Here in Hawaii we are fortunate to have a diverse population with various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Presence of military personnel and immigration from Asia and the Pacific Islands is a result of Hawaii’s unique location in the Pacific. The majority of our population consists of Caucasian, Asian, and persons of Pacific Island descent. Specifically, Caucasian, Japanese, Filipino, Native Hawaiian, Chinese, Korean, African American, Samoan, Vietnamese and Micronesian comprise about 80% of the states’ population. Our culture is shaped by these various ethnic groups.

Food is a common thread among many cultures. In Hawaii, celebrations and special events normally center around food. There is usually a lot of food at these events, more than we can eat! Parties are commonly “pot luck” style in which everyone brings a dish to share. These foods reflect our cultural heritage and/or include foods from various cultures.

How many of us were raised in Hawaii?
Read the following: If we were not raised in Hawaii, we may not be accustomed to local foods. Food may seem foreign and weird. However, we should at least try it before judging it. Who knows? Maybe we’ll like it!

Action: Everyone repeat the following with me, “try all kinds.”

Have participants repeat the following:

Read the following: Our taste preferences, likes and dislikes, are shaped by what we ate as children and continue to change as we get older. Although we may have our favorite foods, we can still taste different foods we have not tried previously. So, we should “try all kinds.”

Action: Everyone repeat with me, “try all kinds.”

Have participants repeat the following:

Action: What kinds of ethnic foods from different cultures do you like to eat?

Ask the following question: *Gently encourage people to participate. Thank participants for sharing.

Read the following: On the handout is a recipe that you can make for your next get together. Gon Lo Mein is a noodle dish, traditionally Chinese, but it was adapted for our local taste.

* Optional: After this lesson, I will demonstrate how to prepare the Gon Lo Mein recipe. Today we will “try all kinds!”

Celebration Foods
Lesson 21: Living Local
Read the following: Along with trying new foods, we must remember to drink 6-8 cups liquids every day. We are lucky to have such great tasting water here in Hawaii. So drink it! Drinking 6-8 cups of water daily is important for us to be healthy.

Read the following: When making food, it is important to clean our kitchen things before, after, and even while we are preparing food. For example, if we cut raw meat on a cutting board, we should wash the board with hot soapy water before cutting another food item. Raw meat juices may also spill on kitchen counters and surfaces. We should wipe up spills immediately so bad bacteria cannot grow and contaminate other things.

Read the following: Now I am going to read three statements. Please raise your hand if you agree with the statement. The first statement is: I plan to try all kinds and eat ethnic foods from different cultures.

Action: Ask your assistant to count the number of participants who raise their hand and record on the tally sheet.

Read the following: How many of you agree with this next statement: I plan to always wash my kitchen stuff with hot soapy water.

Action: Ask your assistant to count the number of participants who raise their hand and record on the tally sheet.

Read the following: The last statement is: I plan to drink 6-8 cups of liquids every day. How many people agree with this last statement?

Action: Ask your assistant to count the number of participants who raise their hand and record on the tally sheet.

Read the following: That’s the end of this activity. Thank you for listening. Please check with your doctor or health care professional before making dietary changes.

*Optional: Gon Lo Mein Demonstration (see Recipe Index Pg 205)
Luncheon meat such as spam, treet, tulip, etc. may be used, but is not necessary to cook this dish. This recipe can be made without any meat if it’s not available. Also, any type of veggies may be substituted for the chop suey mix. Participants may even bring veggies grown from their yard. Fresh veggies must be rinsed and cut before adding it to the pot.

Read the following: Now, we will make a noodle dish called Gon Lo Mein. To make this recipe we need luncheon meat, chop suey mix or other veggies, oyster sauce, water, and chow mein noodles. Before preparing the Gon Lo Mein recipe, I will wash my hands with soap and water.

Action: Wash hands with soap and water before beginning. Follow recipe directions:
- SLICE luncheon meat into strips.
- In a large pot, COOK luncheon meat.
- ADD chop suey mix (or other cut veggies), mix.
- In a small bowl, COMBINE oyster sauce and water (to total about 2/3 cups), and POUR into pot. MIX well.
- ADD noodles and MIX.

Read the following: See how easy that was! Who wants to try these delicious noodles?

Action: Pass out food.