



## Neighborhood Treats

### K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

### Pre-/Post- Visit Lesson Plan

#### Overview:

For those detained overnight, officials at Ellis Island introduced immigrants waiting to be processed a variety of food to be tried for the first time. Men, women, and children alike spoke in great detail about tasting Jello, white bread, and bananas, and awaited in awe and nervous anticipation to describe and write about these tastes and textures back home

For this activity, students will learn about the different foods that contribute to the immigrant tradition today. As immigrants tasted foods at Ellis Island for the first time, students will be given an opportunity to try new culinary tastes in the classroom. They will identify how different cultures impact our diets, and discuss how immigrants continue to influence and enhance our cultural palates.

(Important Note: Please check students for food allergies and dietary restrictions before starting this activity.)

#### New York State Learning Standards:

Elementary:

Standard 4: 1B, 1C, 1E

Standard 5: 1B

#### Time Frame:

25-30 minutes

#### Materials:

- A preliminary list of foods that can increasingly be found at the local supermarket or local immigrant neighborhoods. Certain foods should include lychee, plantains, soft-shell tacos, matzoth, gelato, and kielbasa, amongst others.
- Audio clip – Ellis Island
- Paper
- Pencils/Pen

## Objectives:

- Describe the new feelings of trying new foods for the first time.
- Identify the different foods immigrants have introduced to the United States.
- Evaluate the importance of (imported) foods to an immigrant culture.

## Procedure:

### 1. Anticipatory Set-

“Does anyone remember trying foods like yogurt or cottage cheese for the first time? (Other examples apply, of course). Can you recall how the food tastes, and the textures of the food? Do you remember how the food smelled and tasted as you started chewing? If you understand how it felt to try new foods, then you know a little bit about today’s topic of immigrants who brought foods and tried foods in their new countries.”

2. Explain that immigrants arrived to Ellis Island tired and scared, but officials tried to improve their stay by providing a suitable place to stay and offering three meals-a-day. For those who had to stay overnight, immigrants remembered trying foods they never had, for the very first time. Inform students that they will be hearing actual interviews from immigrants as they share their experiences from the dining hall. Gather students in a concentric circle (or the preferred class discussion format) and play several of these [sample recordings](#). Enclosed are brief descriptions of the Ellis Island interviews:

- Man tasting Jello
- Women expressing concern of ingesting live worms
- White bread that is reminiscent of cake

3. Play several of these recordings found on the Ellis Island website (or if possible, post the links “in this space provided”) Using a blank sheet of paper (or their journals), students will write their feelings, describing how immigrants felt as they tried these new foods. Students will participate in a share-out after the recordings have been played.

4. Explain that immigrants who arrive today continue to try new foods in the United States, but they also continue to bring new foods to the country. These culinary tastes have greatly shaped our daily diets. In this class, students will get the opportunity to try some of the foods immigrants have brought to the United States that can be found in marketplaces today. Distribute several food selections (on the list provided above) and have students taste the following:

- Lychee (lee-chee) - (native to China)
- Plantains (plan-tin) - (popular in the Caribbean and Central American country)
- Soft-shell tacos (Mexico and other Central America)
- Matzoth (mah-tsah ) - (well-liked in many Ashkenazi Jewish communities)
- Gelato (juh-lah-toh) - (traditions date to ancient Rome and Egypt)
- Kielbasa (kil-bah-suh) - (a staple dish in many Eastern European countries)

5. **Homework:** Instruct students to write a brief paragraph (four-to-five sentences) describing their experience with tasting these foods for the first time. Students should also consider how these foods help expand our diets. Further, students can imagine how immigrants would feel about trying these new, exotic foods today.