



EduTrend Contents

W4C · CULTURAL STUDIES & ANTHROPOLOGY · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Food and Culture

Explore how food carries identity and history

Ages 12–14

Level: Intermediate

60 minutes

Groups of 3 · up to 30

Activity 04

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 04 · AT A GLANCE

Food and Culture

Students investigate how food reflects culture. They trace the origins of everyday ingredients, analyse a festive meal as a symbol, examine how migration and trade have changed local food, and create a food map of their class with pupils' voluntary contributions.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- trace the origins and journeys of common foods;
- explain how food expresses identity, belonging and celebration;
- describe how migration and trade change food cultures;
- discuss food traditions respectfully.

KEY WORDS

food culture · identity · migration · trade · fusion · ritual · heritage · globalisation

CURRICULUM LINKS

Geography: trade and migration. History: exchange of foods between continents. Food technology. C3 Framework, Dimension 2.

1

WONDER

What do people do?

2

OBSERVE

Look and listen

3

ASK

Hear their view

4

COMPARE

Same and different

5

INTERPRET

What does it mean?

6

REFLECT

What about us?

Materials (per group)

- Food origin cards (tomato, potato, chilli, rice, wheat, sugar, tea, coffee, chocolate)
- World map and string
- Photos of festive meals from different traditions
- Menu from a local restaurant or school canteen
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Check food origins in a reliable source; many familiar foods travelled between continents after 1492.
- Collect photos of festive meals with short explanations.
- Prepare a menu to analyse for global influences.
- Invite students to share a family dish if they wish.

SAFETY

If food is tasted, follow allergy and hygiene procedures. Students share only what they wish about family traditions.

ACTIVITY 04 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Show that food cultures are always mixing: “traditional” dishes often use ingredients that arrived from elsewhere.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–10 min Hook	Show a familiar dish. Ask where each ingredient originally came from.	<i>“Is this dish as local as it seems?”</i>
10–25 min Trace	Groups map the origins of ingredients with string on a world map.	<i>“What surprised you?”</i>
25–35 min Symbol	Groups analyse a festive meal: what does each food mean?	<i>“Why do celebrations have special foods?”</i>
35–50 min Change	Groups analyse a local menu for influences from migration and trade.	<i>“How has migration changed what we eat?”</i>
50–60 min Share	Class creates a food map of dishes students choose to share.	<i>“What does food tell us about who we are?”</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Trace the global journeys of ingredients in a local dish and explain how food expresses identity and changes through migration and trade.

ACTIVITY 04 · FACILITATOR NOTES

The anthropology in brief

Food is one of the clearest expressions of culture. What people eat, how they prepare it and who they eat with reflect environment, history, beliefs and identity. Festive meals often carry symbolic meanings about harvest, renewal or remembrance.

Food cultures are always changing. The exchange of crops between the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia after 1492 transformed diets: tomatoes, potatoes, maize and chillies spread from the Americas, while wheat, sugar cane and cattle travelled the other way. Migration continues to bring new dishes and create fusion cuisines.

Common ideas to listen for

- “Traditional food never changes.” Many traditional dishes use ingredients adopted in the last few centuries.
- “Food from another culture is exotic.” It is everyday food for the people who eat it.
- “Everyone in a country eats the same food.” Diets vary by region, family and belief.

Adapting the activity

Support

Use five ingredient cards with origins printed on the back.

Stretch

Research the history of one dish and how it changed as it travelled.

WORKSHEET 1

Ingredient journeys

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

Where did each ingredient originally come from?

Ingredients

Ingredient	Original region	How it travelled

WORKSHEET 2

Food as symbol

Analyse a festive meal.

The meal and the occasion

What the foods mean

Food	Meaning or symbol

WORKSHEET 3

Food and change

Reflect on migration and identity.

Influences on our local menu

A dish that matters to me and why (optional)

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Traces food origins	Explains food as identity	Explains cultural change

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Food and Culture is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents W4C Cultural Studies & Anthropology programme (middle school, level: intermediate). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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