

EXPLORING FOOD CULTURE

*Conscious Kitchen and
West Contra Costa Unified School District Nutrition Services*



GOALS

- Celebrate the diversity of culinary cultures represented in the classroom
- Inspire students to taste new flavors
- Encourage students to explore and share their own culinary culture - share a traditional family recipe

PREPARATION

Ask each of the students to bring a favorite family recipe from home to share their culture

Prior to the lesson purchase and prepare ingredients for 3-4 different rice bowls:



Caribbean Bowl: spring onions, coconut milk, black beans w/ jerk seasoning



Central/South American Bowl: salsa roja, radish, cilantro, black beans w/ fajita seasoning



East Asian Bowl: spring onions, edamame, cucumber, seaweed, soy sauce

For the black beans for this lesson, prepare prior to your arrival at the school.

- For the beans, follow this recipe (1.5 cups dry beans, ~1 hour to cook)

The rice should start cooking in the instant pot or rice cooker as soon as you arrive at the school. All other ingredients can be prepared on-site while the rice is cooking.

- For the rice, follow this recipe (3-5 cups dry rice, ~30 min to cook)

SHOPPING LIST:

Caribbean

- Spring onions
- Coconut milk
- Black beans
- Jerk seasoning

Central/South American

- Fajita seasoning
- Salsa roja
- Radish
- Cilantro

East Asian

- Edamame
- Cucumber
- Seaweed
- Soy sauce

LESSON MATERIALS (based on 15 students)

- 10 cereal bowls (for topping ingredients)
- 1 cup (for coconut milk)
- 3 shallow trays
- Post it notes
- 15 index cards
- 15 pens/pencils
- Instant pot
 - Rice cooker (optional)
- Large Klean Kanteen (for beans)
- Hand grinder or food processor (for chutney)
- Hand sanitizer wipes
- Gloves
- 15 compostable bowls or plates for tasting
- 25 compostable spoons
- 15 soup spoons (if possible)
- Napkins

WELCOME (5 minutes)

- If you have worked with this group of students before, say hello, remind them of your name. Honor them by letting them know you are happy to see them again and make eye contact with them when you greet them.
- If working with a new group, introduce yourself and tell students a little about Conscious Kitchen, a fresh local organic seasonal nutritious school food program.

INTRODUCTION / ICE BEAKER (10 minutes)

Welcome! In today's lesson, we will introduce the concept of food unity by exploring the term "food justice" and the cultures represented in our classroom. The food choices we make with our families represent who we are, our history and tradition.

- Let's start by sharing three things about your food culture with a partner. Some questions they might consider: What is your favorite dish? Or is there a tradition that your family has before starting a meal, who does the cooking? What types of food do you eat / enjoy?
- Then ask each group to share one thing that that they learned

LESSON CONTENT (15 minutes)

1. Begin the lesson by presenting the following video clip (here), introducing the class to different school lunch programs around the world.
 - Which meals stood out to them?
 - Which meal would they like to try?
2. Transition the lesson content with the segment on the diversity of food cultures in the US. What we eat everyday can say a lot about our culture, our values, our emotions, and our identity. *In the US, the food culture is really a blend of many different food cultures that show the diversity of our country. What types of food culture do you see where you live? Can you think of any restaurants near your neighborhood that make food from another culture?*
3. *Let's explore the diversity of food culture within our own classroom! Have students take turns sharing the recipes they brought to class. Take note of similar ingredients or other similarities, and differences. It could be fun to focus on a specific ingredient like spices in each recipe to compare and contrast food cultures!*
4. *Tell students that we will be moving to the dining hall for our next activity, where we will try rice bowls with different toppings from around the world. Encourage students to embrace unfamiliar flavors while highlighting the importance of recognizing familiar flavors, so as to learn about the different cultures represented in the classroom.*
 - Move students to the dining hall.

SET THE SCENE (5 minutes)

Potluck United Nations

Let students see the different dishes you have prepared and explain to them the ingredients of each bowl.

- East Asia: spring onions, edamame, seaweed, soy sauce, sambal (chili sauce)
- Caribbean: spring onion, coconut milk, black beans w/ jerk seasoning
- Central/South America: salsa roja, radish, cilantro, black beans w/ fajita seasoning

OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITY (25 minutes)

- Break up students into groups of ~3
- Have them draw a culture out of a hat
- Allow students to build their own rice bowls that are topped with different ingredients/spices from the culture they drew from the hat.
- Students should taste their rice bowls and talk/write about their thoughts/experience
- Bring everyone back together to discuss their cultures

CLOSING QUESTIONS (10 minutes)

- What was your favorite bowl that you tried today? Did you taste ingredients that you haven't tried before?
- Were you surprised at all of the diversity of food culture in this class? Did you notice a similar ingredient in another culture's dish that is also found in yours?
- What did you learn about another culture that's similar to yours? (What's different from yours?)
- What else did you learn today that surprised you?
- Why is it important to keep culinary cultures and traditions alive?

WRAP-UP (5 minutes)

In today's lesson, we discussed that the foods that we eat tell a story about our culture and having that story is what makes us proud of who we are. It also reinforces that we are deserving of having our cultures celebrated, especially through food! It's important that we understand our peers' cultures, and that they understand ours – that way we can build more relationships at our schools and in our communities, celebrating connections from around the world.

RESTAURANT DATABASE

Culturally relevant restaurants within the Bay Area that represent the cuisines of students in the classroom. **This can be printed out and passed out after the class is over, or posted somewhere in the classroom after the lesson.*

Guatemala

- Quetzal Taqueria and Antojitos - Richmond
- Palacio Latino Restaurant and Bakery - San Pablo

El Salvador

- El Cuscatlan - Richmond
- Taqueria La Bamba - Richmond

Mexico

- Taqueria San Juan - Richmond
- Tres Hermanas - Richmond

Jamaica

- Kingston 11 Cuisine - Oakland
- Sweet Fingers Jamaican Restaurant - Oakland

Pakistan

- Indus Village - Berkeley
- Biryani Tika Kebab Indian and Pakistani Cuisine - Oakland

Nepal

- Little Kathmandu - El Cerrito
- Aangan - Albany

Laotian

- Lao-Thai Kitchen - Albany
- That Luang Kitchen Lao Cuisine - San Pablo

Cambodian

- Phnom Penh House - Alameda
- Battambang - Oakland

Thai

- Chang Thai Cuisine - San Pablo
- Banana Leaf Thai Cuisine - El Cerrito

Filipino

- Lumpia Cabalen - Hercules
- The Lumpia Company - Oakland

Native American / Indigenous

- Cafe Ohlone - Berkeley
- Wahpepah's Kitchen - Oakland



conscious kitchen
ambassador program

