

Diversity in Food

Lesson# 5.2

Lesson Description:

In this chapter you will learn about the foods, traditions, and religious dietary laws of different cultures. The types of foods eaten and the characteristic flavors of the different cultures will be discussed. With this information, you are able to plan and prepare foods using a variety of cultural traditions.

Latin America and South America

FLAVOR PROFILES

By exploring food through a prism of culture, time, and place, we build a deeper appreciation of how regional characteristics have shaped our global food system. When you think of your favorite dish, you probably think of a particular taste: sweet, sour, savory or maybe spicy. World cuisines are defined by traditional ingredients, seasonings, and cooking practices that evolved within a particular geographic area. The term flavor profile defines foods prepared in a particular ethnic style including Italian, Moroccan, or Thai. Ethnic flavors are created by the combination of primary and secondary ingredients, herb and spice combinations, and indigenous cooking techniques. Due to trade and globalization, numerous cuisines around the world use many of the same basic foods, but may season those foods in distinctive ways.

The Foods of LATIN AMERICA

Latin America stretches from Mexico and the islands of the Caribbean to the tip of South America. Because the area is so large, it includes climates and geographical features of all kinds—tropical rain forests, snow capped mountains, arid deserts, and temperate zones. Foods vary according to the growing conditions. Nevertheless, many similarities exist among the cuisines— styles of food preparation and cooking associated with a specific group or culture.

Corn, or maize, is the staple grain in much of Latin America. Wheat and rice are also grown in some areas.



Mexico

Mexico's cuisine developed out of both the Aboriginal Peoples' foods and the influence of the Spanish conquerors. Cornmeal, rice, cooked dry beans, and chili peppers are the basics of Mexican cooking. The bland taste of corn and beans provides a contrast to the spicy taste of the various peppers.

The bread of Mexico is the tortilla. You have probably eaten tortillas in tacos, burritos, and similar foods. This flat, pounded bread is usually made from masa—dried corn soaked in lime water and ground while wet. In some dishes, masa is made into a dough and cooked by steaming. The best known of such dishes is tamales, masa formed into various shapes and often filled with finely chopped chicken and other foods. The bundles are steamed in corn husks or banana leaves.

Much of Mexican cuisine is hotly spiced. One dish that often surprises visitors to the country is pollo con mole poblano, chicken in a thick, dark sauce of chili peppers and chocolate.

Most Mexican meals include frijoles, cooked dry beans. Frijoles refritos are cooked dry beans that are mashed and fried in lard. Popular desserts include flan, a sweet baked custard topped with a sauce of caramelized sugar and preserved guava.



Central America

A bridge of seven small countries connects Mexico to South America: Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama. This region is where the Mayan empire flourished. People who live in these countries today are of Mayan, European, African, and mixed descent. The cooking has Mayan and Aztec roots with Spanish and Caribbean influences.

Corn and beans are the staple crops. Bananas, coffee, coconuts, and cacao (the bean from which chocolate is made) are exported to other countries.

Chicken is widely eaten in Central America. It might be prepared with pineapple or in a mixture of ingredients, such as pumpkin seeds, tomatoes, and raisins.

A favourite food is chayote, a crisp vegetable with a delicate flavour, which is often sliced and simmered. Costa Ricans mix it with cheese and eggs, whereas cooks in the Dominican Republic fry it with eggs, tomatoes, and hot peppers.

The Caribbean

The tropical islands of the Caribbean Sea are to the south and east of Mexico, between Florida and South America. Caribbean nations include Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico.

Columbus landed on these islands on his voyages to find spices and a shorter route to India. The Spanish came later, as did the Dutch, Portuguese, British, and French. All these cultures left their marks on the people who live there today, in the languages they speak, their customs, and their food.

Caribbean Cuisine

The staple food is the plantain, a starchy food that looks like a banana but is cooked as a vegetable. It can be roasted, fried, boiled, baked, or combined in dishes with meat and cheese. Abundant fish and shellfish are taken from local waters. Among these are flying fish, conch, shrimp, cod, clams, grouper, and red snapper. In the warm climate, tropical fruits—including mangoes, bananas, coconuts, papayas, and pineapples—are also plentiful. So are sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and chili peppers.

The Caribbean

The dishes of the Caribbean vary from country to country. Some are colourfully named. For example, Moros y Cristianos ("Moors and Christians") is a Cuban national dish made with black beans and rice. Jamaican "Saturday Soup" consists of hot peppers (originally from Africa), carrots, turnips, and pumpkin added to beef stock. The cuisine of Haiti, which includes a soup made of bread and pumpkin, reflects both African and French influences.

Islanders use coconut milk and fruit juice to prepare both main dishes and desserts, such as coconut custard. Ice cream made with papaya and other local fruits is also popular.



The Foods of SOUTH AMERICA

Twelve nations make up South America, the southern half of the Western Hemisphere: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Surinam, Uruguay, and Venezuela. South America also includes French Guiana, a European possession.

As in the rest of Latin America, the population is of Aboriginal Peoples, European, and African ancestry. The climate, culture, people and growing conditions vary greatly from country to country and from rural area to city.

Brazil

Brazil, the largest country in South America, produces great amounts of beef, coffee, and cocoa. The people trace their ethnic roots to Aboriginal Peoples, Portuguese, and Africans. This blend of cultures can be seen in Brazilian food. From West Africa comes dende, or palm oil (which gives a bright yellow-orange colour to foods), malagueta peppers, and coconut milk. From the Portuguese comes a love of sausage and the use of kale as a soup ingredient.

Sausage appears in feijoada, the national dish of Brazil. Links of the smoked meat are simmered—along with beef short ribs, slices of dried beef, and pork——in a pot of black beans• Side dishes of rice, collard greens, sliced oranges, and manioc flour (a toasted breadcrumb-like grain) complete the rib-sticking stew. Brazil's long coastline accounts for the many fish recipes, including mariscada, a fish stew consisting of clams, mussels, cod, shrimp, and crab cooked with tomatoes and spices.



Peru

Peru is located on the Pacific coast of South America. When the Spanish conqueror Pizarro came to Peru in the 16th century, the Aboriginal Peoples were eating corn, potatoes, squash, beans, cassava, sweet potatoes, peanuts, tomatoes, avocados, and chili peppers. Although these foods are still popular, and the potato remains its staple food, Peru is also noted for its fishing industry. Popular meats include seafood and beef.

Peru was a Spanish colony for almost 300 years. The Spanish influence can be seen in foods such as gazpacho, a cold tomato-based soup of Spanish origin. Ceviche is a native Peruvian dish in which raw fish is marinated in lime juice. Other foods often eaten in wealthier areas include meat, poultry, vegetables, and grains, which are highly seasoned with onions, garlic, and hot peppers. Rice, potatoes, and bread accompany the main meals.

In poorer areas, meals include potatoes, corn, squash, and soups made of wheat and barley. The foods of those living in jungle areas fruits, consist of a variety of fish, small game, and nuts.



Argentina

South of Brazil, along the eastern coast of South America, lies Argentina. Today most of its inhabitants are of European descent.

Raising beef is one of Argentina's major industries, and as a result, most people eat beef. It is often grilled outdoors and served with spicy sauces. Puchero is a meat and vegetable stew. Another widely eaten dish is empanadas, turnovers of dough filled with vegetables, meat, fruit, or a combination of the three. Meats are also combined with fruits in local stews such as carbonada criolla—beef mixed with peaches.



Africa and The Middle East

Africa

The Sahara forms a natural east-west dividing line through Africa. It separates the five nations in the north, along the Mediterranean Sea, from the rest of the continent.

Sub-Saharan Africa

The area south of the Sahara is sometimes known as the sub-Saharan region. The concept of society in this region is defined by kinship groups—centuries- old networks of clans and tribes numbering sometimes in the thousands. In the past, these clans often lived together in villages and jointly owned the surrounding farmland. Food traditions are linked more with these social groups than with political boundaries past or present.

- Influence of Climate

Most of sub-Saharan Africa has a tropical or subtropical climate. However, there is a wide range of geographical features, including mountains, coastlines, river valleys, tropical rain forests, and desert. Consequently, different foods are raised in these various regions.

Africa and The Middle East

In western and central Africa, areas that are hot and humid, the chief crops include plantains, rice, bananas, yams, and cassava. In the grasslands in the east and south, corn, millet, and sorghum are grown. Wheat is grown in many areas, along with foods such as onions, garlic, pumpkins, watermelons, cucumbers, chilies, dates, and figs.

Chickens, cattle, sheep and goats are raised wherever possible. Small herds of animals have traditionally provided income, as well as food, for small farmers and herders. The eating of meat, however, is usually reserved for special occasions. People living along waterways, such as rivers, lakes, and seas, have an abundant supply of fish.

- Influence of Settlers

Over the centuries, food crops introduced from other continents have been incorporated into African cuisines. Coconuts were introduced from Asia in the 1500s. In the same century, corn arrived from the New World. In the 1600s, cassava became an important food source. In the 1700s, peanuts were introduced, possibly from South America.



Africa and The Middle East

Yams have remained a staple starch throughout Africa. The traditional way to prepare them is to boil, peel, and slice or pound them until they form a paste, called Fufu. In West Africa, cooks mash and deep-fry them, make them into croquettes, or slice and bake them. In some areas, cooks make fufu by mashing cassava and plantains.

South Africa was visited and also settled by many waves of Europeans looking for trade routes or escaping persecution. These French, Dutch, British, and German Europeans brought their own food preferences and preparation methods. African cooks modified them with local produce and techniques. Bredie, for example, is a stew made with meat or fish, vegetables, onions, and chili peppers.

- The African Meal

Most Africans eat one large meal a day, generally in the evening. A typical meal may include a grain such as millet cooked into a porridge or a vegetable such as yams, This is served with a seasoned stew made with vegetables and flavoured with meat, poultry, or fish, if available.



North Africa

The five main countries that make up North Africa are Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia. The population is clustered along the Mediterranean, in desert oases, or in irrigated parts of Egypt along the Nile. Because of its location along ancient trade routes linking Asia to Europe, this area has been well travelled. Its cuisine reflects the influence of those early travellers. The use of rice as a staple and the variety of produce are two legacies of foreign visitors. Two other staple starches grown in the region and still widely used are wheat and barley.

- North African Cuisine

Although there are some differences among the cuisines of North Africa, all make use of olive oil, chickpeas, fava beans, lentils, lamb, and goat. Dried fruits and nuts play a role in the cuisine, as do chili peppers and cinnamon.

One notable dish of the region is tajine, a Moroccan specialty. The dish is a long-cooked stew of lamb, prunes, and almonds, sometimes flavoured with cinnamon. Tajine is often served with couscous, a fluffy steamed grain. Couscous is also the name of an entire meal featuring the grain and one of several stewed meats or poultry mixed with aromatic vegetables. Another dish that is both savory and sweet is pastilla, common in both Morocco and Algeria. This dish, which bears French Influences, is a pigeon pie made with phyllo dough' eggs, vegetables, spices, and nuts. The finished dish is sprinkled with sugar.

The Middle East

The Middle East is located just east of North Africa, between Southeast Europe and Southwest Asia. The main countries of the Middle East are Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Turkey. Most people in this area are Arabs. Israel, which is a Jewish nation, is the exception.

- Middle Eastern Cuisine

There are many similarities among the foods of the various nations of the Middle East and North Africa. The names and some seasonings may vary, but the basic ingredients and cooking methods are similar.

Fruits include apricots, pomegranates, dates, figs, grapes, and oranges. Vegetables include eggplant, peppers, olives, cucumbers, and tomatoes. Seasonings include parsley, dill, mint, cinnamon, lemon juice, pine nuts, onion, and garlic. Tahini, a sesame seed paste, is popular. Lamb is commonly eaten; chicken and fish are also used when available. Chicken is sometimes an ingredient in stews made with lentils, beans, rice, and vegetables. Pork is a food forbidden by religious law throughout this region.

- Staple Foods

Although rice and barley are eaten, the staple starch of the Middle East is wheat, especially in the form of bulgur. This grain is a featured ingredient in tabbouleh, a popular salad that also includes tomatoes, mint, parsley, onions, and olive oil.

Another important staple food is yogurt. Depending on where you are, you might find yogurt made from the milk of cows, goats, camels, or buffalo. In several countries, yogurt is called leban. Leban is often mixed with vegetables, especially cucumbers and dates, for a side dish or part of a main dish.

Here are some other dishes commonly found in this area:

- Kubaybah or kibbi. A mixture of ground lamb, bulgur, cinnamon, and allspice.
- Stuffed vine leaves are filled with a rice and meat mixture and served with a sauce made of yogurt, garlic, and mint.
- Herrira. A mutton and vegetable soup. Is eaten often during Ramadan, the month when Muslims fast during daylight hours.

- Chelo. Popular especially in Iran, Iraq, at and Lebanon. Steamed rice accompanied by a meat or vegetable dish.
- Koresh. A stew of meat or poultry with and vegetables, fruit, nuts, seasoning, perhaps cereal. Most Iranians will eat a chelo koresh for one meal a day.

Desserts of the Middle East are often fresh, seasonal fruits. The people of the Middle East also enjoy sweet desserts, such as baklava, phyllo dough layered with nuts and honey syrup. Halva is a candy made of ground sesame seeds and honey.

For a feast, such as a wedding, it is common to roast a whole sheep and serve it with couscous. A salad of tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, mint, melon, grapes, dates, and figs might be included.



Israel

Israel includes people who originate in the Middle East along with others from around the World. Consequently, its food customs embrace both Middle Eastern traditions and those of many other countries. Customs also reflect Jewish food traditions and laws, including a prohibition against mixing dairy foods and meat.

Traditional condiments, which find their way into most recipes, include shatta, Zhoug, and tahini. Shatta is a red chili pepper mixture. Zhoug is a combination of green chili peppers, parsley, coriander, cumin, garlic, olive oil, and salt and pepper.

Some Israelis live in a kibbutz (kee-BOOTS), a communal organization, which raises its own food. Breakfasts at a kibbutz are substantial. They may consist of fresh produce, cold meats, cheese, fish, eggs, condiments, vegetable salads, and hot coffee.

Chicken and lamb are widely used. So are chickpeas, which are enjoyed both in falafel— patties of the ground legume seasoned with parsley and fried—and in hummus b'tahini, a spread of ground chickpeas, lemon juice, and tahini. Both dishes are served with pita bread, the pocket bread popular throughout much of the Middle East.



The Foods of EUROPE

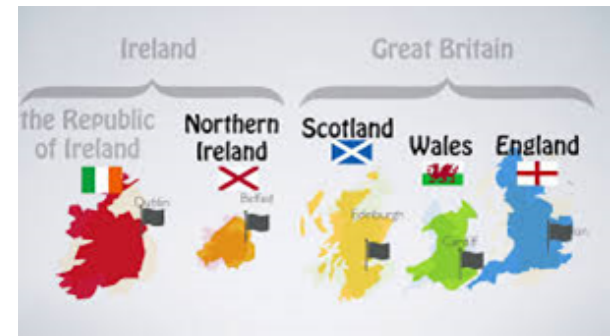
Western Europe

The cuisines of many world cultures, including our own, trace their roots to countries and regions of Western Europe, which include Austria, the British Isles, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Scandinavia and Spain.

The British Isles

The British Isles are an island group just off the European continent. The two largest islands are Great Britain—which includes England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland—and Ireland. The food of this region tends to be hearty and cooked by plain, simple methods. Beef, mutton (meat from older sheep), pork and fish are favorite foods. Many traditions eat four meals a day: breakfast, lunch, tea , and dinner (or supper).

The habit in our own country of eating hearty breakfasts is a custom inherited from Britain. Today, breakfast in the British Isles still usually includes cereal, eggs, bacon or sausage, broiled tomatoes, toast, and marmalade. Tea is more common in the morning than coffee.



British Cuisine

Typical lunches and dinners in Britain revolve around meat, including:

❑ Roast beef and Yorkshire pudding.

Beef baked in the oven, with a popoverlike mixture cooked in the pan drippings. Roast beef is usually served with a horse radish sauce or mustard.

❑ Shepherd's pie.

Leftover ground lamb or beef cooked with onions, garlic, tomatoes, and seasonings. The dish is covered with, mashed potatoes and baked.

❑ Cornish pasties (PAS-tees). Popular in the south of England, these baked pastry turnovers—filled with steak, onions, chopped potatoes and carrots—were once carried to work by miners and eaten cold.

The British also enjoy a variety of game— pigeon, quail, pheasant, and deer. Fish is also common to British menus. Finnan haddie, a fish dish sometimes eaten for breakfast, is smoked haddock prepared with milk, onion, lemon juice, pepper, and parsley.

- Tea

A meal that is uniquely British is four o'clock tea. Tea generally includes bread—either plain or in small finger sandwiches—and a dessert. Crumpets, which are similar to what Canadians call English muffins, might also be served. So might scones, a tasty variation of baking- powder biscuits. Scones are often served with jam and clotted cream- a thick spread skimmed from rich, while milk. In Scotland, tea may be served with oatcakes or oatmeal biscuits.

Sometimes, Britons have their tea served with a non-sweet dish that is somewhere between an appetizer and a main course. This meal is called high tea. A typical dish served at high tea is Welsh rabbit (or rarebit) seasoned, melted cheddar cheese on toast. High tea often takes the place of supper.



France

The goal of French cooking is to maximize the flavours of all ingredients in a dish so that no one flavour overpowers another. Much of French cooking is fairly simple— and frugal. The practice of deglazing a pan— adding stock or another liquid to a defatted sauté pan to loosen the browned-on particles—got its start in French kitchens. Deglazing is an easy and economical way of making a sauce.

Haute Cuisine

The classic dishes of France are often grouped under the heading haute cuisine. Literally "high cooking," this is a method of food preparation that makes use of complicated recipes and techniques, often involving costly ingredients. Originally, great chefs prepared these time-consuming dishes for aristocrats. Food preparation was considered an art. Rich sauces, elegantly decorated dishes, and exotic ingredients characterize haute cuisine. Haute cuisine still exists today, usually in expensive restaurants.

Cuisine Bourgeoise

Outside of the aristocracy, a simpler form of cooking developed. Cuisine bourgeoise (boorJWAHZ) is based on hearty, one-dish meals made from fresh ingredients from the local market. Cuisine bourgeoise varies from province to province. Examples include:

- **Ragout.** A flavourful stew made with vegetables and meat, poultry, or fish. It is often named after the region where it originated.
- **Pot-au-feu.** A soupy casserole of less tender cuts of beef, along with sausage and Poultry, simmered in an earthenware pot with aromatic and root vegetables.
- **Cassoulet.** A hearty blend of white beans, meats, preserved duck, and garlic sausage.
- **Bouillabaisse.** A hearty soup that combines several types of fish and shellfish, tomatoes, and herbs.

- Meals in France

French people rarely eat between meals. A typical breakfast is light, consisting of coffee or hot chocolate and some kind of bread— toast, a croissant, or brioche, a round roll made from a rich yeast dough. Lunch or dinner might include an hors d'oeuvre (appetizer), followed by a light fish course, then a main dish and vegetables. Next comes a salad of greens simply dressed with a vinaigrette. A meal concludes with either a sweet dessert Or With bread and cheese. Such a menu sounds filling. Portions, however, are kept sensible, and food is eaten slowly.



Spain and Portugal

Spain and Portugal inhabit a peninsula, which provides both countries with thousands of kilometres of coastline. Many of the dishes of both nations are based on fish and seafood.

- Meals in Spain

Breakfast in Spain, as in France, generally consists of coffee or hot chocolate and a bread. The bread might be churros, fried strips of dough.

Lunch often consists of a salad, fish, a meat course, and fruit or a light dessert. Supper at home may be a light meal, but at a restaurant, it may be another large meal. Spanish people eat out late, with dinner hour generally starting at 10:30 P.M.

A few dishes are enjoyed throughout the country. These include chicken with garlic, garlic shrimp, gazpacho (cold vegetable soup), and paella—a combination of saffron-flavoured rice, poultry, and shellfish. Another dish of Spain, tortilla española, is an omelet made with potatoes, onions, and green peppers. The dish, served in slices at room temperature, is popular in tapas bars—restaurants that specialize in small servings of foods ranging from main dish to salad items.



Portuguese Cuisine

Portuguese cooking is similar to Spanish cooking, except that the Portuguese prefer foods with more spices. The cuisine was greatly influenced by travellers to India, South Africa, and South America. Portuguese foods tend to be rich because they contain more cream and butter.



Germany and Austria

Generally speaking, German food tends to be rich and heavy. Sausages abound, with different combinations and seasonings in each region. Familiar favourites include bratwurst and knockwurst.

Veal and pork are the most popular meats. Germans also eat beef and poultry, but fish is not popular.

- German Cuisine

Some German dishes are characterized by a blending of fruit, vegetables, and meat achieve sweet-sour flavours. An example is sauerbraten, beef marinated for several days in a sweet-sour sauce, and then simmered in the same sauce. It is served with noodles, dumplings, or boiled potatoes. Schnitzel, means "cutlet" in German, usually of veal. in wienerschnitzel—or "Viennese cutlet"—the veal is dipped in egg, breaded, and fried.

Germans are noted for their rye and pumpernickel breads as well as stollen, yeast bread with raisins and candied fruit. Another favourite is streusel-kuchen, a coffee cake topped with a mixture of flour, sugar, butter, nuts, and cinnamon. German desserts include cakes and cookies. Marzipan, include a rich candy made of ground almonds and sugar, has its origins in Germany. So does nürnberg lebkuchen, which is better known as gingerbread.



- Austrian Cuisine

Austria is a nation south of Germany. The people there share not only a common language with the Germans but also many of the same food customs. Austrian cooking, in addition, bears influences of the cooking of its other Eastern European neighbours. Austrians are famous for their rich cakes, almost always served with Schlag—with thick, Sweetened whipped cream. Linzertorte, a cross between a pie and a cake, has a crust made in part of ground nuts and a sweet jam filling. Sachertorte, another famous Austrian dessert, is a rich chocolate cake spread with apricot preserves and a dark chocolate icing.



Italy

Where did pasta come from? A popular explanation is that Marco Polo brought the recipe to Italy from China in the 1300s. Whatever its origins, pasta is the dish most associated with Italy. It is usually eaten, however, as a first course, not as a main course.

- Italian Cuisine

In the south of Italy, pasta is often—though not always—served with tomato sauce. On the southern island of Sicily, a local favourite is pasta con sarde. In some parts of northern Italy, rice is favoured over pasta, in both rice balls and risotto, short-grained rice simmered carefully in stock. Another grain common in the north is cornmeal, served as polenta, cornmeal mush that is sometimes cooled, sliced, and fried.

Along Italy's northwest borders, the cooking is similar to that of France and Germany. Butter is used in place of olive oil. Italians of this region also eat speck (SHPEK), a local sausage.

Italy

Seafood is popular along the coastal areas. In the south, fresh bass is served mariner-style, with tomatoes, onions, and fresh basil.

No Italian meal would be complete without a contorno (vegetable course). Served after the main course, a large plate of eggplant, string beans, artichokes, peas, potatoes, or other vegetable is passed around the table.

Salads may begin or end a meal. They are usually served with an oil and vinegar dressing. Salads, pickled vegetables, cheeses, and other appetizers are called antipasto, which means "before the meal."

Italy is famous for its cheeses, from hard parmesan and romano, which must be grated, to ricotta (or "recooked" cheese), which is similar to cottage cheese.





Greece

The history of Greece includes a period of nearly 400 years when it was ruled by Turkey. As a result, many Greek dishes, such as vine leaves stuffed with seasoned meat and rice, are similar to foods in the Middle East.

- Greek Cuisine

Greek cooking often makes use of tomatoes, green peppers, garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil. Rice appears in many dishes. Feta cheese, made from sheep's or goat's milk and cured in brine, is widely eaten as an appetizer and in salads. It is also used in cooking.

Because of Greece's location on the Mediterranean, Greek cuisine makes use of fish and shellfish. Grilled octopus is eaten, and shrimp are sometimes baked with tomatoes and feta cheese. Lamb is the most popular meat, often served grilled. Moussaka is a layered casserole made with seasoned ground lamb and sliced eggplant. A rich white sauce is poured over the mixture before baking.

The Foods of NORTHERN EUROPE

Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland Although make up the Scandinavian countries. these countries do not have a lavish cuisine, the people have used the foods available to them creatively and tastefully.

- Foods of Scandinavia

Scandinavians rely heavily on fish for food. Dried and salted cod is a staple. Fish may also be fried, poached, or grilled, as well as used in soups and fish balls.

Dairy products are also important to Scandinavian cooks. Each country has a version of thick or sour milk, which may be eaten with sugar. Milk, butter, and cream are essential ingredients in many dishes. Scandinavians also bake an array of rye and white breads.

Because the local growing season is so short, Scandinavian meals rarely include an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables. Root vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, onions, and rutabagas are used regularly. Fresh berries (lingonberries, raspberries, and strawberries) are often used to accent desserts. Fruksoppa, or "fruit soup," is a mixture of dried fruit and tapioca cooked in a sweetened liquid and served cold.

The Foods of NORTHERN EUROPE

- Scandinavian Cuisine

The Swedish smorgasbord is perhaps the finest example of a bountiful buffet. Originally, the Word meant "sandwich board." Now it is a collection of assorted meats and fish dishes, raw vegetables, salads, and hot dishes.

Smørrebrød are open-faced sandwiches, which the Danes eat daily. Thin slices of buttered bread are topped with pickled herring, cooked Onion rings, Cucumbers, apple horseradish. The Danes are also well known for their rich, flaky, buttery pastries with touches of sugar, almonds, or jam.





The Foods of EASTERN EUROPE

Russia

Russia is one of the many countries that once made up the Soviet Union. It covers a vast area, from Eastern Europe to the Pacific Coast in Asia.

- Russian Cuisine

Food in Russia differs from region to region, as it does in most countries. National dishes are based mainly on available staple foods. One example is Russian black bread, a dark, heavy, moist bread of rye and wheat, flavoured with chocolate, caraway, coffee, and molasses.

Hearty soups are also common. Schchi is a soup made from sauerkraut. Other popular soups are made with fresh cabbage and potatoes. Borscht, or beet soup, is one of the best-known Russian soups. If available, meat or sausage is added. Most soups either contain sour cream or are served with it.

Fish—including sardines, salted herring, and salmon—are common. Caviar is often served with blini, small buckwheat pancakes, and sour cream. Buckwheat is also eaten crushed and cooked as kasha, and is served as an accompaniment to meats.

Tea is the most popular beverage. On cold evenings, you might find a gathering of Russians drinking tea and enjoying good conversation.

The Foods of Other EASTERN EUROPEAN NATIONS

The food in some other nations of Eastern Europe has many similarities to that of Russia and, sometimes, to food of the Middle East. The use of wheat, kasha, and cabbage, for example, is widespread.

Poland. In Poland, the national dish, bigos, is a stew of game meat with mushrooms, onions, sauerkraut, sausage, apples, and tomatoes. Krupnik is a barley and vegetable soup to which sour cream and dill are added.

Hungary. Hungarians enjoy grilled skewered lamb or beef in addition to the dish for Which they are most famous, gulyas or goulash, In Canadian culture. This soup like dish is made With beef, onions, paprika, potatoes, and perhaps garlic, caraway seeds, tomatoes, and honey.

Hungarians also enjoy sauerkraut, pork stuffed cabbage rolls, strudels, and dobos torta, a chocolate-filled sponge cake with many layers, glazed with caramel.

The Foods of Other EASTERN EUROPEAN NATIONS

Czech Republic. The people of the Czech Republic area rely on dumplings as the cornerstone of their meals. Dumplings may be made from a variety of foods and come in many shapes and forms. Pork, beef, and game are common, as are cabbage and sauerkraut with caraway. One of the most famous Czech dishes is kolacky, yeast buns filled with fruit, cottage cheese, poppy seeds, or jam.

Romania. Corn is the mainstay of cooking in the area of Romania. Cornmeal mush, the national dish, is served with melted butter, sour cream, or yogurt. Romanian cooks also use peppers in their dishes and are known for their richly flavoured stews.

Bulgaria. Grains, vegetables, fruit, nuts, and yogurt are mainstays of Bulgarian cuisine. Fresh vegetables are eaten widely in salads. Fruits, nuts, and herbs grow well in this region. The people prefer fish and lamb to other meats. A favourite dish is potato musaka, a casserole of vegetables, meat, potatoes, onions, garlic, tomato, eggs, cream, and grated cheese.

The Foods of ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Asia

For purposes of discussion, the countries of Asia and the Pacific will be treated in four sections. The first will look at the world cultures of Japan, China, and Korea. The second will examine Southeast Asia. The third will cover the Asian subcontinent of India; the fourth, Australia and New Zealand.

- Asian World Cultures

Asia is the world's largest continent in both area and population. Traditional Asian cooking emphasizes grains and legumes, and uses an abundance of fresh ingredients. The staple grain is rice, though wheat is widely used in parts of China, India, and Japan. Another staple is soybeans, which are used to make many products, such as soy sauce, tamari, and tofu. Soybean sprouts are used fresh and in cooked dishes.

The Foods of ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The basic cooking methods include boiling, steaming, and frying. Main dishes are usually a mixture of fried or steamed vegetables, mixed with a small amount of meat, poultry, or fish. Foods are prepared and cooked in bite-size pieces, which allows them to be picked up with chopsticks. The custom of cutting foods in small pieces started centuries ago when fuel was scarce and expensive; small pieces would cook quickly.

Coastal areas enjoy an abundant variety of seafood. Seaweed is an important ingredient of Asian cooking. It is used in soups, sauces, and main dishes, and is also served as a side dish.

Japan

Japanese cuisine features foods that are economical, nutritious, and attractive in appearance. Traditionally, Japanese people have eaten mainly vegetables, seaweed, and fish, as well as some fruit. Popular seafood includes squid and eel.

The Foods of ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

The Japanese dietary guidelines recommend that a person eat 30 different foods a day. Accordingly, meals usually consist of small amounts of a variety of foods. Fish is consumed both cooked and raw. It is presented the second way as sushi or sashimi, bits of very fresh raw fish combined with vinegared rice. Sushi is additionally wrapped in sheets of nori, or pressed seaweed.

Cooked dishes include sukiyaki—a mixture of vegetables and meat cooked quickly in a wok—and tempura—crisp batter-fried vegetables and seafood. Soba, buckwheat noodles are widely eaten for lunches and snacks. In addition to having a pleasing flavour, Japanese food must also appeal to the eye. Foods and table settings are carefully arranged.



China

Chinese cuisine dates back thousands of Years and goes hand in hand with Chinese philosophy. In this philosophy, the universe is seen as an interplay of opposing forces. Food Preparation, therefore, balances opposites. Ingredients are carefully selected and cut into Pieces to retain a sense of harmony and symmetry. Whether for a banquet or a simple family meal, the foods blend simplicity and elegance.

A Chinese meal does not have a main dish a specific serving order of dishes. Instead, many dishes are arranged in the centre of the table, the variety depending on the number of diners. Each person is served a bowl rice, and then helps him- or herself to some food. Soup is eaten during the meal or at the end of it—sometimes, sweetened, as a dessert- but never at the beginning. Hot tea is always served.



- Chinese Cuisine

The foods of China, which vary from region to region, range from spicy to simple and nurturing. From the southern province of Canton comes congee a "mother's-milk" dish of rice gruel flavoured with meat or poultry. Congee is usually served with fried bread. Chow fun is broad noodles stir fried with strips of meat, onions, and bean sprouts.

Noodle dough is known throughout China. In the northern capital of Beijing, it is made into 10 mein—thin spaghetti-like strands—and dumplings of all shapes and sizes. The region is also home to a special-occasion dish that is one of the most complicated recipes of any culture. That dish, Peking duck, requires several days of preparation, during which the duck is air-dried. The meat and crisp-roasted skin are ultimately presented ceremoniously on separate platters, along with thin pancakes.

First introduced in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s, Szechwan cooking comes from the province of the same name in central China. This area is noted for its extremely hot peppers. Other ingredients that contribute to the zesty, spicy cuisine of this region include fresh ginger and garlic.

Korea

As in much of Asia, rice is essential in Korea. It is sometimes cooked with barley or millet, which adds nutrients, texture, and flavour to the rice.

Meals usually consist of a soup or stew plus a grilled or stir-fried dish. Fish and fish pastes appear regularly in Korean foods. Garlic, in many forms, is used in meals. In fact, some of the hottest foods in the world can be found in South Korea.

Pickles add interest and flavour to Korean dishes. They might be made from almost any foods, such as pumpkins, cabbage, or ginseng. They can be rich in minerals and vitamin C.



SOUTHEAST ASIA



Southeast Asia includes Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar (formerly Burma), Thailand, and Vietnam. These countries are in the tropics and have a variety of tropical fruits and vegetables, as well as a huge assortment of spices. The cooking reflects the influence of Chinese and European settlers.

Thailand

Coconut milk, the juice from coconuts, is frequently used as a liquid in Thai cooking, from main dishes to desserts. Noodles are a favorite and appear in casseroles and in soups. They are also mixed with sauces made of oysters, black beans, or fish. Then they are topped with chopped peanuts, coconut, and green onions.

Most food combinations in Thailand have four basic flavors—sweet, sour, salty, and spicy. They also meet four texture requirements—soft, chewy, crunchy, and crispy. Popular dishes include pad Thai, a mixture of rice noodles, shrimp, peanuts, egg, and bean Sprouts. Satays, bamboo-skewered lengths Of marinated and grilled chicken or beef, are served with a peanut dipping sauce.

Vietnam

Rice and fish are the staple foods in Vietnam. The Vietnamese eat rice every day, by itself and combined with other foods. Rice starch is used to make noodles and dumpling wrappers. Foods are usually seasoned with nuocmam, a strong fish sauce.

Fish has always been the main source of protein for the Vietnamese. Fish and other foods are commonly seasoned with fresh ginger, coriander, lemon grass, and sweet basil. Many foods are rolled in lettuce or rice paper wrappers, which are easily dipped into spicy sauces.



Indonesia

Indonesian foods are highly spiced. One of the most popular dishes is nasi goreng, a mound of fried rice surrounded by assorted meats, such as beef and shrimp, and vegetables. The diner mixes them to obtain a wide variety of flavour combinations. Gado gado is a salad of lettuce, hard-cooked eggs, onions, and bean sprouts, topped with a peanut butter—based dressing.



The Philippines

The inhabitants of the Philippines are a blend of Chinese, Arab, and Indian people living on 7000 islands. The culture and food reflect the influences of those who have settled there, including the Spanish and Americans of the last few centuries.

The Chinese introduced foods such as cabbage, noodles, and soy to the Philippines. The Spaniards brought tomatoes, garlic, and peppers. The staple foods are fish, pork, and rice, the which is made into cakes, noodles, and pan- cakes. Fish sauces are also widely used. The national dish is adobo, which is pork marinated and browned in soy sauce, vinegar, our garlic, bay leaves, and peppercorns.



India

Cooking in India varies from region to region, according to climate and culture. In the northern and central areas, wheat is the staple grain and lamb is the most common meat. In the south, rice is the staple grain and the food is much spicier. Very little, if any, meat is eaten—especially beef, since cows are considered sacred animals. Garlic, cardamom, cumin, coriander, cloves, and other fragrant spices are widely used. Virtually all Indian recipes begin with a complex blend of toasted and ground spices called garam masala. Most cooks grind and mix their own spice blends and keep several on hand in jars. Yogurt is used widely.

India boasts a wide variety of meatless main dishes; among these is chana baji, sautéed chickpeas and onions liberally flavoured with cumin. When poultry and fish are available, they are used sparingly in proportion to other Ingredients. The dish biryani is a colourful plate piled high with flavourful basmati rice with almonds, raisins, and bits of either lamb, goat, or chicken.

India

As in Africa, breads are used as edible utensils. Chapati, a simple flat wheat bread, is used in some areas to scoop up rice and lentils. Breads are baked in a clay oven, or tandoor, which also lends its name to a famous Indian dish—chicken tandoori. The dish is made of chicken pieces that have been marinated in a blend of yogurt and garam masala before cooking at high heat in the tandoor.



Australia and New Zealand



The foods in Australia and New Zealand are very similar to those of the cultures who settled the coastal parts of these countries. Among these cultures are the English, the Scottish, and the French.

Menus vary according to location, from the outback of Australia, to the large cities along its coast, to the smaller cities and rural areas of New Zealand. Meals usually feature foods that are locally available. Meat and seafood are plentiful. Many people eat steaks and chops (beef or mutton) for breakfast. New Zealanders enjoy toheroas, which resemble clams.

One uniquely Australian dish is pavlova, a rich mixture of meringue, fruit, and cream. Pies and sweet rice dishes are common desserts.

Activity: Flavor Profile Research

Question: Choose a country you wish to research and develop your investigation by responding to the following prompts:

- ☐ on which continent is it located?
- ☐ what ingredients and seasonings are commonly used in this country's food?
- ☐ briefly describe the typical daily meals in this country (Breakfast, lunch, dinner, other)
- ☐ what are some of the noteworthy eating and dinning customs of this region?
- ☐ choose a common ingredient of your country's foods and find out why it is used so much there. (For example: the country's climate, history, or location may be part of the reason)

**A very helpful website for this activity
is: <http://www.foodbycountry.com/>**

share this knowledge with your peers in the next day class.