

Name: _____ Class: _____

Space Food

By Barbara Radner
2005

Life in space is very different from life on Earth. When people living in space need to eat, it's a different experience than when you eat. In this informational text, Barbara Radner describes how astronauts take food into space. As you read, take notes on what kinds of foods astronauts eat in space.

- [1] You really know how important a clean kitchen is if you live in the same small place for weeks. Everyone needs to have a clean kitchen so they are healthy. A dirty kitchen can make people sick. Astronauts are people who travel on spaceships. They need to have a very clean home. They travel far from Earth. We need clean kitchens everywhere on earth and in space.



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Astronauts have to solve two problems: how to get food and how to keep their spaceship clean. They need to solve them in order to stay alive. They are in a spaceship far from Earth, and they need to take care of everything themselves. They need to be sure they have what they need to live there, because the astronauts may be in space for weeks.

Here is how they solved the food problem. At first, the astronauts took tubes of food with them into space. They would squeeze a tube and eat semi-liquid food. It did not taste great, but since they did not need to take dishes or silverware with them, they had no dishes to wash.

Today's spaceships have a bigger menu. Astronauts can eat from bowls. In fact, they take cereal and other standard¹ foods with them. The foods are packaged in special containers to keep them fresh. They use knives, forks, and spoons. One unusual item on their table is a pair of scissors. They use the scissors to open the food packages. They can eat right from the package.

- [5] They have a kitchen on the spaceship. Its oven can heat food to 170 degrees. The kitchen has water and sets of meals that come on trays. The astronauts choose their menu before they go into space. They take a lot of food with them.

The astronauts keep bread and fresh fruits and vegetables in a special food locker. Most flights take tortillas. They package the tortillas in an oxygen-free wrap so they stay safe.

How do they keep the kitchen clean? They do not have to worry about mice or other rodents.² They make sure that there are no rodents before the ship leaves. But sometimes mice travel on the ship. Those mice are part of experiments. They live in cages.

1. **Standard (adjective):** very familiar and widely used
2. small mammals

How do astronauts keep their trays clean? That is another health problem the astronauts solve. They need to stay healthy in space. To carry a lot of water to wash trays would be a lot of extra weight. They pack wet wipes in plastic bags. They use them to clean trays. So, their kitchen is clean and they stay healthy.

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Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: What is the main idea of the article?
 - A. Astronauts must take special steps to eat in space and keep their kitchen clean.
 - B. When astronauts are in space, they don't worry about eating right or cleaning.
 - C. Eating and cleaning the kitchen in space is no different than doing so on Earth.
 - D. Astronauts are more active in space and therefore have to eat more food.

2. PART B: Which paragraph from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
 - A. Paragraph 1
 - B. Paragraph 2
 - C. Paragraph 3
 - D. Paragraph 5

3. Which of the following describes how the text is organized?
 - A. The author discusses how astronauts keep their kitchens clean and then how they get food in space.
 - B. The author describes what astronauts do for food today and what they plan to do for food in the future.
 - C. The author discusses how astronauts keep their kitchens clean in space and then what happens if they don't.
 - D. The author describes two problems that astronauts have in space and then goes into detail about how they solve them.

4. Which of the following must happen before astronauts can eat food in space?
 - A. The food must be packed up and brought with them.
 - B. The food must be looked over for mold or bugs.
 - C. The food must be turned into a semi-liquid form.
 - D. The food must be put into small and easy-to-use tubes.

5. How is keeping the kitchen clean related to health in the text?

Discussion Questions

Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.

1. In the text, the author describes how astronauts eat in space. If you had to eat in space, what do you think would be challenging about it?
2. What do you think space food will look like in the future? How could space food be improved? What would you send with astronauts going to space if you got to pick out their menu?