

**4-H at
HOME**



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FOOD SYSTEMS SCAVENGER HUNT

Discover your community's food system strengths and weaknesses with a walking tour scavenger hunt.



Food Systems Scavenger Hunt

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About the Activity

The food we eat often comes from all over the country and across the world. But what happens if food can't get from one place to another? In this activity you will go on a scavenger hunt to find out about your community's food system and its strengths and weaknesses — and see just how resilient your community's food system is to food shortages and food insecurity.

Supplies

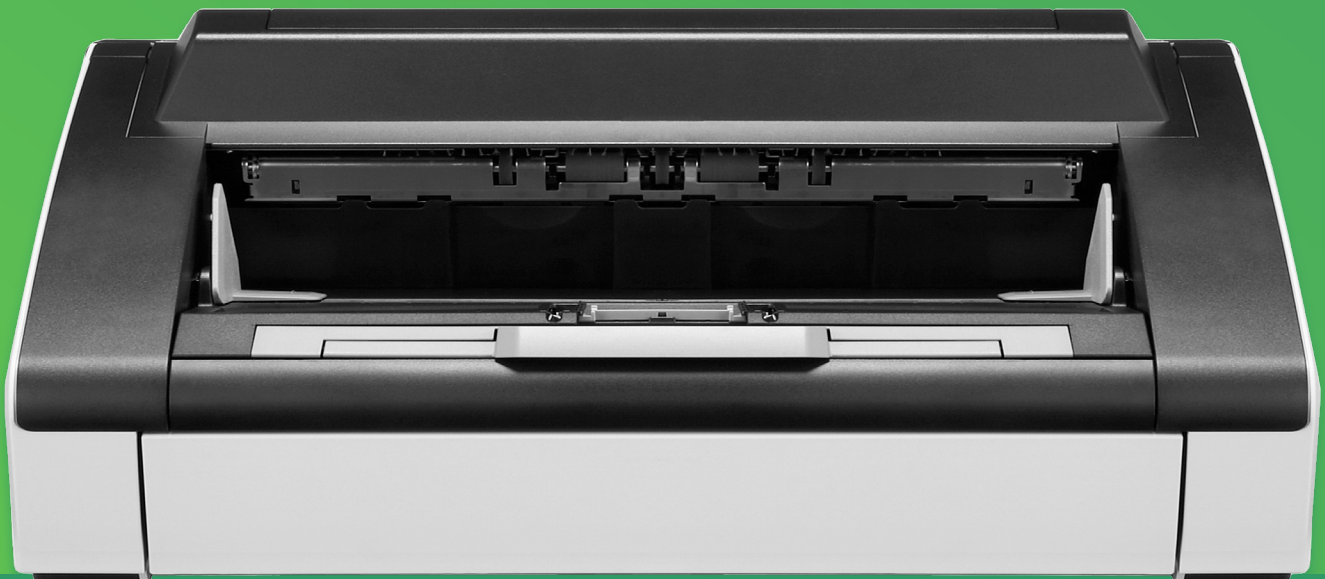
These simple supplies are all you'll need for this activity.

- Downloadable scavenger hunt list
- Printer
- Pen or pencil to mark the scavenger hunt list

Grades: 7-10

Topic: Food Systems, Civic Engagement

Time: 1 to 2 hours



Activity Steps

It's important to know how food-resilient your community is. In this activity, you will go on a scavenger hunt to uncover the different levels of your local food systems. You can use this knowledge to help show your friends and family how they can become more food resilient.

- 1 First, let's get familiar with the different levels of food systems, meaning the decisions we make about how we obtain our food — from household to global.
 - **Individual:** A personal decision about food based on experience, culture, preference, or finance. The decisions depend on the situation and can change over time.
 - **Household:** A group of people that live together may eat together, share a food budget, and affect one another's eating behaviors — for example, parents' influence on children.
 - **Local:** Direct-to-consumer markets such as farm stands, farmers' markets, and community supported agriculture (CSA) as well as direct-to-retailer sales such as convenience stores, supermarkets, and restaurants.
 - **Regional:** A food system at this level tries to be self-reliant within a state or a cluster of states such as the Northeast, Southwest, West, Southeast, and Midwest.
 - **National:** Farm labor, food safety, pesticide use, and product labeling are all guided by federal regulations. Market agreements for commodities affect supply and prices on this level.
 - **Global:** This level relates to imports of agricultural products, movement around the planet, and food security of the world's population. It has a significant influence on our diets, economies, environmental quality, and policies of all levels of the food system.

DID YOU KNOW?

COVID-19 had a huge impact on food supply chains around the world, including farmers, food service distributors, food service producers, food packaging companies, and grocery retailers. You may have even experienced this if you went to the grocery store and could not find certain items because they were out of stock.

- 2 Now, let's get down to it! Print out (or view on your computer or phone) the downloadable scavenger hunt list for this activity.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina severely hit the city of New Orleans, Louisiana. The floods caused by the hurricane damaged many food retail stores in the city. Roads and communication infrastructures were also damaged, making food transportation difficult. As a result, residents had difficulty accessing fresh food and faced food shortages.

- 3 **Determine how food resilient your community is by:**
 - Calculating the total number of food sources from each level of the food system that you found in your scavenger hunt. Consider how much you depend on food that you eat that is grown or transported from places that are not part of your region.
 - Taking a closer look at other non-food things you found in your scavenger hunt (number 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14). How will they affect the ability of your community to supply food locally?
 - Considering your access to food in an emergency situation such as COVID-19 lockdown, natural disasters, severe weather, etc.

DID YOU KNOW?

The United States produces very limited amounts of its own bananas, mainly in Hawaii and Florida. Most of the bananas sold in U.S. stores are imported from Central American countries including Guatemala, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Columbia, and Honduras.

Test Your Knowledge

See how much you've learned about Food Systems!

Drag the words in the right column to the correct statements on the left:

H5P — Drag the Words with Tip

Reflection Questions

Bonus questions to inspire wonder.

- Where would you get food from if all the stores in the area were closed?
- Name two things that can disrupt food from traveling to your grocery stores.
- What are the things you like to eat that are NOT commonly grown in your region?
- What are some things you could do to be more food resilient?



Investigate & Explore

Take what you've learned to the next level to learn more and explore the possibilities.

A resilient food system will help communities secure food access in all situations of emergencies. For instance, during the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, many grocery stores could not keep up with the demands of shoppers as the traditional food supply chain was disrupted. Meanwhile, many local farms stand out to provide community members with direct access to fresh produce, through CSAs, farmers' markets, and food pantries. Buying locally produced food is not just a move to acquire food easily, it also helps to support the local economy and provides local food in case of a national emergency. On the other hand, charitable organizations, such as food banks, also play a vital role in providing food for many people who experience hardships. Items at food banks are mostly processed food that are not locally produced, but they can be stored for a long time.

Take a meaningful break to explore your community food spots. You can go shopping at a farmers' market, helping at a local farm, buying Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) food boxes, or volunteering at a food bank. Think about how they can make your community more food resilient. You will also get to explore more local food projects in the last two activities in this series, **Become a Food Systems Influencer**, and **Act for Food Justice**.

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BE A FOOD SYSTEMS INVESTIGATOR

Learn about the key players involved in modern food systems.





Be a Food Systems Investigator

Learn about the key players involved in modern food systems.

About the Activity

There are a lot of key players - animals and humans alike - in the production of our food. Each have different roles, responsibilities, and perspectives. You'll learn all about them in this activity, including (for the humans!) their points of view that are based on their life experiences, and then you'll start to think about the different career tracks available to you in the food production industry.



Supplies

These simple supplies are all you'll need for this activity.

- Internet-connected device
- Key Players in Food Systems Worksheet
- Printer
- Glue

Grades: 3-8

Topic: Food Systems, Civic Engagement

Time: 30 minutes





Activity Steps

Be a Food Systems Investigator -

1

Review this list of key players in food systems.



DID YOU KNOW? Pollinators help plants reproduce so that we can have fruits, vegetables, and nuts to harvest. Common pollinators include bees, butterflies, moths, flies, birds, bats, beetles, and other small mammals.

- b. For non-human producers, find out about their roles by searching ‘what are pollinators,’ for example.

DID YOU KNOW? Decomposers are made up of the “FBIs”—fungi, bacteria, and invertebrates (worms and insects).

2

Pick four players in the above list to learn more about, human or otherwise, and find some more information about them on the internet.

- a. For people, find out about their job related to food systems. Examples could include: a restaurant chef, a waitress, a farmer, a 4-H Educator, a cafeteria worker, or a grocery store worker. You can easily find videos about, say, a farm worker by searching in a web browser ‘day in the life of a farm worker.’



3

In your role as a food systems investigator, find pictures of your four key players, then print them out.

DID YOU KNOW? The U.S. has multiple federal agencies that regulate food safety. The four main agencies are: the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which is part of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS); the Food Safety and Inspection Services (FSIS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) of the Department of Commerce.

4

Glue each picture to the worksheet and write a short description of:

- a. Role of the key player in food systems
- b. Their responsibilities to food systems
- c. Perspectives of the key player (For example: What did they say would make their jobs easier/better? What do they think of modern food systems?) [You may skip this one for non-human players.]
- d. What's happening in the picture

DID YOU KNOW? Agriculture, food, and related industries provided 22.2 million full- and part-time jobs for Americans, accounting for 10.9% of total U.S. employment in 2019. Food service, eating and drinking places, had the most jobs (13.0 million), followed by food and beverage stores (3.2 million), and farms (2.6 million). The rest of the agriculture-related industries provided a total of 3.4 million jobs.

5

For bonus points, find other players not included in this list, such as people who work in a food processing factory, people who work with food packaging, people who help get emergency food to those who are food insecure, or people who make decisions about food laws.

DID YOU KNOW? There are many cool jobs related to food that intersect with other industries. Here are some examples: a software engineer can design a food ordering app; a photographer can take food advertisement photos or shoot TV commercials; a professional food blogger can write about food on social media; a finance consultant can provide financial advice for a food company.



Test Your Knowledge

Visit <https://4-H.org/FoodSystemsInvestigator> to put your knowledge to the test with an interactive game.



Reflection Questions

Bonus questions to inspire wonder:

- What is your desired future career? What could be the connections of this career with food systems?
- Choose a key player in food systems. How could you make their role in the food systems easier?
- What is one other player in the food systems you could think of? What are their roles in the food systems?



Investigate & Explore

Take your new knowledge to the next level.

You just investigated some key players in food systems – but what about you? Do some thinking as you intersect with various food systems players in the near future and ask yourself ‘Could I see myself doing their job?’ Why, or why not? If there are certain things about their job you don’t like, how could you change them? For example, if you see a large truck driving food products that clearly come from far away, is that appealing to you? If driving a truck doesn’t sound fun, would you rather be a logistics expert who coordinates what trucks go where, and when? Or a farm laborer who helps

to load the trucks? Food systems are complicated networks run by people, and you can have a role – other than that of a consumer – if you want, when you grow up!

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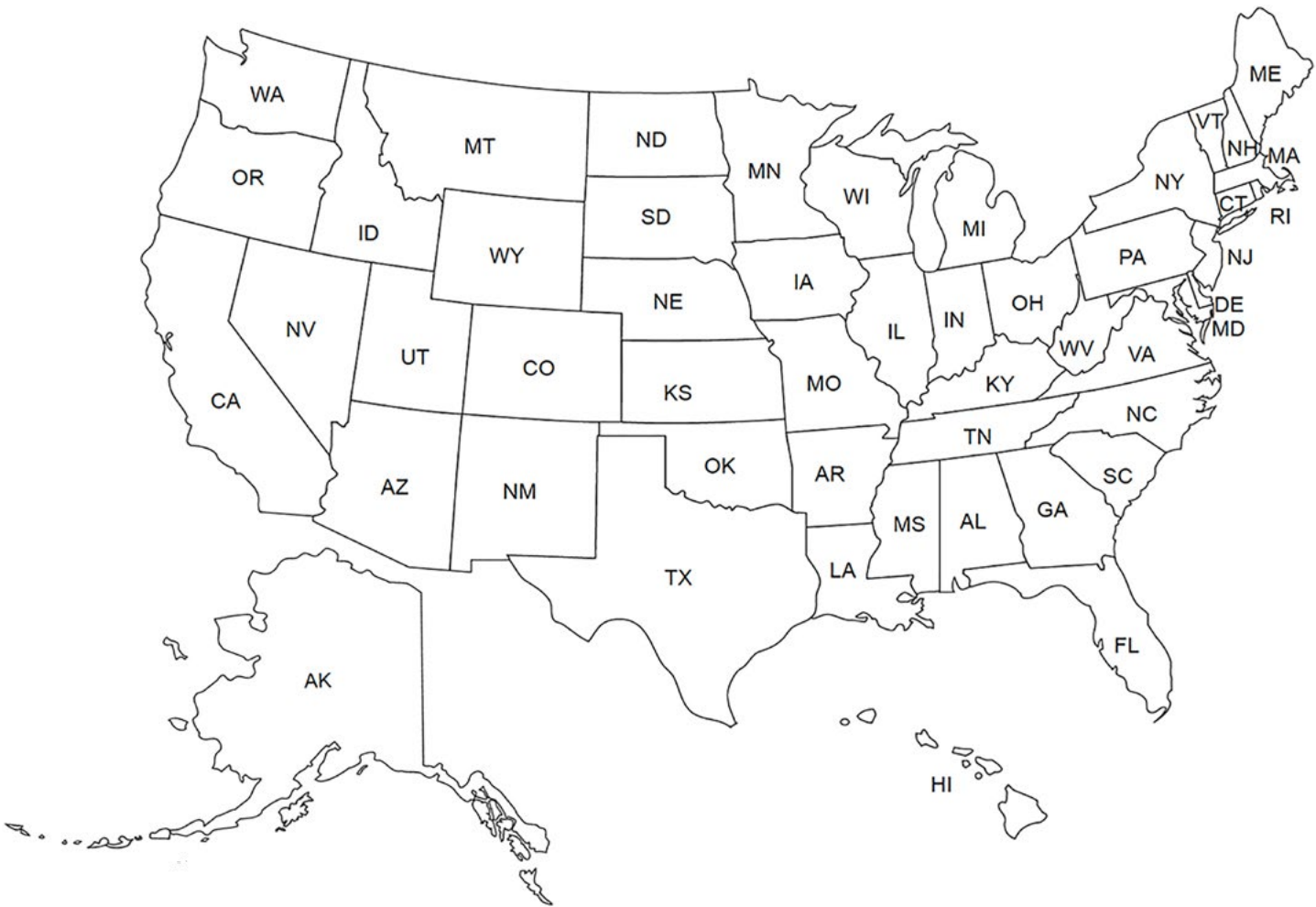


Instruction: Use pins and a string to map out the route of the following locations you found from the clues.

- Production
- Retail

- Processing
- Consumption

- Distribution Facility
- Disposal Facility



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KEY PLAYERS IN FOOD SYSTEMS

Instruction: Take pictures, use pictures from a magazine, or draw pictures of 4 key players whose roles and responsibilities related to food systems. Provide a short description of each key player.

Key Player 1

[put picture here]	Role of the key player in food systems
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	Key player's responsibilities in food systems
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	Key player's perspectives on food systems
	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	What's happening in the picture?
	<hr/> <hr/>



Key Player 2

[put picture here]	Role of the key player in food systems
	Key player's responsibilities in food systems
	Key player's perspectives on food systems
	What's happening in the picture?



Key Player 3

[put picture here]	Role of the key player in food systems
	Key player's responsibilities in food systems
	Key player's perspectives on food systems
	What's happening in the picture?



Key Player 4

[put picture here]	Role of the key player in food systems
	Key player's responsibilities in food systems
	Key player's perspectives on food systems
	What's happening in the picture?

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ASK AN ELDER: WHAT IS YOUR CHILDHOOD FOOD STORY?

Find out how the ways we interact with food have changed over time.





Ask an Elder: What Is Your Childhood Food Story?

Find out how the ways we interact with food have changed over time.

About the Activity

What's for dinner? The answer to that question has changed over the years. In this activity, you will interview someone who grew up at least 30 years ago to get a sense of how advertising, costs, accessibility, and trends have affected their food choices at different points in their life. What did older adults eat, plant, and cook when they were growing up decades ago, and what changes have they noticed? Let's find out.

Supplies

These simple supplies are all you'll need for this activity.

- Sample talking points
- Food Pyramid and MyPlate
- An Elder's Story of Food Systems Worksheet
- Note-taking tools
- Video-enabled, internet-connected device for a video call (optional)

Grades: 6-12

Topic: Food Systems, Civic Engagement

Time: 1 hour





Activity Steps

1

Find somebody in your family or community (it can be a parent, grandparent, relative, neighbor, or teacher, for example) who is at least 30 years older than you, and ask to have a 30-minute interview about food with them.

DID YOU KNOW? The USDA released the Food Guide Pyramid in 1992 as a visual guide to nutritional recommendations. Over time, recommendations changed, and in 2011 the USDA released the MyPlate diagram, which illustrated the latest evidence-based nutritional guidance.

2

To prepare for the interview:

- Choose a comfortable setting with few distractions. Or find a good time and place to talk to them on a video call.
- Introduce yourself and explain that the interview is for a 4-H project for you to learn about food culture and food systems from a person from a different generation.
- Let your interviewee know that the interview will take around 30 minutes.

DID YOU KNOW? Since the 1970s, Americans are spending more on food away from home while less on food at home. However, this trend reversed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as people were eating more at home.

3

For the first few minutes, use the USDA Food Guide Pyramid and MyPlate to guide the first part of the interview (see sample talking points companion sheet to this activity).

DID YOU KNOW? Globally, people have been consuming more calories as time goes by. From 1961 to 2011, Americans' consumption of vegetable oils more than doubled, accounting for a more than 26% increase of calorie consumption over that 50-year span. Check out this interactive website to see changes in people's diet over time around the world.

4

For the second part of the interview, ask your interviewee about their experiences regarding food culture and food systems. Talk about how cultural backgrounds and time periods influence the types of food they eat, their food traditions, and changes they have witnessed in the food system (see sample talking points).

DID YOU KNOW? Comfort food is food that brings you joy and satisfaction, connecting to emotion, memory, and culture. It can be your family meal or a traditional dish unique to your heritage. It can bring you back to a familiar sense of home if you are in a new place, or to traditional foods that come from your heritage or region.

5

Use your notes to compare your interviewee's experiences with your own experiences on the worksheet. For example, reflect on changing attitudes toward food choices.





Test Your Knowledge

QUESTION 1

Is culture part of the food systems?

- a. No. What we eat is not related to our cultures.
- b. Yes. Culture can influence our taste and food preferences.

QUESTION 2

Which of the following describes changes in people's daily diet from 1961 to 2011?

- a. People's diet did not change.
- b. People were eating 50% less fruits.
- c. People's daily calories consumption increased by 26%.

QUESTION 3

Which food group is found in the Food Pyramid but not in MyPlate?

- a. Grains
- b. Vegetables
- c. Dairy
- d. Oils and sweets

QUESTION 4

What is not a characteristic of comfort food?

- a. It can remind you of home.
- b. It can bring you happy memories.
- c. It can make you feel stressed.
- d. It is often related to your culture.

Reflection Questions

Bonus questions for after the interview

- What new ingredient or dish from the conversation do you want to try?
- What are some major differences between MyPlate and the Food Pyramid? How do those updates influence your and your interviewee's food choices?
- If you were born in the same year as your interviewee, how might your food be the same or be different from now? Why?



Investigate & Explore

Take your new knowledge to the next level.

America has been known as the melting pot of cultures as people migrate to this land of opportunity from all over the world. Food is also part of this journey: some may keep it original while others adapt to the new culture; some ingredients are unique to one culture; some cultural cuisines share the same ingredients but use different ways

to prepare. Are there any cuisines outside of your culture that you and your family enjoy? Where is your favorite place to eat food outside of your culture? The next time you go out to eat, try talking to the owner of the restaurant and find out any interesting stories!

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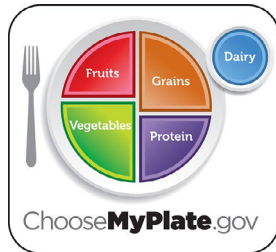
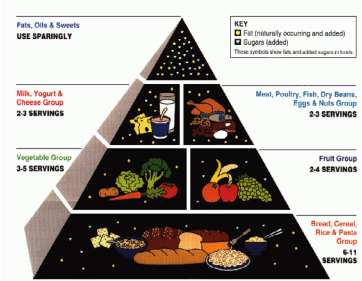


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Instruction: Use the USDA Food Guide Pyramid and MyPlate to guide the first part of the interview (3-5 minutes).



- 1 Did you follow these guidelines in choosing healthy foods?
- 2 What are some examples of food you choose to eat based on each food group?
- 3 What portion of each food category did you eat in the past? Has that changed over time?
- 4 Why did you think the food guide was changed from Food Pyramid to MyPlate?

Instruction: For the second part of the interview, ask your interviewee about their experiences regarding food culture and food systems (25-27 minutes).

- 1 **Cultural Background:** What is your ethnic or cultural background? How has this affected the types of foods you eat? As a child, could you always find food that fit your culture or background? Can you find those foods now?
- 2 **Food Types:** As a child, did you eat mostly processed or home cooked meals? Did you eat at restaurants or fast-food chains frequently? Why or why not? Is it the same now?
- 3 **Traditions:** What were your family traditions around eating together, cooking together, or growing food together? Did you have a garden or a farm? How did you typically purchase food – did you go to a single grocery store? Did you get different products from different community members? How did historical events impact your access and use of foods (examples might be droughts, economic downturns, or changes to the neighborhood)?
- 4 **Food System Changes:** What are some things in the food system that have changed:
 - i. How has the cost of milk changed? Was milk delivered?
 - ii. What skills around growing and preserving food did you learn – how has that changed? Did anyone in your family do food preservation, grow, or raise food?
 - iii. Are there people in the family who have been farmers or cooks – how has that changed? What other food systems jobs did family members do?

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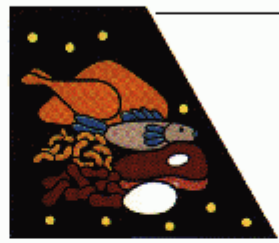
Fats, Oils & Sweets
USE SPARINGLY

KEY
 ● Fat (naturally occurring and added)
 ▣ Sugars (added)
 These symbols show fats and added sugars in foods.

Milk, Yogurt & Cheese Group
2-3 SERVINGS



Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs & Nuts Group
2-3 SERVINGS



Vegetable Group
3-5 SERVINGS



Fruit Group
2-4 SERVINGS



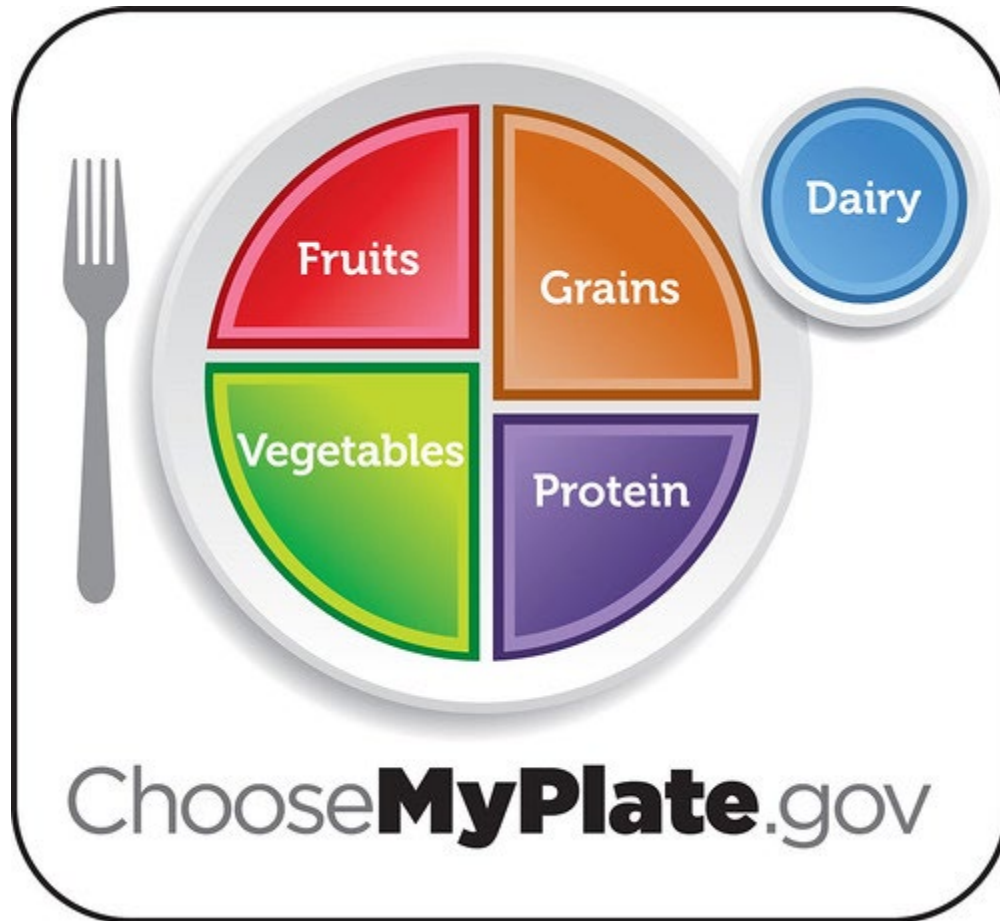
Bread, Cereal, Rice & Pasta Group
6-11 SERVINGS

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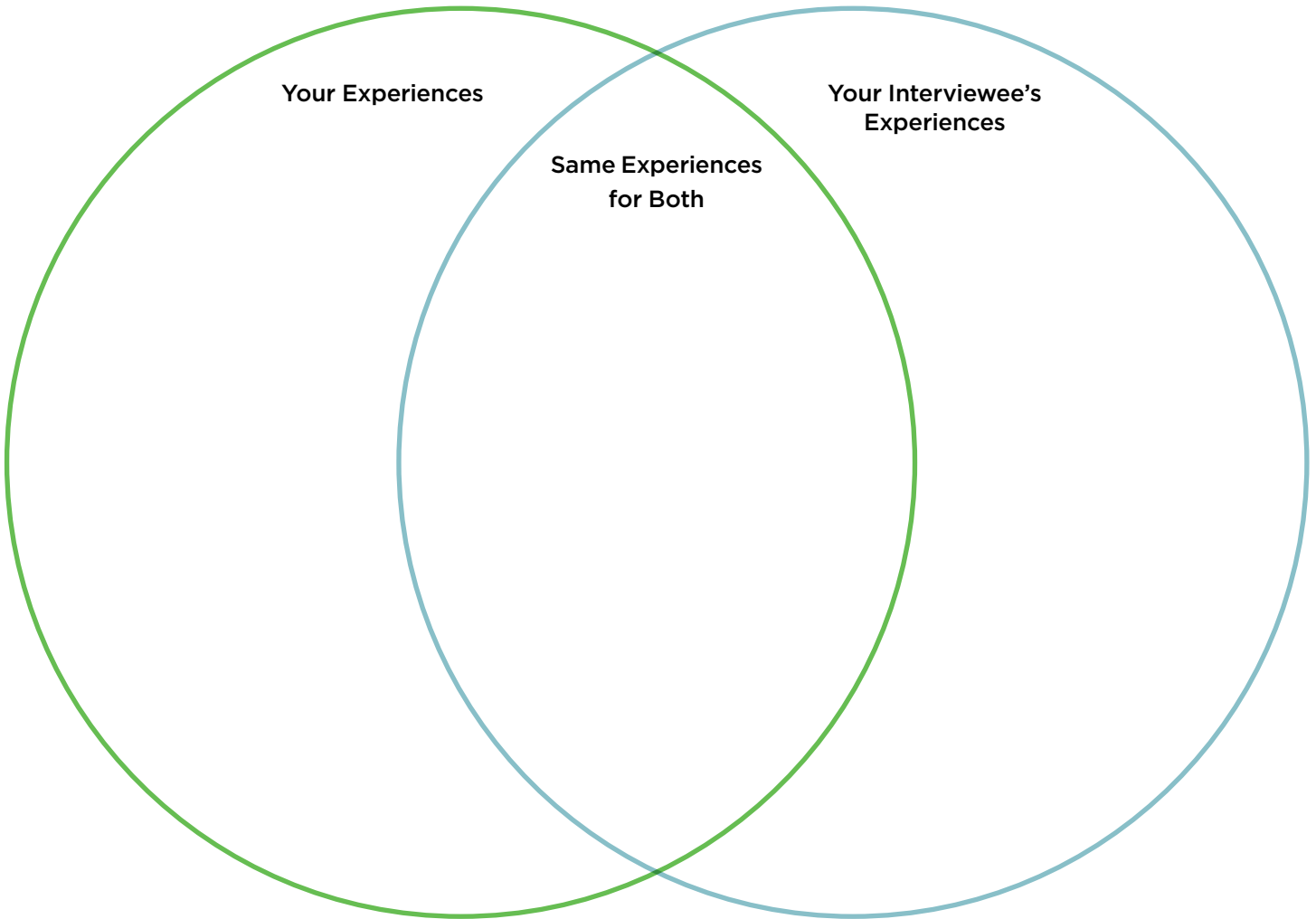


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Instruction: Use the Venn Diagram below to compare your interviewee's experience with your own experience regarding how the food system has changed in terms of belief, culture, value, and knowledge.



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