A Comparison of Food and Nutrition in France and the United States

Iowa State University
Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition

United States
- Meal lengths are 14.4 minutes
- Portion sizes in the US are 25% larger than in France:

France
- 22.2 minutes (on average)

Proportion of those in the US and France who are overweight or obese:

Shopping trips per week:
- 2.1 vs. 3.7

Federal Nutrition Guidelines:

Objectives:
- To understand how food and eating culture has an effect on the health and nutrition of a country
- To observe the differences between food habits of Americans and the French

Methods:
- Observations were made both in the United States and in France while studying abroad in Paris.
- Research from existing literature was compared to the observations and a profile was made for both countries.

Overview:
- In general, the French value quality over quantity, while Americans value quantity over quality.
- French and Americans differ in the social side of food and eating, and have different standards for food shopping and meal preparation.
- The French have lower obesity and heart disease rates.

Results:
- Differences in meals, food shopping, and food habits could have an effect on the resulting health of the people of France and the United States. Taking into account the effect of food culture on health could drive policy and legislation in the future that could improve US health.