

Grade Level

3-6

Class Periods

1

Goals/Objectives/Student Outcomes:

Students will:

- Learn about types of food eaten by people in earlier times.
- Learn how people acquired what they ate.
- Learn about the utensils and dishes people used to prepare and serve food.
- Learn about seasonal variability in food.
- Learn how food was preserved for future use.

Materials:

1. Recipe books, old and new
2. Newspapers, old and new
3. Restaurant menus
4. Time to look at television and listen to the radio
5. Catalogs showing tools, utensils, and dishes for sale
6. Grocery store advertisements showing prices and types of food for sale
7. Samples of containers used to store food
8. Samples of actual food items, especially those that are not grown in this area

Background:

Although all people need sufficient food to live, the ways in which we acquire, prepare, and consume food can take many forms. Earliest people gathered and hunted food, and the idea of growing food was a revolutionary development. Most food had to be preserved, processed, and prepared before people ate it. The consumption of food came to acquire cultural significance beyond merely sustaining life, often acquiring formal and ceremonial importance. Within this general framework of having enough to eat, certain techniques of preparation, choices and varieties of food, and kinds of edible materials either became valued or became taboo and therefore could not be eaten. The wide variation in the ways people have approached these issues make the study of food and food preparation one of the central concerns in the history of any group of people.

Procedure:

This thematic lesson plan is intended to introduce this particular topic to students. The activities are intended to introduce students to the process of inquiry that can be applied to the study Iowa history. In many cases the same activities can be used to explore the topic in a variety of Iowa history time periods. This lesson plan can also be used in conjunction with other topical areas in this curriculum.

These thematic lesson plans underscore basic skills such as reading, writing, communicating orally, and collecting reference sources. Many of the activities will give students practice in using higher skills as in reading, writing, communicating orally, collecting reference sources and using a library; distinguishing between primary and secondary sources; using charts and timelines; and developing vocabulary. The teacher can introduce higher level skills through these activities such as collecting information from a variety of sources through observation and questioning; compiling, organizing, and evaluating information; comparing and contrasting; drawing conclusions or inferences from evidence; considering alternative conclusions; making generalizations; recognizing points of view; understanding how things happen and how things change; recognizing how values and traditions influence history and the present; grasping the complexities of cause and effect; developing a chronological sense; and understanding events in context.

Activities:

1. List the food you ate during your most recent meal.
2. List your favorite foods.
3. Discuss where food is obtained.
4. Discuss where food products originate. These may be different from the places where we obtain food.
5. Look at recipe books to see what ingredients are needed to make various kinds of foods.
6. Look at a newspaper or magazine to see what food products are advertised.
7. Watch television and listen to the radio and keep a journal of the food advertisements that are broadcast.
8. Look at old newspapers and see what food products are advertised.
9. Compare the prices of foods in old newspapers with the prices of the same or similar foods today.

10. Find old recipes.
11. List as many ways as possible to preserve food.
12. List types of containers in which food is sold, kept in the home, or preserved.
13. Discuss how people gathered and grew food at earlier times in our history.
14. Look at restaurant menus and see what choices of food are available today.
15. Look at menus from the past and see what choices of food were available at earlier times in our history.
16. Discuss what kinds of foods people in other parts of the world eat and why we might not eat the same kinds of food.
17. List some of our food taboos. Discuss why we have taboos about certain types of food.
18. Discuss the utensils and tools needed to prepare food.
19. Discuss the types of dishes and utensils needed to consume food at a table.
20. Discuss why so many types of utensils, tools, and dishes are needed or desirable to prepare and consume food.
21. Discuss what foods are available only at certain seasons because of where or how they are grown.

Assessments of Outcomes:

1. Prepare a typical dinner menu from an earlier era.
2. Compare a shopping list for the ingredients needed to make a typical dinner in historic times with a typical shopping list from today.
3. List foods that we commonly eat but that are not typically eaten by other people. Explain those differences in diet.
4. List foods that we don't commonly eat but that other people do. Explain the reasons for the differences.
5. List the types of utensils, tools, and dishes that are used to prepare and consume food today and in historic times, here and elsewhere.

Extensions and Adaptations:

Most of the activities listed under procedures can be easily adapted to meet the learning needs of most students at various ages. Many of the listed activities can be used as art, music, writing, math, or science projects. Be sure to draw on teachers within your school and resource people in your community. The folklife section of this curriculum provides a list of community resource ideas.

Resources:

Contact the Iowa History Resource Center at the State Historical Society of Iowa for a list of books, videos, organizations and ideas for studying Iowa history. Write to: Education Coordinator, State Historical Society of Iowa, 600 East Locust, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.