

FOOD FOR CHILDREN



FROM SPOON-FEEDING TO FAMILY MEALS

Good Advice and Useful Facts

Food For Children (Mad Til Børn)

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1620, København V

With support from **Mælkeafgiftsfonden**

Editors:

Katrine Langvad, Chief Consultant, Nutrition & Health (editor-in-chief)
and **Rasmus Flade Nielsen**, Senior Consultant, The Danish Dairy Board

Professional input and inspiration:

Anne W. Ravn, Clinical Dietitian
Dorte Fischer, Health Visitor
Susanne Feddersen, Health Visitor

Design & layout

Braulein

Photography

Lea Kaae (Moment Studio) & Winnie Methmann

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**Danish Agriculture
& Food Council**

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Danish Dairy Board

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4–6 months

At around 6 months of age, you should begin spoon-feeding. Some babies may be ready a little earlier, but do not start before 4 months of age.



What can your baby do now?

Hold their head up

Sit with support

Push their tongue back and swallow food



How does your baby eat?

If your baby is thriving and growing well, exclusive breast-feeding is recommended until around 6 months.

Breast milk or infant formula alone can meet your baby's needs up to 6 months.

Your baby may be ready for spoon-feeding from 4 months at the earliest.

Continue breastfeeding or bottle-feeding when you start spoon-feeding.

How to start spoon-feeding

Your baby does not need to start spoon-feeding before 6 months – but it should not be delayed beyond this.

Introduce spoon-feeding with small tastes and let your baby continue to get most of their nutrition from breast milk or formula.

If your baby is around 6 months when starting solid foods, you can progress more quickly than if they start at 4-5 months.

Ensure food is not too hot (37°C).

Choose a time when your baby is rested and when you yourself have the time and energy.

Hold your baby on your lap or let them sit in a reclined baby seat facing you, so you have close contact and are at eye level.

The first attempts at spoon-feeding

Use words and facial expressions to clearly signal that it is time to eat.

Start gently with a small spoonful.

Your baby may spit out the food at first simply because it is new – it does not necessarily mean they dislike it.

Show that you enjoy the food yourself – smile and make positive sounds like “mmm” or “ahh”.

Try again gently with another spoonful.

Stop when your baby turns their head away or closes their mouth – end the meal clearly so your baby understands that you are finished.

What can your baby eat as the first spoon-feeding?

Porridge

Start with a thin, smooth porridge without lumps – almost like a creamy soup or yoghurt.

Begin with cornmeal, millet flour, or buckwheat flour – these resemble milk in taste and texture.

Prepare porridge with breast milk or infant formula and water. Add 1 tsp fat per portion (e.g. butter, oil, plant-based margarine). Do not add fat to ready-made porridge products.

Make the porridge thicker as your baby grows and gets used to spoon-feeding.

Offer a variety of porridge types from the start – including both gluten-free (corn, rice, buckwheat, millet) and gluten-containing grains (rye, wheat).

For variety, you may add 1 tbsp of fruit or vegetable purée.

Ready-made purées and instant porridge can be part of your baby's food.

Always check the age recommendation on ready-made products.

Ready-made food is not better than homemade porridge and purée.

Purée

Start with a creamy purée mixed with a little infant formula and 1 tsp fat per portion (butter, oil, plant-based margarine).

Combine potato purée with puréed cooked vegetables such as carrot, cauliflower, or broccoli, so your baby experiences many different flavours.

Fruit purée can be used as a topping for porridge – e.g. mashed ripe banana, cooked apple or pear (peeled), berries (frozen berries must be boiled), or canned fruit without added sugar.

What can your baby drink?

Breast milk or infant formula.

Your baby can now begin practising drinking from a cup.

Use cold tap water or breast milk/infant formula in the cup.

Only use a bottle for breast milk or infant formula.

How much should your baby eat and drink?

In the beginning, treat spoon-feeding as taste samples – not a full meal.

Once established, offer 2 or maybe 3 spoon-fed meals a day.

All other meals remain breast or bottle.

Offer food, breast milk, or the bottle whenever your baby shows signs of hunger – feeding times cannot be placed into a fixed schedule.

Watch for your baby's fullness cues – some babies turn their head away, close their mouth, become sleepy, or fall asleep.

Vitamin supplements

Give your baby vitamin D drops – 10 mcg per day (unless the baby drinks 800 ml or more of infant formula containing at least 1.3 mcg vitamin D per 100 ml).

If your baby was born prematurely and/or with low birth weight, they may need iron drops – consult your doctor or health visitor.

Avoid

Honey during the first 12 months – it may contain bacteria that can cause severe illness.

Milk, yoghurt, meat, fish, cheese, and dried beans – they contain too much protein for young infants.

Daily rice porridge. Also avoid rice drinks and rice cakes.

Spinach, beetroot, fennel, rocket, and celery – infants cannot tolerate the high nitrate content.

Raw eggs. Hard-boiled eggs or eggs in baked goods can be introduced in small amounts a few times a week.

Adding salt until your baby eats family meals.

Metal spoons – they may feel too hard on your baby's gums.

Prunes and prune purée (unless advised by your health visitor in case of constipation).

Quinoa porridge can be used from 4 months in rotation with other porridges, but not as a first choice due to high protein content.

All types of tea, including iced tea, as tea inhibits iron absorption and may contain problematic substances beyond caffeine.

Suggested meals for the day

4–6 months

Drinks	Breast milk or infant formula as needed + cold tap water <i>(Needs vary from child to child)</i>
Morning	Breast or bottle
Mid-morning	Breast or bottle
Lunch	Porridge or purée + breast or bottle as needed
Afternoon	Breast or bottle
Late Afternoon	Possibly breast or bottle
Evening	Potato/vegetable purée, possibly fruit purée, + breast or bottle
Late evening	Breast or bottle
Night	Possibly breast or bottle

The very first porridge

Thin porridge made with powdered infant formula

¼ dl corn, millet, rice, or buckwheat flour

2 dl water

½ tsp fat (e.g. butter or oil)

Powder for 1 dl infant formula

1 tbsp fruit purée, e.g. apple or pear

Thin porridge made with ready made infant formula

¼ dl corn, millet, rice, or buckwheat flour

1 dl water

½ tsp fat (e.g. butter or oil)

1 dl ready-made infant formula

1 tbsp fruit purée, e.g. apple or pear

Tip: Add a little fruit purée to give the porridge a mild sweetness. The vitamin C in the fruit purée also helps your baby absorb the iron in the porridge more effectively.



How to prepare

1. Combine flour and water in a small saucepan. Whisk to avoid lumps.
2. Cook the porridge over low heat while whisking continuously. Let it simmer for 2–3 minutes.
3. Remove the saucepan from the heat. Stir in the fat and infant formula (either powdered or ready-made).
4. Add a little fruit purée if desired.
5. Pour the porridge into a small bowl and check that it has a suitable serving temperature before giving it to your baby.

6–9 months

When your baby has adjusted to spoon-feeding of soft food, they can start eating family meals – and practice self-feeding.



What can your baby do now?

Start to practice chewing food.

Sit up with support and be fed with a spoon in the beginning.

From 7–8 months, many can sit independently in a highchair and be fed. Let your baby sit in a chair with a footrest.

Around 8 months, many can pick up small bites of food using their thumb and index finger.

Practise drinking from a cup independently.

Hold a spoon/fork on their own.



How does your baby eat?

Breast or bottle-feeding remains part of their diet.

Increasingly more meals are eaten with a spoon – start now if you haven't already.

Your baby will want to try holding the spoon and attempt to bring soft finger foods to their mouth – feel free to let them touch the food and spoon for a sensory experience.

Begin drinking from a cup.

After 6 months, excessive night feeds (breast or bottle) can reduce daytime appetite. Consult your health visitor (“sundhedsplejerske”) for advice.

Around 8 months, your baby can bite and chew small pieces of soft food.

What can your baby eat?

Once spoon-feeding is going well, the baby can try and taste some of the family meals.

Porridge made with breast milk or infant formula, water, and 1 tsp of fats per portion – vary between butter, oil, and plant-based margarine.

Gradually make porridge and mash coarser in texture.

Limit ready-made porridge and baby food in jars or tubes to smaller amounts, as their soft consistency does not encourage chewing development. It is recommended to heat up food from glass and tube packages that contain meat to reduce furan content.

Be careful with foods that contain hard pieces, as they can be a choking hazard.

From around 6 months, your baby should have some finely minced meat, chicken, or fish daily to meet their iron needs.

From around 8 months, your baby can chew small pieces of rye bread (without whole seeds) with soft toppings, as well as soft fruit in cubes, and bites of whole, boiled potatoes or other cooked vegetables.

Use fat as a spread on bread underneath the topping, unless you're using a spreadable topping that already contains a fat source.

Cooked or oven-baked foods are easier to chew for your baby than fried food.

Vitamin supplements

Provide a daily vitamin D supplement (drops) of 10 mcg (unless consuming 800 ml or more of infant formula with at least 1.3 mcg of vitamin D per 100 ml).

Avoid

Ice cream, cakes, sweets, sugary drinks (juice, soda, and the likes) as well as fruit purée pouches, due to their high sugar content – which ruins the appetite for meals.

Only use salt and strong spices sparsely.

Honey (before 12 months) – it may contain soil bacteria which can cause severe poisoning.

Dairy products (except breast milk, infant formula, and small amounts of cheese), as they contain too much protein for young babies. Cow's milk should only be used in dishes, e.g. minced meat dishes with sauce, prepared for the whole family.

Only make rice porridge as a variation once in a while, and avoid rice drinks and rice cakes.

Cinnamon – e.g. cinnamon sugar on porridge.

Large amounts of spinach, beetroot, fennel, rocket, and celery – limited to about once every two weeks, as babies of this age can't tolerate the high nitrate levels.

Babies under the age of 3 should not eat large predatory fish like herring shark, halibut, pike, swordfish, and tuna (including canned tuna). These types of fish accumulate mercury.

Do not use “green toppings” on warm food. Fresh herbs and leafy vegetables should only be used in warm dishes, if they are thoroughly heated. Green toppings can be used on cold food. All leftovers with green toppings must be discarded.

Any type of tea, including iced tea, as it inhibits iron absorption and may contain harmful substances beyond caffeine.

3 suggestions for the meals of the day

6–9 months

Drinks	Breast milk or infant formula. When your baby has progressed to spoon-feeding, breast milk or infant formula should be given after the meal. From 9 months: if your baby can drink more than ¾ l of breast milk or infant formula, the rest of their thirst should be quenched with water.		
	6–7 months	7–8 months	8–9 months
Morning	Breast or bottle	Breast or bottle or porridge	Breast or bottle or porridge
Mid-morning	Porridge – perhaps with some fruit purée	Bread with cheese and fruit	Porridge or fruit purée with breast milk or infant formula
Lunch	Vegetable mash with finely minced meat or fish	Dinner leftovers in small pieces	Rye bread with toppings – e.g. liver pate, cod roe, avocado, cream cheese
Afternoon	Porridge or breast or bottle	Porridge with fruit	Bread with cheese, fruit in small pieces – e.g. strawberries
Evening / Dinner	Vegetable mash with finely minced meat or fish, perhaps a bit of fruit purée	Rye bread with toppings – e.g. egg, dinner leftovers of fish and meat – some chewy greens	Little pieces of potato, vegetables, meat/fish. Fat or gravy
Late evening	Breast or bottle	“Øllebrød,” breast or bottle	Perhaps breast or bottle
Night	Breast or bottle (if needed)		



9–12 months

Now your baby can join you at the table in their high chair and eat almost the same food as the rest of the family.



What can your baby do now?

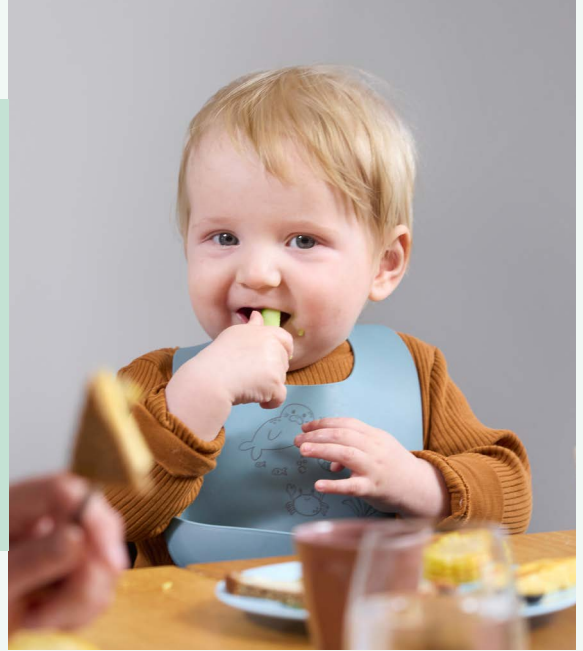
Chew slightly coarser foods in suitable bites.

Sit independently in a high-chair – use one with a footrest.

Use their thumb and index finger to pick up food.

Try eating with a spoon and fork (on their own).

Drink from a cup using both hands.



How does your baby eat?

You can begin weaning off the bottle – ideally, your baby should be completely weaned by the age of 1.

You can continue breastfeeding until your baby is 1 year old, or longer, if you both enjoy it. Stop when you or your baby wishes.

After 9 months, breastfeeding is mainly for comfort, hydration, or as a snack.

Night-time breastfeeding is often unnecessary – it can reduce appetite during the day.

Breast milk or formula remains your child's primary milk source.

Your baby eats with their fingers and practises eating with a spoon.

They can bite into pieces of rye bread and chew effectively.

What can your baby eat?

From 9 months, your baby can eat almost the same foods as the rest of the family.

Add 1 tsp of fat to main meals until the baby is 1 year old – vary between butter, oil, and margarine, with a focus on plant-based oils.

Until the baby is 1 year old, it is recommended to spread a bit of fat on bread beneath the topping, unless the topping itself is a spreadable kind already containing fat.

Food should be cut into small pieces but not mashed.

Continue to offer new foods for a varied diet. This helps ensure your baby gets all the nutrients it needs and may help prevent picky eating.

A varied diet includes different types of meats, fish, vegetables, fruits, bread, and dairy products.

Offer food that needs chewing – to train mouth movements and thereby speech development.

Foods you can serve

Bread (without whole seeds), potatoes, rice, bulgur, and pasta – preferably wholegrain options.

All cooked or grated vegetables – about half should be fibre-rich such as carrots, cabbage, lentils, and beans that have been soaked and boiled according to instructions. Spinach, beetroot, celery, rocket, and fennel about once every two weeks.

All fruits – fresh in small pieces or cooked (frozen berries must be briefly brought to a full boil).

Eggs, all types of cheese (except raw milk cheese), meat, poultry, and offal (e.g. liver and heart). Meat is recommended for daily consumption, as it contains iron, zinc, and other important nutrients.

Most types of fish (e.g. salmon, herring, mackerel, cod, saithe, plaice), as well as prawns, mussels, and roe – but not large predatory fish, e.g. herring shark, halibut, pike, swordfish, or tuna (including canned tuna). Fish is recommended as a main meal twice a week and more often as a topping on bread.

Offer a variety of legumes, fish, meat, offal, grains, vegetables, and fruit.

Cow's milk in food – less than 1 dl per day.
Use the type of milk you already have in the fridge.

Fermented whole milk products in small portions from 9 months (½ dl, increasing to 1 dl by age 1).

What can your baby drink?

Breast milk or infant formula.

Cold tap water.

From 6 months, supplementary mixes as part of a varied diet.

How much should your baby eat and drink?

Your baby can't eat large quantities of food at once and therefore needs 3 main meals plus 2-3 snacks daily.

Don't pressure your baby to eat more than they want – instead, focus on creating a relaxing atmosphere around the meal.

If your baby easily gets constipated, offer extra water with meals. Consult your health visitor (sundhedsplejerske) or doctor for advice.

At 9 months, the total milk intake should not exceed ¾ l (including fermented dairy products).

Towards age 1, reduce the daily milk intake to between 3.5 – 5 dl (about ½ l).

Vitamin supplements

Provide a daily vitamin D supplement of 10 mcg (unless consuming 800 ml or more of infant formula with at least 1.3 mcg of vitamin D per 100 ml).

Avoid

Ice cream, cakes, sweets, sugary drinks (juice, soda, and the likes) as well as fruit pouches, as they have a high sugar content. Too much sugar ruins the appetite for their main meals – which is an important source of the vitamins and minerals they need.

Only use salt and strong spices sparsely.

Honey (before 12 months) – it may contain soil bacteria which can cause severe poisoning.

Cow's milk as a drink.



Dairy products with more than 3.5 g of protein per 100 g (e.g. skyr, “quark”, “fromage frais”, “ymer”, “ylette”, and Greek yoghurt) before 2 years.

Spinach, beetroot, celery, rocket, and fennel in large quantities – limit to about once every two weeks.

Do not use “green toppings” on warm food. Fresh herbs and leafy vegetables should only be used in warm dishes if they are thoroughly heated. Green toppings can be used on cold food. All leftovers with green toppings must be discarded.

Large predatory fish before the age of 3, e.g. herring shark, halibut, pike, swordfish, and tuna (including canned tuna). These types of fish accumulate mercury.

More than 50 g of raisins per week, due to the risk of fungal toxins.

Conventional dried apricots – choose organic ones instead – as they contain high levels of sulphites.

Whole grapes, nuts, seeds, peanuts, popcorn, mints, and hard candies, as well as hard fresh vegetables like carrots, until age 3 – as these pose choking risks.

Rice cakes and rice drinks – they contain the substance inorganic arsenic.

Regular use of cinnamon – e.g. cinnamon sugar on porridge. If you occasionally make cinnamon sugar, ¼ tsp of cinnamon per 1 tbsp of sugar is a suitable ratio.

All types of tea, including iced tea, as tea reduces iron absorption from the diet and may contain problematic substances aside from caffeine.

3 suggestions for the meals of the day

9–12 months

Drinks	Breast milk or infant formula as needed, as well as cold tap water <i>If your baby can drink more than the recommended amount of breast milk or infant formula (¾ l) the rest of their thirst should be quenched with water*</i>		
Morning	1 slice of rye bread with butter and a small portion of plain yoghurt or cultured milk (“tykmælk”, 3.5% fat) with oats and berries	Bread with eggs, cheese, marmalade and fruit slices	Porridge with compote – e.g. made of strawberries
Mid-morning	Bread roll with cheese slices, melon	Bread with butter, eggs, and tomatoes	Rye bread with cod roe and cucumber (or other toppings)
Lunch	“Øllebrød” with some breast milk / infant formula, grated apple	Rye bread with toppings – e.g. mackerel, avocado, peas, cooked or grated carrots	Dinner leftovers
Afternoon	Pita bread with ham and corn	Cauliflower soup and toasted bread	Wholegrain bread roll with cream cheese, plum
Late afternoon	Banana, bread with liver pate	Cultured milk (“tykmælk”, 3.5% fat) with grated rye bread, pear	Fruit mash with grains and some breast milk / infant formula
Evening / Dinner	Fish with vegetables and rice	Cooked or fried mushrooms, potato, diced meat	Potatoes, vegetables, chicken, gravy

(*Fermented dairy products are included in the recommended amount of milk)

1–3 years

Your child now eats the same as the rest of the family, and the meals should be healthy and varied.



What can your child do now?

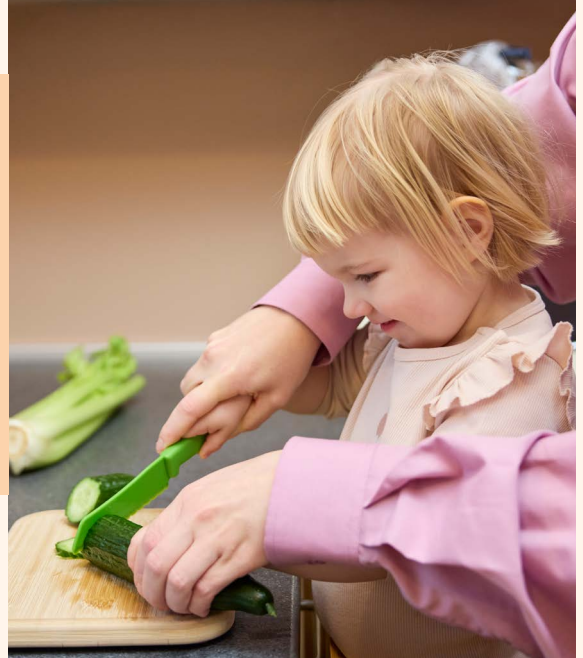
No longer uses a bottle.

Practice eating with a spoon and fork.

Practice drinking from a cup with one hand.

From around 2–3 years old, serve themselves food.

From around 2–3 years old, help in the kitchen.



How does your child eat?

From about 18 months, your child eats independently with a spoon and fork without spilling too much.

Still uses their fingers to eat.

Drinks independently from a cup.

What can your child eat?

Your child now eats the same as the rest of the family with no special dietary requirements. Generally, make sure the food is varied.

Additional fat is no longer necessary, as your child's growth rate has slowed.

Foods you can serve

Plenty of porridge, grains, and bread daily – about half as whole-grain options.

Fruit and lots of vegetables daily – both fresh and cooked.

Legumes, meat, poultry, offal, eggs, and fish (avoid large predatory fish, instead choose salmon, herring, mackerel, cod, saithe, and plaice) – on bread and in hot, main course meals.

Potatoes, rice, and pasta – vary and include whole-grain options where possible.

Fermented dairy products made from semi-skimmed milk (“letmælk”, 1.5% fat).

Cheese.

What can your child drink?

Ages 1–2: Semi-skimmed milk (“letmælk”, 1.5% fat).

From age 2: Skimmed milk (“skummetmælk”, “minimælk” or “kærnemælk”, less than 0.5% fat).

Cold tap water.

How much should your child eat and drink?

Offer 3 main meals and 2–3 snacks, such as bread, vegetables, fruit, or yoghurt with oats.

Your child's appetite can vary greatly day to day – let them decide how much they want to eat.

Do not pressure your child to eat more than they feel like.

Ages 1–2: Minimum 3.5 dl and maximum 5 dl of milk or dairy products per day.

Ages 2–3: A small glass of milk + a small portion of a dairy product (in total about 2.5 dl) as well as ¼ slice of cheese (about 5 g) per day.



Vitamin supplements

Provide a daily vitamin D supplement of 10 mcg.

Avoid

Limit ice cream, cakes, sweets, and sugary drinks (juice, soda, fruit smoothies, etc.).

Limit the amount of fruit yoghurt, drinkable yoghurt, and chocolate milk. The high sugar content can ruin the appetite for main meals and damage teeth.

Dairy products with more than 3.5 g of protein per 100 g (e.g. skyr, “quark”, “fromage frais”, “ymer”, “ylette”, and Greek yoghurt) before 2 years.

Large predatory fish before age 3, such as herring shark, halibut, pike, swordfish, and tuna (including canned tuna). These types of fish accumulate mercury.

Whole grapes, nuts, seeds, peanuts, popcorn, mints, and hard candies, as well as hard fresh vegetables (like carrots) until around age 3. They can pose a choking risk.

More than 50 g of raisins per week, due to the risk of fungal toxins.

Conventional dried apricots – choose organic ones instead – as they contain high levels of sulphites.

Rice cakes and rice drinks – they contain the substance inorganic arsenic.

From age 1-2, only offer cinnamon occasionally, as a high intake can harm the liver. For cinnamon sugar on porridge, use ¼ tsp of cinnamon per 1 tbsp of sugar as a suitable ratio.

All kinds of tea, including iced tea, as tea reduces iron absorption from the diet and may contain problematic substances aside from caffeine.



4 suggestions for the meals of the day

1-3 years

Drinks	<p>Before age 2: Semi-skimmed-milk ("letmælk"). Hereafter, skimmed milk ("skummet"- "mini"- or "kærnemælk")</p> <p>Cold tap water</p> <p><i>If your child can drink more than the recommended amount of milk the rest of their thirst should be quenched with water</i></p>			
Morning	Oatmeal with apple and raisins	Cultured milk ("Tykmælk") with grated rye bread	Rye bread with cream cheese, white bread with banana	"Øllebrød" with milk ("Letmælk") or oatmeal, a bit of fruit
Mid-morning	Rusk ("skorpe") with cream cheese, celery leaves, grated carrot	Bread roll with cod roe, slices of pear	Bread ("gnavebrød"), small plain yoghurt, fruit	½ bread roll with cheese, banana, or a different fruit
Lunch	Rye bread with potato, herring, strawberry, bell pepper	Bread with mackerel in tomato sauce, ham, grated carrot	Rye bread with liver pate, cod roe, avocado and banana, cooked carrot, cucumber, bell pepper	Meat ball ("frikadelle"), potato salad, finely grated vegetable salad ("råkost"), e.g. made of apple and cabbage
Afternoon	Tortillas, luncheon meat ("kødpølse"), tomato, salad	Whole grain bread roll with liver pate, orange slices	Bread roll, fruit/vegetable spread	Plain yoghurt with shredded rye bread topping and berries. ½ bread roll with butter, apple slices
Late afternoon	Rice porridge ("Risengrød") or another kind of porridge	Fruit/vegetable spread	Fruit salad	Green spread with cucumber, green beans, peas, corn, bell pepper
Evening / Dinner	Lasagna, bread, salad	Steak, potato, gravy, beans	Oven-baked salmon, potato slices, spinach	Chicken, potato, baked tomatoes, avocado mash, shredded carrots, strawberry compote with milk



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