

EAT

CAFETERIA CONNECTION

Ask the children to examine the food and culture themed poster in the cafeteria. Have students identify the country on the poster where pasta is commonly eaten as a dietary staple. 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 explain how cultures around the world have developed diets that are nutritionally similar.

10 Minute Lesson

Through teacher-guided discussion, students will explore common carbohydrate sources that all cultures typically consume.

LIVE

HOME ACTIVITY

Instruct students to examine the foods they have at home and make a list of carbohydrate sources they can find. Tell them to look for foods made with grains such as various types of breads, legumes like beans and lentils, and other starchy vegetables such as potatoes. Discuss results in class.

Teacher's Notes

Background

Many different types and combinations of foods can be used to nourish the body. There is a striking similarity in the nutritional composition of many native diets throughout the world. People around the world have relied on a dietary staple rich in complex carbohydrate, most commonly a grain such as rice, corn, wheat, barley, sorghum, oats, etc. In some cultures, the primary staple is a starchy root such as potatoes. These carbohydrate sources provide more than half of the world's calories, even today. Through teacher-guided discussion, students will explore common carbohydrate sources that all cultures use in their daily lives.

10 Minute Lesson

Lead Group Discussion-

Learning about Dietary Staples: *Explain to students the concept of “dietary staple,” that is, the food that makes up the biggest piece of the diet, usually a carbohydrate such as grain or potatoes. Ask them why it is important to have a food rich in carbohydrates as a staple. Ask if they recall the body's first and most important need, nutritionally speaking. (ANSWER: Energy).*

Discuss how cultures around the world have developed diets that are nutritionally similar, featuring grains and potatoes. Elicit reasons why different cultures living far apart managed to develop similar diets.

Why do you think people in early civilizations ate high-carbohydrate diets? (Point out that early farmers needed carbohydrates as a staple because their lifestyle as physical laborers required a great deal of energy).

Ask students to list examples of ethnic diets that feature carbohydrate sources.

- Mexico – tortilla, corn, rice, noodles (fideo)
- China – Rice, noodles, rice bread...
- United States – Bread, cereal, mashed potatoes...
- Ireland – Soda Bread, Biscuits, Potatoes

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

Optional Enrichment Ideas

Have the students collect grain samples, including common varieties (rice, oats, corn, wheat), a few that are lesser known (barley, millet, quinoa, etc). Set up a center where students can identify and label the grain products.