

# Traditional foods can bring joy to dementia patients

January 18 2016

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(HealthDay)—For patients with dementia, traditional dishes can create

joy and boost patients' sense of well-being, according to research published online Jan. 11 in the *Journal of Clinical Nursing*.

Ingrid Hanssen, R.N., from the Lovisenberg Diaconal University College in Oslo, and Britt Moene Kuven, R.N., from the Haraldsplass Diaconal University College in Bergen—both in Norway, explored the meaning of traditional food to institutionalized patients with dementia. In three qualitative studies, they conducted in-depth interviews of family members and nurses experienced in [dementia care](#) in South Africa, and among ethnic Norwegians and the Sami in Norway.

The researchers found that traditional food fostered feelings of belonging and joy. Familiar tastes and smells evoked pleasant memories and boosted patients' sense of well-being, identity, and belonging. Furthermore, words were produced that were not normally spoken.

"This study provides insight into culture-sensitive dietary needs of institutionalized [patients](#) with dementia," the authors write. "Besides helping to avoid undernutrition, being served traditional dishes may be very important to reminiscence, joy, thriving, and quality of life."

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
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Citation: Traditional foods can bring joy to dementia patients (2016, January 18) retrieved 26 April 2024 from  
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