



Regional Fish Foodways

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Objectives

Participating youth and adults will:

1. Be able to describe a fish Foodways tradition from their own region or community.
2. Be able to identify two other fish Foodways traditions from other places.
3. Understand that food tradition vary from place to place.
4. Taste one example of a local fish food tradition.

Youth Development Objectives

Participating youth will:

1. Develop better cultural awareness as they learn about people and groups who may be different than themselves.

Roles for Teen and Junior Leaders

May help with the cooking demonstration.

Potential Parental Involvement

May be asked to be the cook and demonstrate their version of a local foodway custom.

Evaluation Activities/Suggestions

In a group discussion afterwards, while eating the food, the club can talk about what they learned.

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Best Time: After a fishing outing, after catching a fish, or a club meeting.

Best Location: In a kitchen facility.

Time Required: 1 to 2 hours

Equipment/Materials

- * A kitchen with oven, stove, sink and table or other food preparation area.
- * Room enough for a club to gather in and watch a cooking demonstration. The county Extension's kitchen facility, if available.
- * If the foodways tradition involves outdoor cookery (on a beach, alongside river, etc.) it would be best to try to do the demonstration where the tradition usually takes place.
- * About ten spices and condiments used in preparing and eating fish, to talk about (such as catsup, mustard, lemon, horseradish, garlic, onion, Tabasco sauce).
- * First aid kit (i.e. burn ointment, bandages, etc.)

Safety Considerations: Youth should have adult supervision while preparing and cooking food (help with knives, filleting, and cooking, etc.). How to properly keep fish fresh, how to safely handle fish and safe clean-up methods should be covered. Consult food safety experts at your Extension office.

References:

Camp, Charles. *American Foodways: What, When, Why, and How We Eat in America*. Little Rock, AR: August House, Inc., 1989.

Neustadt, Kathy. *Clambake: A History and Celebration of an American Tradition*. University of Massachusetts Press, 1992.

Pitre, Glen. *The Crawfish Book*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1993.

Crawford, Linda. *The Catfish Book*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press. 1993.

MacDowell, Marsha. *Foodways*. East Lansing, MI: 4-H Youth Program, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University Museum, 1984.

Taylor, David A. *Documenting Maritime Folklike*. Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1992.

Lesson Outline

Presentation

Ways we eat fish

Regional fish

Demonstration of a local fish Foodways tradition

Application

Make a **LIST** with members of all the ways we can eat or prepare fish and seafood. Use the list below to help you. Bring in some spices and condiments from home that you might use when cooking or eating fish, to use as discussion points, such as catsup, mustard, lemon, horseradish, crab boil, butter, garlic, onion, curry, Tabasco sauce.

DESCRIBE a few traditions from different regions using foodways the traditions described below or some that are familiar to you.

For the remainder of the meeting time, allow your special guest to **DEMONSTRATE** his or her food custom. Ask the cook to involve your members as much as possible in the preparation of the food, such as in cleaning the fish, preparing side dishes, or adding spices in the right amounts. Have fun, and encourage members to ask questions of the cook. This should be an interactive, educational exchange.

When done, all participants can taste the food. Discuss how this food is different or the same as foods the members eat at home. What local or regional variations or personal preferences are there in your group?

Lesson Narrative

Ways we eat fish. The ways we eat fish and seafood are numerous! The Aright@way to cook fish in Louisiana may be different than the Aright@way to cook the same fish in Massachusetts. Fish and seafood dishes may be different from county to county, town to town, family to family, person to person. With your group, created list of methods by which fish is prepared. Some words you may come up with include: baked, fried, raw, boiled, steamed, casseroles, stews, soups, chowders, salads, sauces, sandwiches, dried, smoked, pickled, salted, grilled, planked, pan-fired. Encourage members to talk about the exact kinds of fish they eat. Now create another list of food events or celebrations that revolve around seafood or seafood customs. Some celebrations you may come up with include: clambake, booya, fish fry, crab derby, oyster roast, fish boil, crab boil, lobster bake, chowder feast oyster shucking, contest.

Regional fish foodways. Of course, there's more to it than that! Talk about the following fish foodways traditions in various parts of the country.

Bay Port Fish Sandwiches: In Bay Port, Michigan, the Engelhard family, then co-owners of the local commercial fishery, came up with an idea in the late 1940s to help sell herring at a local chamber of commerce festival: fried fish sandwiches. They sold the sandwiches from a stand in their front yard. Battered and then fried in peanut oil, the fish is placed in hotdog buns and served with mustard, catsup, or tartar sauce, and coleslaw on the side. The sandwich was so well liked that they began selling the dinners from their stand throughout the summers in the 1950s. Bay Port became known as the place for the "famous Bay Port fish sandwich." After the children were grown, the Englehard family stopped the practice. In the 1970s, the chamber of commerce again approached the family to see if they would be willing to introduce the fish sandwich at a community festival. They did, and the response was so overwhelming that now the community hosts an annual Bay Port Fish Sandwich Festival on a weekend in August. The Engelhard family is still in charge of the secret batter. With the depletion of herring in Saginaw Bay, suckers (known locally as Amullet@) are used, prepared in such a way that includes the fish bones in the sandwich. What started as a family tradition, shared with a community, has become a community festival in which many members take part.

New England Clambake: This community and family food event is a long tradition in New England, passed on by Native American peoples to the colonists. Each group that holds a clambake has its own set of customs and traditions. No two are exactly alike. The group divides up the tasks: gathering Rockwood or other fuel found along the ocean shore for the fire: the digging of a large pit for the clambake; preparing other food such as clam chowder to feed everyone while clams, corn and other foods are baking in the pit. The pit is lined with rocks that are heated by fire, and then filled with layers of Rockwood and clams, lobster, and corn. After slowly steaming and baking for several hours, the group eats the meal. At some bakes, a toast, prayer or blessing is said for the bake and all the workers who helped over the two or three day affair. While people work, they also share a lot of fun by telling jokes and stories, reminiscing, boasting, and chatting. Many aspects of a clambake are not available, but they can buy the clams and still hold the bake. By helping with a clambake, participants feel linked to their region=s cultural heritage and connected to each other, and share in the joy of keeping this custom alive.

Demonstrate a local fish custom or food. Invite someone to your meeting you has made a particular recipe for a long time, and who learned it in a traditional way. Bring all the supplies need for the demonstration. Ask the cook to demonstrate as many of the steps in the process as possible within your time period. Have him or her talk about the tradition, and encourage your members to ask questions. Your group can sample the results. If it is not possible to bring someone in to your meeting, consider bringing your club to the place where the person cooks (restaurant, home, etc.).

Summary Activity

Visit a fish market and interview the person selling or cleaning the fish.

Or, visit a nearby community fish food event such as a festival or dinner in which fish Foodways are served. If possible, host or help out at a community event involving a fish food tradition.

Exhibit or Sharing Suggestions

Enter your fish Foodways project at a fair and be sure to include the background information on it. Prepare the food, give the recipe, and provide a description of the tradition.

Community Service and Giving Back Activities

If your community or local organization is planning to publish a cookbook, volunteer your club to help collect the fish Foodways recipes. Interview fish cooks to learn more about who is doing the cooking and how they learned the tradition.

Extensions or Ways of Learning More

Look for community cookbooks with local recipes from people in your community for examples of local fish dishes.

Links to Other Programs

See 4-H FOLKPATTERNS Leaders Guide and Foodways.

See 4-H Sportfishing Program Fish Cookery