Explore a Family Recipe
Creative writing

Purpose
Students will explore the connections between food and culture by investigating the cultural influences, preparation, and historical ties of the food that people eat. They will also be able to gain an understanding of how geography and climate effects what people eat culturally.

Objectives
Students will be able to:
- Examine how different types of foods that they grew up with (or any cultural/ethnic recipe) may be helpful or harmful
- Differentiate the types of nutritional components found in foods of their choice
- Investigate the history of these foods in their culture
- Create their own story or writing about a food or recipe they know

Time
One 1 hour session in class for Family, Country, Ethnicity, & Religion worksheet (enclosed) and for the assignment; then assign the development of their own investigation and creative writing piece as a homework assignment. These pieces can be read aloud in class.

Materials
Access to word processing software and internet would be useful for the research and the production of the writing and essay products. If oral presentations are required, computer access to presentation software such as PowerPoint would be useful, but not essential since transparencies could be used to illustrate the speaking points.
- Family Recipe (worksheet)
- Family, Country, Ethnicity, & Religion (worksheet)
- Cultural Food Item (worksheet)

Procedure
1. In class, have students respond to the Family, Country, Ethnicity, & Religion worksheet (enclosed). The students will list foods that they associate each quadrant. If they do not associate with a particular quadrant (i.e. religion) they may leave that quadrant blank. The students will then share and compare common foods listed in any particular quadrant. After the activity the students will determine the connections between specific foods and the cultures in which they are popular.

2. Each student will choose a family or cultural recipe of their choice
   a. (Optional) Use the Family Recipe Form to compile the Recipes
   b. (Optional) Use the Cultural Food Item Research Form to begin researching their recipe
3. Students may interview an individual or individuals from the country/countries of heritage on the historical aspects of the cultural recipe that they choose to research.
   a. Each student should research the nutritional components of their recipe.
   b. The students can determine a way in which to improve the recipe so that it is more nutritious.
   c. The students will research if culture has affected or influenced fast food restaurants and frozen food items.

4. Students will explore the culinary customs and history of their family.

5. Have students write their own description of a family recipe that has meaning to them or members of their family. Describe the food, and why they love/hate it. If this recipe has changed over time, how has it changed and how do they feel about this change? They can write this as a short story, a letter, a journal/diary entry, an essay, a newspaper article, a poem, or even a song.

Additional optional worksheets are included which can be used to explore the Family Recipe.

Family Culture – A “Classroom Concern” – Differences between cultures are a rich topic for the classroom. It is important to remember that when exploring these differences, the ethical principle of “respect for individuals and groups” be maintained. When there are stigmatized groups represented in the classroom, or a single individual from a group, there is a potential for negative comments and hurtful interactions. Beginning this activity with a sense of respect and of valuing these various traditions will go a long way toward creating a comfortable environment for cross-cultural learning.
## Family, Country, Ethnicity, & Religion

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FAMILY RECIPE

Families pass down recipes from generation to generation. Find a family recipe to be placed in a class cookbook. Each recipe will be placed in a class cookbook.

Your name:
Recipe name:
Recipe author:
Relationship to you:
Recipe:

Nutritional Components:
Cultural Food Item Research

Select one food item that is indigenous to your cultural background to research by answering the following questions.

1) What are the physical characteristics of this food item? (sketch a picture of your food item on the back of this worksheet)

2) Where is this food item produced?

3) How is this food item produced?

4) In what ways is this food item prepared?

5) Does this food item have any medicinal value?

6) What is the relationship between this food item and the culture in which it is consumed?
Additional Activities
Have a potluck lunch with students bringing in their family recipe and presenting their creative pieces.

Design a menu that displays a favorite dish from the country/countries of their family origin. (i.e. appetizers, main dishes, vegetables, salads, breads, desserts, drinks, etc.) Each menu will be presented in an interesting way. The students may use music, dance, skits, visual aids, video, mural, or rap.

Ask students to discuss how recent trends in working parents affects cultural cooking in the home.

Have all the students contribute towards the creation of a class cookbook. The book can include photographs of student and family members. Furthermore, the book can be sold to the school, community, etc. as a fundraiser.

Follow Up Activities
Investigate the nutritional components found in foods that the students grew up with, such as carbohydrates, fats, minerals, proteins and vitamins. After determining the nutritional components found in these foods, they will also be able to determine the recommended daily allowance of each component and why this is considered healthy or unhealthy.

Design posters based on the research they found on the nutritional components of their cultural/ethnic recipe. The research would include where these components came from and what they do to the body.

Student Assessment
Give the following creative writing components to each student as a guide to their creative writing products:
  - Select a family recipe
    - (Optional) Write it down in the Family Recipe Form Provided
    - (Optional) Explore the recipe with the Cultural Food Item Form Provided
  - Research this recipe in your family by interviewing members of your family and community
  - Create this story describing your feelings as well as facts about this recipe; Describe the food, and why you love/hate it. If this recipe has changed over time, how has it changed and how do you feel about this change? You can write this as a short story, a letter, a journal/diary entry, an essay, a newspaper article, a poem, or even a song.
  - Be prepared to answer questions concerning your story

Assign points for the following components of the critical writing products:
  - Was the recipe investigated?
  - Were the facts correctly summarized?
  - Were there sources of information?
  - Did the creative writing story of the student describe how the student feels about their recipe and its place in their family and culture?
  - Could the student answer questions from the audience about their story?