

# FOOD AND SOCIETY: THE CULTURE OF FOOD



## SUMMARY

This lesson highlights the diversity of global food traditions and the important role that food plays in our cultures, our identities, and our social interactions. We explain that the US is a unique melting pot of food cultures – and give students a chance to share their different food traditions and favorite dishes.

*Duration: 90 mins, 2 Sessions | Grade Level: 4th-7th*



# Module 3: Food & Society

## The Culture of Food

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### LESSON RESOURCES

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[greenbeetz.org](https://greenbeetz.org)

our website hosts lesson slides, google forms, lesson videos, and teacher training videos, glossary, standards alignment and more

# COOKING BASICS: AT A GLANCE



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*How can we travel the world without leaving town?*



## STUDENT LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

After this lesson students will be able to:

- Understand what culturally different foods are.
- Identify cuisines that come from different parts of the world.
- Understand that New York City is a melting pot of cultures and associated cuisines/dishes.



## VOCABULARY

- **Staple** - foods that are so plentiful in a region that they have become part of the daily food consumption and may be a part of one or more meals each day. Traditionally, staples may have been grown or produced in the same region they are eaten, but with a global economy, staples for many regions may be produced elsewhere and transported (ex: rice in Southeast Asia, Yuca in South America, Potatoes globally, etc)
- **Cuisine** - a style or method of cooking, especially one characteristic of a particular country or region.



## KEY POINTS

- People around the world embrace different food traditions, both in terms of what they eat and how they eat it. The food people eat often depends on what foods are plentiful in their region.
- The US is a melting pot of different cultures, including food culture.
- Experiencing cuisine from another country is one way to experience a part of another culture.
- When families move from other countries to the US, food serves an important link to their cultural identity.
- Food brings people together and gives us the chance to explore and learn about each other. Meals with friends and family are not only a source of nourishment but also important quality time to spend together.

# LESSON BREAKDOWN

TIME	ACTIVITY	MATERIALS/RESOURCES
<b>PART 1</b>		
3-5 min	Breakfast Challenge Revisited	Breakfast Challenge Handout
3-5 min	Introduction: Sharing Family Recipes	<b>Lesson Slides</b>
1-3 min	Vocab Review	<b>Lesson Slides</b>
10-12 min	Lesson Video: The Culture of Food & Discussion	<b>Vimeo</b> or <b>YouTube</b>
10 min	Cultural Snack Discussion	
10 min	Food Detective Assessment	Exit Card
<b>PART 2</b>		
5-7 min	Breakfast Challenge	Breakfast Challenge Handout
5-7 min	Activity: Food of the World	World Map (online or physical)
10-15 min	Group Presentations: Culture of Food	Exit Cards from last session
7-10 min	Snackz & Factz	Chosen from previous session discussion
5 min	Test Your Noodle	<b>Lesson Slides</b>
5-7 min	Food Detective Assessment	Exit Card

# PRIOR KNOWLEDGE AND MISCONCEPTIONS

## PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students may have a wide-range of cultural backgrounds. Encourage them to share and be the “experts” in their cultural heritage for you and the class.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS	POSSIBLE RESPONSE
Humans innately notice patterns and are quick to make generalizations.	Make sure students are not stating stereotypes as they discuss cultures - either their own or others.

## DETAILED LESSON SCRIPT: PART I

### Breakfast Challenge

3-5 minutes

- Remind students of the Breakfast Challenge from the beginning of Green Beetz.
- They will now complete a final week of the Breakfast Challenge to compare what they ate during the first week of the program.
- You can have them complete this at home or give them 5 minutes each morning in class to record their intake, moods, and other observations.

### Breakfast Challenge

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. When you eat a healthy breakfast, it gives your mind and body a long-lasting boost of energy. A good breakfast fuels you to concentrate longer in class, perform better on the field, and stay in a better mood.

We know there are times when you are hungry, but you don't have time to sit down for breakfast. We all have those days when we want to grab a donut and a soda for breakfast. The downside is that we don't really feel great afterwards. We might have a burst of energy from the sugar, but that sugar is used up quickly. You may not even notice that just minutes after you eat something really sugary you might feel tired and grumpy. You'll probably even want to fall asleep in class. That is not a good way to start off your day!

**So what does it mean to eat a healthy breakfast?**  
**Your breakfast should include foods from each of the following food groups:**

- **Milk and milk product** (whole milk, yogurt, cheese, or soy/almond milk)
- **Fruit or vegetable group** (bananas, apples, potatoes, berries)
- **Bread and grain** (whole grain toast, oatmeal, or a tortilla)
- **Proteins** (hardboiled egg, peanut butter, nuts, or lean meats)

Some healthy breakfast ideas include an egg sandwich on whole grain bread with a piece of fruit, a bowl of oatmeal with raisins and nuts mixed in, or yogurt layered with granola and berries.




Date	Breakfast Food	Breakfast Drink	Mood/Energy level right after eating	Mood/Energy level 1hr after eating	Other notes about how I feel today

# Introduction: Sharing Family Recipes

3-5 minutes

## IDEAS TO OPEN UP THE CONVERSATION AROUND FAMILY RECIPES

You can begin this dialogue by sharing one of your favorite recipes that represents your cultural background and then have students turn and talk. This might be a nice opportunity to bring in a photo of the family member who you associate with this recipe or a picture of the dish so students can get to know you, too!

You can ask your students to bring in family recipes to share instead of asking about them.

Some helpful starter questions:

- Has anyone ever made something from a recipe that had been passed down from one family member to another?
- Does anyone have a favorite recipe that is from their family's cultural traditions?

## Vocab Review

1-3 minutes

You can preview these words by assessing how familiar students are (you can use a thumbs up, thumbs down, or sideways strategy).

LESSON SLIDES



### VOCABULARY



#### Staple

Foods that are so plentiful in a region that they have become part of the daily food consumption and may be a part of one or more meals each day. Traditionally, staples may have been grown or produced in the same region, but with a global economy, staples for many regions may be produced elsewhere.

#### Cuisine

A style or method of cooking, especially one characteristic of a particular country or region.

# Lesson Video: The Culture of Food

10-12 minutes

## Discussion questions after you watch:

- What did you feel as you saw all the different types of food?
- What was the most interesting thing you saw or learned?
- What do you think the message of the video was?
- Did you notice anything about how food from different countries and regions featured in the video were prepared differently? How were the foods similar or different?



If these Key points did not come up during the discussion, be sure to discuss them:

## KEY POINTS

### People around the world embrace different food traditions

Both in terms of what they eat and how they eat it. The food people eat often depends on what foods are plentiful in their region. The way food is prepared and served depends on “local customs” that have developed over many generations (e.g. eating with chopsticks, eating with your hands).

### Melting Pot

The US is a melting pot of different cultures, including food culture. For example, much of the food we see in Harlem was brought to New York from people that came from the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Mexico, and Central and South America.

### We can explore different cultures through food

Experiencing the cuisine from another country is one way to experience a part of their culture.

### Food is an important link to cultural identity

When families move away from their home country, food serves as an important link to their cultural identity. Often people blend their traditional cuisine with their new country.

### Food brings people together

Food gives people the chance to explore and learn about each other. Meals with friends and family are not only a source of nourishment but also important quality time to spend together.

## Cultural Snacks Discussion

10 minutes

Explain that cultural food is not limited to main meals. Throughout the Green Beetz lessons you have introduced them to several healthy ideas for snacks. Now it is their turn!

### HAVE YOU STUDENTS SHARE IDEAS FOR SNACKS FROM THEIR OWN CULTURAL TRADITIONS.

Explain that you are looking for healthy snack ideas, so the snack should either be healthy to begin with or they should suggest alterations that would help make it healthier.

Students who consider their cultural tradition to be from the USA should also share what their favorite snacks are.

Record the list of snacks and choose one for the Snacks and Factz segment coming up in the next session.

## Food Detective Assessment

10 minutes | Exit Card

Get your students thinking about the role food plays in their culture and vice versa. You can have students share their ideas with their classmates now or at the beginning of the next session.

**Name one kind of food that is typically served at one of your family's special meals or celebrations and answer the following:**

- *What makes the food special?*
- *Why is this particular food eaten as part of a celebration or holiday?*
- *Does the food or celebration come from a particular culture, country, or region of the world? Which one?*
- *How is the food prepared/served?*

# DETAILED LESSON SCRIPT: PART II

## Breakfast Challenge

5-7 minutes

If it has been a week, have students compare and contrast their Breakfast Challenge/Log from the 1st week of Green Beetz to now:

Date	Breakfast Food	Breakfast Drink	Mood/Energy level right after eating	Mood/Energy level 1hr after eating	Other notes about how I feel today

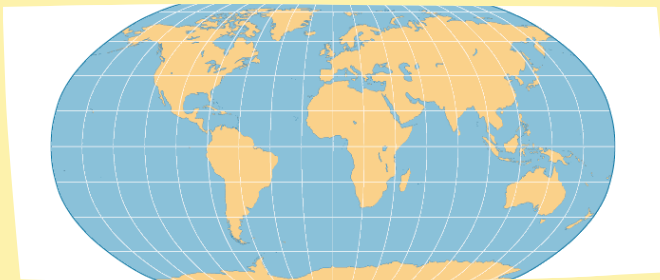
Highlight anyone who has engaged in changing what they eat to improve their mood. Also note anyone who acknowledges feeling tired when they don't have a balanced (or any) breakfast. If students eat school breakfast and notice that their

choices don't feel healthy, this could be an interesting avenue to pursue in ELA. Students could write letters explaining what they have learned about nutrition and what they wish schools/DOE could provide.



## Activity: Food of the World

5-7 minutes



DO
Display or project a large world map in the classroom or on the smartboard.
You can place stickers on a paper map or you can freeze a smartboard and allow them to draw an x or dot on the country where their dish originates.
Students may need help finding the country; a great link to geography.

ASK
Now have your students look at their Exit Card from last week and ask:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where did your family's dish come from? (place a marker on the map)</li> <li>• Once everyone has placed their pin or mark, ask:</li> <li>• Do we notice any patterns—do many of us have similar cultural backgrounds? (Depending upon the class, there may be areas that are dense with pins/stickers, or they may be very spread out)</li> </ul>



# Group Presentations: Culture of Food

10-15 minutes

## DIRECTIONS TO TEACHERS

Divide the class into groups according to regions based on where they placed their pin/sticker on the map.

- Depending upon the class, you might group them by world regions such as Asia, Europe, Africa, Latin America, South America, North America, etc.
- Or you may be able to be as specific as countries. You may want to separate one sticker dense country from others within a crowded region.
- Or you may want to separate one country or region by cardinal directions
- If there are individuals who don't quite fit into a region with others, they could be put into a mixed group, or added to nearest geographic grouping.

Assigning roles to group members (recorder, presenter, leader, etc) may help the group work more cooperatively and allow presentations to go smoother.

## DIRECTIONS TO STUDENT GROUPS

Looking at their Exit Cards from the previous lesson, have group members work together to compare their food choices by answering the following:

- What is different about the meals that they each chose?
- What do their meals have in common?
- Are there similar ingredients, foods, or cooking techniques that are common in their region?
- Have any of these foods changed since the family or ancestors have brought them from another country?

*Presentation directions continue on next page...*



## Group Presentations: Culture of Food (CONTINUED)

### DIRECTIONS FOR THEIR CLASS PRESENTATION FROM THEIR GROUP DISCUSSION:

The presentations should include:

- The countries, cities, or regions that each meal represented - have them point this out on the map.
- A list of the foods that each student wrote about.
- What was common about foods in their group/region?
- What was different about the various foods of the region?

### AFTER THE PRESENTATIONS ASK YOUR CLASS:

*What surprised you or what did you find interesting about the Culture of Food around the world?*

## Snackz & Factz

7-10 minutes

Share one of the snacks from the students' cultural snacks discussed last week or better yet have them prepare the snack! You can set up stations to help them prepare. Ask them:

- Have you ever had this before?
- What do you like about it?
- Does it seem healthy? Why?
- Is it similar to something in another culture? How?



# Test Your Noodle

5 minutes

1. Besides nourishment, what is another reason that people eat meals together? **(quality time spent together, social interaction, company, etc)**
2. The food that people eat depends on what? Name at least one thing. **(food available in the region, family tradition, cultural tradition, personal preferences)**
3. Fill in the blank: The United States is a \_\_\_\_\_ of many different cultures, including food culture. **(melting pot)**
4. Multiple Choice: When families move to the US from other countries, preparing familiar foods is one way for them to hold onto their \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - a. Spices
  - b. Health
  - c. Cultural Identity**
  - d. None of the above
5. Even if you can't travel to far off places, what is one way to explore other cultures? **(trying foods from other cultures)**

## Food Detective Assessment

5-10 minutes

This is the final lesson of Green Beetz! If you are teaching the whole curriculum or just one Module you can have students answer the following on an Exit Card and share with the class and with us at Green Beetz! **(office@greenbeetz.org)**

- *What is the most important thing you learned during Green Beetz?*
- *What do you still have questions about?*

## Culture of Food: Part 1 - Exit Card

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name one kind of food that is typically served at one of your family's special meals or celebration?

- What makes the food special?
- Why is this particular food eaten as part of a celebration or holiday?
- Does the food or celebration come from a particular culture, country, or region of the world? Which one?
- How is the food prepared/served?

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## Culture of Food: Part 1 - Exit Card

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name one kind of food that is typically served at one of your family's special meals or celebration?

- What makes the food special?
- Why is this particular food eaten as part of a celebration or holiday?
- Does the food or celebration come from a particular culture, country, or region of the world? Which one?
- How is the food prepared/served?

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## Culture of Food: Part 2 - Exit Card

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- What is the most important thing you learned during Green Beetz?

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- What do you still have questions about?

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## Culture of Food: Part 2 - Exit Card

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- What is the most important thing you learned during Green Beetz?

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- What do you still have questions about?

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