

Exploring New Foods and Culinary Traditions

Unit 4: Culinary Explorations and Cultural Competency

Duration: 45-90 minutes

Standards:

National Standards for FCS

8.5.1 Demonstrate professional skills in safe handling of knives, tools, and equipment.

8.5.6 Prepare various stocks, soups, and sauces using safe handling and professional preparation techniques.

8.5.7 Prepare various fruits, vegetables, starches, legumes, dairy products, fats, and oils using safe handling and professional preparation techniques.

CT Career and Technical Education Performance Standards

G.17 Demonstrate skills in safe handling of knives, tools, and equipment.

K.31 Describe and demonstrate the process for preparing various soups, stocks, and sauces.

K.35 Describe and demonstrate the process for preparing eggs, grains, and batter products.

Description:

This lesson not only introduces students to new foods and emerging culinary traditions from diverse cultures; it also helps them to understand how to do this in a respectful way. They will taste and prepare dishes that expand their culinary repertoire, appreciating the innovation and diversity in global foodways.

Objectives:

- Learning new cooking techniques from chefs around the globe and within the region.
- Building culinary and cultural competency by exploring diverse cuisines.
- Understanding and addressing the systemic issues that affect food access and nutrition.

Vocabulary:

- Anti-Racism - a process of actively identifying and opposing racism

Materials:

- Ingredients and kitchen equipment for recipes
 - Optional additional protein to serve with sauce (chickpeas, tofu, cubed
 - white fish such as cod, or thinly-sliced chicken breast)
 - Student travel journals from lesson 4.01 (optional)
-

Recipe:

- [Ghanaian Chalé Sauce](#)
 - [Fufu recipe](#)
-

Procedure:

1. Talk about the continent of Africa by looking at an [interactive map of the continent](#) together. Emphasize that:
 - a. Africa is a continent, not a country.
 - b. Africa is the largest continent, and it has the greatest diversity of landscapes, climates, and people on Earth.
 - c. People who were stolen from the continent of Africa brought thousands of traditions, foods, meals, practices, styles, and cultural practices to what is now the United States.
 - i. For example, Nigerian and Cameroonian drumming rhythms are adapted into jazz, and rice and greens are foods from these countries as well.
 - d. Humans who were stolen from West and Central Africa and forced into enslavement in North and South America and the Caribbean gave birth to the children who became known today as “African American.” Since then, racist practices have dominated across all systems; education, health, economics, and yes, food!
2. Anti-racism, as tiring as it can feel, is the only antidote to racism, and one way to promote anti-racism in food systems is to highlight various underrepresented and neglected communities in food.
 - a. Ask, “How can we honor people whose ancestors were once enslaved in what is now the United States, by preparing and eating foods that many of those ancestors ate?”
3. People in countries in Africa eat grains (corn, wheat, teff), vegetables, fruits, animal products (ghee, meats, fish, seafood, eggs, insects, game meats), spices (all and any), herbs, fungi (mushrooms), bacteria (in fermented fufu, for example), nuts, and seeds. The majority of foods eaten from South Africa to Ethiopia to Sudan to Nigeria to Morocco to Egypt to Ghana and beyond include non-animal sources. This is important because growing these foods requires less of an Earth burden (agricultural practices, water consumption, pesticide use), and they lend much more flavor to dishes. These foods also have major health benefits.
4. Some common foods across West African countries pureed or mashed sauces from multiple ingredients (almost like sofritos of Puerto Rico), and fufu, a pounded meal of water plus yucca (cassava), potatoes, yams, rice, oats, or other starches.

5. Students cook [Fufu recipe](#) and [Ghanaian Chalé Sauce](#).
 - a. For a full meal, cook any protein (chickpeas, tofu, cubed white fish such as cod, or thinly-sliced chicken breast) until tender, in the chalé. Alternatively, you could have students eat just the chalé with the fufu.
 - b. For the [fufu recipe](#) - use frozen-then-cooked yucca instead of fresh if desired, or have students peel the yucca with a good potato peeler, cut it into chunks, then remove the fibrous center; show [Fufu video](#) (~6.5 minutes). The frozen-then-cooked yucca might be a better option for students who don't have strong practice with knife skills yet. Instead of wasteful plastic wrap, the fufu can be wrapped in parchment paper.
 - c. Students should eat this meal with their hands.
6. Optional: Culinary Travel Journal Work
 - i. Students utilize journals made in lesson 4.01.
 - ii. Introduce journal expectations:
 1. Students will choose a new region or cuisine to explore in their journal.
 2. Journals should include:
 - a. Recipes
 - b. Cooking techniques
 - c. Ingredient histories
 - d. Cultural reflections
 3. [Travel Journal Examples/Inspiration](#)

Assessment(s):

- Formative assessment: Students participate in a group discussion around how (through food) we can honor people whose ancestors were once enslaved in the United States.
- Summative assessment: Students prepare [Ghanaian Chalé Sauce](#) and West African [Fufu](#).

Resources:

- [Interactive Map Africa](#)
- [Ghanaian Chalé Sauce](#)
- [Fufu recipe](#)
- [Fufu video](#)
- [Travel Journal Examples/Inspiration](#)

Extensions:

- What would social justice look like in a restaurant? Have students write about this and consider publishing their work.