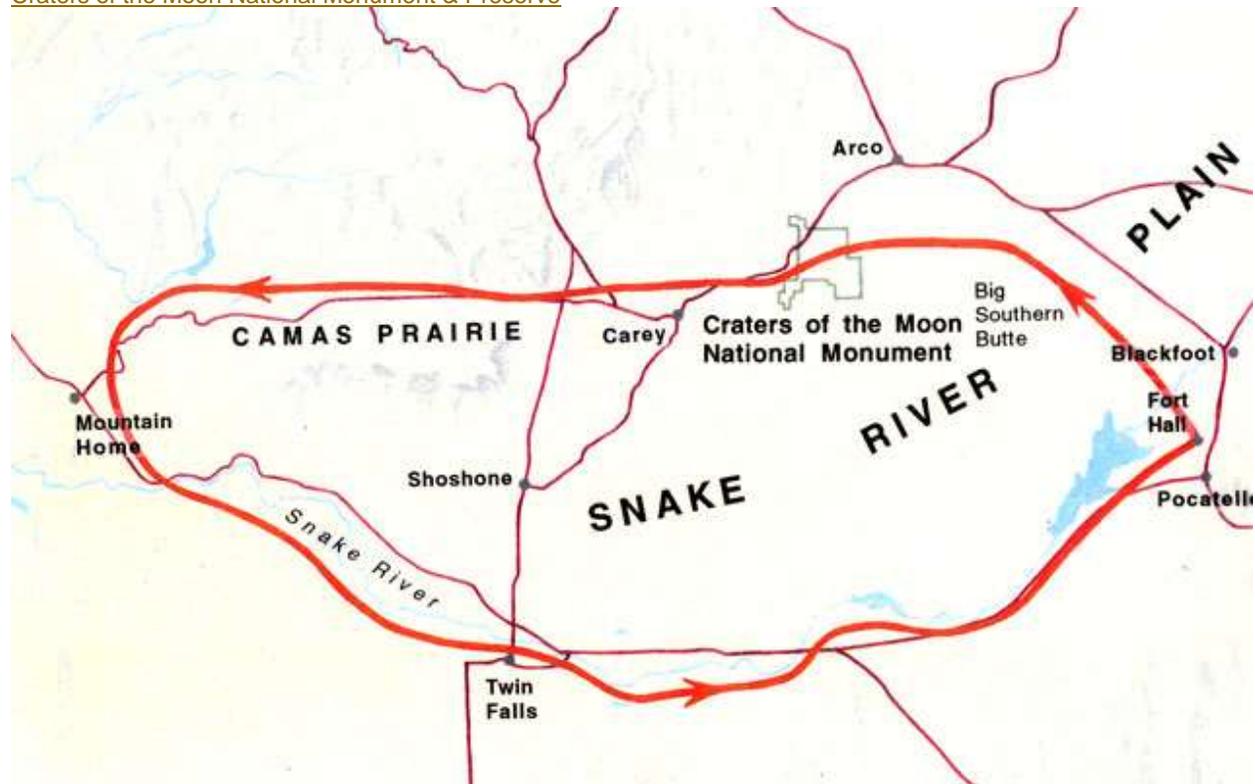


LESSON PLAN

# Food For Thought

[Craters of the Moon National Monument & Preserve](#)



Shoshone-Bannock people travelled through the area on their annual migration for various food sources.  
*NPS*

**GRADE LEVEL:**

Fourth Grade-Fifth Grade

**SUBJECT:**

American Indian History and Culture, History

**DURATION:**

2 hours

**GROUP SIZE:**

Up to 36

**SETTING:**

classroom

**NATIONAL/STATE STANDARDS:**

Extension: CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.3

## Overview

Students increase their awareness of food by studying their own diet and preparing and eating a Native American dish. (CLASSROOM ACTIVITY)

## Objective(s)

- Students will be able to list some of the positive and negative attributes of modern food production.
- Students will be able to prepare a simple Native American dish.

## Background

When we eat something, we are enjoying the fruits of photosynthesis. Every morsel of food we ingest was created by the sun, the Earth, water, and carbon dioxide. Each meal represents the beginning, growth, life, and death of plants and maybe animals. Seasonal weather variations can have drastic effects on this cycle, creating anxiety over the prospect of hunger. "Will there be enough to eat?" is a question that shaped human cultures and distribution worldwide.

Our relationship to food changed radically with the industrial revolution. Populations shifted from rural to urban, from food growing to food buying. The exploitation of abundant fossil energy (oil and coal) insulated us against hunger; if a crop failed at home, it could easily be imported from a thousand miles away.

Most Americans today do not know hunger. We expect grocery stores to provide a cornucopia of food year round. We have a feeble connection to preprocessed, canned, and boxed food grown on industrial farms by strangers in unknown places. Food that we ourselves didn't grow is more inclined to be wasted. Our relationship to food has grown as distant as the tropical fruits we import to North America.

While this century's food production practices have yielded advantages, they have also caused environmental perils. Pesticides make high crop yields and the ability to cheaply feed growing populations possible, but can have deleterious effects on wildlife, water, and people who eat the crop. Culinary diversity has increased with access to Central and South America, where hundreds of square miles of lowland tropical forests, among the most biologically diverse on Earth are being replaced by heavily crop-dusted banana plantations. Attractive, convenient packaging makes food preparation easier but adds to our waste disposal problems. Unlike most of the world, we can afford to eat meat as a staple rather than a delicacy, which contributes to American's high rate of hypertension and heart disease. Our high meat diet exacerbates the impact we have on the natural world by requiring more land be taken from wildlife and used for beef production. For example, millions of acres of tropical forests have been felled to produce cheap beef for American hamburger franchises. The land required to provide food for one meat-eating person could provide enough food for 20 vegetarians.

Our relationship to food and its distribution and processing has changed radically. Appreciating the positive and negative aspects of these changes can heighten our awareness of food, where it comes from, how it's produced, and how it connects us to the natural world. Despite changes during the last 100 years, the same sun and the same photosynthetic reaction that fed our ancestors feeds us.

We will be better Earth citizens if we are as conscious of our dependence upon nature as were our predecessors.

See "Additional Resources" below for more information on the history of Craters of the Moon.

From the *Teacher's Guide to Craters of the Moon*.

## Materials

- Honey
- Water
- Strawberries or raspberries
- Unbleached flour
- Baking powder
- Vegetable shortening
- Salt
- 2 to 4 10-inch cast iron skillets
- 2 to 4 mixing bowls
- 2 to 4 surfaces for kneading bread
- 2 to 4 quart saucepan
- 2 to 4 hot plates or burners

## Procedure

### STEP 1

Generate a list of your students' favorite food on the chalkboard. If they suggest something like pizza, leave room underneath it for its ingredients (see below). In the next column, write the raw material it is made from. Next, write down where it came from, if you know. Record the food's packaging.

Then generate a list of foods local Indians might have eaten. The kids will likely guess the animals first. Encourage them to come up with other food they might have eaten such as: tule roots, camas bulbs, thistle shoots, cabbage, clover, gooseberries, mushrooms, grasshoppers, crickets, caterpillars, ants, locusts (and their eggs, larvae, and chrysalides), salmon, rattlesnakes, sage grouse, and large mammals. Record the same information you recorded for our food.

<b>Today's Food</b>	<b>Raw Material</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Packaging</b>
Pizza			cardboard box or foil
crust sauce toppings toppings	wheat tomatoes beef vegetables	Great Plains? southern states? anywhere many places	
Bananas	bananas	tropics	none
Corn (canned)	corn	maybe local	steel can
Hamburgers			styrofoam box
buns burger sauces condiments	wheat beef tomatoes, mustard vegetables	Great Plains? anywhere southern states? southern states?	
Hershey's bar			plastic and foil
sugar chocolate	sugar beet or cane cocoa plant	US or tropics tropics	
<b>Indian Food</b>	<b>Raw Material</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Packaging</b>
Pemmican berries meat	berries deer, elk, bison	local	none
Salmon	salmon	local	none
Breads	camas bulbs	local	none
Ant larvae	ants	local	none
Tule roots	tule plants	local	none

## STEP 2

With the class, make a list of advantages and disadvantages of our modern food practices (see below). See what the kids can come up with.

## **A comparison of today's food production practices to those of Indians:**

### **Advantages**

- No starvation
- Ease of preparation
- Food gathering and production takes less time
- Gives us more time to pursue other endeavors
- Preservatives prevent food from spoiling
- Food is relatively inexpensive

### **Disadvantages**

- High salt content of foods causes high blood pressure
- High fat and cholesterol cause heart disease
- Some food additives may cause cancer
- May contain antibiotics, growth hormones and genetically modified organisms
- Pesticides poison the environment
- Herbicides poison the environment
- Many wild plants and animals cannot coexist with many farms and ranches
- Transport of foods from afar causes air pollution and contributes to the greenhouse effect
- Creating a demand for oil contributes to oil spills
- Irreplaceable biological diversity is lost when forests and wetlands are removed to plant crop

What are the main differences in the way we procure foods? Perhaps the most fundamental difference is related to petroleum. Because of it, we can cheaply transport and process food. In effect, work that was once done by human muscle is now done by oil.

### **STEP 3**

Now it's time to make an Indian snack. Allow a full hour. The following are recipes for pan bread and for fruit toppings to go with it. Ideally, go into the field with the kids and collect berries. This won't be possible for most classes, so just buy the berries and prepare them in class.

Divide the class into four to six groups. Three to five groups can work on bread while the remaining group works on a fruit recipe.

#### **Bannock Bread**

2 cups unbleached flour

4 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup vegetable shortening

1/2 cup water

Combine dry ingredients in a mixing bowl. Cut in shortening until mixture resembles coarse meal. Gradually mix in water to form a thick dough. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 15 minutes, or until it is very smooth. Grease bottom and sides of a 10-inch cast-iron skillet. Press dough into the pan and

cook, uncovered, on top of the stove over low heat for about 10 minutes on each side. Watch carefully so bread does not burn before center is cooked through. Place loaf on a rack to cool. Serves 6.

### **Whipped Raspberries and Honey**

1 quart fresh raspberries

1/2 cup honey

Puree berries with honey until smooth. Chill and serve as a topping on bread. Serves 4 to 6.

### **Strawberries Poached in Honey Syrup**

1/3 cup honey

2/3 cup water

1 quart fresh strawberries, washed and de-stemmed.

Place honey and water in a saucepan and boil rapidly for 5 minutes over medium-high heat. Reduce heat. Drop in the whole berries and simmer for 5 minutes. Turn off heat and allow berries to cool in the syrup. Serve warm or cold, ladling syrup over each portion. Serves 4 to 6.

*Recipes from: Cox, B. and J. Martin. Spirit of the Harvest, North American Indian Cooking. 1991. Steward, Tabori, and Chang, New York. 255 pp.*

## **Extensions**

As a follow up activity, you could have the students:

1. Write an Indian legend on how a certain food came to the Earth.
2. Write an essay on how their diet would be different without petroleum.

## **Additional Resources**

[History of Craters of the Moon](#)