

Thankful for Food

Goals:

- *Students will be able to trace the origins of food*
- *Students will begin to understand that food availability is dependent upon climate, geography and resources*

Audience: 4th

Optional Craft, Activity or Snack:

- Thanksgiving in Highwood

Materials:

- Thankful for Food Visual

Common Core Standards Taught:

- English Language Arts: Speaking and Listening: 4.1
 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly
 - Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.

Lesson:

Leader: At the end of the month, many people will celebrate Thanksgiving. Raise your hand if you know why people celebrate this holiday.

Thanksgiving is a time to give thanks for all that we have. The holiday originated in the 1600's when the pilgrims and Indians experienced a bountiful harvest. To celebrate their success, they sat down together and feasted for 3 days!

The Indians and pilgrims were very thankful for a good growing season. Remember, there were no grocery stores, so they had to grow or hunt ALL of their food! Today, we are fortunate because we can get food from a variety of places: restaurants, grocery stores, farmer's markets, and vending machines. Food is available year round and requires a lot less effort to obtain than it did in the 1600's.

(Show map). At this time, the pilgrims and Indians had to rely on the natural resources for their food sources. The food that was available to them was limited based on their geography and climate. They could only eat what was 'local' or what they could grow or hunt. Let's take a look at the map and think about the geography and climate of the Plymouth colonies.

As you can see, the colony is surrounded by water. What kind of food do you think is available if you live near the ocean?
-Fish and shellfish

Now let's think about Massachusetts' climate. It shares a similar climate to Illinois. They have hot and humid summers, rainy springs, and snowy winters. Their climate dictates what kinds of crops they can grow. Do you think they can grow bananas, pineapples or coconuts? No, those are tropical fruits that grow best in tropical locations. Massachusetts can grow corn, pumpkin, zucchini, squash, apples, berries, and wheat (similar to Illinois).

What kind of wildlife do you think you could find in Massachusetts?
Deer, wild turkey, hogs, and other types of birds

Let's think back to the first Thanksgiving. Raise your hand and tell me what you think would be on the menu based on the natural resources and climate of Plymouth, Massachusetts.
Fish, turkey, chicken, hen, venison, wild game, squash, corn, pumpkins and wild berries.

Think of all the hard work that would go into growing crops. They would have to plant the seeds in the spring. Then, they would pray for rain (remember, they didn't have hoses or sprinkler systems so they would rely on Mother Nature). Finally, they would harvest the crop. At this time, they did everything by hand (there was no farming equipment)!

Now you can see why they were so thankful for a good growing season. Before grocery stores, people relied on local resources for their food. Their food choices were dictated by climate and geography.

Are our food choices limited by climate and geography?
The grocery stores have quite a large selection. Sometimes, it is difficult to get seasonal fruits and vegetables, but for the most part, we have access

to a wide range of foods. These foods travel a far distance to reach our plates.

Let's take a look at a Thanksgiving Menu and see how far each ingredient traveled to get to our plate. (Use classroom map and visual)

Turkey: How far did the turkey travel? A butterball turkey is from North Carolina, which is about 800 miles away. (Show map).

Mashed Potatoes: Our potatoes came from Idaho, which is about 1,700 miles away (show map).

Green Beans: Our green beans came from Iowa, which is about 200 miles (show map).

Pumpkin Pie: Pumpkin pie has several ingredients: pumpkins, sugar, butter, crust, and cream. The crust traveled 300 miles from Minnesota, the pumpkins traveled 200 miles from Michigan, the cream and eggs traveled 200 miles from Wisconsin, and the sugar traveled all the way from the Caribbean- almost 1,800 miles. That is a total of 2,300 miles for one pie!

Cranberries: The cranberries came from Maine- about 800 miles.

If we add up the total distance, that is 5,800 miles!

This Thanksgiving, think about all the work that goes into getting food on your plate and remember to thank the person who helps get it there!