

Be a Food Explorer

Grade Level: 3

Approximate Length of Activity: One class period

Objective

Teacher

1. Introduce students to different fruits and vegetables.
2. Promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables.
3. Explain the origins of some fruits and vegetables.

Students

1. Try a variety of unfamiliar fruits and vegetables.
2. Research their origins and develop recipes.

Michigan Content Standards: (Health) Strand 1-Standard 1-1.1

Background

Most of the foods we eat have traveled all around the world. Bread is made from wheat, which originated in the Middle East. The meat in our hamburgers is from beef animals, which came to us from South Asia, the Middle East and Europe. French fries are made from potatoes, which are native to Central America, along with tomatoes. Lettuce comes from Europe, oranges from China and apples from Eastern Europe.

Some of the fruits and vegetables we eat today that are native to the Americas are corn, beans, sweet potatoes, peppers, squash, pumpkins, Jerusalem Artichokes, sunflower seeds, and pecans. Potatoes, peanuts and tomatoes got their start in South America and made their way back to North America.

Explorers from the 1500s introduced many new foods to other parts of the world. Valuable spices were among the riches sought by explorers when they sailed from their countries to new worlds, risking their lives and fortunes.

Spices were important because there was no refrigeration in the 1500s, and fresh meat spoiled quickly. Strong spices covered the flavor of slightly rotten food. Some spices, like rosemary and cinnamon, helped preserve food. Spices also covered unpleasant smells in unsanitary times and were used to embalm dead bodies. Black pepper was more valuable than gold.

Many of the foods we know traveled from continent to continent because sailors needed fresh foods to survive. Without means to preserve fresh fruits and vegetables, sailors had to exist on salted meat, dried fish and unleavened bread and biscuits. Without the vitamin C found in fresh produce, sailors would develop a disease called scurvy that made their gums bleed and joints swell.

Reaching land for fresh food and water was the only way to survive, but explorers rarely knew exactly where they were going. In their search for fresh foods in new lands, the explorers brought back tomatoes, potatoes, bananas, chocolate and tea from the new world and discovered new grains like Indian corn.

Materials Needed

- Assorted fruits and vegetables
- Copies of “Be a Food Explorer” reading page for each student
- Copies of “Be a Food Explorer” checklist for each student
- Copies of “Be a Food Explorer” survey for each student

Activity Outline

1. Hand out copies of “Be a Food Explorer” reading page.
2. Have students read the page.
3. Hand out copies of the “Be a Food Explorer” checklist.
4. Have students fill the chart out and discuss. Challenge students to describe the importance of eating fruits and vegetables. Challenge students to describe why it is important to match healthy eating with exercise.

Discussion Questions

1. What are two foods that are native to the Americas?
2. Are you a picky eater?
3. What is your favorite fruit or vegetable?
4. What are three fruits and three vegetables grown in Michigan?

Related Activities

1. Activities related to social studies
 - On the chalkboard, make a list of foods native to the Americas (See Background). Then have students list all the foods they have eaten in a day and cross check with the list of native foods.
 - Have students select five unfamiliar fruits and vegetables. (See list that follows)
 - Have students research to find where the unfamiliar foods originated, where they are mostly grown now and other information.
 - On a map of the world, have students show where their food originated and report to the class. Discuss how climates affect what foods are grown.
 - Many people are afraid to taste foods they have never tasted before. New foods brought home by explorers were often met with suspicion. Have you ever been “afraid” of a new food? (Be honest) Why?
2. Activities related to language arts
 - Bring a wide assortment of fruits and veggies. (Could be different varieties of the same fruit or vegetable) Check for food allergies.
 - Make a list of all you have brought, and have students check off the ones they have tried.
 - Ask each student to sample three fruits and three veggies they have never tasted and write their observations, comparing them to other flavors.
 - Discuss observations.
 - As a homework assignment, ask students to try at least three more fruits and vegetables

- they have never tried and answer the questions on the survey sheet provided.
- Provide students with a copy of the reading page, “Be a Food Explorer.” Preview the reading page, and have students write questions they predict will be answered by the reading. After reading, have students respond to their questions and discuss the information with a partner.
 - Have students cut apart fruits and vegetables list, alphabetize to the third letter and glue stick on another piece of paper.
 - Have students work in groups to develop recipes for one unfamiliar fruit and one unfamiliar vegetable. Award extra points for recipes that do not add sugar or cheese. Have students taste test the creations and vote for the ones they like the best.
3. The lesson “How to Pick the Best” located in the health section of this curriculum guide.
 4. The lessons included in “The Farmer Grows a Rainbow” located in the health section of this curriculum guide.
 5. The lesson “Fruit for Sale” located in the social studies section of this curriculum guide.

Book Resources

1. “Gathering the Sun: An Alphabet in Spanish and English,” by Alma Flor Ada, Rosa Zubizarreta and Simon Silva
2. “Stranded at Plimoth Plantation” by Gary Bowen
3. “Together...Let’s Try New Foods, Grandpa’s Garden Lunch” by Judith Casely

Acknowledgement: Adapted from “Be a Food Explorer,” Oklahoma Agriculture in the Classroom.

Be a Food Explorer

Most of the foods we eat have traveled around the world. Bread is made from wheat, which first grew in the Middle East. The meat in our hamburgers is from beef animals, which came to us from South Asia, the Middle East and Europe. French fries are made from potatoes, which are native to Central America. The tomatoes in your ketchup came from Central America also. Lettuce comes from Europe, oranges from China and apples from Eastern Europe.

Corn, beans, sweet potatoes, peppers, squash, pumpkins, sunflower seeds, and pecans are foods native to the Americas. Potatoes, peanuts and tomatoes started in South America, made their way to Europe and Africa with the Spanish explorers and then found their way back to North America with colonists.

Many new foods were introduced around the world during the 1500s, the great era of exploration. Explorers risked their lives and fortunes seeking valuable spices and found other foods along the way. Spices were important because there was no refrigeration, and fresh meat spoiled quickly. Strong spices covered the flavor of slightly rotten food. Some spices, like rosemary and cinnamon, helped preserve food. Spices also covered unpleasant smells in unsanitary times and were used to embalm dead bodies. Black pepper was more valuable than gold.

Many of the foods we know traveled from continent to continent because sailors needed fresh foods to survive. Without means to preserve fresh fruits and vegetables, sailors had to exist on salted meat, dried fish, unleavened bread and biscuits. Without the vitamin C found in fresh produce, sailors would develop a disease called scurvy that made their gums bleed and joints swell. Reaching land for fresh food and water was the only way to survive. In their search for fresh foods in new lands, the explorers brought back tomatoes, potatoes, bananas, chocolate and tea from the new world and discovered new grains, like Indian corn.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are just as important for our health today as they were for the 16th Century explorers. Some of the foods you find on the grocery shelves may seem as exotic to you as tomatoes and squash did to early explorers. Unlike them, we only have to explore the produce shelves in the grocery store. How brave are you? How many new foods have you tried this week? Complete the checklist worksheet.

Be a Food Explorer

Fruits I have tried	Vegetables I have tried
____ apples	____ asparagus
____ apricot	____ beet
____ bananas*	____ broccoli
____ blackberry	____ cabbage
____ blueberry	____ carrot
____ cantaloupe	____ cauliflower
____ grape	____ corn
____ honey dew melon	____ green beans
____ mango*	____ lettuce
____ nectarine	____ onion
____ orange*	____ peas
____ peach	____ spinach
____ pear	____ summer squash(yellow or green)
____ pineapple*	____ sweet potato
____ raspberry	____ tomato
____ strawberry	____ turnips
____ watermelon	* not grown in Michigan

My favorite fruit is _____

My favorite vegetable is _____

The new fruit that I will try is _____

The new vegetable that I will try is _____

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Name of fruit or vegetable I tried _____

Have you ever had this food before? ___yes ___no

In complete sentences, describe this fruit or vegetable. Use all five senses.

Did this fruit or vegetable taste similar to something that you have eaten before?

___yes ___no If yes, what? _____

Was the food cooked? _____ Raw? _____ Eaten with something added? _____

What, if anything, was added?

sugar (or something sweet) ___cheese ___ketchup ___ranch dressing

would you add something not listed? (describe)

Would you eat this food again? ___yes ___no