

“What’s Cooking in the Cultural Celebration Kitchen?”

EAT CAFETERIA CONNECTION

Ask the children to look at the food and culture themed poster and the food offered for lunch in the cafeteria. Have students to identify one food commonly eaten in China. Discuss their observations when the students return back from lunch and have had an opportunity to review the poster.

LEARN CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objective

Students will describe the types of food eaten at holidays celebrated by three cultures.

10 Minute Lesson

Through teacher-guided discussion, students will learn the history and traditions of three cultural celebrations: Cinco de Mayo, Chinese New Year, and St. Patrick’s Day. Children will also identify their favorite holidays and the foods they associate with each. Students will discuss the role that food plays in celebrating special days across the world.

LIVE HOME ACTIVITY

Instruct the children to ask an adult at home about memories they have of eating special foods during holiday celebrations and to describe their family’s holiday food traditions. Children can ask about helping an adult prepare one of the traditional foods for the family to enjoy at a meal on a day that’s not a holiday.

Teacher's Notes

Background

Food is an important part of any celebration in all countries of the world, regardless of culture, ethnicity or religion:

Food is a very important and necessary part of our lives. We use food for a variety of different purposes and the food that we choose to eat is selected because of a variety of different influences. Food also plays an important part in how we celebrate. Foods commonly eaten at celebrations often reflect particular staple foods commonly eaten in certain countries, for example pasta in Italy, beans in Mexico, and rice in China. The lesson below provides other examples of how special foods are included in certain cultural celebrations.

LEARN 10 Minute Lesson

Food is a very important part of our lives. We need it to live, it is what gives us the nutrients that we need for our bodies to grow. We also use food for social reasons. When we have friends or family to our home we usually have some form of food to offer them, whether it is a light snack or a full meal. Food also plays an important part in how we celebrate and is a major part of celebrations all across the world.

In Mexico, **Cinco de Mayo** (which means The 5th of May) celebrates the victory of the historical battle of 1862 between Mexico and France. This holiday is a symbol of Mexican pride and unity and includes great festivities. Delicious food also plays a part in this celebration. When the celebration first began, traditional foods included atole (porridge), tortillas (very thin flatbread), tamales (filled pastries, both savory and sweet), and sopas (soups). Today, the food has expanded to include many different dishes like quesadillas, salsa, fajitas and burritos.

In China, **Chinese New Year** is the biggest holiday celebrated among Chinese people. It is often referred to as the spring festival because it indicates the beginning of spring. It is a time when families and friends get together to say goodbye to the old and welcome the new. Unlike our New Year's celebration, Chinese New Year never falls on the same day. This is because a solar calendar is used to determine the date based upon the position of the moon. Food is also very important to this New Year's celebrations. Traditional foods include noodles for long-life, tangerines for wealth, and turnip greens for good luck.

In Ireland, **St. Patrick's Day** is celebrated in honor of Saint Patrick, a patron saint of Ireland. A patron saint takes special care of a country or group. Saint Patrick is said to have brought Christianity to Ireland. Saint Patrick died on March 17th and this is the day Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated. Traditional Irish St. Patrick's Day food might include ham and cabbage or bacon and cabbage, Irish lamb stew, potatoes, and Irish soda bread.

Ask the students: *Let's take a look at the school menu. Can you find foods that might be eaten in celebration of the days we've just discussed? (Foods might include: rice, noodles, bread, tacos, quesadillas, tortillas, potatoes, etc.)*

Explain: No matter what the celebrations, these special foods are what many of us look forward to as the celebration gets closer.

Introduce and explain the EAT Cafeteria Connection and LEARN Home Activity to the students.

Optional Enrichment Idea

Have students write 1 – 2 paragraphs describing how they celebrate a special holiday with their family, to include a brief discussion about special foods the family might enjoy on that holiday.