

# What people ate in the 1950s

Here are some of the amounts of foods people ate in the 1950s.

## What people, on average, ate each week in the 1950s

2.7 litres milk

3.5 eggs

1,600 grams bread (about 2 loaves)

200 grams flour

330 grams fruit (about 3 apples, oranges or bananas, or a handful of strawberries)

190 grams cakes/pastries (about 2 biscuits)

330 grams cooking fat/oil (this would all be used to cook food, such as fish and chips or a 'fry up')

## Activity

1. Keep a diary of what foods you eat for a week. You may need to look on packages for amounts, or use a scale to weigh food out.
2. Write down the differences between what you eat and what a person in the 1950s ate.



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## Here is what people, on average, ate each week in the 1960s



3. Does your diet today look more like the 1950s diet or the 1960s diet?



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## What people ate in the 1950s

### Age range

- Years 3/4 (SP4/5).
- Years 5/6 (SP6/7).

### Resources

Copies of the worksheet. Scissors.

### Using the worksheet

You may like to use this in conjunction with a study of nutrition. In general, people ate more food in the 1950s than in the 1940s, and a somewhat larger variety. When rationing ended, adults probably ate the foods they remembered from before the war, such as fruits and vegetables. However, children who were used to a bland diet continued to eat bland food and fewer fruits and vegetables.

Of course, many things people eat are not on this list, such as pizza, meat, etc. Pizza uses flour and one pizza probably uses a week's worth of flour. You may like to remind students that most people would not have eaten pizza or pasta, which were almost unheard of in the 1950s. This was also before immigrant numbers rose significantly, so there would have been few, if any, Chinese or Indian restaurants or shops, and people would not have heard of many of these foods (curry was known from Britain's Empire, but it was cooked at home and not by very many people).

Students may be surprised by how much more pastries and foods with fat in them they eat in a week – urge them to keep track of the grams of fat in the packets of crisps and sweets they eat (it should be listed on the wrapper).

### Younger students

Students may need some assistance in determining how many grams of each item they eat. You can do this activity in conjunction with maths lessons in scales and weighing.

### Outcomes

The students can:

- Keep track of how much of certain foods they eat.
- Compare what they eat with what people in the 1950s ate.
- Determine how much, by weight, of an ingredient is in a particular food.

### Older students

Students may like to keep track of other items they eat and use secondary sources to find out what else people ate in the 1950s.

### Outcomes

The students can:

- Keep track of how much of certain foods they eat.
- Compare what they eat with what people in the 1950s ate.
- Determine how much, by weight, of an ingredient is in a particular food.