

EAT

CAFETERIA CONNECTION

Ask the children to look at the food and culture themed poster in the cafeteria. Ask the students to identify one food commonly eaten in China. 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 describe the types of food eaten at holidays celebrated by three cultures.

10 Minute Lesson

Through teacher-guided discussion, students will learn the history and food traditions of three cultural celebrations: Cinco de Mayo, Chinese New Year, and St. Patrick’s Day. Children will also identify their favorite holidays and the foods they associate with each. Students will discuss the role that food plays in celebrating special days across the world.

LIVE

HOME ACTIVITY

Instruct the children to ask an adult at home about memories they have of eating special foods during holiday celebrations.

Teacher's Notes

Background

Food is an important part of any celebration in all countries of the world, regardless of culture, ethnicity or religion:

Food is a very important and necessary part of our lives. We use food for a variety of different purposes and the food that we choose to eat is selected because of a variety of different influences. Food also plays an important part in how we celebrate. Foods commonly eaten at celebrations often reflect particular staple foods commonly eaten in certain countries, for example pasta in Italy, beans in Mexico, and rice in China. The lesson below provides examples of how special foods are included in certain cultural celebrations.

LEARN 10 Minute Lesson

Food is a very important part of our lives. We need foods to grow and stay strong. However, food also plays an important part in how we celebrate. Food is a major part of celebrations all across the world. *Select one or all celebrations to discuss with students.*

In Mexico, **Cinco de Mayo** (which means The 5th of May) celebrates the victory of the historical battle of 1862 between Mexico and France. This holiday is a symbol of Mexican pride and unity and includes great festivities. Delicious food also plays a part in this celebration. When the celebration first began, traditional foods included atole (porridge), tortillas (very thin flatbread), tamales (filled pastries, both savory and sweet), and sopas (soups). Today, the food has expanded to include many different dishes. *Ask students what other foods they associate with Mexican culture.*

In China, **Chinese New Year** is the biggest holiday celebrated among Chinese people. It is often called the spring festival because it indicates the beginning of spring. It is a time when families and friends get together to say goodbye to the old and welcome the new. Unlike our New Year's celebration, Chinese New Year never falls on the same day. This is because a solar calendar is used to determine the date, based on the position of the moon. Food is also very important to this New Year's celebrations. Traditional foods include noodles for long-life, tangerines for wealth, and turnip greens for good luck. *Ask the students what other foods they associate with Chinese culture.*

In Ireland, **St. Patrick's Day** is celebrated in honor of Saint Patrick, a patron saint of Ireland. A patron saint takes special care of a country or group. Saint Patrick was a caring person and did many nice things for the people of Ireland. Saint Patrick died on March 17th and March 17th is the day Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated. Traditional Irish St. Patrick's Day food might include ham and cabbage or bacon and cabbage, Irish lamb stew, potatoes, and Irish soda bread. *Ask the students what other foods they associate with Irish culture.*

Ask the students: *What kind of foods do you eat on special holidays? Share your own experiences.*

Explain: No matter what the celebrations, these special foods are what many of us look forward to as the celebration gets closer.

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

Optional Enrichment Idea

Have students recall a holiday celebrated by their family. Ask them to draw a picture of themselves celebrating that holiday and include the foods they enjoyed in the picture.