

MIDDLE MEALS: The foods we choose, the meals we plan, and the way we construct our plates are cultural, personal, familial, and societal habits. Likewise, though the notion of eating three meals a day is a strongly ingrained habit, if we look around the world, we'll find that eating throughout the day is a time-honored tradition. And fear not. Research suggests that eating smaller amounts of food more frequently is even better for controlling your weight, particularly if your diet is comprised of healthful plant-based foods!

Brunch

Brunch, a portmanteau of **breakfast** and **lunch**, originated in Britain in the 19th century among the privileged elite, who had the time and money to partake of extracurricular meals. Today, especially in the United States, it's a late-morning meal consisting of standard breakfast foods and typically enjoyed between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Weekend and Mother's Day brunches are especially popular and include pancakes, French toast, tofu scramble, waffles, and an array of vegan pastries.

Eleveneses

Perhaps taking our suggestion to the extreme, the Hobbits who live in J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth enjoy at *seven* meals a day (breakfast, second breakfast, eleveneses, luncheon, tea, dinner, and supper). Though the term may be a little outdated, *eleveneses* (taken around 11 a.m.) refers to an actual snack time in the United Kingdom – similar to afternoon tea but eaten in the morning. Less savory than brunch, it might consist of cake or biscuits with tea or coffee.

Tiffin

Related to the Old English word *tiffing*, meaning "a little drink or sip," in India, a tiffin refers to a light meal eaten during the day. Prepared for working Indian men by their wives, these meals are transported using a complex system to get these tiffin-boxes to their destinations. Commonly, rice is in one box, dal (a thick stew made with lentils, onions, and spices) is in another, and bread (such as Naan), vegetable curry, and a sweet are each in their own box.

Dim Sum

A Cantonese word meaning "touch the heart," dim sum consists of a variety of dumplings, steamed dishes, other sweet and savory goodies, and lots of green tea. In restaurants, customers select small dishes from passing carts, and though you can ask for vegan options, you'll have many more to choose from if you host your own brunch at home. Serve steamed green vegetables, tofu dumplings, potstickers, steamed buns, spring rolls, and mango pudding.

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