

# GROCERIES & CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE ARRIVAL MEAL



Good Neighbor Teams may be asked to buy initial groceries and provide a warm culturally appropriate meal for the newcomers. This document provides an overview of common foods and proposed welcome meals by country. However, remember that newcomers may come from a certain country in which they identify with nationally, but may be of a specific ethnic group that will affect their food cultures.

## PRE-ARRIVAL PREPARATION

- Do research prior to the newcomers arrival on the newcomers cultural background and identify culturally inclusive grocery stores near the newcomers residence.
- If there are no culturally inclusive grocery stores nearby, then be familiar with the common types of foods that are connected to that culture.

## PRE-ARRIVAL GROCERIES

Providing groceries before newcomers arrive, allows the newcomers to have some groceries upon arrival, but it is not expected your team will know exactly what they necessarily need or want. A trip with the family to the grocery store soon after their arrival should be arranged by your team and communicated with the World Relief office.

## SUGGESTED BASIC GROCERY LIST

This can be modified but below is a suggested grocery list of food items that are more common across various ethnic and culture groups. Use this as a guide as your team prepares groceries:

- Tomatoes
- Cabbage
- Potatoes
- Cucumber
- White onions
- Apples
- Bananas
- Oranges
- Eggs
- Rice (not instant)
- Sugar
- Salt
- Garlic
- Chicken, bone-in and skin on (halal if Muslim. If there are no halal markets in your community or you can't confirm that the meat is halal, refrain from purchasing meats)
- Cooking oil—Corn/Canola oil preferred
- Black tea
- Green tea
- Instant coffee
- Milk
- Apple, mango, or other fruit juice

For additional resources and ideas, check out Refugee Welcome Collective's [Grocery List and Arrival Meal](#).

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## GROCERY STORE WITH NEWCOMERS

- It is a good idea to take the family shopping soon after their arrival to help introduce them to grocery stores and restock their pantry needs.
- Food Stamp is administered through the Department of Social Services and may take some time to arrive after their enrollment for benefits. Until then, groceries may be reimbursable by World Relief. Check with the local World Relief office on their reimbursement policy and process.
- Guide the family in navigating the grocery store and finding foods they are familiar with.
- In many parts of the world, people go to the market every day for their daily needs. However, this is not always doable in the US. Help the newcomers plan and shop for at least the week. It may also be a good idea to schedule a weekly grocery trip with them for the first few weeks until they are able to get to and from the grocery store on their own.
- Locate convenient stores or neighborhood markets that are walking distance to them, and show them how to get there, so that if they need smaller essentials throughout the week before the bigger grocery day, they can go and make these purchases on their own.
- Local farmer's markets may also be a good place to visit with newcomers, especially if they are easily accessible to them.
- Food pantries are certainly a good option of additional resource for newcomers. Share the information with the newcomers but let them decide if they want the services. If they do, work with them to get connected to a local pantry and apply.

## KEEP IN MIND

- Going to the grocery store may be an overwhelming experience for newcomers who are from countries where American-style grocery stores do not exist. Make sure the family is rested after arriving before taking them grocery shopping.
- Ingredients and food preparation differs across the globe and your team can certainly help source specialty items for the newcomers, but it may be most helpful to get them connected to other neighbors from their ethnic and cultural communities.
- Newcomers experience with food security and access before arriving to the U.S. can influence their habits around food and shopping, If teams notice any unusual habits, be understanding but also use it as teachable moments.

# GROCERIES & CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE ARRIVAL MEAL



## ARRIVAL MEAL IDEAS

If the newcomer has any US Ties, they should be part of the discussion around this meal, as they may want to prepare it for their soon to arrive family. If this is the case, your team may offer your assistance as a way of learning and building connections. If there is no US Tie, and your team is unsure about what to do, contact the World Relief staff for ideas and suggestions. Some local offices will have connections with local restaurants and communities that can provide culturally appropriate arrival meals. If your team will provide the meal, here is a simple list of ideas for different nationalities. Feel free to research complete recipes and additional ideas for more ethnic specific dishes. However, when in doubt, baked chicken (Halal if Muslim) with white rice is a safe choice.

### **Afghan Refugees**

Kabuli Pulao, Kofta, pita bread, and fresh fruit.

### **Bhutanese Refugees**

Jasha Maroo, white rice, Momo, boiled potatoes stir-fried with green onions, chili peppers and spices, fresh fruit.

### **Burmese Refugees**

Burmese style Biryani (halal if Muslim) or Tamarind Pork (non-Muslim only) with white rice, roti, fresh fruit.

### **Central African Republican Refugees**

Peanut and Sweet Potato Stew over white rice, cooked carrots, fresh fruit.

### **Columbian Refugees**

Bandeja Paisa, white rice, kidney beans cooked with tomatoes and green onions, fried plantains, fresh fruit.

### **Congolese Refugees**

Poulet Moambe, white rice, beans, fresh fruit.

### **Cuban Refugees**

Ropa Vieja, white rice, beans, black beans, potatoes, fresh fruit.

### **Eritrean Refugees**

Zigini with Injera bread, lentil stew, cooked green beans with garlic and onion, fresh fruit.

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## Haitian Refugees

Griyo, rice, fried plantain, fresh fruit.

## Iraqi Refugees

Masgouf or Kofta with white rice, spiced chickpeas, green beans, fresh fruit.

## Sudanese Refugees

Ful Medames with flat bread, cooked green beans, fresh fruit.

## Somali Refugees

Suugo Suqaar (Somali spaghetti), Sambuusa, bananas, other fresh fruit.

## Ukrainian Refugees

Borscht, potato salad, fresh bread, fresh fruit.

## Vietnamese Refugees

Pho or grilled lemongrass chicken/pork and rice, Vietnamese style egg rolls, fresh fruit.

## REMEMBER TO

- Log your volunteer hours on Track-it-Forward
- Log case notes if required of GNT