
PAST & PRESENT

A brief history of the USDA's Food Graphics

What's New About MyPlate:

MyPlate replaced MyPyramid in 2011, keeping the prefix “My” in order to maintain a personal connection, but instead of illustrating an abstract pyramid, MyPlate took the eating guide to a more concrete and easily-applicable form: a plate. Introduced along with an update of the USDA food patterns for the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, MyPlate was designed to grab consumers’ attention with a new visual cue.

MyPlate reminds Americans to eat healthier; it’s not intended to change behavior alone. Using a familiar visual, MyPlate illustrates the 5 food groups, while its companion website includes practical information and tips to help build healthier eating patterns.

Walk Down Memory Lane:

The USDA released the first food graphic in 1956. It was entitled “Food for Fitness” and is most famous for cementing the idea of food groups in the American consciousness. That stuck around until 1979, when the Hassle-Free Daily Food Guide replaced it, followed by 1984’s Food Wheel. This wheel offered a “total diet approach,” featuring goals for moderation and enough nutrients each day. In 1992, the Food Guide Pyramid was introduced, and then in 2005 it was redesigned. Instead of being a one-size fits all approach, the new pyramid included ways to personalize eating recommendations and added “My” to the title. It was replaced by MyPlate in 2011, which remains the USDA’s featured food graphic today.

