

# African American Health & Dietary Customs

African Americans represent a young and growing population in the United States.

To reach and support this consumer group, it's important to understand their unique health needs, dietary customs, and food attitudes.



## Unique Health Needs<sup>1-4</sup>

African Americans are disproportionately affected by diet-related conditions like overweight/obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. Food insecurity is a serious concern that can have negative consequences on diet quality and overall health.

- 76% adults are affected by overweight or obesity
- 61% adults over 50 experience high blood pressure
- 2X more likely to experience food insecurity than the average household



## Dietary Customs<sup>3,5,6</sup>

Traditional soul food embodies culture, history, and comfort. Typical dishes include cooked greens, fried chicken, corn bread, beans, and macaroni and cheese. Dairy intake is lower than most Americans. Sugar sweetened beverages contribute considerably to overall sugar intake.

- 1-2 meals per day (least likely to consume 3 meals per day)
- 19 average tsp of added sugar consumed per day by adults
- 43% prioritize "fresh" food items



## Food Attitudes<sup>7-9</sup>

Home-cooked, fresh ingredients, and family recipes resonate as authentic. Plant-based eating is becoming more common, especially among women. Many value and seek brands that support social justice issues.

- 77% believe authentic meals are important to pass on culture to family
- 78% consider soul food mainstream
- 58% expect brands to support social justice issues



# African American Health & Dietary Customs

## Healthy Opportunities

### Encourage & Reinforce

- Family cooking and sit-down meals
- Nutritious staples (greens, peas, beans, corn, baked chicken)
- Fresh food preparation
- Water and unsweetened beverages
- Regular physical activity
- Reduced sodium options
- SNAP/WIC information (if applicable)
- Cultural connection with food



## References

1. OMH. Obesity and African Americans, 2020.
2. CDC. African American Health, 2017.
3. USDA. Scientific Report of the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2020.
4. ODPHP. Food Insecurity, 2020.
5. CDC. Get the Facts: Added Sugars, 2021.
6. USDA. NHANES, 2016.
7. Collage Group. Authentic Cooking: What "Home Cooking" Means to Different Cultures, 2017.
8. Collage Group. The Food and Beverage Revolution: Unlocking Younger Consumers' Preferences, 2018.
9. Nielsen. It's in the Bag: Black Consumer's Path to Purchase, 2019.

Visit [nestleusa.com/nutrition/inspire-healthy-lives](https://www.nestleusa.com/nutrition/inspire-healthy-lives) for more information on our commitment to supporting healthier lives.



Good food, Good life