

From Scotland to Somalia, the stories of your favourite foods

International School Meals Day raises awareness of the importance of good nutrition among school-age children. This year, a new competition asked young people to submit their best recipes. *Lynn Gilmour* explains

International School Meals Day (ISMD), held this year on Thursday 15 March, aims to encourage children and young people around the world, with support from their teachers, to talk to each other about the food they eat and the role it plays in their lives.

Launched in 2013, the day raises awareness of healthy eating and good nutrition for all children by bringing people together to take part in food activities as well as share recipes and best practice.

Each year we have been delighted to see an increase in collaboration and contributions, helped by the opportunities brought by using Skype in the classroom and engaging in discussion on social media.

This year's theme, 'My Food', encouraged pupils to share and discuss their favourite meal, either provided at school or cooked at home with food grown locally.

Thanks to Scottish Government funding, and to mark the Year of Young People in Scotland, this year we decided to do something a bit different to celebrate the day. We ran an international competition, seeking children and young people's favourite recipes, with the winners being published in an ISMD Children's Cookbook made available on the day.

The cookbook is comprised entirely of recipes submitted by children and young people from around the world. Contributions came from as far away as Honduras, Japan and Somali, with pictures, poems and stories detailing the foods children love to eat at home or school.

With more than 140 entries received, representatives from Children in Scotland's young people's advisory group, Changing our World, had the difficult job of deciding the selection that would appear in print. Four members, Martha, Alice, Ellie and Alasdair,

agreed the final 20 making up the My Food cookbook.

Lindsay Graham, food and nutrition expert and a champion of International School Meals Day, welcomes the level of support the day has received.

"It's great to see International School Meals Day celebrate another year of school food stories, pictures and recipes from around the globe. It's particularly heartening to see this year's theme of 'My Food' giving children and young people the opportunity to take part in this annual event," she said.

"In Scotland 2018 is The Year of Young People, so it's very fitting that some of our Scottish schools have had their recipes selected for the cookbook. The cookbook is not only interesting and practical, but also provides an insight into what children are eating around the world, and its contents could form the basis for a range of lessons and

classroom activity".

"We know that healthy, nutritious food is essential for physical and mental health and wellbeing for adults and young people, and mealtimes can be positive social experiences from the earliest age," said Simon Massey, Head of Engagement and Learning at Children in Scotland.

"We are always keen to demonstrate the positive effect of involving children and families in the preparation and enjoyment of healthy meals."

> **International School Meals Day is managed by Children in Scotland as part of our wider work on challenging inequality through food. Find out more at:** internationalschoolmealsday.com

> **Our Food, Families, Futures project continues to support families during summer holidays and has extended from Glasgow and West Dunbartonshire into Irvine and Perthshire. Learn more about our projects:** childreninScotland.org.uk/our-work/projects



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Image: Taqwa and Buzayri, winners from Somalia