

Examples of everyday food eaten by pupils in Malawi

Pupils at Chipili School wrote out information about different everyday meals. Selected pupils stood and presented their writing to the rest of the class. Mr Ligomekha (Std 5 teacher) translated from the Chichewa. Transcripts are as the original translation.

Breakfast (chakudya cha m'mawa)

Kingsley (Std 5)

I take sweet potato in the morning which is cooked or roasted. This sweet potato comes from my garden. I transport this sweet potato by using a bicycle to the trading post.

What about you? What do you take as breakfast?

And where do you get those food items? How do you transport them?

Miriam (Std 5)

I take tea as breakfast. I buy tea leaves and sugar and bread, sweet potatoes or cassava. The tea comes from estates around Thyolo or Mulanje. [*Southern Malawi.*]

These food items come from the garden, or from the market. These food items are transported by carrying on the head ('heading') or by bicycle or car.

What do you drink in the morning?

What do you eat as snacks for breakfast?

How do you find these food items?

Tiwonge (Std 4)

I take tea in the morning. I use rice. Rice comes from the market or from the field. After buying rice, then it is cooked. After cooking, when it is tender, it is served. Before we start eating we wash our hands. After washing hands we start eating.

[*Some rice is grown around Kayabwa. However, not much is grown because of lack of water. Most rice comes from Salima (near the lake) or Karonga in northern Malawi.*]

Gift (Std 4)

In the morning I take pumpkins [*the other children laughed at this because this is unusual to eat them at this time of day*]. To get pumpkins I plant seeds in the fields. After planting, they germinate then start bearing fruits. I go to the field to harvest some pumpkins. After harvesting, I cook. After cooking, I eat.

Lunch (chakudya cha masana)

Felina (Std 5)

I take nsima and relish for lunch. Nsima is made from maize flour. In the relish there are: tomatoes, salt, onions, oil, pounded groundnuts, water and soda. This is served with green leaves or meat. We make the soda ourselves or buy it from the market. The ingredients come from the field or the 'dimba' (vegetable) garden.

What do you take as lunch?
What ingredients are in the relish?
Where do you get these food items?

Mercy (Std 5)

I take porridge as lunch. Porridge is made from maize flour. In the porridge I put sugar bought from the market and salt. When cooking we mix it with water. We make it ourselves. The sugar comes from the field or from the market. The salt comes from the market [*originally from Mozambique*].

What about you? What do you take?
What are the ingredients in your relish?
Where do you get these ingredients?

Supper (chakudya cha madzulo)

Ishmail (Std 5)

I take nsima for supper or cooked sweet potatoes mixed with groundnut flour. This is called 'futali' and is very delicious and nutritious. Sometimes I take mice as relish. After killing the mice we remove the intestines and clean them with water. Then we boil them with salt. After the water has evaporated we know it is ready.

Sometimes we cook meat or vegetables by frying or boiling. After they are tender, we eat them.

We get the mice by digging in the holes from the bush (countryside). Mice are clever, so they need a clever person to catch them. When digging you must be alert because it comes from the hole very quickly. After it has come out we keep both hands on there, then we kill it. We take it and hit it on a hoe handle. Sometimes we use traps to catch the mice, instead of our hands. We also catch small birds in traps sometimes.

[The mice are actually smoked out. They may have several holes, so all but one of these are blocked, a fire is lit and then, as the mice run out, they are caught by hand or with a trap.]

What do you take as supper?
Do you have relish dug from the soil in your country?

Other food we grow ourselves or buy at the market. We buy meat from the market. We buy pork, goat, beef or mutton. Some of the food items come from the lake, like fish.

What about in your country?
Do you have food from the lake?

Lexona (Std 5)

I take nsima made from flour of maize husks (=medea). This is a nutritious food. Sometimes I take 'chigumu' which is a local cake made from maize flour, with soda, sugar, salt and a little oil. It is cooked by baking. In the relish we have got mice, vegetables and caterpillars. We fry or boil them until tender. When it is ready, we start eating. We get the mice from holes in the bush.

What do you take for supper?
Do you have mice in your country?

We grow much of our food ourselves, or sometimes we buy food at the market. Sometimes mice are sold at the market. Some food comes from the lake.

Do you have food from the lake in your country?