

ESY Pittsburgh Winter Cooking Program

Native Foods

Food History Lesson
December



Map Skills North America

Materials Needed:

- World Map
- Food Journals
- PA Wild Edibles (Acorns, Dried Elderberries, Cattails, etc.)
- Maps
- Elderberry Syrup and Soda Water
- Small Cups
- Hand Sanitizer

Prepare Before Lesson:

- Buy elderberry syrup & soda water
- Hang up world map
- Write agenda on board

Other maps:

- <http://www.native-languages.org/pennsylvania.jpg>
- http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_vault/2014/06/17/interactive_map_loss_of_indian_land.html

Objectives:

1. Introduce map skills, focusing on the United States and its history.
2. Introduce term **Indigenous** when referring to people and foods.
3. Develop understanding of Native Americans, historically and today.
4. Discuss the nutritional value of traditional diets and the importance of food traditions.

Lesson Flow

o Engage (5 min)

- “Imagine you live here in Pennsylvania, many hundreds of years ago. There are no roads, no grocery stores. How do you get your food?” “This is what it was like for Native Americans, and many of them hunted for meat, gathered foods like cattails and acorns from the woods, and planted crops like corn, beans, and squash.”
- “Now, imagine you and your family, and everyone you know—your entire tribe—are forced to move. Where you move there are no acorns, no cattails, and no animals to hunt. Instead, the government gives you only flour and fattening. Now, how do you eat?”

o Map Skills (5 min)

- Find North America on the world map.
- *Optional:* What is a border? Show maps of tribal territories (changing throughout history) vs. national borders (today).
- Show map of tribes of Pennsylvania. Find Oklahoma on the map. Talk about relocation (see Food History)

o Food History (10 min)

Today, nearly one in three Native Americans are overweight and many struggle with diabetes. This is a result of a sad part of American history:

- During the 1800s, native peoples were moved away from their homes and onto reservations, where they were no longer able to get their traditional ingredients.

o **Food History (cont'd.)**

- One example of this is “The Long Walk”—an Indian removal project that lasted from 1864-1866 and forced the Arizona Navajo people to walk 300 miles to “relocate” in New Mexico. Their food and animals were either left behind or destroyed. To keep them from starving completely, the government offered ration boxes of cheap commodity foods like lard and flour. (Many of Pennsylvania’s tribes were relocated to Oklahoma.)

The traditional, ‘pre-reservation diet’ is very good for health. And today we see a strong resurgence of traditional foods and recipes within the American Indian community.

o **Garden Connections (15 min)**

According to many Native chefs, there are two main rules that make up Native cuisine: use only foods **indigenous** to your area, and use simple cooking techniques like smoking, drying, stewing, or putting food in direct contact with fire.

- o What does **indigenous** mean? What ingredients might be **indigenous** to our area? Share props or photos (i.e. cattails, acorns); discuss foraging. What else can be foraged?
- o Note: there isn’t just one Native cuisine. Today, there are 566 federally recognized Indian Nations and there are regional and tribal differences between food preparations and ingredients. How might Native cuisine be different in California, in Arizona?

Next week’s recipe will use local ingredients, indigenous to our area. We will be making a traditional Native American recipe.

o **Tasting and Journaling (10 min)**

-“Today we will be sampling a treat that mixes old traditions with something new. We are going to use elderberry syrup, a yummy and medicinal syrup made from berries indigenous to this area. We will mix it with soda water to make a healthy soda. *Discuss, sanitize hands, sample.*

-As students finish sampling, talk to them about cooking together next week and encourage them to begin Food Journaling.

Food Journal

- Prompt: Reflect on the following quote from Dana Eldridge, Navajo, founding member of Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance: “*What I’ve learned...is you can’t produce food by yourself. You need people, you need family, you need community and relationships, so a lot of it is about rebuilding community and reconnecting with the land and I think that’s a very important healing process for our people.*” How does this quote relate to our Winter Cooking Classes? How do we at [insert school name] learn from rebuilding community and connecting with the land?

Recommended Resources

1. Book: Muskrat Will be Swimming by Cheryl Savageau
2. Television Series: PBS’s Seasoned with Spirit
3. Food Article: <http://www.eater.com/2015/6/8/8716011/native-american-food-restaurants-resurgence>

Additional Content Information and Activities

Traditional Recipes: This lesson can be used as a springboard to introduce the topic of food traditions, traditional culture, and recipes. Students can share their own family's traditions and take home a worksheet to record a traditional family recipe of their own to contribute to the class cookbook. (See the next page for worksheet.)

Meadowcroft Rockshelter: Just 27 miles south of the Pittsburgh metropolitan area, this archaeological site may be the oldest known site of human habitation in North America. The Heinz History Center runs educational programs for large groups at the Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village.

Family Recipe Share: Attached is a "Family Recipe Share" sheet which can be used to collect recipes that are special to families of students in your class. Teachers can choose how to use the collected recipes; here are a few of our ideas:

- Have families come in to discuss or demonstrate how to make the dish in class. The final 3 weeks of the Winter Cooking Program schedule allow time for class recipes to be included.
- Make a class recipe book
- Make a bulletin board highlighting the types of foods and cultures represented in our recipes.
- Organize a school pot-luck dinner where families bring foods that are special or important to their cultures. Encourage families to label the name of the dish, the ingredients and the cultural or family significance of the recipe.

Family Recipe Share for Cooking Class

Please share a simple recipe that is important to you or your family. This could be your favorite food, a special occasion food, or a dish that is important to your family's traditions and culture. Ideally, the recipe you decide to share is healthy, kid-friendly and easy to make (even better if it is vegetarian and avoids common allergies).

Recipe Name: _____

Ingredients List

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Instructions

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

As a parent or guardian, I would like the opportunity to come in and help prepare this recipe with my student's class.

Parent's/Guardian's Name: _____

Parent's/Guardian's E-Mail: _____

Please return this paper to _____ by _____. Thank you! _____

