

Dietary intake



Figure 1: Daily energy intake, 1986-88

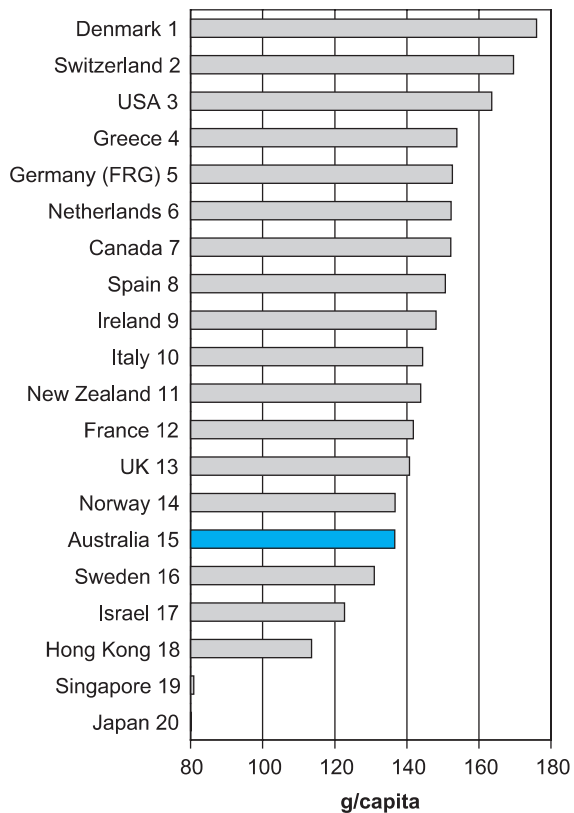


Figure 2: Daily fat intake, 1986-88

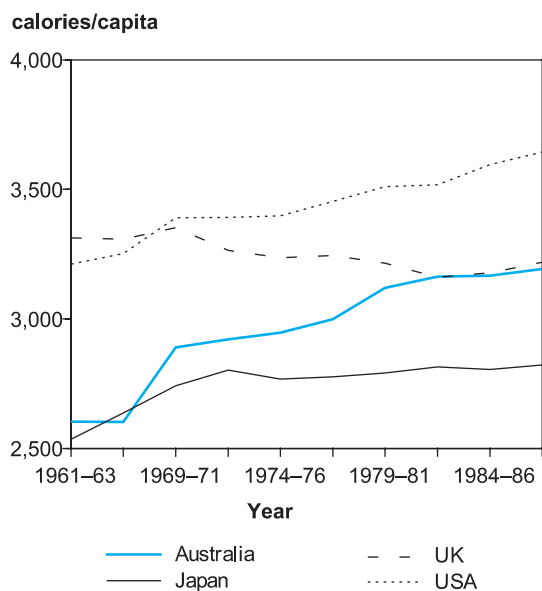


Figure 3: Trends in daily energy intake, 1961-63 to 1986-88

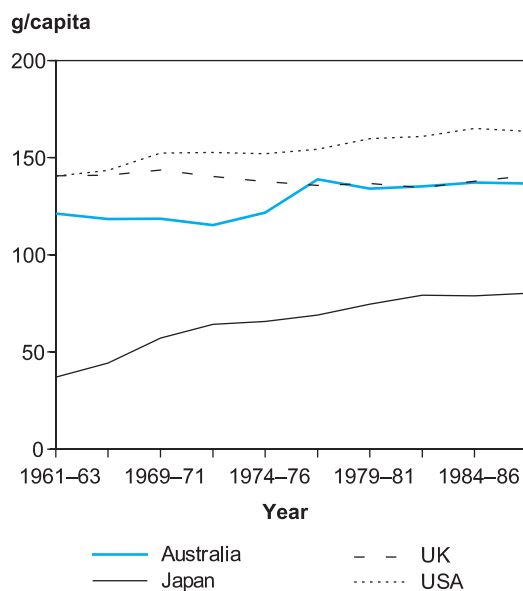


Figure 4: Trends in daily fat intake, 1961-63 to 1986-88

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Components of dietary intake

Country	Estimated daily nutrient intake (1986–88)			Apparent annual consumption	
	Energy (calories/capita)	Protein (g/capita)	Fat (g/capita)	Butter (kg/capita)	Sugar (kg/capita)
Australia	3,339	99.4	136.6	1996 2.8	1995 47
Canada	3,451	98.8	152.2	1995 2.7	1992 42
Denmark	3,605	100.5	176.0	1992 6.2	1996 43
France	3,312	112.5	141.8	1992 8.9	— —
Germany	3,528	103.5	152.6	1992 6.8	1992 34
Greece	3,701	113.0	153.9	1991 1.0	— —
Hong Kong	2,883	88.3	113.6	— —	1993 26
Ireland	3,688	108.5	148.1	1991 3.7	1991 35
Israel	3,132	98.3	122.7	1994 0.6	1994 36
Italy	3,571	110.4	144.4	1992 2.3	1992 27
Japan	2,822	89.8	80.2	1995 0.7	1993 22
Netherlands	3,303	97.6	152.3	1994 3.3	1991 40
New Zealand	3,475	109.7	143.8	1996 8.0	1996 44
Norway	3,266	100.5	136.7	1996 2.2	1993 43
Singapore	2,882	81.4	80.9	— —	1993 73
Spain	3,494	100.9	150.7	1991 0.6	1991 27
Sweden	3,030	96.2	131.0	1992 3.8	1993 44
Switzerland	3,623	100.1	169.6	1995 5.5	1993 45
UK	3,218	89.4	140.7	1992 3.1	1992 39
USA	3,644	109.0	163.5	1995 2.2	1993 32

Sources: FAO 1991; OECD 1998; United Nations 1995b; Israel CBS 1996.

- Health and diet are closely related. In developed countries, undernutrition is rare – diet-related diseases are largely associated with inactivity and the over-consumption of food. Coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, certain cancers, Type 2 diabetes and tooth decay can all be prevented or alleviated by a balanced diet.
- Several indicators are currently used for comparing the nutritional status of various populations. Prominent among these are daily energy, protein and fat consumption per capita. The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) publishes three-year average food balance sheets for specified countries. Derived from food supply data, they act as surrogate indicators of food consumption in the population, hence they are termed ‘apparent consumption’.
- The latest FAO publication, covering 1986–88, ranks Australia 11th out of 20 developed countries for energy intake, and 15th for fat intake (Figures 1 and 2). Greece, the United States, Switzerland and Denmark have high intakes of both energy and fats. Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan have comparatively lower intakes of both energy and fats. Australians have comparatively higher sugar consumption and moderate butter consumption.
- Australian per capita calorie intake has increased since the early 1960s (Figure 3), but energy derived from fats and oils has remained relatively constant (Figure 4). The relative contribution of saturated and unsaturated fats in Australia is not known. Per capita energy intake from Australian and United Kingdom diets are similar, and are higher than for Japan, but not as high as for the United States.
- Australia’s food supply characteristics are similar to those of Northern Europe and the United States, but different from Italy, Greece and Asian countries. Energy derived from fats and oils continues to be much higher in European countries and the United States.
- The 1995 National Nutrition Survey provides information which will serve as a baseline for future analyses of Australian dietary intake. Similar surveys are also currently being undertaken or planned in other developed countries.

For more information, see:

Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations 1991. FAO food balance sheets, 1984-1986 average. Rome: FAO.

Lester IH 1994. Australia’s food and nutrition. Canberra: AGPS.