**La cocina prehispánica**

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**CLASS**

Spanish

**LEVEL**

High School. (The activities are intended for a Spanish 3 class, but each one can be adapted for a lower or higher level language class with the appropriate modifications.)

**CONTENT AREA**

Food/Dining in Restaurants

**LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS**

Identifying / Describing / Presenting Opinions / Giving Recommendations / Asking Questions

**UNIT DESCRIPTION**

Students will explore both the foods and utensils central to pre-Hispanic cuisine in Mexico. Students will be able to identify which foods continue to be fundamental ingredients not only in Mexican cuisine today, but also in the diet of individuals around the world.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

1. Which pre-Hispanic foods still exist in the Mexican diet today? Which ones exist in the US diet? The global diet?

2. How have these foods been adapted and modified over time? What do these changes tell us about the culture?

3. Why is it important that these foods continue to be part of Mexican cuisine today? Why and how have they survived over the course of time? Are there are threats to the survival of any of these foods?

**ACTIVITIES**

While these activities serve together to form a cohesive unit, individual activities can be selected and used to enrich pre-existing food units that teachers may already have.

***• Vocabulary List (Introduction to pre-Hispanic cuisine) (Handouts of database provided):*** This visual vocabulary list can be used as a resource for both teachers and students alike. This list is presented in the following format:

a. Food name in Spanish

b. Food name in Náhuatl

c. Food name in English

d. Photo(s) of food from markets and restaurants in Oaxaca

e. Image of food in codices (when available)

The vocabulary list is divided into 10 different sections:

**Lista 1:** Frutas y verduras (Fruits and vegetables)

Semillas (Seeds)

Vainas (Pods)

Plantas y hojas (Plants and Leaves)

**Lista 2:** Flores (Flowers)

Raíces (Roots)

Animales (Animals)

**Lista 3:** Utensilios (Utensils)

Preparación (Verbs for Food Preparation)

**Lista 4:** Comidas y bebidas especiales (Special foods and beverages)

***• Lotería (Handout provided):*** Students will create their own bingo boards using images from the codices and/or their personal illustrations to practice the new vocabulary. For a homework assignment, the teacher can provide the students with a sheet of pre-selected images that can be cut and pasted onto the bingo board to be used in class the following day.

When playing lotería in class where the goal is basic identification of the food items, the teacher can simply read the words and have the students identify the images on their boards. For a more advanced version, the teacher can present descriptions of the foods and utensils that will help them to identify the items.

[Language focus: Vocabulary]

***• Codex Matching Game:*** The teacher will create a matching game using photos and images from the visual dictionary in which students match images from codices with the appropriate vocabulary word.

[Language focus: Vocabulary]

***• Sorting Activity (Handout provided):*** Students will be given a group of words and asked to assign them to the appropriate categories (Fruits/Vegetables, Seeds, Animals, Utensils, etc.)

[Language focus: Vocabulary]

***• Legends (Handouts provided):*** Students will compare and contrast “El monte de nuestro alimento” (Una leyenda náhuatl) and “La tuza trajo el maíz” (Una leyenda oaxaqueña), two legends explaining the origins of corn, beans, chilies, and tomatoes in Mexico.

***• Song (Handout provided):*** Students will listen to music and later watch video of Lila Down’s *Palomo del comalito.* One possible activity is for the teacher to use the song for a closed-reading activity by deleting words that students will then fill in as they listen to the lyrics. Another possibility is to have students provide illustrations around the lyrics based the words they read as they listen to song.

*Discussion questions:*

1. What do you think inspired Lila Downs to write this song?

2. What does Downs want us to know about the women who work with corn?

3. How the role of corn in Mexico compare/contrast with the role of corn in your own culture?

***• Cooking Demonstration:*** Teacher will prepare a basic dish (salsa or guacamole) incorporating several pre-Hispanic ingredients. While the teacher creates the dish and explain the steps, the students will write the instructions (in command form) on an index card that they will later to be able to take home so they can prepare the food on their own.

Other possible items to prepare would be Mexican hot chocolate or handmade tortillas.

[Language focus: Vocabulary; constructing commands]

***• Taste-testing activity (Handout provided):*** Students will sample 8-10 items from *la cocina prehispánica* and evaluate their opinions. Potential items to be sampled: *jícama, nopalitos, tuna, pepitas, chocolate mexicano, chayote, papaya, néctar de guyaba, mole, chapulines, chicle, totopos y salsa, frijoles.*  Many items can be found in Latino markets. Some specialty items can be found on-line: mexgrocer.com

[Language focus: Expressing and explaining opinions]

***• Design a taquería (Handout provided):*** As one of their culminating activities for this unit, students (groups of 2) will create the menu for their own taquería at the *Feria de taco* to be held in class. This menu will then be used in a communicative classroom activity in which students will first practice ordering food and interacting at a food stand.

Part 1: Groups create poster menu for their taquerías. Each group will be required to serve two specialty tacos utilizing only pre-Hispanic ingredients, in addition to the other items listed on their menus to build tacos. Drinks and desserts will also be included. Vocabulary needed for restaurant interactions, as well as proper courtesies, will be reviewed.

Part 2: On the day of the taco stand activity, the class will be split in half. While the first group of taquería owners arrange their posters, the other half of the class will be assigned roles that determine how they will order food. Roles that can be included: Food Historian, Guide Book Writer, Tourist with Dietary Restrictions, and Local Food Expert from Oaxaca. Each role card explains how the person should order as well as how she/he should evaluate the different menus. Once one round of conversations has taken place, the two groups will switch activities.

The teacher will create wallets filled with piñata money and plastic toy coins from Mexico so the students will be able to practice authentic transactions at the taquería.

Part 3: In groups of four, students will share their evaluations of the taquerías they visited with each other. Groups will vote and award their award for the best taquería in the class.

[Language focus: Vocabulary; stating needs; asking questions; giving recommendations]

***• Food Review (Assessment) (Handout to be added October 2014):*** Students will visit a local taquería of their choice and write food review. The written review will include not only the student’s evaluation of the food, but also her/his analysis of the ingredients (which ones are pre-Hispanic, which ones reflect the local community, etc.) Print copies of menus from different taquerías will be provided to those students who may not be able to visit restaurant on their own.

[Language focus: Vocabulary; expressing and explaining opinions; giving suggestions]

**RESOURCE LIST**

***Books***

*La tacopedia: Enciclopedia del taco* by Alejandro Escalante.

*Cuentas y leyendas de México* edited by Lilian Scheffler.

***Journals***

*Arqueología mexicana* (4 different issues)

Cocina prehispánica: Recetario (Edición especial 12)

La calabaza, el tomate y el frijol (Edición especial 36)

El maíz: Catálogo visual (Edición especial 38)

El cacao y el chocolate (Edición especial 45)

***Music***

“Palomo del comalito” by Lila Downs

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8o6QUwsadP8>

“La cumbia de mole” by Lila Downs

***Video* (As always, please preview before viewing with your students.*)***

*UNESCO video clip*

*Traditional Mexican Cuisine: An Age-Old Community Culture Still Vibrant Today*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhZ-EKPPQkU>

*Diana Kennedy*

*Las raíces de la cocina mexicana*

<http://www.biodiversidad.gob.mx/usos/dk/>

*Anthony Bourdain, Parts Unknown: Mexico*

*Classic Zapotec Meal on the Outskirts of Oaxaca*

<http://edition.cnn.com/video/shows/anthony-bourdain-parts-unknown/season-3/mexico/>

*The Munchies Guide to Oaxaca (5 parts available)*

Trailer: <https://munchies.vice.com/videos/munchies-guide-to-oaxaca-trailer>