Here in Hawaii we are fortunate to have a diverse population. 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 centers 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.

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! 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.

**Gon Lo Mein**

**Ingredients:**
- ½ (12 ounces) can luncheon meat
- 2 (10 ounces) packages chop suey mix
- ½ cup oyster sauce
- 2-3 tablespoons water
- 2 (10-ounces) packages refrigerated chow mein noodles

**Directions:**
1. SLICE luncheon meat into strips.
2. In a large pot, COOK luncheon meat.
3. ADD chop suey mix, MIX.
4. In a small bowl, COMBINE oyster sauce and water (to total about 2/3 cups), and POUR into pot. MIX well.
5. ADD noodles and MIX.

* Please check with your doctor or health care professional before making dietary changes

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