

# Countries, Food, and Culture

## Utah Social Studies



### Materials

- ◆ Copies of “Countries, Food, and Culture” worksheet (one per student)

### Background

People around the world each have their own unique traditions from daily household responsibilities and family holidays to religious practices and historical ethnic customs. Regardless, many of these traditions center around food and its preparation.

For Americans, no Fourth of July celebration would be complete without a barbecue and watermelon, and Thanksgiving isn't the same without turkey. However, it is important for students to understand that people in different countries have similar feelings about their own foods, and although their foods may be different, most are equally nutritious and based on the historical traditions of the region. We know Italy as the home of pizza. Did you know that the modern precursor to what we call pizza occurred in pre-Renaissance Naples? Poor housewives had only flour, olive oil, lard, cheese and herbs with which to feed their families, so combining them in a tasty and delicious manner became the goal. All of Italy proclaimed the Neapolitan pies to be the best.

Japan is an Asian nation. This island is mountainous, and what little arable land exists is terraced and carefully cultivated to coax rice and a few other crops. Japan has always fed its dense population from the sea and the rice fields. Its traditional foods emphasize what nature provides. Sushi, the combination of raw fish, seaweed, and seasoned rice, is a supremely logical food in Japan.

Tacos originated in Mexico. The history of tacos begins with the story of corn and the cooking of tortillas which are a round, thin unleavened bread made from ground maize. It is not known for how many millennia this has been a staple, but when the conquistadores arrived in the New World in the late 15th century, they discovered that the inhabitants made flat corn breads. Fresh tortillas are eaten as bread, used as a plate and spoon, or filled to make dishes such as tacos and enchiladas.

In France, bread (or the lack of it) was one of the primary causes for the French Revolution. After Napoleon seized power, he was determined not to make the same mistakes. His government issued decrees (actual laws) that established standards for French bread, specifying ingredients and baking methods.

All of these foods may now be considered American, but they originated in other countries, each with their own history. While students at this age may have some trouble with the concepts of world geography, most will recognize certain types of restaurants (Mexican, Italian, Asian, or French) serve foods from specific geographical areas. For example, Mexican restaurants serve foods originating in Mexico or Japanese restaurants serve foods originating in Asia.

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Grade Levels:** K-2

### Standard

#### Objective 1

Identify important aspects of community and culture that strengthen relationships.

- c. Describe resources in the community, changes in schools and neighborhoods over time, and the relation of goods and services to resources in the community.

#### Objective 3

Express relationships in a variety of ways.

- a. Recognize and describe traditions, music, dances, artwork, poems, rhymes, and stories that distinguish cultures.

### Activity Procedures

1. Give each student a copy of the worksheet Countries, Food, & Culture.
2. Write the names of different types of restaurants on the board so students can see the correct spellings: Mexican, Italian, French, and Asian.
3. Have the students color the picture of the foods and then fill in the blanks underneath.
4. Ask students if they can think of any other foods that may have originated from these countries.
5. Ask students if they can think of a restaurant in their community that serves this kind of food.
6. At the bottom of the page, ask students to draw their favorite food.
7. Ask if they think their favorite food originated in America or from another country? What type of restaurant might serve this food.

### Additional Activities: What's Next?

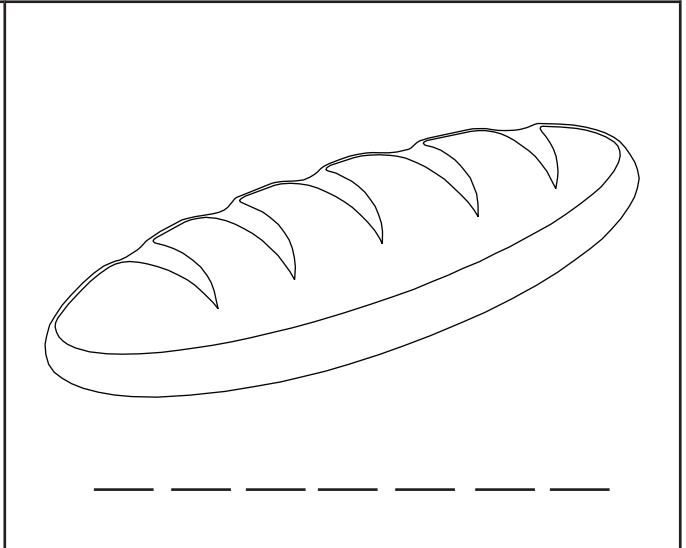
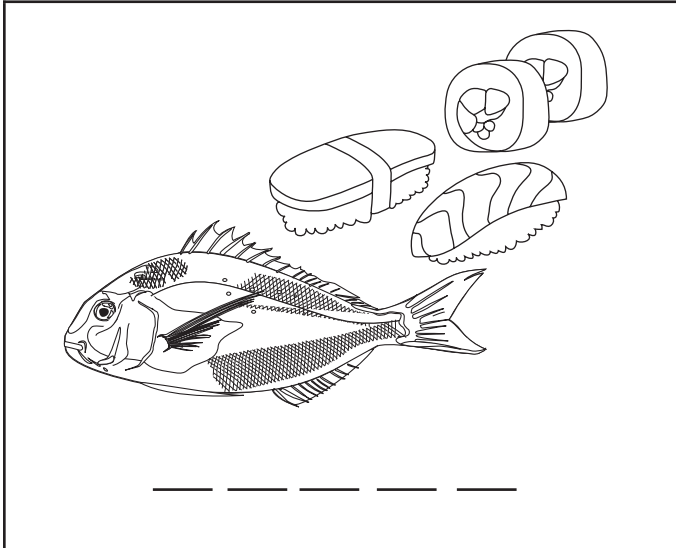
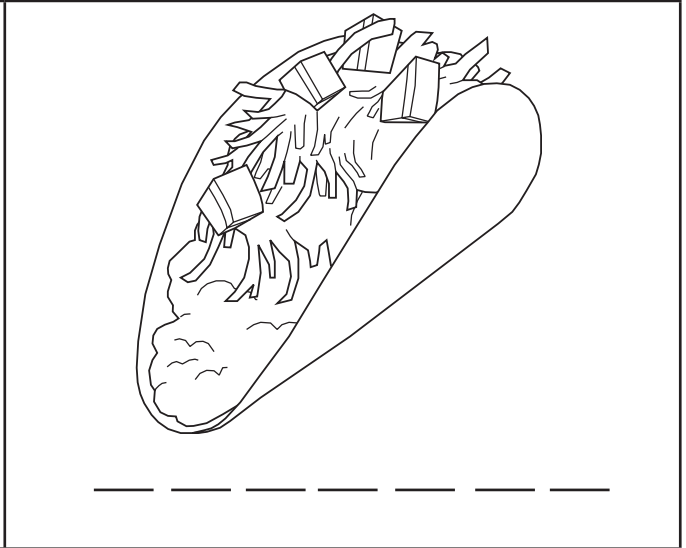
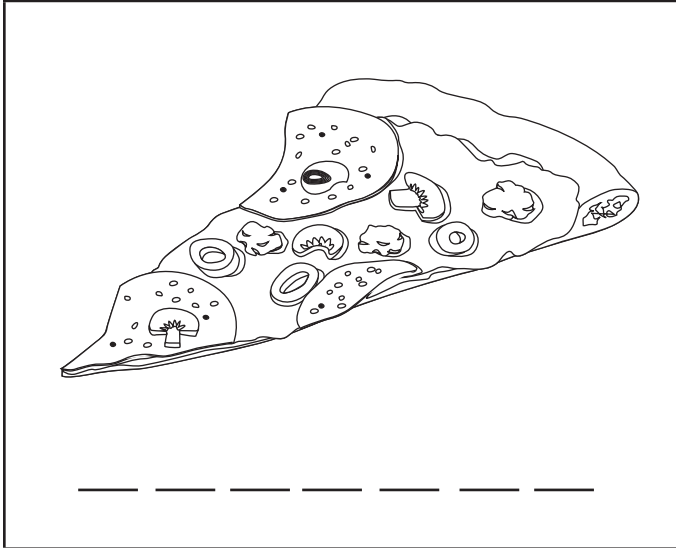
1. Ask students, "What are some foods we eat here in America?" After listing a variety of foods, explain that because most Americans originally came here from other countries, the United States is unique in that many different types of foods are considered American, including some of the ones discussed in the lesson, such as pizza and tacos.
2. Consider making a recipe from another country in class, or bring samples of food to class from other countries. Discuss possible traditions or holidays that might be associated with this food.
3. Locate countries that were discussed on a globe.

*Teacher Notes:*

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## Worksheet

Instructions: Color each picture of these foods. Then, on the blanks provided write the name of the type of restaurant that might serve this food: French, Asian, Italian, or Mexican. In the bottom square, draw your favorite food. Did it come to this country from some other place? What type of restaurant might serve this food?



**My Favorite Food**