from her mother. Her mother was a great cook. She always used very fresh garlic, ginger and spices. She made delicious Bengali foods. Why didn't Jhumpa learn to cook from her mother?

Mom Lahiri was "queen" in her kitchen. Her cooking methods were secret, even from her daughter, Jhumpa. People asked, "How do you make this?" Mom Lahiri would say, "Oh, it's nothing, really. You just take all the ingredients and put them in the pot."



After Jhumpa grew up, she learned to cook from recipe books and websites. One day, she went home to India and cooked a meal for her mother. Mom Lahiri watched Jhumpa cook. Mom Lahiri saw that Jhumpa was a very good cook. Finally, Mom Lahiri began to share her secrets: "I always put a little sugar in my curry." "Add a little water to the spices before you put them in the pan."<sup>1</sup>



**In pairs, talk about food and cooking for 5-10 minutes:**

Try to complete one or more of these sentences with information about your life. Give detail if you can.

For breakfast, I eat . . .

For dinner, I eat . . .

When I was a child, I liked to eat . . .

When I was a child, I didn't like to eat . . .

My parents made me eat . . .

**Share your partner's answers with the group.**



**Discussion Questions - talk in pairs or small groups. Change groups from time to time.**

Are there some foods that people might eat at every meal in your home culture? (For example, rice, bread, corn, yams, etc.) How often do people eat these foods? Are there some beverages that people drink at any time of day in your home culture?

In Japan there is a saying, "Eat until you are 80% full." Compare and contrast eating, cooking, restaurants & health in your home culture and in U.S. culture. (What's similar? What's different?)

Is it bad to throw away food in your home culture? Is it **very** bad to throw away certain foods like bread or rice? Explain. (For example, a certain Chinese woman once was poor but now has plenty of food. She still eats every single grain of rice in her bowl.)

Do you eat all foods or are there some foods you don't eat? Why?

In your home culture, are some people vegetarian or vegan or on special diets? Please explain.

Does your home culture or religion have a habit of fasting (not eating at certain times). Please explain.



Do you have a food garden? Did you have a food garden in your home country?

If yes, what do/did you grow?

What are your secrets to growing good food?

**Try to complete these sentences:**

I get a stomachache when . . . . .

I eat too much when . . . . .

I eat too little when . . . . .



Where did you learn to cook? Does your family have traditional recipes that grandma/grandpa cooked and now the grandchildren cook? Explain.

**Extra Challenge - Share a favorite recipe. Explain how to make the food.**

**Vocabulary:** garlic, ginger, spices, "it's nothing," ingredients, pot, recipe, website, secret, curry, "made me eat", "throw away", every single, grain, vegetarian, vegan, diet, fasting

**Keep talking about it this week:** Ask friends to share their favorite recipes with you. Next week, share a new recipe with your Talk Time group.

**More about food:** go to **Google** - <http://www.google.com/> Type in "food India", "food China", "food Iran" or "food" with any country. You'll find many interesting food websites!

<sup>1</sup>"The Long Way Home" by Jhumba Lahiri. Audio story may be found at <http://www.pri.org/arts-entertainment/food-selected-shorts.html>