



## IN HISTORY: IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC HERITAGE

### Lessons

### International Food

#### Overview/Description

Issues surrounding immigration can be difficult or controversial. To balance the seriousness and complexity of these issues, this exercise can be a fun way to:

- understand the importance of food and foodways (food-related activities, preparations and beliefs) as a part of our cultural heritage
- use food and foodways as a means of encouraging conversation about ethnic diversity
- give students an opportunity to interview community members

#### Grade Level

Intermediate/middle school (grades 6, 7, and 8) and high school

#### Academic Standards for Social Studies

- Indiana Standards (as of Jan. 2010):
  - Grade 6, History, Standard 1, Historical Knowledge, Modern Era: 1700 to present (6.1.15); Chronological Thinking, Historical Comprehension, Analysis and Interpretation, Research (6.1.23); Geography, Standard 3, Places and Regions (6.3.4); Geography, Standard 3, Human Systems (6.3.10)

- Grade 7, History, Standard 1, Historical Knowledge, Chronological Thinking, Historical Comprehension, Analysis and Interpretation, Research (7.1.20 and 7.1.24)
- Grade 8, U. S. History, Standard 1, The Civil War and Reconstruction Period: 1850 to 1877 (8.1.25)
- High School, World History, Standard 9, Historical Thinking (WH.9.1); World Geography, Standard 2, Places and Regions (WG.2.2 and WG.2.4)
- National Standards (National Council for the Social Studies): I Culture; III People, Places, and Environments; IX Global Connections

#### Social Studies/Historical Concepts

Food, culture, and celebrations

#### Learning/Instructional Objectives

Students will investigate food in their own culture and the cultures of other ethnic groups, formulate questions, conduct interviews, report on the interview in both oral and written form, and prepare and share a particular dish with their friends or the class (as appropriate).

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## Time Required

Two class periods, one for introduction of project and one for presentation of project

## Materials Required

- Pencil and paper
- Photocopy equipment or access to computer software to develop a digital resource
- Various food supplies and access to kitchen facilities
- Audio and/or digital video recorder
- Student Handout: International Food

## Background/Historical Context

There is an old saying, “You are what you eat!” This may or may not be true, but everyone has a favorite dish or recipe and strong memories tied into the foods we share with one another. What can you say about someone’s culture based on what they eat? A lot. Food is one of those taken-for-granted aspects of culture, even though it plays such a critical role in many of our celebrations.

Think of all the traditional foods prepared for family gatherings, weddings, religious events, and picnics. What kind of food do you find at the movie theater? At the county fair? At summer camp? Food does more than provide nourishment, it helps define our cultural or ethnic heritage—who we are, where we came from, and where we now live. For example:

- Gumbo (a kind of seafood stew) is identified as a Cajun specialty from Louisiana
- Grits are associated with southern cooking
- Paella is a familiar Spanish dish using saffron rice and meat
- Peirogies are a favorite among many eastern European communities
- Traditional Irish cooks are praised for their soda bread

- No Indian powwow would be complete with fry bread and honey

For more detail on immigration and ethnic history, refer to the “INTRODUCTION: Ethnic History in America and Indiana” essay by John Bodnar from *Peopling Indiana: The Ethnic Experience* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1996). The “Introduction” section of the Indiana Historical Society’s “IN History: Immigration and Ethnic Heritage” Web site provides a free download of this essay in PDF format.

## Teacher’s Instructional Plan

### Introduction

- As an introduction to this lesson on immigration, consider using a book talk to introduce student choice reading selections or read a selection as a class read-aloud. Refer to the “Resources” section of the Indiana Historical Society’s “IN History: Immigration and Ethnic Heritage” Web site for sample “Student Choice Reading Lists.” Check with your school or local library for other selection options.
- Introduce the lesson and activity to students by sharing the background information described above.
- The lesson may require parental supervision and assistance in preparation of recipes and/or recording interviews.

## ACTIVITY

- For this assignment, students will:
  - interview a person raised in a culture other than their own
  - prepare a dish from a recipe obtained in their interview
  - research some of the foods of the culture from which this recipe comes

- Planning and conducting the interview
  - Identify other students or community members who are willing to talk about their cultural heritage and share ideas about foods, recipes, and cooking with your students.
  - As a class, brainstorm questions to be asked in the interview.
  - Use the student handout questions as a springboard for more questions.
  - On a sign-up sheet, have students indicate who they propose to interview. The person the students will interview should not be a relative and should have been raised in a culture other than their own.
  - Set a date for students to complete their interview with a community member.
  - Ask students to take notes during their interview, even if they plan on recording their session. If students record their interview, remind them to be sure to ask permission to make a recording prior to beginning the interview.
  - If the person being interviewed agrees, you might want to consider making this a group project by taking along a digital audio/video recorder and assigning different roles for the team. For example: interviewer, cameraperson, audio person, and editor.
- Set a date for students to complete their reports, recipe information, and recording their experiences in preparing the food.
- Students will write a report of what they learned from their interview.
  - Remind students to include the name of the recipe, how it is made, and a brief personal history of the person who shared this recipe.
  - Discuss who eats this dish (what community, what ethnic group, what region, what country).
  - Identify what time of year (Christmas, Passover, breakfast, anytime) it is served.
  - Describe what they have learned about cultural heritage in general by studying food.
- Rattle those pots and pans!
  - Ask students to prepare the recipe using available ingredients.
  - If possible, share the food and recipe with their friends and ask the student to include this experience in their reports.
- Optional group project: Prepare a digital presentation of their experiences.
  - This activity may be adapted to a vod/podcast or other group digital presentation.
- Optional culminating event: Set aside a day for an international food fair.
  - Consider inviting another class or the interviewees to share in the food stories and the feast.

### Evaluation and Assessment

Consider using a rubric or checklist for evaluating student work.

### Additional Resources

Refer to the “Resources” section of the Indiana Historical Society’s “IN History: Immigration and Ethnic Heritage” Web site for additional resources on immigration and ethnic history.

## Student Handout: International Food

### Instructions

For this assignment, you are asked to interview a person raised in a society other than the United States, to prepare a dish from a recipe you obtained in your interview, and to research some of the foods of the culture from which this recipe comes.

- Planning and conducting the interview
  - Work with your teacher to identify other students or community members willing to talk with you about their cultural heritage and sharing ideas about foods, recipes, and cooking. The person you interview should not be a relative and should not have been born in the United States.
  - If the person you interview agrees, you might consider making this a group project by taking along a digital video recorder and assigning different roles to your team. For example: interviewer, cameraperson, audio person, and editor. Check with your teacher for approval to make this assignment a group project.
  - Take notes. If you bring along an audio or digital video recorder, be sure to ask permission to record the interview first.
- What did you learn?
  - Write a report based on your interview.
  - Be sure to include the name of the recipe, how it is made, and a brief personal history of the person who shared this recipe with you.
  - Discuss who eats this dish (what community, what ethnic group, what region, what country, etc.).
  - Identify what time of year (Christmas, Passover, breakfast, anytime) is it served.
  - Describe what you learned about cultural heritage in general by studying foods.
- Rattle those pots and pans!
  - Prepare the recipe you have been given using available ingredients.
  - Share it with friends and be sure to add this experience to your report.
- Optional—Group project:
  - Prepare a digital presentation of the class experiences.
  - Check with your teacher for group project details.