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Foodways A 4-H Folkpatterns Project – Mood and Foods  
Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service  
4-H Club Bulletin

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# Moods and Foods

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Food Preparation

**PURPOSE:** To become aware of how you associate eating certain foods with how you feel

**YOU'LL NEED:** Pen or pencil

**TIME:** 20-30 minutes

**HOW TO DO IT:** Write down one or more foods you associate with each of the following feelings:

Feeling angry

Celebrating and feeling good

Feeling healthy

Feeling sad

Feeling like sharing

Feeling special

Feeling sick

Feeling especially hungry

Thinking about your roots

Feeling sentimental

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## NOW WHAT?

Have your group discuss their attitudes toward food and self by talking about the following:

1. **Favorite foods as a child (prepared at home)**—Discuss early memories about food. Why were these foods special? Was it the taste, texture, or smell? Did you have them very often, just once in a while, or only for special occasions?
2. **Favorite foods now**—Why do you like them? Are they highly advertised foods? Are they good food buys? Are they nutritious? Compare the cultural likenesses and differences in your group.
3. **Cultural foods**—Emphasize the importance of having roots—of being a unique person. Discuss how cultural foods can give a person a sense of belonging. What is your family history of the food?
4. **Celebration foods**—Celebrations may have important personal meaning, since they top off family traditions and occasions (e.g., anniversaries, religious events). These contribute to a sense of family security, support, and care.
5. **Foods for when you're sad**—Were these foods eaten when you were younger to make you feel better or are they junk foods eaten as a kind of binge? Or both? Or do you cut down on food when you are sad?
6. **Feeling good foods**—Are these foods that are nutritious? What do these foods mean to you?
7. **Foods and sickness**—These may provide fascinating insights into cultural family attitudes toward food and health.
8. **Foods you enjoy preparing and sharing**—These may show your cooking skills or lack of them, or that you never have the opportunity to cook.

*Adapted from It's Your Move—4-H Teen Nutrition Education Program, by Susan E. Travis, Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.*