

FOOD AND CULTURE PROJECT:

THE WORLD'S FLAVOR PROFILES

OVERVIEW

Students examine the food traditions of the world's five major inhabited continents. They learn about the broad flavor profile of each continent, and then select a country and research key ingredients, seasonings, and dishes that form the foundation of that country's cuisine.

GRADE LEVEL: 3-5



CENTER FOR ECOLITERACY



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CALIFORNIA FOOD FOR CALIFORNIA KIDS™ downloadable resource

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Learning in the Real World

Learning in the Real World is a publishing imprint of the Center for Ecoliteracy, a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization. Created in 1997, Learning in the Real World offers resources to support schooling for sustainability, stories of school communities, and the ecological framework that informs the work of the Center.

THE WORLD'S FLAVOR PROFILES

FOOD AND CULTURE OVERVIEW

Although most people are aware that food provides nourishment, we rarely consider the geographic, historical, and cultural conditions that have influenced what we eat and how we procure, prepare, and serve it. By exploring food through a prism of culture, time, and place, we build a deeper appreciation of how regional characteristics have shaped our global food system.

LESSON OVERVIEW

Students examine the food traditions of the world's five major inhabited continents. They learn about the broad flavor profile of each continent, and then select a country and research key ingredients, seasonings, and dishes that form the foundation of that country's cuisine.

GRADES

3-5

LENGTH

Two 50-minute class periods, plus time between for student research

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Become familiar with the traditional and regional foods of the five major inhabited continents.
- Understand that their cultural heritage influences the foods they eat.
- Draw from informational texts, maps, and online resources to research the flavor profiles of a country of their heritage or another country of their choice.
- Create a visual representation of that country's flavor profile.

STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS

- Crosscutting Concepts — Patterns: Patterns can be used as evidence to support an explanation

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS — ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- Writing — W.3.7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic. W.4.7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic. W.5.7. Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- Reading Informational Text — RI.3.7. Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur). RI.4.7. Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on

Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears. RI.5.7. Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.

COLLEGE, CAREER, AND CIVIC LIFE (C3) FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

- Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools — Geography - D2.Geo.3.3-5. Use maps of different scales to describe the locations of cultural and environmental characteristics.

VOCABULARY

- Flavor profile
- Ingredient
- Traditional
- Seasonal
- Cuisine
- Continent
- African
- Asian
- European/Mediterranean
- Latin American
- Middle Eastern/Indian

MATERIALS

- Large world map
- Adhesive dots

- Flavor profile pictures
- “Flavor Profile Research” student handout
- Access to the Internet
- Poster-making materials (oaktag, markers, etc.) or access to an online poster-making application

PREPARATION

- 1 Make copies of the flavor profile pictures or plan to project the images on a screen. Make copies of the student handout.
- 2 Write possible search terms on the board for finding information about a country’s foods and ingredients. Among the possibilities:

- Common (or typical) foods of _____*
- Traditional foods of _____
- Traditional meals of _____
- Cuisine of _____
- Favorite foods of _____
- Common breakfasts (or lunches or dinners) in _____
- Common (or key) food ingredients in _____
- Food history of _____
- Climate of _____
- Farm products of _____

* The blank indicates the country’s name.

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Show students the world map, and ask them to think about a continent or geographic area whose cuisine interests them. It may be a geographic area from their family's heritage or where their favorite foods come from. Give each student an adhesive dot, and ask students to place their dots in that area on the map.
- 2 With information from the Background, provide a quick overview of the five flavor profiles, using the world map to locate each geographic area and displaying the flavor profile picture for each.
- 3 Invite students to choose a flavor profile that either reflects their heritage or ethnicity or represents their favorite food flavors.
- 4 Direct students to choose one country within the flavor profile and find out more about the cuisine of that country. As a class, read through the directions on the student handout, making sure students understand both their task and any new vocabulary.
- 5 Talk about search terms students might use to find information about the foods of the country they have chosen. Point to the terms you have written on the board, and add any new ones students think of. See Resources for an additional source students may use for their research.
- 6 Allow time for students to conduct their research.
- 7 Provide poster-making materials (or access to an online poster-making application). Have students create a poster similar to the flavor profile pictures that depicts 8-10 main ingredients and seasonings used in the cuisine of the country they researched.
- 8 Display the completed posters and discuss how our cultural heritage influences the foods we eat and the reasons ingredients may be common in a particular cuisine.

EXTENDED LEARNING

- Challenge students to find 3-5 recipes that incorporate ingredients and seasonings commonly used in their chosen country.
- Prepare and share dishes from each of the flavor profiles.
- Visit a grocery or ethnic food store to see what ingredients and seasonings from students' countries may be available locally.

ASSESSMENT

Use students' posters to assess their understanding of the concepts.

RESOURCES

- foodbycountry.com: this website provides information on food history, food customs, geography, and politics related to food — as well as sample recipes — for most countries around the world.
- Menzel, P., & D'Aluision, F. (2010). *What I Eat: Around the World in 80 Diets: A Material World Book*.

BACKGROUND

A flavor profile includes the overall attributes and tastes of a particular food product or cuisine. The broad, general flavor profiles explored in this activity represent the world's major continents. Due to trade and globalization, numerous cuisines around the world use many of the same basic foods, but may season those foods in distinctive ways. Within each of these profiles are very significant regional differences, but the choice of seasonings—and in some cases, ingredients—allows us to talk in broad terms about flavor profiles.

FLAVOR PROFILE: AFRICAN

For this lesson, “African” refers primarily to the countries of the African continent and islands south of the Sahara. The cuisine is diverse, showing the influences of colonizers, explorers, and traders over the centuries, interwoven with diets based on indigenous foods.

In the United States, enslaved Africans brought their native foods such as okra, black-eyed peas, and yams, and also incorporated corn and other local ingredients. Especially in the South, many typical foods have strong ties to this African tradition. The African profile includes the following ingredients:

Beans	Paprika
Black-eyed peas	Peanuts
Collard greens	Peppers, chili
Corn	Peppers, sweet
Millet	Sassafras
Molasses	Sweet potatoes
Okra	Yams

Familiar foods in this profile include gumbo soup, black-eyed peas with collards, and sweet potato pie.

COLLARD GREENS



BLACK-EYED PEAS



CORN



PEANUTS

PAPRIKA



CHILI PEPPERS



SWEET POTATOES



OKRA

FLAVOR PROFILE: ASIAN

The Asian continent includes countries as culturally and culinarily different as China, Japan, the Koreas, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and the Indonesian archipelago. Most of them use—in one way or another and to greater and varying degrees—the following spices, herbs, and ingredients:

Coriander	Rice vinegar
Coconut	Saffron
Cumin	Sesame seeds and sesame oil
Curry	
Fish sauce	Soy flavorings: miso paste, fermented soybeans, soy sauce
Ginger	
Lemongrass	
Mint	Thai basil
Mung beans	Tofu
Peppers, chili	Turmeric
Peppers, sweet	

Familiar foods in this profile include Asian noodles, pho soup, and rice bowls.



TOFU



GINGER



LEMONGRASS



SAFFRON



CHILI PEPPERS



CORIANDER



MUNG BEANS



COCONUT

FLAVOR PROFILE: EUROPEAN/MEDITERRANEAN

This profile traces its origins to North American settlements in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially of immigrants from the British Isles, Northern Europe, and Spain. Later immigration throughout the first part of the twentieth century brought additional Northern and Eastern Europeans, as well as Italians, Portuguese, Greeks, and other Mediterranean peoples. This profile includes the following ingredients:

Barley	Olive oil
Basil	Oregano
Capers	Paprika
Couscous	Peppers, chili
Dill	Peppers, sweet
Fennel	Rosemary
Garlic	Saffron
Horseradish	Thyme
Mint	Tomatoes
Olives	

Familiar foods in this profile include risotto, lasagna, and vegetable soup.



FENNEL



BARLEY



OLIVES AND OLIVE OIL



OREGANO



GARLIC

SWEET PEPPERS



COUSCOUS

FLAVOR PROFILE: LATIN AMERICAN

Mexico, the Central American and South American countries, and the islands of the Caribbean have elements of a distinct New World cuisine based on indigenous ingredients that has also been heavily influenced by colonizers from Spain, Portugal, Holland, and France, and by the African traders. The Latin American profile includes the following ingredients:

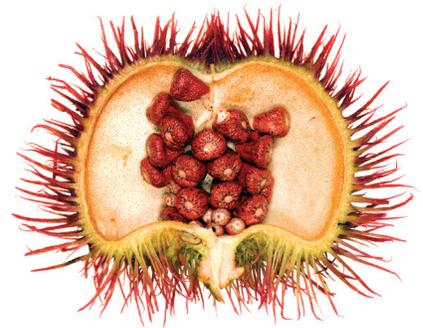
Achiote	Nopales (cactus pads)
Bananas	Oregano
Beans	Papaya
Chocolate	Peppers, chili
Cinnamon	Peppers, sweet
Corn	Plantains
Cumin	Quinoa
Garlic	Tomatoes
Hibiscus	Vanilla
Mangoes	

Familiar foods in this profile include tacos, tamales, and arroz con pollo (rice with chicken).

PLANTAINS



ACHIOTE



BEANS



QUINOA



VANILLA



TOMATOES



CUMIN



HIBISCUS



FLAVOR PROFILE: MIDDLE EASTERN/INDIAN

This profile encompasses cuisine from the Middle East, also known as Western Asia (including Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Turkey, Afghanistan, and Pakistan), as well as countries of North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. The Indian subcontinent is sometimes included in geographical references as part of Western Asia, and sometimes as part of Southern Asia. Culinarily, India and the Middle East use many of the same herbs and spices, as well as such ingredients as yogurt. This profile includes the following ingredients:

Allspice	Pine nuts
Cardamom	Pomegranates
Chickpeas (garbanzo beans)	Rose water
Cilantro	Sesame oil
Cinnamon	Tamarind
Coriander	Turmeric
Cumin	Yogurt
Fennel	
Garlic	More specific to India:
Ghee (clarified butter)	Curry
Mint	Garam masala
Nutmeg	Kaffir lime leaves
Peppers, chili	Mangoes
Peppers, sweet	

Familiar foods in this profile include falafel, tabbouleh, pita bread, and curried potatoes.

[Source: Flavor profile information was slightly adapted from pages 35–45 in *Cooking with California Foods in K-12 Schools* (2011, Learning in the Real World).]

CILANTRO



CINNAMON



YOGURT



CURRY



PINE NUTS

MANGOES



TAMARIND

POMEGRANATES



CHICKPEAS



FLAVOR PROFILE RESEARCH

- 1 What country did you choose to research?
- 2 On which continent is it located?
- 3 Color in your chosen country on the world map below.



- 4 What ingredients and seasonings are commonly used in this country's food?

Meats: _____

Fruits: _____

Vegetables: _____

Grains: _____

Dairy: _____

Spices: _____

5 Briefly describe the typical daily meals in this country.

• Breakfast: _____

• Lunch: _____

• Dinner: _____

• Other: _____

6 Choose a common ingredient of your country's foods, and find out why it is used so much there. (For example, the country's climate, history, or location may be part of the reason.)



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ABOUT THE CENTER FOR ECOLITERACY

The Center for Ecoliteracy is an internationally recognized leader in systems change innovations in education for sustainable living. Since 1995, the Center has engaged with thousands of educators from across the United States and six continents. The Center offers publications, seminars, academic program audits, coaching for teaching and learning, in-depth curriculum development, keynote presentations, and technical assistance. Books authored or coauthored by the Center for Ecoliteracy include *Ecoliterate: How Educators Are Cultivating Emotional, Social, and Ecological Intelligence* (Jossey-Bass, 2012); *Smart by Nature: Schooling for Sustainability* (Watershed Media, 2009); and *Ecological Literacy: Educating Our Children for a Sustainable World* (Sierra Club Books, 2005).

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PHOTOS

Cover coconut: istockphoto 11204027, isailorr; chilis: istockphoto 4710381, magnetcreative; olives: istockphoto 337080, susib; corn: istockphoto 13967505; cinnamon: istockphoto 15689149, popovaphoto

World map www.digital-vector-maps.com

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