

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST
PRACTICES FOR FOOD BANKS AND
COLLABORATORS THAT ADDRESS THE
FOOD PREFERENCES AND DIETARY
NEEDS OF THE LATINX COMMUNITY**



YOUR LATINA NUTRITION

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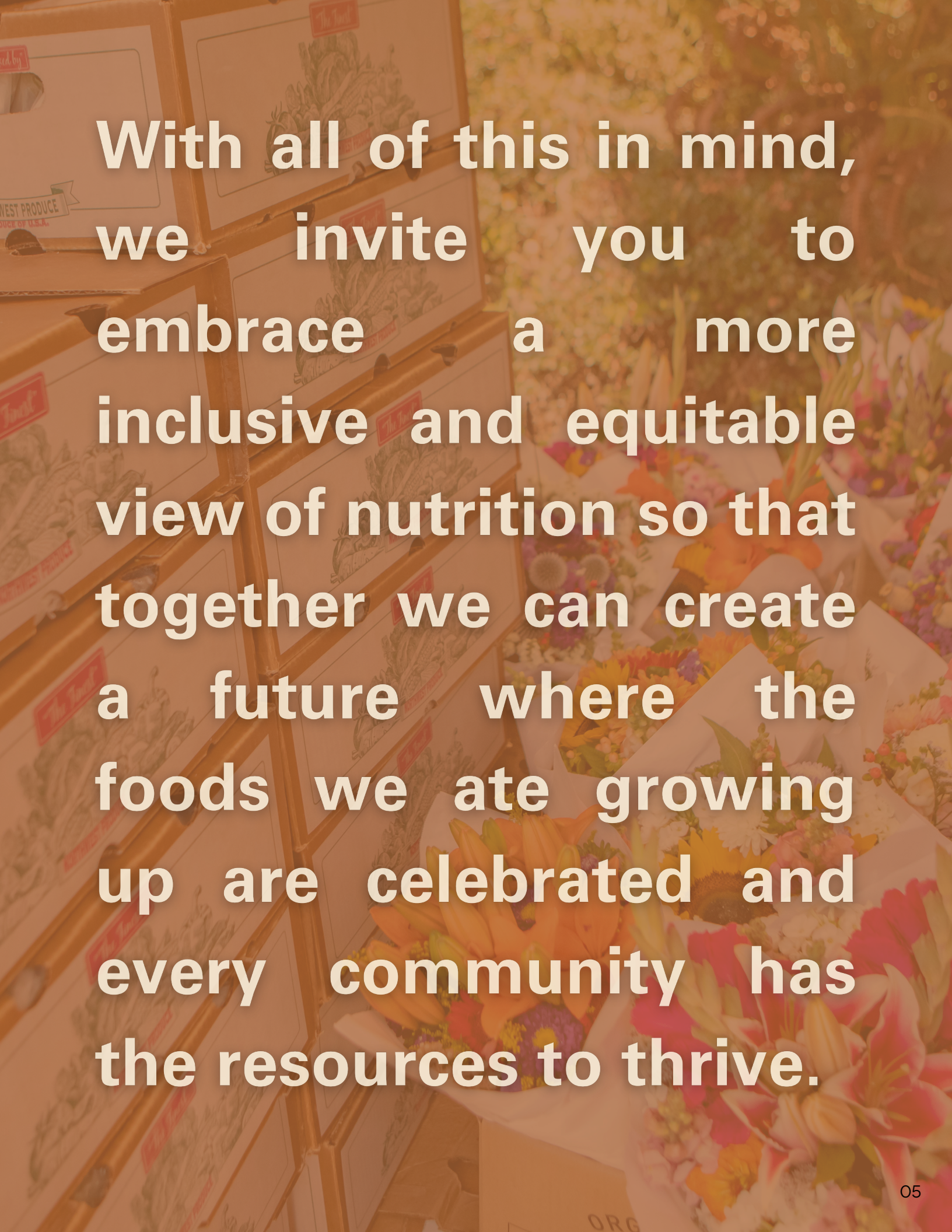
INTRODUCTION

In a world where nutrition has often been shaped by dominant voices and systemic biases, we come together to challenge the status quo. We recognize that not everything that is taught and understood about nutrition reflects the diverse realities of our communities. It is necessary to reframe our understanding of cultural foods, not as unhealthy but as essential to our identity, heritage, and well-being.

With these recommendations and best practices we aim to communicate this message, while honoring and integrating the richness of the diverse food traditions in our communities. When it comes to health we acknowledge the ways in which health is affected by systemic issues and Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). We understand the complex systems that have been overlooked in the past, especially as it relates to our communities.

By unraveling the mark of institutional racism, white supremacy culture, and colonialism as it relates to our cultural foods, these recommendations and best practices serve to foster a shift. A shift that honors the value of cultural foods and provides practical recommendations for eating these foods and medical advice that is culturally inclusive.

Although there is a huge gap in research on the health benefits of our cultural foods due to systemic biases, existing research does show that our traditional cultural diets have great potential to promote our health. For example, a 2022 study in the British Journal of Nutrition found that a traditional Mexican diet rich in maize, legumes, and vegetables is linked with lower cholesterol. This is important because high cholesterol can lead to heart disease and stroke. Another study, this one from 2015 in The Journal of Nutrition, found that a traditional Mexican diet was linked with lower levels of systemic inflammation and insulin resistance in women. Systemic inflammation is linked with various chronic diseases, and insulin resistance can lead to high blood sugars and diabetes.



**With all of this in mind,
we invite you to
embrace a more
inclusive and equitable
view of nutrition so that
together we can create
a future where the
foods we ate growing
up are celebrated and
every community has
the resources to thrive.**

Commitments of Alimentando Al Pueblo food programming

By adhering to these commitments, Alimentando al Pueblo will strive to fulfill its mission of healing and supporting our community in the face of ongoing and evolving challenges.

Facilitate Healing and the Creation of Memories

Rooted in the knowledge of genetic memory, healing justice framework - and what is at the root of our work - is the intergenerational healing of Community members who have been disenfranchised and traumatized by colonial violence and the fierce and intentional reclamation of our Ancestral practices and futures, so we can thrive.

Cultivate a Community of Imagination

Our imagination and dreams are the source of our collective liberation. Our Community has not only been politically, economically and socially disenfranchised, our dreams and imaginations have been repressed and robbed. We are building strategies, intentions, processes so that our Community can be in realignment with their imagination, in order to collectively imagine, and manifest, the futures we long for.

Reinvest in our Community

Our reinvestment focuses are our team, our Community and our small businesses. From partnering and purchasing directly from Latine and BIPoC local farms, grocery stores, distributors, artists, chefs, and creatives, to paying living wages, and offering culturally rooted professional development we are ensuring that our Community is socially, culturally and economically healthy and prosperous.



Culture of Abundance

We want to turn the scarcity model on its head, there is enough - there is more than enough for everyone. We are abundant in love, care, creativity and solutions. We materialize this pillar by building partnerships, protocols, and processes that lift up and value our Communities lived experiences, perspectives, and contributions to our collective imagination and liberation.

Provide Culturally Rooted Programming

From the way we greet and serve our Community at our food bank, to how we are building the foundation of our organization's infrastructure, we want to ensure that our programming is rooted in the inherent dignity of all peoples and the Ancestral practices, values and ways of our Community.

Commitments specific to our food programming include:

- Provide nutritious and culturally relevant food while uplifting and empowering our people
- Promote awareness and appreciation of cultural foods within our community, emphasizing their significance and benefits
- Address the multifaceted challenges faced by our community through a comprehensive approach that includes both immediate relief and long-term healing. Additionally, educate on how Social Determinants of Health impact our community's health outcomes, fostering a deeper understanding of these influences.
- Confront and reduce the effects of systemic racism and economic inequality. We will work to break down barriers that cause unfairness and support policies that promote justice and equality
- Involve our community and make their voices be heard. By creating a participatory environment, we will help people take an active role in their own healing and in shaping our community's future.

Nutrition Recommendations/Best Practices

The following recommendations have been developed to approach nutrition through a cultural lens that celebrates, honors, and embraces the rich traditions and heritage of our Latine community. They also emphasize the importance of providing resources that are not only culturally appropriate but also meet the physical needs of those who are food insecure or lack the resources to cook.

Per this 2022 study, food banks often “struggle to meet individual health, social, and cultural dietary needs in socially acceptable ways.” This highlights the critical importance of understanding and prioritizing the needs of the community. By amplifying their voices and regularly surveying whether the food provided aligns with their culture and traditions, we can ensure that our efforts truly resonate and make a meaningful impact.

Reframing nutrition

It's no secret that mainstream nutrition recommendations are not culturally inclusive. Eurocentric foods and meals are often promoted as the epitome of health, but in reality, Latin American cultural foods are also full of nutrition. They deserve to be celebrated for this and for the joy, connection, and satisfaction that they provide.

Our meals are often well-rounded nutritionally. They contain carbohydrates, protein, fat, and fiber all in one dish. Each of these food groups serves a different purpose for your body. Carbohydrates give you energy; protein makes up your muscles, bones, cartilage, hormones, and more; fat helps you absorb certain vitamins and supports cell function; and fiber promotes digestive health, helps prevent blood sugar spikes, and helps lower cholesterol. Plus, foods in each food group provide different essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.

Just because Latin American meals don't have each food group separated into its own section on the plate doesn't mean that they aren't all there. Some common cultural foods that fit into these food groups include:

Carbohydrates: tortillas, rice, arepas, fruit, starchy vegetables (yucca, plantains)

Protein: chicken, beef, pork, fish, beans, cheese

Fat: oil, avocado, some meat

Fiber: fruit, vegetables (onions, peppers, tomatoes), salsa, nuts, seeds, corn tortillas, avocado, beans

You may notice that some foods fit into multiple food groups. That's just added nutrition!

Also, note that **nutrition is just one small part** of the big picture of health.

Yes, eating all the food groups and ensuring you eat enough nutrients throughout your day or week is beneficial for health, but other systemic factors are also incredibly impactful. This includes access to quality medical care, environmental conditions and exposure to pollution, social support, a built environment that allows for physical activity, and much more.



Here's a breakdown of typical Latin American dishes, highlighting their nutrition so you can see the richness in our cultural foods:

Mexico

Tacos de asada

- Tortillas: Carbohydrate and fiber
- Asada: Protein and fat
- Pico de gallo: Carbohydrate, fiber, and antioxidants
- Salsa: Carbohydrate, fiber, and vitamins



El Salvador

Pupusas de frijol y queso

- Corn masa: Carbohydrate and fiber
- Beans: Protein, fiber, and iron
- Cheese: Protein and fat
- Curtido (cabbage slaw): Fiber, vitamins, and probiotics



Honduras

Baleada

- Flour tortilla: Carbohydrate
- Refried beans: Protein, fiber, and iron
- Eggs: Protein and fat
- Cheese or crema: Protein and fat
- Avocado: Healthy fats, fiber, and vitamins



Guatemala

Pepián

- Chicken: Protein and fat
- Vegetables (tomato, squash, potato)
- Carbohydrate, fiber, and vitamins
- Pumpkin and sesame seeds: Healthy fats, protein, and minerals
- Rice: Carbohydrate



These dishes represent balanced meals with a mix of protein, healthy fats, carbohydrates, and fiber, showcasing how traditional Latin American foods are deeply nutritious.

Common Nutrition Misconceptions

Myth: Cultural foods are unhealthy.

Many people believe that traditional or cultural foods are unhealthy, but this is often due to misconceptions about unfamiliar ingredients or cooking methods. In reality, cultural foods are often nutrient-dense, balanced, and rich in essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber. For example, dishes like Mexican nopales and tamales, and Guatemalan pepián use fresh, nutrient-dense ingredients and highlight the diversity and richness of cultural diets.

Myth: Canned foods are bad.

Canned foods often get a bad reputation for being overly processed or containing preservatives. However, they can be a convenient and nutritious option, especially when fresh produce is not available. Canned vegetables, beans, and fish often provide the same nutritional benefits as fresh versions, and they can make healthy eating more accessible for people with limited time or resources. Rinsing canned goods, like beans, can also reduce sodium content if that's a concern. Given that many people may not be used to cooking with canned foods, we need to debunk misconceptions and educate on how canned foods can be incorporated into traditional dishes for convenience, affordability, and nutrition.

Myth: You should avoid processed foods.

While ultra-processed foods high in added sugars, unhealthy fats, and sodium can contribute to poor health, not all processed foods are unhealthy. Foods like tortillas, queso fresco, and frozen vegetables are technically processed but can be part of a healthy diet. Processing can improve food safety and accessibility, helping people eat nutritious meals. Rather than avoiding all processed foods, focus on choosing minimally processed options that retain their nutritional value.

Common Nutrition Misconceptions

Myth: Latin American foods lack vegetables.

Contrary to popular belief, Mexican and Central American cuisines include a wide variety of vegetables. Staples like peppers, tomatoes, onions, avocados, squash, and chayote are integral to many traditional dishes. Dishes like sopa de verduras, caldo de pollo with fresh vegetables, and ensalada de nopales are just a few examples of how vegetables are used abundantly. The diversity of plant-based ingredients offers a rich array of nutrients and flavors. It is important to remember that there are hundreds of veggies to choose from and just because our veggies might look different from those that are popular in the United States, doesn't mean they're less nutrient dense. It is also important to point out that we do not separate ingredients on our plate like the US dietary guidelines often show. Our dishes are mixed and varied but still provide a lot of veggies.

Myth: Latin American food has too many carbs.

Carbohydrates are often misunderstood and labeled as “bad,” but they are an essential part of a balanced diet, providing energy and nutrients like fiber, B vitamins, and minerals. Many Mexican and Central American staples, such as corn tortillas, beans, rice, and plantains are nutrient-dense sources of carbs. Dishes like gallo pinto, tacos de frijoles, and tamales combine carbs with proteins and healthy fats, making them part of balanced meals that provide sustained energy and support overall health.

Myth: Corn is unhealthy and should be avoided.

Corn, a staple of Mexican and Central American cuisine, often gets a bad reputation, especially when associated with processed corn products. However, traditional forms like elotes or masa used for tortillas and tamales are nutrient-rich and full of fiber, vitamins (such as B vitamins), and antioxidants. Corn is a versatile and wholesome ingredient that has been part of these cultures for centuries and deserves to be enjoyed regularly.

Medical Recommendations

Diabetes Mellitus

Unfortunately, Latines are 1.3 times more likely to die from diabetes and 70% more likely to develop diabetes than their non-Hispanic white counterparts, per the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This should not be blamed on cultural foods. Rather, social determinants of health like language proficiency, health literacy, socioeconomic status, and access to health insurance play a big role in the development and progression of diabetes, per a 2022 study in Cureus.

Knowing that Latines do face higher rates of diabetes, it's important to offer well-rounded, diabetes-friendly meals to support Latines with diabetes in managing their condition through cultural foods. Rather than cutting out beloved carbs like white rice or tortillas, focus on adding nutrition to meals, particularly fiber and protein, to prevent blood sugar spikes.

Furthermore, having diabetes increases risk of developing heart disease. So, it's important to prioritize sources of unsaturated fat, which can help lower cholesterol and protect the heart, according to the American Diabetes Association.

Also, note that although some people may have heard that beans should be avoided because of their carb content, the American Diabetes Association considers them a "diabetes superfood". They are full of fiber, protein, potassium, iron, zinc, and folate.

Recommendations for diabetes-friendly boxes:

- Provide foods high in fiber, which can help with blood glucose management, according to the CDC. High fiber foods include:
 - Beans
 - Habas
 - Corn tortillas
 - Arepas
 - Lentils
 - Chayote
 - Avocado
 - Sweet potatoes
 - Plantains
 - Oats
 - Yuca
 - Guava
 - Papaya
 - Cabbage
 - Pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
- Provide sources of lean and plant-based proteins like beans, lentils, chickpeas, and canned tuna.
- Include foods rich in heart-healthy fats like avocado, canned fish, pumpkin seeds, and chia seeds
- Make at least 50% of grains distributed high-fiber or whole grains and starches including corn tortillas, maseca, oats, corn, quinoa, amaranth, and whole wheat bread



Heart disease

Latines are 10% less likely to have heart disease and 30% less likely to die from heart disease compared to non-Hispanic whites, per the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Still, heart disease is one of the top three causes of death for the Latine community.

A large study in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that 80% of Latinos and 71% of Latinas had at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Risk factors were more prevalent in Latines who had a lower socioeconomic status and higher levels of acculturation. This suggests that cultural foods are not the culprit, and providing foods in alignment with traditional diets from our home countries can support health.

Nutritionally, it is important to eat enough fiber and limit sodium and saturated fat to prevent and manage heart disease. This can absolutely be done with cultural foods.

For example, three corn tortillas can provide almost 20% of your daily fiber needs, and ½ cup of black beans provides about 25% of your daily fiber needs! Both of these are also low in saturated fat.

Recommendations for heart disease-friendly boxes:

- Make at least 50% of grains distributed high-fiber and whole grains and starches including corn tortillas, maseca, oats, corn, quinoa, amaranth, and whole wheat bread
- Provide heart-healthy fats including non-tropical cooking oil (e.g. canola oil, olive oil, vegetable oil), nuts, and seeds like pepitas
- Ensure items are low-sodium whenever possible, meaning each serving contains no more than 5% of the daily value for sodium. Avoid providing items with more than 20% of the daily value of sodium per serving.
- Provide lean proteins including canned low-sodium tuna, lentils, and beans
- Provide chiles, herbs, and spices for adding flavor without sodium
- Provide low-fat or fat-free sources of dairy

Youth

Children instinctively want to eat and know how much food is enough for themselves. With the support of caregivers, children can continue to trust their food experiences. Awareness and adherence to each party's specific role at mealtimes is key in helping children nurture their relationship to food.

CAREGIVER'S ROLE	YOUTH'S ROLE
DECIDE WHAT FOODS WILL BE SERVED	WAIT FOR FOOD TO BE COOKED AND OFFERED
MAKE THE FOOD THAT WILL BE SERVED	CHOOSE WHAT FOODS THEY WOULD LIKE TO TRY AND THE AMOUNT THEY WILL EAT
IMPLEMENT AN EATING ROUTINE WITH SCHEDULED MEALS AND SNACK TIMES	ACCEPT OR PASS ON FOODS OFFERED
CHOOSE LOCATION OF MEALTIMES	SHOW UP TO THE LOCATION OF MEALTIMES
ESTABLISH DECORUM AT MEALTIMES	FOLLOW EXPECTATIONS AT MEALTIMES

Selective Eating is common amongst youth; and while it can be frustrating to witness them object to foods offered, it is especially important for caregivers to remain patient. **Trying new foods is an act of courage and it can take up to fifteen attempts** before a child accepts it.

Focus on the subtle changes in receptivity that happen overtime. Like them going from being unable to tolerate the smell of the new food being nearby to allowing the new food to rest on their plate and licking it before they are done eating their meal! Caregivers' opinions on food and food choices can greatly influence children's opinions and behaviors. When one is open-minded about all foods and offers the same foods to the youth it helps children remain curious and accepting of all foods.

Due to societal beliefs that thinner equates to healthier, body weight often becomes a focal point during childhood and adolescence. However, health can't be determined solely by weight and healthy people come in all shapes and sizes. Resist the urge to comment on physical appearances and instead identify and compliment all the things their bodies are capable of doing. Allowing children to grow into their own body without commenting on their physical appearance can increase their receptivity to food.

Recommendations for youth-friendly boxes:

- Iron rich foods to help support youths' brain and physical development.
- Lean and plant-based proteins like: chicken, fish, eggs, dry beans, lentils, brazil nuts, pistachios, pumpkin seeds, chia seeds.
- Vegetables like: tomato paste and dark greens- okras, watercress, collard greens and spinach
- Whole Grains like: quinoa, wheat berries, oats, corn Vitamin D and calcium rich food to help with muscle, bone, and immune support.
- Whole Grains like: Low sugar breakfast cereals, oatmeal, whole-grain bread Oily fish like: sardines, salmon, smoked herring
- Dairy products like: cheese, milk, yogurt Ingredients to flavor water to help with increasing hydration and decreasing the intake of added sugars via sugary drinks like juice and soda
- Herbs like: mint, basil, rosemary, ginger Fruits and vegetables like: cucumbers, jalapenos, lemons, berries, pineapples



**NUTRITION STANDARDS FROM
OTHER LATINE COUNTRIES**

Mexico

The 2023 Mexican Dietary Guidelines emphasize developing better eating habits while being mindful of the environment. They encourage incorporating beans, lentils, and fava beans into meals, whether in soups, with vegetables, or in stews, as these foods are excellent sources of protein and fiber. The guidelines highlight that these foods are both practical and economical, and they are deeply rooted in Mexican culture, having been staples for many civilizations.

Another key recommendation is to include whole grains, such as corn tortillas, oats, rice, and potatoes, in the diet. These foods are rich in vitamins, fiber, and provide essential energy. Corn tortillas, in particular, are a cornerstone of the Mexican diet and should be promoted within our community. Understanding their nutritional value is crucial, as they play an important role in a balanced and healthy eating pattern.

The recommendations also emphasize mindful consumption of red meat, processed meats, and ultra-processed foods like chips, cookies, and cereals, which often contain high levels of salt, sugar, and fat. Additionally, avoiding alcohol intake is advised. Staying hydrated by drinking water throughout the day and with every meal is strongly encouraged.

The motto "All movement counts!" underscores the importance of physical activity, highlighting that walking, running, or dancing are all beneficial ways to stay active and healthy.

Lastly, the recommendations emphasize the importance of enjoying meals with loved ones, highlighting the value of shared experiences. They encourage everyone to participate in food planning and preparation, fostering a sense of community and connection around the table.



Peru

Peru's 2020 Dietary Guidelines emphasize the importance of consuming a variety of whole, natural foods. These foods are rich in essential nutrients, fiber, and antioxidants, which can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases and promote overall well-being. The guidelines also stress the need to reduce the intake of processed and ultra-processed foods, which, when consumed often, can be sources of unhealthy fats and added sugar. They encourage eating local foods, taking advantage of the availability of agricultural products, the country's rich biodiversity, and varied culinary traditions.

Key messages include enjoying a diverse diet of fruits and vegetables daily and obtaining protein primarily from animal sources, such as organ meats and dairy. However, plant-based protein sources, like legumes and beans, are also mentioned.

The guidelines recommend moderating the consumption of rice, pasta, and bread and reducing added sugars and salt, as hypertension among Peruvians has steadily increased over the last 10 years. Additionally, the guidelines advocate drinking 6-8 glasses of water daily, engaging in at least 30 minutes of physical activity, preferring home-cooked meals, and enjoying eating in a community, such as with family members, friends, and coworkers.



Guatemala

Guatemala's Dietary Guidelines emphasize a varied diet with a mindful lens on anemia prevention, heart disease prevention, and economical food choices. No specific quantity of each food group is recommended, but the frequency of consumption is stated clearly.

Starchy fiber-rich foods like tubers, cereals, grains, and legumes are encouraged to be the largest portion of one's daily intake. Fruits, vegetables, and herbs, in a variety of colors, are recommended daily. Beans and tortillas are two specific foods that are highlighted and encouraged every day. Dairy products, eggs, and incaparina are protein-rich products recommended 3 times a week, while animal-derived protein foods are suggested 2 times a week. Nuts and seeds are considered good compliments to the diet, and sugar and salt are acknowledged and encouraged in modest amounts. Lastly, avoiding alcohol and prioritizing water is also emphasized.

Guatemala's guidelines place a large emphasis on exercise, displaying it at the top of their food guide image. Thirty minutes to one hour per day is recommended for optimal health. As for eating patterns, three meals and two snacks are generally advised



Honduras

The Dietary Guidelines for Honduras, known as the "a Guía Alimentaria Basada en Alimentos para Honduras," or GABA aims to promote healthy eating habits and prevent malnutrition and chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease, cancer, hypertension, and diabetes. The guidelines consist of eight key messages for promoting healthy eating and lifestyle habits and a pictorial olla to demonstrate the frequency at which certain food groups should be consumed.

The guidelines stress the importance of eating a varied diet with foods from all the food groups. Fruits, vegetables, cereals, grains, and tubers are recommended to be consumed multiple times a day to prevent illnesses. Additionally, animal protein sources, like meats, fish, chicken, etc., should be consumed at least twice a week to help grow and strengthen the body.

GABA suggests Hondurans eat five meals a day (three main meals and two snacks). Foods/nutrients that should be minimized include fried foods, sausages, added salt and sugar, and excess fat for heart health. The recommendations encourage the consumption of safe, clean drinking water over sugary beverages and emphasize proper food handling and hygiene practices to prevent foodborne illnesses. There is also a push for physical activity to maintain overall well-being. These guidelines address undernutrition and the country's growing issue of nutrition-related diseases.



El Salvador

El Salvador's guidelines focus on nine recommendations to promote healthy eating for Salvadoreans and their families. Including families in the title is significant as it highlights the value families have in health and well-being.

The recommendations include preparing home-cooked meals using natural ingredients such as fruits, vegetables, dairy, and varied protein sources. They emphasize the importance of eating grains, as El Salvador's cornflour and wheat flour are fortified. There is also an emphasis on food safety, ensuring that fruits and vegetables are correctly washed for safe consumption.

To ensure broad accessibility, the guidelines distill complex nutritional information into pictorial and easy-to-understand language. There is a focus on regional variety, choosing seasonal fruits and vegetables for the best taste and price, and encouraging the use of cultural herbs and spices to flavor foods.

Similar to guidelines from other Latin American countries, emphasis is placed on lifestyle habits, such as physical activity and water intake, to support dietary changes and prevent chronic conditions.





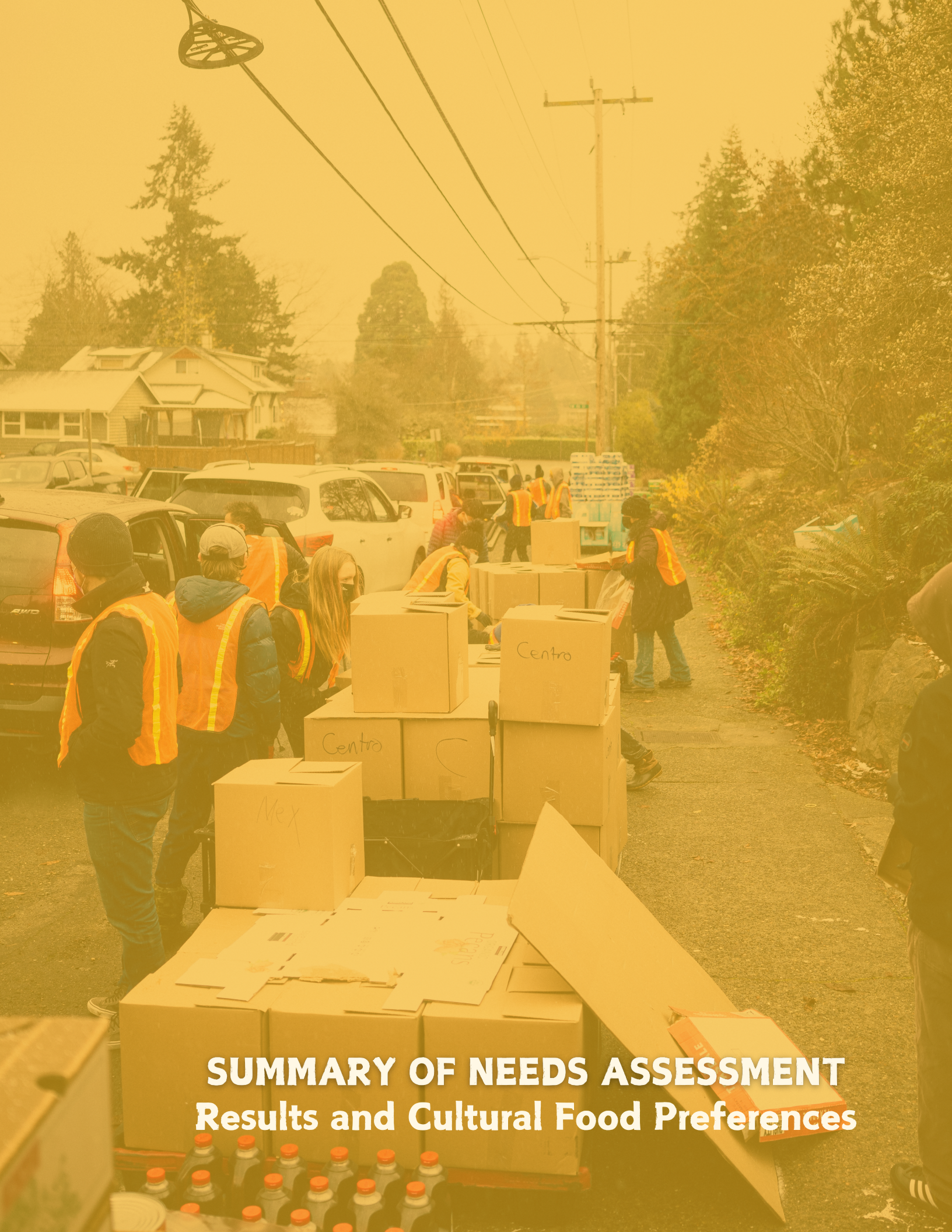
HOW TO EAT CULTURAL FOODS

It's clear from other countries' dietary guidelines that our cultural foods can absolutely be at the center of a nutrient-rich diet. In particular, tortillas are emphasized as a nutrient-dense carbohydrate source, and beans are highlighted as a nutritious source of fiber and protein.

Fruits and vegetables are encouraged, just like in the US, and that includes fruits and vegetables common in Latin America. Even though foods like chayote, tomatillo, mamey, and guava aren't often promoted in the US, doesn't mean they aren't full of nutrition and deserve a place in your regular eating pattern. Eating fruits and vegetables that honor your culture and taste preferences is always a wonderful way to support your health.

Also, remember that health isn't just about what you eat. Almost all of the dietary guidelines summarized above mention the importance of community and sharing meals with others, which is something that culturally, we already appreciate and practice as a cherished custom. Social support has been linked with a number of health benefits, including better quality sleep, improved mood, healthier eating habits, and even a longer life. Having strong social connections, something deeply rooted in many Latine cultures, is linked to a reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, dementia, depression, and anxiety, according to the CDC. So, don't underestimate the power of sharing meals with loved ones—it's more than tradition; it's a vital part of health and well-being.





SUMMARY OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Results and Cultural Food Preferences

This report presents the findings from a survey conducted to gather feedback on the food distributions provided by Alimentando Al Pueblo. The survey aimed to understand the preferences, cultural food needs, and potential barriers faced by recipients.

Survey Overview

Survey Participants: The survey was completed by 53 individuals from various cultural backgrounds, including Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Peru.

Objective: To assess the satisfaction with the food provided, identify preferred and disliked foods, and gather insights on cultural food needs and barriers to consumption.

Key Findings

Satisfaction with Food Distributions

Overall Rating: Most respondents rated the food distributions highly, with most ratings at 4 or 5 out of 5.

Common Positive Feedback:

- Respondents appreciated the inclusion of staple items like rice, beans, tortillas, and oil.
- Many found the food distributions to be culturally relevant and useful.

Preferred Foods - Top Preferred Foods:

- Tortillas, maseca, beans, oil, rice, and sugar were frequently mentioned as the most appreciated items.
- Some participants specifically mentioned enjoying products like coffee, chile, tamarindo, lechera, and various condiments.

Disliked Foods - Common Dislikes:

- Certain respondents expressed a dislike for specific items, such as canned vegetables and certain types of pasta.
- Some noted that they received items they were unsure how to use, indicating a potential need for cooking instructions or recipes.

Cultural Food Preferences - Cultural Foods Requested:

- Respondents expressed a desire to see more culturally relevant foods, such as tortillas de maíz, pepitoria verde or pepitas, and specific types of chiles.
- Foods like tamales, mole, and items used in traditional dishes were also mentioned.

Barriers to Consuming Cultural Foods

Key Barriers:

- **Cost:** Many respondents cited the high cost of certain cultural foods as a barrier.
- **Accessibility:** Some cultural ingredients are difficult to find in local stores.
- **Time of Preparation:** The time required to prepare traditional dishes was noted as a challenge, especially for those with busy schedules.

Health Conditions and Dietary Needs

Common Health Conditions:

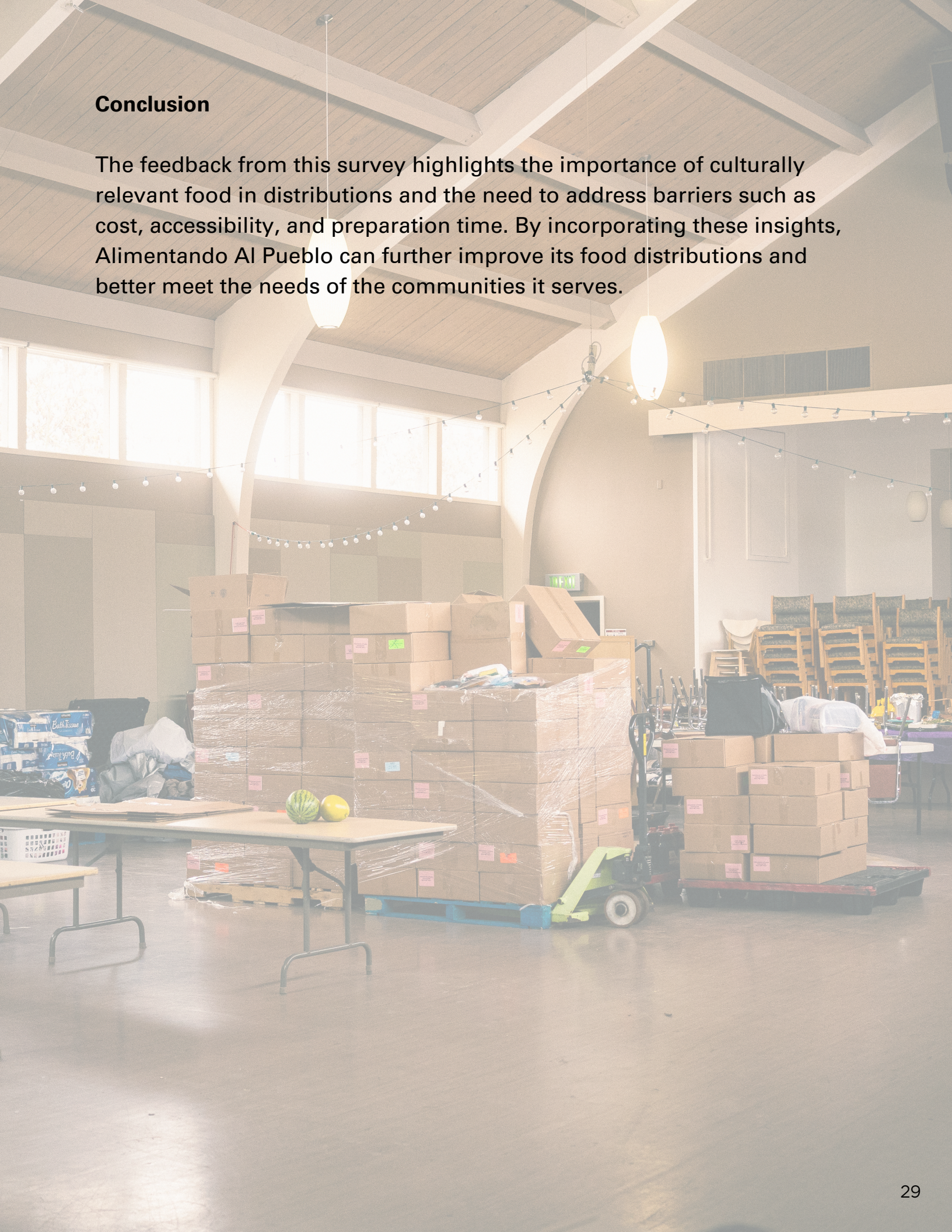
- Several respondents mentioned managing conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol.
- There was a noted interest in learning how to prepare healthier versions of traditional dishes.

Recommendations - Based on the survey findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Enhance Cultural Relevance:** Increase the variety of cultural foods offered, focusing on those specifically requested by respondents.
- **Address Barriers:** Consider providing educational resources, such as recipes or cooking tips, to help participants use unfamiliar foods and manage preparation time.
- **Health-Focused Options:** Offer healthier alternatives or ingredients that align with the dietary needs of those managing chronic health conditions.
- **Add More Protein Offerings.** Current protein food offerings are limited to beans and tuna. If possible, offer more culturally relevant protein sources to help participants meet protein needs and offset the high cost of animal proteins.

Conclusion

The feedback from this survey highlights the importance of culturally relevant food in distributions and the need to address barriers such as cost, accessibility, and preparation time. By incorporating these insights, Alimentando Al Pueblo can further improve its food distributions and better meet the needs of the communities it serves.





DONATION GUIDELINES

DONATED FOODS AND PRODUCTS

We are committed to distributing safe and nutritious food to our community, with a special focus on honoring the cultural preferences of our comunidad. Our offerings include a diverse selection of fresh, canned, and packaged foods. We believe in promoting a balanced and healthy eating pattern where all foods can have a place, including those often demonized or misunderstood. Our goal is to educate our community on how every type of food can contribute to a healthy lifestyle when enjoyed mindfully.

Although myths about the lack of nutritional value of Latine cultural foods are pervasive, they are largely false. Some studies show that acculturation to the United States actually results in worse dietary quality.

Furthermore, Latines are disproportionately impacted by the social determinants of health, which play a big role on overall health outcomes. Latines in the U.S. are less likely to have health insurance, social and emotional support, and more likely to experience food insecurity than their white counterparts, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. All of this greatly impacts overall health outcomes, and restricting cultural foods is not the solution.

Therefore, we appreciate donations of culturally-relevant foods first and foremost. We have surveyed participants and the below donation requests are based on these surveys and nutrition guidance from Latina registered dietitians:

High-Priority Food Items List:

- Tortillas
- Maseca
- Beans (dry or low-sodium canned)
- Oil
- Rice
- Sugar
- Coffee
- Chiles
- Condensed milk

In order to address specific dietary needs of donation recipients, low- or reduced-sodium food items are appreciated when possible. You can identify an item as low-sodium by checking the nutrition facts panel. It is low-sodium if it has less than 5% of the daily value of sodium per serving.

FINAL THOUGHTS

These Recommendations serve as a guide to ensure that culturally appropriate, nutritious foods are accessible to Latine families. By reframing nutrition and challenging misconceptions, this document empowers food banks and their collaborators to honor cultural traditions while promoting health and well-being. The needs assessment results, paired with insights from various countries and communities, underscore the importance of providing not just food but food that reflects the cultural and dietary preferences of the people it serves. As we continue this work, let us remember that food is not only a basic need but also a key to preserving heritage and fostering dignity within our communities. Through these practices, we can create a more equitable, inclusive food system that truly nourishes the whole person—mind, body, and culture.

YOUR LATINA NUTRITION

CONTACT US



www.yourlatinanutritionist.com



[@your.latina.nutritionist](https://www.instagram.com/your.latina.nutritionist)

This report was thoughtfully crafted by a team of dietitians at Your Latina Nutrition



Mission: Cultivate healing through Comunidad, Comida y Celebración. **Vision:** Joyful Communities

Vision: Joyful Communities

Alimentando al Pueblo is a Burien based nonprofit founded in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic as a Community and Cultural building organization. Our programs are rooted in a power sharing model with a goal to develop leadership within our Community.

Together, we source and distribute cultural foods, organize celebrations that promote social connections and healing, and center Latine art and traditions in every aspect of our work to cultivate joy, pride, and cultural preservation.

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CONTACT US



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Alimentando Al Pueblo