

# Patch Program

## Tastes of the States

Food unites us all. We gather over meals to come together and celebrate. Cuisine is culture. Explore America through food, from learning about recipes of the past to creating meals for today. As the United States approaches its semiquincentennial, marking 250 years of history, it's the perfect time to reflect on the diverse flavors and traditions that have shaped our nation. Through food, we can honor our shared past while imagining the future of American culture.

### All level requirements:

Earn your patch by completing at least four activities with a minimum of one per category.

When you're done, [submit photos](#) and a story to inspire other Girl Scouts to earn this patch, too. [Purchase patch](#) by August 31.

## Discover

Explore how food in America has evolved over time. Discover how our roots and major events have shaped the flavors and meals we enjoy today.

- **Semiquincentennial year!** This year, we celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. It's our country's semiquincentennial! One good way to see how life has changed since the American Revolution is to look at what people of that time often ate. Make a traditional food that Americans would have eaten in 1776. Is it similar to what you usually eat?
- **Backyard BBQ beginnings.** Did you know that what we call [barbecue or BBQ](#) started a long time ago in the Caribbean? Caribbean people cooked marinated meat over a fire using wood plates to keep it from burning. They called this technique *barbacoa*. Spanish settlers learned this cooking method and took this idea with them as they moved north all the way up to Virginia

colony. Even back then, barbecues were fun, relaxed gatherings. People came together to eat and spend time with each other just like we do at barbecues today. That's why barbecues are still such an important and fun part of American culture. Have you ever been to a barbecue or cookout? What would your menu be if you hosted a cookout with your troop?

- **First Texans' food traditions.** Many Native American tribes such as the Jumano, Tonkawa, and Huaco (Waco) nations called Central Texas home before being displaced by settlers. What Native American tribal nation lives, or originally lived, in your region? Were they hunter-gatherers or did they have established crops? Make a list of foods they historically ate. How similar is it to what you eat?
- **Flavors from your family tree.** Unless you are Native American, your family immigrated to the United States. Find recipes for traditional dishes from a country your family immigrated from. Enjoy a meal featuring foods inspired by your ancestors.
- **Wartime grocery challenge.** During World War II, American families helped the war effort by limiting how much food and supplies they used. Each family received a ration book with special tickets or stamps inside. They had to give a store a ticket from their book to buy things like sugar, butter, meat, or gas. Pretend you live in 1942 and [plan your weekly grocery shopping trip with a ration book](#).
- **Victory gardens, plants with a purpose.** Families started victory gardens to grow their own food as a way to help the war effort during World War I. When America joined World War II, the U.S. Department of Agriculture wanted [42% of all fruits and vegetables grown in the United States to come from a family's own victory garden](#). Learn more about how victory gardens helped the country beyond providing food for a family. Then, sketch a plan for your own family's victory garden. What would you grow? Where would you plant each item?
- **Campfire cooking, 1927 style.** Girl Scouts invented s'mores! The first known recipe appeared in *Tramping and Trailing with the Girl Scouts* which was published in 1927. Look over the nosebag lunches, campfire menus, overnight hike menus, and recipes on pages 61-72. Which ones sound yummy to you? Are there dishes that are unfamiliar to you? Pretend you are a Girl Scout in 1927 and use this guidebook to plan out breakfast, lunch, and dinner for a day spent outdoors.

- **Cookie entrepreneurs in action.** The Girl Scout Cookie Program got its start in 1917 when the Mistletoe Troop in Muskogee, Oklahoma sold homemade cookies at their high school as a service project. Watch this [vintage television commercial](#) from 1976, then film your own Girl Scout Cookie commercial.
- **Chili and state pride:** “Chili concocted outside of Texas is a weak, apologetic imitation of the real thing,” according to President Lyndon B. Johnson. In 1977, the Texas Legislature officially passed a [resolution](#) declaring chili as the official state dish. If you got to pick a food that best represents your state, what do you think it should be? Create a state fair poster featuring the food you chose to encourage others to eat it.
- **Spice it up!** Did you know that the United States is the world’s largest spice [importer and consumer](#)? Adding spices or sauce to a dish is a great way to make it taste better. Cinnamon is a popular spice for cakes and cookies in America. It comes from the bark of trees grown in tropical parts of Asia. What is your favorite spice or sauce? How is it made? Can you make it at home? Where is it originally from? Look on a map and find that place. Have you ever been there yourself?
- **Food brands that made history.** “Hershey,” “Kraft,” and “McDonald’s” are names famously associated with American food. Watch an episode of [The Food That Built America](#) to learn how modern, iconic American foods got their start.

## Connect

From sea to shining sea, travel across America and learn what flavors makes each area unique, what foods unite us, and inspiring women in the culinary arts.

- **Melting pot or salad bowl?** The United States is often described as a “melting pot,” where cultures blend into one. A more accurate comparison is a “salad bowl,” where each ingredient keeps its own distinct flavor while still contributing to the whole. You can still see and taste the lettuce, tomatoes, and carrots, but they all come together to make something yummy. In the same way, people from all over the world move to America and keep special parts of their own culture like their food, language, and

traditions, while also sharing and enjoying American culture. Your troop is enhanced by having a variety of people! Have a troop potluck where every Girl Scout brings a dish that represents her heritage. While you enjoy this multicultural feast together, share why you chose the food you brought and what it means to you.

- **Tastes across the states.** Maine is famous for fresh lobster and wild blueberries because that's what is naturally found there. But lobsters wouldn't thrive in the hot, dry climate of Arizona. Instead, Arizona is known for dishes such as Sonoran hot dogs and posole that blend Mexican, Native American, and Southwestern flavors. Research and compare the iconic foods of three states. Have you tried any of them before?
- **Honoring first foods.** *Indigenous food sovereignty* is a term used to describe the right of Native American nations to define their own food systems. Many Native American nations choose to grow and eat traditional foods the way that their ancestors did. Find a recipe for a traditional Native American dish such as [Three Sisters Stew](#). Is there anything you eat that is similar to that dish? When do you eat that dish? Talk to your family about whether the family has food you all eat today that your ancestors also ate?
- **Girl Scouts in the kitchen.** Celebrity chef Carla Hall said that in her family, "being in Girl Scouts felt like Girl Power!" She credits years of selling Girl Scout cookies as the secret to her success as an entrepreneur. Read about her advice on [the power of tenacity](#). Then, find other people in the culinary world who are Girl Scouts. Or watch one of Carla's episodes of *Chasing Flavor*.
- **Barbecue across America.** [Barbecue](#) stands as more than just a time-honored culinary tradition in the United States. The act of grilling meats and serving up hot dogs, if you can believe it, has become a powerful symbol of American life. As barbecue spread across the American South and Midwest, it evolved into specific regional specialties. The Carolinas, Memphis, Texas, and Kansas City each have their own variety of barbecue. Do you know the differences between each of them? Have you tried any of them? Pick your favorite and try making a barbecue sauce from one of these regions from scratch!
- **Kitchen science lab.** Level up your kitchen knowledge and skills. American cuisine is comprised of many cooking methods from around the world. All of the [techniques](#) can be categorized as either: dry heat, moist heat, or combination heat. Learn about a cooking or baking technique that is new to

you, then try it out with the help of an adult. Or learn about the science behind a cooking tool. For instance, how do microwaves make food hot?

- **Taste of the town.** Eating local food is a fantastic way to connect with places you visit. If your family or troop is taking a summer trip, look along your route or at your destination to see if there are any fun food places to try. Can you find anything unique to the area?
- **Unwrapped and uncovered.** The television show, *Unwrapped*, uncovers behind-the-scenes details on classic American food, from peanut butter and chocolate syrup to French fries and bubblegum. Watch a video of [Unwrapped](#) from the Food Network and join host Marc Summers as he explores the test kitchens and the secrets behind lunch box treats, soda pop, movie candy, and more.
- **Snack hack challenge.** What is your favorite snack? How hard is making a homemade version of a processed snack? The show, *Gourmet Makes*, by the *Bon Appétit* test kitchen shows pastry chef Claire Saffitz attempting to create homemade versions of popular foods such as [Cheez-its](#), [Pocky](#), [Hot Pockets](#), and [Pop-Tarts](#). Try making a homemade, copycat version of your favorite store-bought snack.
- **Food miles mystery.** How far does food have to travel to get to you? Go to the produce section of your grocery store and check the sticker or label on various fruits and vegetables to figure out where your food comes from. Try to find foods that are grown locally, within your state, in another state, in another country, and on another continent. Do all apple varieties come from Washington state? Do you think you could be a locavore who only eats foods that are grown near you?
- **Fusion food fun.** Food traditions changed as families moved to the United States. They adapted by using available ingredients and preparing meals that suited their new communities. In many cases, they blended their traditional recipes with flavors and cooking styles from other cultures to create something entirely new. Compare how food from a person's home country can be different from the version made in America. For example, Tex-Mex food, American Chinese food, or other mixed ("fusion") foods may use different ingredients, taste different, or be cooked in new ways compared to the original dishes. Is there a fusion restaurant near you that you can try with your troop?

# Take Action

As a Girl Scout, you can make the world a better place! Share what you've learned about food in America with your troop, friends, or family.

- **From factory to flavor.** From Blue Bell in Brenham to the Dr. Pepper Museum in Waco, Texas produces flavors unique to our state. Learn how food is produced. Visit a food-related company near you such as a factory, outlet, or museum. Do they offer tours? Can you try the food on the tour? Or watch [this video](#) about how Girl Scout cookies are made.
- **Cool treats, no heat!** Beat the summer heat by making a no-cook recipe for your family or a hangout with friends or your troop. Check out [Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles No Cook Recipes](#) for inspirations!
- **Try something new!** Expand your taste buds! Is there a restaurant that you always go to and get the same dish? Next time, try a dish you've never had before. Is there a food establishment you've always wanted to visit? Take some time and try it out!
- **Healthy plate challenge!** [Harvard's School of Public Health](#) recommends filling over half of your plate with fruits and veggies, then prioritizing whole grains and healthy proteins for the rest of your plate. Healthy proteins include beans and peas, nuts, seeds, and other plant-based healthy protein options, as well as fish, eggs, and poultry. When choosing fruits and vegetables, "[eating the rainbow](#)" is a way to ensure you get a variety of nutrients which keep you healthy. Make menus for three healthy eating plates. Then, create a meal with fruits and vegetables from every color in the rainbow.
- **Street eats adventure.** Street food is a major part of culture in the United States. Gather your troop, friends, or family and go to a street food location or event. This can be anything from your county or state fair, food trucks, or local farmers market. What foods are you interested in trying?
- **Heritage in the kitchen.** Try your hand at making a traditional Native American dish. Look through the North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems' [recipe library](#) or their [test kitchen videos](#) and make a recipe that combines modern cooking techniques and trends with indigenous

ingredients. [Sun cookies](#) is a simple recipe that only requires sunflower seeds, maple syrup, and salt.

- **Recipe swap social.** Have a recipe card swap with your troop! Everyone brings a recipe from their family on a card and swaps with another person in their troop. If you want to be extra fancy, write the recipe on a tea towel with fabric pens (be sure to read the instructions on the fabric pens to make your recipe permanent).
- **Kitchens through time.** Find a museum or historical site that has a kitchen. See if your troop or family can take a trip there and see the historical kitchen. Look around. What was the source of heat for cooking? Keeping food cold? Cleaning dishes? If you live near Washington, Texas, consider going to [Washington-on-the-Brazos](#).
- **Global BBQ showdown.** Try some different styles of BBQ in your area such as Korean BBQ or a churrasco style Brazilian BBQ. Or have a BBQ cook off with your troop or family. Create a score card and vote on who had the best dish. You can even have different categories such as best taste, best presentation, and most creative.
- **Food helpers in action.** Give back to your community by helping a food-based organization. Is there a local organization that you could volunteer at with your troop? Or is there a food drive you could donate to? Is your school doing a summer lunch program that you can get involved in?
- **Red, white, and yum!** Do you know why the American flag looks like it does? In 1777 the [Flag Act](#) said the flag should “be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation.” Red symbolizes hardiness and valor; blue symbolizes justice, vigilance, and perseverance; and white symbolizes purity and innocence. With the help of an adult, make some red, white, and blue snacks, such as strawberry, banana, and blueberry kabobs. Get creative and celebrate America's 250<sup>th</sup> year of independence!