

Celebrating the table: Global travel engaging others with food

Recent travel to seven countries gave Martha Marino a first-hand opportunity to talk with others about their traditional foods and diets. Come as an armchair traveler to hear her stories connecting with local people about the foods they love. Many WIC clients face food options unfamiliar to their preferences and cultural patterns. Reflect on your family's traditional foods and your experiences tasting unusual ones to enhance the ways you engage others to talk about food.

Countries in our armchair travel:

- ❖ New Zealand
- ❖ Chile
- ❖ Argentina
- ❖ Italy
- ❖ Denmark
- ❖ Scotland
- ❖ Ireland

Common threads in these countries:

- ❖ People enjoy celebrating their heritage and traditional foods.
- ❖ Families eat together often.
- ❖ They eat more fish, fruits, and vegetables than Americans.
- ❖ Physical activity is a natural part of life, not "exercise."
- ❖ They adapt heritage dishes to the changing food supply while maintaining flavors they love.
- ❖ Parents teach their children how to cook.
- ❖ Favorite traditional dishes developed from poverty and scarcity.

What I learned about engaging others with food:

- ❖ Know a bit about their cultural foods to communicate with understanding and respect.
- ❖ Learn to cook one of their dishes.
- ❖ Risk accepting kindness from strangers. Also risk giving kindness.
- ❖ Notice the children and talk with them.
- ❖ Don't necessarily make the guest go first.
- ❖ My traditional food may be gross to someone else.

Small group conversations:

- ❖ Conversation 1: Trying a new food
Share a time when you tried a new food. How did you feel before trying the food? How about after? Would you eat it again?
Recall a time when you encouraged a client to try a new WIC food. How did your client feel? How did you feel?
- ❖ Conversation 2: Talking about food
Think about a time when you talked about food with a client who is from a culture different from your own. How did you feel? How do you think your client felt?
What did you learn from the client?
What seemed to work to keep the conversation going?

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Blog about global and local food and agriculture: <https://travelerstable.blog>