

COMMUNITY-INSPIRED FOODS

A Guide to Sourcing Foods That Meet the Needs of the Communities We Serve



TARRANT FOOD BANK
AREA
READY TO
NOURISH

COMMUNITY-INSPIRED FOODS

As part of Tarrant Area Food Bank's Nutrition Policy, this guide reflects our commitment to sourcing foods that better align with the preferences, nutrition needs, and food traditions of people across our 13-county service area. One of the fastest-growing regions in the country, our service area is home to communities with roots across the globe. To better understand the many communities we serve, we conducted a community needs assessment to learn more about dietary preferences, food traditions, and nutrition priorities. This guide is intended to help partners identify and source community-inspired foods through TAFB and other available food sources.

North American Comfort

- Corn Meal
- Cheese
- Bread
- Pasta
- Beans (red, lima, black-eyed)
- Cabbage
- Rice
- Peppers
- Potatoes
- Citrus
- Melons
- Apples
- Berries

Caribbean

- Beans (black, red)
- Rice (white)
- Sweet Potato
- Calabaza Squash
- Coconut Products
- Limes
- Jicama
- Yams
- Mango
- Papaya

Central & South American

- Tortillas (corn, flour)
- Rice (long grain)
- Beans (pinto, black, flava)
- Masa flour
- Peppers/Chili Peppers
- Avacados
- Plantains
- Jicama
- Limes
- Coconut Products
- Mango
- Papaya

European

- Bread (rye, sourdough)
- Olive Oil
- Pasta
- Potatoes
- Cabbage
- Beets
- Carrots
- Mushrooms
- Cheese
- Berries
- Plums
- Oranges
- Grapes

Mediterranean & Middle Eastern

- Phyllo Dough
- Cucumbers
- Green Bell Peppers
- Cabbage
- Cheese
- Olives
- Olive Oil
- Pasta
- Lentils
- Coucous
- Eggplant
- Grape Leaves
- Grapes
- Figs

African

- Ugali, made from maize flour & water
- Injera
- Cassava Flour
- Corn Meal
- Millet
- Beans (kidney, butter beans, black, peas)
- Rice
- Yams
- Okra
- Yuca
- Plantains
- Dates

East & Southeast Asian

- Rice (white, sticky, jasmine)
- Rice flour
- Noodles
- Coconut Products
- Fish Sauce, Oyster Sauce, Soy Sauce
- Curry Powder, Turmeric, Cardamom
- Ginger
- Chilli Peppers
- Pumpkins & Squash
- Turnips, Radishes, Leeks

COMMON FOODS AND DIETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The foods listed below reflect common ingredients, staples, and dietary considerations that may be important across many communities in TAFB's service area. These categories are not intended to define every household or culture. Instead, they offer a practical starting point for sourcing foods that are familiar, versatile, nutritious, and responsive to community needs.

COMMON FOODS ACROSS COMMUNITIES

Below are common staples, proteins, produce, and flavor builders that can help guide food sourcing across many communities.

Common Staples

- Rice
- Beans and lentils
- Flour & Corn Products
- Pasta & noodles
- Cooking oils
- Canned tomatoes and tomato products

Common Proteins

- Chicken
- Fish
- Eggs
- Beans and lentils
- Nuts
- Tofu
- Yogurt
- Cheese, when culturally appropriate and widely used

Common Produce

- Onions
- Garlic
- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Cabbage
- Citrus
- Potatoes
- Squash
- Leafy greens
- Herbs such as cilantro, parsley, mint, and basil

Common Spices & Flavor Builders

- Cumin
- Cinnamon
- Curry powder
- Turmeric
- Chili peppers or chili flakes
- Black pepper
- Garlic Powder
- Ginger
- Bay leaves
- Bouillon or seasoning blends

DIETARY AND CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Halal: Foods prepared for halal diets avoid pork, pork products, blood, and intoxicants like alcohol. Many households may also prefer meat processed according to halal standards.

Kosher: Meats prepared for kosher diets avoid pork, pork products, and blood. Fish must have both scales and fins, and shellfish are avoided. Dairy and meat must be prepared and consumed separately.

Vegan: Vegan households avoid animal products, including meat, dairy, eggs, and animal-derived ingredients. Plant-based proteins and clearly labeled foods are important.

Vegetarian: Vegetarian households avoid meat and poultry and may also avoid fish, eggs, dairy, beans, lentils, tofu, and grains.

***Note** Households may follow these dietary and cultural practices to varying degrees; this is not an exhaustive list.

HEALTH-RELATED NUTRITION NEEDS

Food Allergies: Common allergens may include tree nuts, peanuts, dairy, eggs, soy, wheat, fish, shellfish, and sesame. Clear labeling and ingredient transparency matter.

Gluten-Free / Celiac: Individuals with celiac disease or gluten intolerance need foods that do not contain wheat, barley, or rye. Naturally gluten-free staples can include rice, beans, corn, potatoes, fruits, vegetables, and plain proteins.

Lower Sodium / Blood Pressure Friendly: For individuals managing hypertension or heart health, prioritize foods lower in sodium and limit heavily salted, canned, or highly processed items when possible.

Blood Sugar Friendly: For individuals managing diabetes or blood sugar, emphasize fiber-rich foods such as beans, lentils, whole grains, vegetables, and proteins that can help support balanced meals. Limit added sugars when possible.

Heart-Healthy: Heart-healthy options may include fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains, lean proteins, and foods lower in saturated fat and sodium.

MAKING THE HEALTHY CHOICE THE EASY CHOICE

Community-inspired foods help us honor preferences, support well-being, and reflect the needs of the communities we serve. Together, we can make the healthy choice the easy choice.



Contact us for questions, inquiries, and technical guidance.
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