

SUPPLEMENTARY LESSON

Tracing the Food System:

An Investigation of a Chicago Public Schools Meal

This lesson will allow students to make the connection between the food they eat at home and at school and the people, plants, and animals that provide it. Students will study the recipes of the winning school meal from the Cooking up Change® Chicago competition and write creative narratives of a chosen ingredient along its journey of farm to tray.

SUBJECTS



NUTRITION

Aa

LANGUAGE
ARTS

GRADE LEVEL

4-5

TIME

1 hr

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Note: This lesson can easily be shortened if you do not wish to study all major components of the meal.

Objectives

- Students will be able to provide answers to the core question, “Where does our food come from?” They will be able to describe the sequence of agricultural production from soil to food product.

Materials & Preparation

- Recipe cards with the three recipes, one set for each student
- Create a flow chart handout or have students record in their journals
- Familiarize yourself with the main ingredients in the three recipes. Be prepared to talk about where these foods come from. For a sample flow chart of the conventional broiler chicken production process, refer to “Ingredients of the Food System” curriculum from John Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. See slides 6-9: jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/teaching-the-food-system/curriculum/_pdf/Ingredients_of_the_Food_System-Slides.pdf
- For additional background information, refer to the “Background Reading” section of the curriculum: jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/teaching-the-food-system/curriculum/_pdf/Ingredients_of_the_Food_System-Background.pdf

Common Core Standards

- W.4.3. and W.5.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

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Lesson Introduction

1. To introduce the lesson, explain to the students that they will be investigating the food we eat and tracing it back to its origins.
2. Initiate a discussion about the meaning and importance of food in the students' lives. Possible questions include: Why is food important to you? What role does food play in your families? Do you have traditions or celebrations that involve special dishes? How do you determine if you would eat a food product or not? In other words, how do you determine if a food is good or not?
3. Broaden the discussion and explain to students that there are activities involved to bring those important foods to the table. Ask them to brainstorm which people are typically involved in these activities or supply chain and write ideas on the board. Explain that there are many people involved along the food supply chain in areas of production, processing, distribution, retail, and consumption.
4. Lastly, ask students to brainstorm the possible impacts of this supply chain and food production on our health and the environment. Possible prompts include: How does the land used to raise animals and crops affect the health of our environment? What products do farmers use to raise crops and animals?

Body of Lesson

5. Hand out recipe cards and flow chart handout, or have students record in their journals.
6. Starting with one of the vegetable side dishes, ask students to read out the ingredients on the recipe and write them on the board.

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7. With each main ingredient, ask the students, “What is the origin of this ingredient?” If they respond with a grocery store or restaurant, ask them to think further back than that.
8. You can help them visualize the process by drawing a flow chart on the board starting with growing the food to the final step of consuming it. Intermediate steps include processing, distribution and retail. Students should complete their own flow charts on their handout or in their journals.
9. If time permits, go through the same process with the oven-fried chicken recipe. The chicken in this specific recipe has a somewhat different story than conventional broiler chickens. Chicago Public Schools sources a large portion of their chicken from Miller Amish Country Poultry Farms in Indiana, a farm 150 miles away where chickens are raised according to animal welfare standards and do not receive antibiotics or hormones. This flow chart could be a bit more complicated because you can also include a subsection devoted to growing chicken feed (corn and soy).

Conclusion

10. For homework or an additional in-class activity, ask students to write a narrative from the perspective of one of their favorite foods as it travels from the farm to their plate. Students can also write from the perspective of someone (farmer, truck driver, grocer) along the food chain. Ask them to describe the sequence of growth, processing, and transportation using details and sequence words such as first, next, after that, etc.
 - Lesson adapted from Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future Food Systems Curriculum: jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/teaching-the-food-system.

Sweet Potato Salad

Ingredients	1½ lb diced sweet potatoes	drained	1 T lemon juice
1 quart water	1 cup frozen corn	¼ cup diced green pepper	1½ tsp cumin
	½ cup kidney beans,	¾ cup mayonnaise	½ tsp Cajun seasoning

Preparation

1. Bring water to a boil in a large saucepan; add sweet potatoes and corn. Boil until tender, about 6-7 minutes.
2. Place vegetables in an ice bath; drain well and place in a large bowl. Add kidney beans.
3. In a medium bowl, combine green bell pepper, mayonnaise, lemon juice, cumin, and Cajun seasoning.
4. Stir dressing into mixture of sweet potatoes, corn and beans. Mix well.
5. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

"Cousins" Collard Greens & Cabbage

Ingredients	2 quarts water	1½ lbs green cabbage, chopped	1 T Southern seasoning (or onion powder, sage, black pepper and cayenne to taste)
1 T butter	1 T chicken base	1 T Cajun seasoning	
1 c diced Spanish onion	1½ lbs frozen chopped collard greens	½ tsp Italian seasoning	
¼ c diced carrots			

Preparation

1. Melt butter in a large pan. Sauté onions and carrots until vegetables are tender. Set aside.
2. Bring water and chicken base to a boil in a stock pot and add collard greens, cooking until tender, approximately 10 minutes.
3. Add onion and carrot mixture; cover and simmer for an additional 10 minutes.
4. Add cabbage and Cajun and Italian seasonings; cover and simmer for an additional 10 minutes.
5. Turn off heat and add Southern seasoning.

Oven-Fried Chicken

Ingredients	¼ c Rice Krispies cereal	½ tsp ground black pepper	8 chicken drumsticks, raw
2 c all-purpose flour	1 T Cajun seasoning	½ tsp paprika	½ c melted butter or cooking spray
	½ tsp poultry seasoning	½ tsp garlic powder	

Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 450° F.
2. In a large bowl, combine flour, crushed cereal, Cajun seasoning, poultry seasoning, pepper, paprika and garlic powder. Mix well.
3. Place drumsticks into flour mixture and coat well.
4. Arrange drumsticks on an ungreased sheet pan.
5. Place melted butter in a spray bottle (or use cooking spray) and spray chicken evenly.
6. Bake at 450° F until the internal temperature of the chicken is 165° F, approximately 25-30 minutes.
7. Serve with whole wheat dinner roll and enjoy!