



GENERAL AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN BUILDING MENUS FOR TOURISM AND AGRITOURISM UNITS

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Abstract

The menu consists of all cooked foods, pastries, confectioneries and food products (that are served at a table).

Food is essential for man, providing the energy and substances needed for metabolic processes, growth and development, representing the regulator of exchange processes between the human body and the environment.

Food has always played a key role in human life, for both individuals and communities. Its qualities and deficiencies decisively influence one's health status. An adequate nutrition is essential for health and for the treatment of several diseases. It must be well-balanced from a quantitative and qualitative point of view.

Keywords: Menu, foods, health, metabolism, side reactions, dishes, catering units, diet.

INTRODUCTION

An adequate diet is necessary in order to maintain health and treat illnesses. Food intake is intermittent, even if energetic requirements are permanent (2).

Menus must be thus constructed as to insure the almost daily serving of meat, fresh vegetables, fruit, dairy products, eggs, cereals, sweets – without abusing any one category of foods. If canned foods or sausages are to be used, they will always be associated with fresh foods, thus ensuring the vitamins needed by the body. (4).

Generally, a cook will plan the menu in advance.

Experience, in agreement with science, has taught us that an ideal menu must comprise three dishes (two main courses and a dessert).

The first course has the role of stimulating appetite and preparing the digestive apparatus for food digestion. For this purpose, it has been established that the most indicated dishes are warm soups and broths, made of meat and vegetables.

Warm soup favors the dilatation of blood vessels in stomach walls, leading to an increased blood flow at this level, which in its turn favors the secretion of a larger quantity of digestive juices.

The second course is the main dish of a meal. It must contain the largest quantity of nutrients in the menu and it must satiate the consumer. This is why the cook must make sure that the main course covers nutritional requirements, both qualitatively (nutrient content) and quantitatively.

The second course is generally prepared from meat, with various vegetables.

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The way in which foods are combined has a great influence over food digestion and assimilation, which is why the cook must know that, if meat is consumed without vegetables, proteins are assimilated to a lesser extent than when meat is combined with vegetables. On the other hand, vegetables favour the secretion of digestive juices, thus ensuring better digestion.

Raw salads added to the second course bring needed vitamins and salts to the menu.

The third course (dessert) must give gustatory nerves a pleasant sweet sensation, which aids digestion. On the other hand, the third course must cover the need for carbohydrates. If the second course did not comprise a sufficient amount of farinaceous products, the dessert will consist of something sweet that also includes flour. For example, if a noodle soup was served, followed by steak and potatoes (farinaceous carbohydrates), then the dessert can be a cake made without flour –a soufflé, an ice cream, a fruit salad or fruit mousse with cream, or a compote. But a good meal does not always depend on its price.

The cook must use, first and foremost, regional and seasonal products, and will take variety into consideration when constructing a menu.

A menu should not be composed only of heavy or light dishes, but of a combination of the two. After a heavy soup or meat borscht, one should serve fish or poultry, not pork, beef or lamb.

During a meal, the same food should not be repeated. For example, one should not serve, throughout the same meal: cheese with sour cream, chicken with sour cream and cheese dumplings with sour cream. It is also good to maintain a harmony of colours. Thus, no two dishes of the same colour should succeed each other: after a white soup one will not serve fish or steak in white sauce, but a darker food (moussaka, grilled steak etc).

When composing a menu, one should also consider the harmony of taste. Foods served one after another will not have the same taste. If a mushroom sauce is served with fish, one will not prepare the same kind of sauce for the steak, even if it has a different colour. Likewise, it is advisable to choose different foods with similar tastes. Two spicy foods or two light foods shall not be served one after another.

Repetitions and analogies should be avoided. Thus, one shall not serve two white meats, like veal and chicken, or two similar garnishes.

Generally, a menu will organize foods, as much as possible, from most substantial to lightest.

After a menu has been built, it must be verified whether it meets all requirements:

- no two similar dishes are repeated;

- the same menu was not served the day before;
- the menu is appropriate for the season;
- dishes are not prepared from the same raw material;
- the cook has also considered the preference of those who will serve the meal.

Dishes that are eaten with more pleasure are better digested and better assimilated (4).

Due to the complexity of the relation between humans and foods, there is a steady increase in the role of the food industry in producing foods that are rich in biologically active substances, called protective foods, which have several advantages, since in nutrition disorders they can have an important role in balancing decompensated metabolisms. Protective foods appear as intermediary products between medicine and food, as they can be used for a long time without any side reactions, being absolutely necessary to children and elderly people, people who work in physically and intellectually demanding conditions, athletes and those working in inappropriate conditions and requiring increased energetic intake and a higher content in biologically active substances, which have a cytoprotective effect, enhance the body's natural immunity and have fortifying properties. (1)

In the case of food, transitioning from a diet of general utility to specific nutrition, throughout its whole extension or only in some of its portions, is a form of educational progress and increases the preventive and therapeutic role of nutrition.

One of the most important mutations undergone by nutritional requirements will be the awareness of needs, resulting in food preferences combined with effective needs.

An important role in stimulating nutritional behaviour specific to the needs of the body is played by the large number of products with which it can be satisfied.

Specific food desires are mainly derived from: the disease state or organisms' predisposition for disease, in case food therapy proves to be useful; age or special period in one's life when diets with an adequate functional architecture are needed; work regime and lifestyle, to which food intake must be aligned.

Food requirements for disease cases are the result of research, but, most of all, recommendations. For this reason, in this case, desires are confused with needs, as they are established by experts in nutrition.

Systematizing diets for ill people must take into consideration the food therapy regime and the necessary food components.

Experts in public catering, in collaboration with researchers and practitioners from medical sciences,



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have the duty of deepening this organization of data and finding more analytical forms of illustrating food needs for ill consumers. In addition to this, they must translate these needs into products and complete them with data on portion size, food structure requirements and many others. (3)

CONCLUSIONS

In constructing a menu, a few requirements must be considered:

- Covering physiological needs in associating all food groups in balanced proportions;
- Avoiding monotony in menu structure;
- Minimizing loss by using appropriate primary and heat processing methods;
- Judicious representation of caloric values for the main meals of the day
- In case of illness, another very important obligation of producers is the requirement of conceiving dietetic foods so that their characteristics do not differ, or at least not to a great extent, from common foods, for the discretion of the consumer's suffering.

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