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La comida prehispánica en la cocina Oaxaqueña y Mexicana.

Unit Description: This unit introduces third year high school students of Spanish to the evolution of culinary traditions in Mesoamerica (1500- present) with a focus on Oaxaca. The time for the unit is estimated to be two to three weeks. Below, I have described the materials, activities, and assessments that will constitute the instructional approach to this material. I have not, so far, added lecture topics, or a daily schedule.

Unit Rationale: Investigating food traditions offers students an accessible window to investigate and participate in the cultural dialogue between pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples and Europeans. As students will learn, contact between these two groups in the sixteenth century dramatically altered food culture in both Europe, and Mesoamerica, and began a process of adaptation and borrowing that continues in both directions to this day. Further, pre-Hispanic food traditions are implicated in the creation of pan-ethnic Mesoamerican identities, a process evident in stories from the Popol Vuh, to Miguel Ángel Asturias’ *Hombres de maíz*. However, practically speaking, ordering food and expressing food preferences is one of the most basic of skills necessary for successful travelling, or for participating in local L2 cultures.

Materials:

**Database of food items and utensils with Spanish, Nahuatl, and English names, and accompanied by photos and codex images (where possible).**

* Codex image vocabulary matching PowerPoint.
* Lotería database and cards.
* Lotería board instructions.
* Go fish cards.
* Codex images of food in use.

**Additional Materials**

* Codex Dialogue activity sheet.
* Situation cards for taco-stand activity.
* Taco-stand activity instructions and examples for students.
* Piñata money.
* Food-critic review rubric and instructions.
* Food tasting activity instructions.
* Menús from Oaxacan restaurants.

Potential Activities:

* **Codex image matching activity (10 mins.)**. Students are introduced to the vocabulary of pre-Hispanic food items and utensils through a matching activity. **Materials:** Vocabulary PowerPoint with images. **Procedure**: Images of pre-Hispanic foods both in photographs and codex images are shown to students as new vocabulary words are presented. This activity culminates with a memory-board, matching activity, where students are expected to identify images (codex/photograph) by correctly naming the food item in Spanish. **Target-language skills:** Vocabulary recall and association.
* **Codex-Lotería game** **(15 mins.)**. Student ability to recognize spoken vocabulary and associated photography/codex images is assessed informally. This activity allows the teacher to introduce a common Mexican game and reinforce the previous day’s vocabulary lesson. **Materials:** Lotería cards, student-made lotería boards. **Procedure**: The teacher compiles a lotería selection of 25-30 codex images from the online database. Students are asked to make a lotería board (4x4) out of these images as a homework assignment. The teacher makes lotería cards before class and uses these randomly for the game. **Target-language skills:** Vocabulary recall and assessment.
* **Go-Fish Activity (15 mins)**. The teacher uses the image database to create a series of cards for a go-fish activity where students are tested on their ability to recognize the applications, and uses of various food items, and utensils in pre-Hispanic cuisine. **Materials:** Go-fish cards. **Procedure**: The go-fish cards consist of matching pairs of cards (20 pairs, ideally), one with the name of a pre-Hispanic food item/utensil and the other with a codex image/photograph. Potentially, the teacher can choose to add descriptions of these food items in Spanish to the codex image cards, or supplement these descriptions for the images themselves. **Target-language skills:** Asking questions, vocabulary recall.
* **Food Taste-Testing Activity (20 mins.).** This activity is designed to introduce students to the flavors of pre-Hispanic foods that are still popular in Oaxaca today. Additionally, students will be asked to evaluate each of the tasted foods using the pleonastic verbs for expressing opinions, *gustar, encantar, dar asco, interesar, molestar,* etc. **Materials:** Easy to prepare foods (teacher's choice) from Mesoamerican cuisines. We recommend salsas, tejate, something with peanuts, tortillas. **Procedure**: The teacher presents the students with food critique sheets that model the use of pleonastic verbs in the preterit and imperfect. The students are then taken to the food testing areas where the foods have been arranged and labeled. It might be interesting to provide both Nahuatl and Spanish names for the food items where possible. Students will then circulate, trying different foods and recording their responses. Next the students are asked to share their opinions of the foods with the class. **Target-language skills**: Pleonastic verbs in the past tense (preterit and imperfect).
* **Codex Dialogue Activity (15 mins).** In this activity, students create imaginary dialogues between the figures found in two images from the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala*. The activity fosters a deeper reading of codex images portraying moments of early contact between the Spaniards and Tlaxcalans, and requires students to think critically about the role of *La Malinche* in these interactions. **Materials:** Codex Dialogue activity sheet, projector (if available this technology can allow for higher resolution viewing of the images). **Target-language skills:** Cultural literacy, food vocabulary recall, conversational fluency.
* **Taco-stand activity (30 mins).** This activity builds on the role playing activity by supplementing student created menus for the restaurant menus from Oaxaca. Students are forced to enter into dialogues with taco-stand vendors to order food, pay, and receive change. **Materials:** Student-created taco vendor boards, situation cards, piñata money. **Procedure:** The students are asked to create their own food menus for a small puesto, or taco stand. The students are encouraged to create menus that will appeal to each of the role playing identities seen in the previous days’ activity -- a) historian of Pre-Hispanic cuisine, b) guidebook author, c) North-American tourist, d) Native Oaxacan, e) American food-celebrity (Rick Bayless, Diana Kennedy). The teacher arranges the desks in a circle and divides the class into vendors and customers. The vendors’ set-up shop in a circle around the edge of the classroom, displaying their menu boards and taking a small amount of piñata money from the teacher for change-making. The customers then receive roles/identity cards from the teacher and a small amount of piñata money for buying. The teacher arranges the customers so that each student or pair of students stands in front of one vendor or pair of vendors. The teacher then gives the students 1 min before telling the inner circle of customers to rotate. After the customers have visited three stands and filled-out their review rubrics, the vendors and the customers switch places, and the vendors now drawing role playing cards themselves. When the buying and selling is finished, students return to their groups/seats and write a review of the taco stand which received the highest score using their rubrics, while also offering suggestions for improvements. Students present these reviews to their groups or to the class. Finally, the teacher collects the rubrics, and awards prizes to the highest scoring vendors. **Target-language skills:** Expressing opinions about the past using pleonastic verbs, impersonal expressions with the subjunctive to give advice.

Assessments:

* **Interpretive assessment.** This assessment evaluates students’ abilities to process and respond to spoken Spanish within the context of a cooking video/demonstration. Students are asked to watch a video/demonstration of the preparation of an Oaxacan food item (mole, tlayudas, etc.), and to rewrite this information in the form of a recipe using commands or impersonal expressions. Students are evaluated on the accuracy of their recipes and the precision of their language.
* **Interpersonal Assessment**. This assessment evaluates students’ abilities to discuss opinions about food, offer advice, and discuss diverse perspectives on food through role playing. ACTFL’s IPA interpersonal rubric for level 3 is the assessment instrument. Students are given a role-playing task and are asked to discuss merits of menu items from Oaxaca according to their characters’ perspectives. These role are: a) historian of Pre-Hispanic cuisine, b) guidebook author, c) North-American tourist, d) Native Oaxacan, e) American food-celebrity (Rick Bayless, Diana Kennedy). Conversations take place in groups of four students each representing one of these roles. An alternative idea, would be for students to imitate judges with these identities on a cooking competition show, where the items under consideration come from Oaxacan menus.
* Performance/Presentational assessment. Students create video cooking demonstrations to be amalgamated into a digital cookbook. Students are assigned dishes from different parts of Mexico with pre-Hispanic origins. Students are asked to create videos that present this history, discuss the changes of these dishes over time, and demonstrate the preparation procedure step by step.