

DIETETIC HABITS IN VARIOUS POPULATION GROUPS IN CENTRAL AMERICA. Marina Flores,
Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP), Guatemala, C. A.

The social, economic and cultural groups which populate Central America differ greatly in dietetic habits and eating customs. Hence, it is necessary to know the dietetic standard and the quantitative intake of each group in order to correlate these data with the clinical and biochemical findings and to guide the programs of nutritional education. Poor families in the different countries were studied by means of daily interviews for 1 week, in which there were recorded the weight of the food available for each meal. The diets of the Guatemalan natives are characterized by their high contents of carbohydrates, calcium, thiamine, niacin and raw fiber and by the almost total absence of free fats and animal protein. This tendency is also manifested in the lower socio-economic groups of the urban and rural areas. However, the diets of the inhabitants of Carib origin on the Atlantic Coast of Guatemala proved to be high in free fats and animal protein, and deficient in calcium. Some other groups which do not consume corn tortillas prepared with lime also show low calcium values. The more wealthy groups studied in Guatemala consume diets very similar to those common in the United States.

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