Lesson Plan: Eat Local Year-round

A hands-on classroom activity exploring foods that are available all year in British Columbia

Grade Level	Grades 4-12
Season	Any season
Difficulty Level	★★★

Teacher Background

Overview

This lesson offers ways for students to learn about their food system in engaging ways, through hands-on play and scientific exploration in both indoor and outdoor classroom settings. All activities can be simplified or elaborated on for your own class' needs.

To encourage positive conversations around food in your classroom, review the Guiding Principles of the Healthy Schools BC Teach Food First resource.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain how foods travel from the farm to the grocery store
- Explain why and how foods are preserved
- Explain why fruits and vegetables come in different colours

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Curriculum Connections

	Curricular Competencies	Content
Applied Design, Skills, and Technology	• Identify and evaluate the skills and skill levels needed, individually or as a group, in relation to a specific task and develop them as needed (Gr.4-7) • Use materials in ways that minimize waste (Gr.8-9)	• Food studies (Gr.6-7) • Food Studies (Gr.8-12) • Outdoor Education (Gr.11-12)
Physical Health Education	• Develop and demonstrate safety, fair play, and leadership in physical activities (Gr.K-7) • Create strategies for promoting the health and well-being of the school and community (Gr.8-9)	• Practices that promote health and well-being (Gr.K-7) • Movement concepts and strategies (Gr.8-9)
Science	• Demonstrate curiosity about the natural world (Gr.4) • Experience and interpret the local environment (Gr.6) • Apply First Peoples perspectives and knowledge, other ways of knowing, and local knowledge as sources of information (Gr.8-9)	• Sensing and responding: plants (Gr.4) • First Peoples concepts of interconnectedness in the environment (Gr.5) • Sustainability of systems; First Peoples knowledge of interconnectedness and sustainability (Gr.9)
First Peoples' Principle	"Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors." The activities in this lesson allow opportunities for students to reflect on the food system. All of this learning ultimately contributes to the land, teachings from the community, and impact on future generations.	

Eat local year-round

Difficulty

Interactive discussion about food origins, what foods grow locally, and how food can be stored for winter and enjoyed year-round

Time: 45 minutes

Materials

Food products or imagery foods that show a range of origins. This may include:

- Fruits, vegetables, eggs, dairy, meat, and packaged products. (Food Card Examples from BC Dairy).
- Local harvested or hunted products. Examples: rosehips, spruce buds, wild greens, flowers, labrador tea, etc.

Steps

1. **Introduce:** Display the food on a table at the front of the class or spread the items around the room for students to engage with.
2. **Discuss growing conditions:** The following discussion questions can be done either in small groups or as a class.
    a. Where are these foods grown or where do they come from? Group the foods by their origin, for example locally/regionally, provincially, nationally, or globally.
    b. Why do some foods grow here and others not? Consider factors like geography, weather, ecosystem, and seasons. What grows here in each season?
        a. Check out the BC Agriculture in the Classroom: Grow BC page, West Coast Seeds Regional Crop Planning Chart or Farm to School BC's Regional Crop Calendars for growing times.

   b. The vital needs of a plant are very much like our own - light, water, air, nutrients, and proper temperature, and each has its own set of needs to flourish.

3. **Discuss sourcing local food**, especially in the winter (or before food is ready to be harvested in the Spring).
   a. Where can you get local food? Brainstorm how foods can be grown at home, school, local farm, indoors, or hunted or harvested from the forest, ocean, or rivers.
   b. How can we keep eating local foods in the winter?
   c. Where can we access or trade foods grown locally? Example: indoor farmers' markets, local stores, farms, etc.
   d. What are ways we can preserve foods? Fridge, freezer, cold storage, dehydrate (dehydrator, oven, or hang upside down), preserve, cook (such as jams), smoke (salmon), and ferment.
   e. Many foods store well throughout the winter, including potatoes, carrots, beets, cabbage, garlic, turnips, and more.
      i. Which of these have you tried?
      ii. How did you eat it?
      iii. What are different ways it might be prepared? Describe your experiences with that food.
      iv. What did it look like? Taste like (spicy, bitter, sweet, bland)? Sound like (crunchy, chewy)? Where did they eat it?
4. **Reflect:** Invite students to reflect on what foods they might want to eat in the winter or ask students to share a new recipe or a favourite recipe that includes local foods with the class.

Additional Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the foods grow there and not somewhere else? Note some foods grow in multiple locations.
2. What do you think/know can be grown here?
    a. Tip: Protected culture growing (greenhouses) and/or indoor growing (artificial lights, hydroponics/aquaponics/aeroponics) means that many things can be grown in different places.
3. Why do you think growing indoors may be more difficult than outdoors? What could be the benefits of each growing method?

Extension Activity: Food Geography

1. Place an array of fruits and vegetables on the table.
2. Have a map visible to class and have students guess what continent/country they think each food item came from.
3. Compare the student guesses to where the foods were grown. Where Food Comes From Today (2019 Stats)
4. See if there is a difference between where the fruit and vegetables were grown versus their geographic origins. Food Map: Origins of Crops

Extension Activity: Making Pickles or Pickled Carrots

Follow this recipe to make pickled carrots with your class or adapt it to pickled cucumbers!

Resources

1. Eating Sustainably
2. BC Agriculture in the Classroom: Grow BC
3. Origin of Crops
4. Food Preservation Blog - Recipes / More Recipes
5. Lesson Activity - Earth The Apple of our Eye