



New Food in the Pot: Changes in the Spanish and Apalachee Diets

[Sunshine State Standards](#)

OVERVIEW

This lesson prepares students for their visit to Mission San Luis. There they will learn about the foodways of the Spaniards and the Apalachee Indians. Students explore cultural and environmental factors that help to determine the foods that people eat.

Because “food is the staff of life,” every culture has specific attitudes about what people eat based on what is available and what is considered appropriate. Within each culture, people express individual food preferences or avoidances based on personal tastes, religious beliefs, medical conditions, and a host of other factors. Moreover, in modern times, many people are very aware of health considerations pertaining to food, and many actively seek to enjoy the cuisines of different ethnic groups.



Before they began to coexist at Mission San Luis, Apalachee Indians and Spaniards had very different eating habits. The most important foods in the Apalachee diet were corn, beans, and squash (the “three sisters”) which they supplemented with sunflower seeds, wild grapes, acorns, hickory nuts, blackberries, maypop, and other wild plants. In addition to fishing and gathering shellfish, the Apalachee hunted deer, bear, panther, rabbit, squirrel, opossum, turtle, and wild turkey.

The common Mediterranean staples of wheat, olive oil, and wine were central to the traditional Spanish diet. Because meat was expensive in most areas, it was consumed primarily by the upper classes. People living near rivers and the sea ate fish frequently, and almost all Spaniards ate fish on religious holidays.

When Spaniards and Apalachee Indians settled at Mission San Luis, both groups learned new foodways. The Apalachees were exposed to domesticated animals such as cows, pigs, and chickens, as well as new vegetable and plant crops. Spaniards began to consume such native foods as deer, unfamiliar species of fish, turtles, corn, wild grapes, and maypop. The Spanish introduced peaches, wheat, and peas as well as domesticated animals. They imported wine, olives, olive oil, and other staples familiar to them that could not be produced locally.

GOALS

- Students will understand that culture and environment contribute to food preferences
- Students will understand that cross-cultural contact can change the foodways of people

Course of Study

The following activities have been designed for grades 6–8. This program correlates with the [Sunshine State Standards](#) for all grades and enhances skills assessed through FCAT, specifically for grades 3–5.

Preparation

1. Read [A Teacher Guide](#) to prepare for guiding a student discussion.
2. Make copies of the *New Food in the Pot* student handout for each student.

Materials—chalk and chalkboard and the San Luis Foodways student handout.

Time required—allow five minutes to prepare for this activity and one to two class periods to complete it.

Pre-Visit Lesson 4



New Food in the Pot: Changes in the Spanish and Apalachee Diets Sunshine State Standards

Procedure

Activity 1

- A. Open the activity by explaining that since the students will learn about the 17th century foodways of Spaniards and Apalachee Indians during their visit to San Luis, it will be useful to talk about foodways of modern times so that they can be compared.
- B. Initiate a discussion about foods students like and are used to eating. List their comments on the chalkboard. Ask them to identify foods on the list that derive from other cultures (e.g., tacos, spaghetti, stir-fried vegetables). Inquire about opportunities that they have had to eat foods from different cultures (e.g., at home, at restaurants, ethnic celebrations, or the home of a friend).
- C. Turn the discussion to the reasons why people avoid certain foods that are common in their own culture, community, or family. After the requisite “yuck” answers (i.e., personal preference), prompt further exploration by suggesting that many factors determine food avoidances—for example, vegetarianism, the desire for weight loss, medical conditions, religion, and seasonal customs. Ask how eating habits in such situations might vary from their own, and invite students to share personal experiences if they are comfortable doing so.



Activity 2

- A. Focus this part of the lesson on the ways in which modern technology and economics have revolutionized diets compared to those of grandparents and great-grandparents decades ago. Ask students to comment on the ways that refrigeration, grocery stores, commercial shipping, and agricultural technology have changed the foods that we eat.
- B. Explain that the ways that foods are prepared and served also reveal details about a culture. For example, 500 years ago, many European cultures began to use individual plates, bowls, drinking vessels, and eating utensils. Today, in many cultures people still prefer to eat from large communal vessels and use hands instead of utensils. Ask students to discuss what they know about how different cultures incorporate food into social activities, how concerns about sanitation have changed the way that people eat, and how one’s ideas about other cultures can be influenced by what people eat and how they prepare and serve their food.

Closure

New Food in the Pot Work

Guide a group discussion about how the traditional diets of Spaniards and Apalachees influenced the other by asking students to share their answers to questions on the student handout. They should write their answers on a separate sheet.

Assessment

Ask students to research foodways of another culture and to compare and contrast these patterns with their own preferences and avoidances, either orally or in writing. Suggest that they might consider such factors as environment, technology, availability of imports, and cross-cultural contacts.



New Food in the Pot: Student Handout

New Food in the Pot: Changes in the Spanish and Apalachee Diets

Read the following paragraphs, and answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper.

Before they lived together at Mission San Luis, Apalachee Indians and Spaniards had very different eating habits. The most important foods in the Apalachee diet were corn, beans, and squash, which they grew in fields around their villages. They also harvested sunflower seeds, wild grapes, acorns, hickory nuts, blackberries, maypop, and other wild plants. In addition to fishing and gathering shellfish, the Apalachee hunted deer, bear, panther, rabbit, squirrel, opossum, turtle, and wild turkey.

The traditional Spanish diet was based on crops grown and processed in the warm climate of the Mediterranean Sea. Staples included wheat, olives, olive oil, and wine. Because meat was expensive in most areas of the country, it was eaten primarily by the wealthier classes. People living near rivers and the sea ate fish frequently, and almost all Spaniards ate fish on religious holidays.

When Spaniards and Apalachee Indians settled at Mission San Luis, both groups learned new foodways. The Apalachees were exposed to domesticated animals such as cows, pigs, and chickens as well as new vegetable and plant crops. Spaniards began to consume native foods such as deer, new species of fish, turtles, corn, wild grapes, and maypop. They also introduced peaches, wheat, and peas as well as domesticated animals, and they imported wine, olives, olive oil, and other staples that could not be produced locally.

Think about it:

1. How did the traditional Apalachee and Spanish diet change as a result of their interaction at Mission San Luis?
2. Did these changes require different ways of cooking and serving food?
3. Could foods have been used for other purposes besides nourishment—for example, to reinforce social position?

Read the following paragraph, and answer the questions.

St. Augustine, the capital of Spanish Florida, was located on the east coast of Florida, about 200 miles from San Luis. Although the area around the community had plenty of seafood, turtles, and other sources of food, Spaniards living there often complained of poor rations. It was said that, "... when there was nothing [to eat] they ate herbs, fish and other scum and vermin."

Think about it:

1. Do you believe that the Spaniards really were starving?
2. How was it possible that Indians had lived there for thousands of years before the Spaniards arrived, and they had plenty to eat?
3. How important was cultural conditioning in causing the Spaniards to believe that there was nothing to eat in St. Augustine?

Sunshine State Standards

Pre-Visit Lesson 4



Completion of Pre-Visit Lesson 4 meets benchmarks found in:

Grades 6–8

- **Language Arts**

Reading

LA.A.1.3 — The student uses the reading process effectively.

Writing

LA.B.1.3 — The student uses the writing process effectively.

LA.B.2.3 — The student writes to communicate ideas and information effectively.

Listening,

LA.C.1.3 — The student uses listening strategies effectively.

Viewing, and

LA.C.2.3 — The student uses viewing strategies effectively.

Speaking

LA.C.3.3 — The student uses speaking strategies effectively.

- **Social Studies**

Time, Continuity, and
Change/History

SS.A.6.3 — The student understands the history of Florida and its people.

People, Places,
and Environments/
Geography

SS.B.2.3 — The student understands the interactions of people and the physical environment.

Economics

SS.D.1.3 — The student understands how scarcity requires individuals and institutions to make choices about how to use resources.