



## CACAO: THE GREAT MIGRATION & THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE

<b>INTEGRATED SUBJECT(S):</b> Social Studies & History, English Language Arts	
<b>GRADE LEVELS:</b> 5	
<b>LESSON TOPICS</b>	
trade, globalization, economy, Columbian Exchange, sugar, chocolate, cocoa, cacao	
<b>CURRICULAR CONNECTION + FOOD OBJECTIVES</b>	
Students will better understand the impacts the Columbian Exchange had on globalization and the global economy by learning about the history of chocolate and tasting cacao.	
<b>CORE CONTENT STANDARDS/SKILLS</b> <i>Potential Curricular Connections:</i>	<b>PILOT LIGHT FOOD EDUCATION STANDARDS</b> <b>covered in lesson</b>
<b>Common Core English Language Arts:</b> Grade 5 Informational Text: Key Ideas and Details (Standards 2, 3)	PLFS 1: Food connects us to each other.  PLFS 2: Foods have sources and origins.
<b>RELEVANT VOCABULARY</b>	
Globalization, market, economy, trade, Columbian Exchange, cocoa, cacao bean, sugar, chocolate	
<b>CLASSROOM/CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES THAT CONNECT TO THE FOOD EXPERIENCE</b> <i>How the food experience connects to the curriculum:</i> <i>What activities will you do that lead up to and/or follow the food experience?</i> <b>*grade bands are only suggestions- activities can be modified to fit multiple grade levels</b>	
<p>Students can read about the Columbian Exchange (see anchor texts) and complete a graphic organizer to summarize what came from old world to the new world (and vice versa)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and discuss the origin of Chocolate in the Americas with the Aztecs (see anchor texts and background knowledge)</li> <li>• If in Chicago, N.W. Harris Learning Connection allows you to borrow artifacts from the Field Museum. Borrow their <b>Aztec &amp; Story of Chocolate</b> exhibit: <a href="http://harris.fieldmuseum.org/catalog.html?product_topic=23">http://harris.fieldmuseum.org/catalog.html?product_topic=23</a></li> </ul>	



## RELATED BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE ON FOOD

**Background info on chocolate:** from “The Sweet History of Chocolate” *History.com* by Christopher Klein (<https://www.history.com/news/the-sweet-history-of-chocolate>) and “A Brief History of Chocolate in Mexico” *Culture Trip* by Lauren Cockling (<https://theculturetrip.com/north-america/mexico/articles/a-brief-history-of-chocolate-in-mexico/>)

- The Mayans and Aztecs were famous for inventing Hot Chocolate (or Xocolatl as it was called in ancient Aztec). They made it by grinding up beans from the cocoa plant, by mixing it with water and spices, then by whisking it until frothy. It did not have sugar in it, might have been served cold, and was probably very bitter.
- Montezuma, the famous Aztec ruler, was said to have enjoyed it. He drank up to 50 glasses a day! When the Spanish Conquistadors arrived in Mexico they tried this new drink, but found it far too bitter and started adding sugar.
- The Aztecs are thought to have added many different spices to the chocolate including chilli peppers, vanilla, cinnamon, and anise. Our version uses some of these, but you can adapt the recipe if you like.
- Commoners didn’t even think of making hot chocolate as the cocoa bean was very precious and only nobles were allowed to drink it!

## ANCHOR TEXTS

- *Smart About Chocolate: A Sweet History (Smart About History)* Paperback – December 29, 2004 by [Sandra Markle](#) (Author), Charise Mericle Harper (Illustrator)
- “The Sweet History of Chocolate” *History.com* by Christopher Klein (<https://www.history.com/news/the-sweet-history-of-chocolate>)
- “A Brief History of Chocolate in Mexico” *Culture Trip* by Lauren Cockling (<https://theculturetrip.com/north-america/mexico/articles/a-brief-history-of-chocolate-in-mexico/>)
- “History of Chocolate” by Barry Callebaut <https://www.barry-callebaut.com/en/group/media/press-kit/history-chocolate>
- *McDougal Littell World History: Patterns of Interaction* Chapter 20 Section 4: The Columbian Exchange and Global Trade by Roger B. Beck et al., McDougal Littell ([http://www.sps186.org/downloads/basic/734099/ch20\\_4.pdf](http://www.sps186.org/downloads/basic/734099/ch20_4.pdf))
- *The Aztec World* by Elizabeth M. Brumfiel (Editor), Gary M. Feinman (<https://www.amazon.com/Aztec-World-Elizabeth-Brumfiel/dp/0810972786>)

## FOOD EXPERIENCE + MATERIALS

*Step by step instructions for the food experience.*

### Option 1:

- Begin by having students think about the questions on the board:
  - How did chocolate change over time?
  - What changes were made, and how were these changes possible?
- Have them discuss their thinking before showing the short clip about the history of chocolate: “The History of Chocolate” *YouTube* by Vancouver Film School (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrIFGfZyvGs>)



- Have some students share out what and how chocolate changed over time.
- Review vocabulary and ask the students if they know what a commodity or the word yield is.
  - Have them share out their ideas (they should be thinking of what these words mean, and how they relate to a global economy)
- Have students read “A Tasty Currency” by Laurie De Maré (<http://www.nbbmuseum.be/en/2013/03/kakao.htm>)
  - As the students read (this could be done in partners or independently, depending on the level of your students) have them use a graphic organizer and think about the history of chocolate and how globalization impacted the way chocolate was used.
- Sample cacao nibs (or unsweetened chocolate) and chocolate chips (milk, semi-sweet, or dark) with the class
  - Students should evaluate the differences between the unsweetened and sweetened chocolate. How did globalization change chocolate’s flavor?
  - Encourage students to discuss in groups and share their ideas with one another and the class

#### **Materials:**

- Printouts of readings
- Board or chart paper to write down student answers/definitions and markers
- Unsweetened chocolate or cacao nibs for class
- 1-2 types of chocolate (chips or bars is fine here!) for class to compare to nibs or unsweetened chocolate
- Napkins or paper towels

#### **Option 2:**

- Begin by having students think about the questions on the board:
  - How did chocolate change over time?
  - What changes were made, and how were these changes possible?
- Have them discuss their thinking before showing the short clip about the history of chocolate: “The History of Chocolate” *YouTube* by Vancouver Film School (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrIFGfZyvGs>)
- Have some students share out what and how chocolate changed over time.
- Review vocabulary and ask the students if they know what a commodity or the word yield is.
  - Have them share out their ideas (they should be thinking of what these words mean, and how they relate to a global economy)
- Have students read “A Tasty Currency” by Laurie De Maré (<http://www.nbbmuseum.be/en/2013/03/kakao.htm>)
  - As the students read (this could be done in partners or independently, depending on the level of your students) have them use a graphic organizer and think about the history of chocolate and how globalization impacted the way chocolate was used.
- Review the process for making hot chocolate with the students:
  - Students will mash cacao beans (early Aztec and Mayan) to find the chocolate is bitter and rough
  - Continue crushing and stirring – fatty parts of bean are exposed (but it is still very bitter tasting)
  - Add sugar – makes the drink sweeter and more like modern hot chocolate
- Ask students afterwards: How did globalization change chocolate? How did the role of chocolate change from ancient Mayans to present day?
- After tasting the different chocolates, students will make the ancient Aztec drink (see below for recipe) and use their five senses to describe the drink.

**Materials:**

- Printouts of readings
- Board or chart paper to write down student answers/definitions and markers
- Cups and napkins/paper towels for class
- Bowl or large measuring cup that can hold boiling water
- Whisk and ladle
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Hot water kettle

- Ingredients:

Aztec Xocolatl (Modern Hot Chocolate) - serves 4-6

- 1 cup Dark Chocolate
- 4 cups of Boiling Water (use electric kettle)
- 2 teaspoons Vanilla Extract
- 1 teaspoon Cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon Cayenne Pepper
- ¼ cup sugar

1. Break the chocolate into squares in a heatproof jug or bowl.
2. Pour in the boiling water, or ask an adult to help.
3. Add the other ingredients and mix it until the chocolate has dissolved.
4. Pour it carefully into mugs.
5. If it is too bitter, you could add a splash of milk or additional sugar to taste.

**IDEAS FOR FOOD ADVOCACY**

- Write letters for fair labor in chocolate production & research the cocoa farmers:  
<https://makechocolatefair.org/issues/cocoa-prices-and-income-farmers-0>
  - Research the work the Food Empowerment project is doing to support your letter writing.
    - Food Empowerment Project seeks to create a more just and sustainable world by recognizing the power of one's food choices. We encourage healthy food choices that reflect a more compassionate society by spotlighting the abuse of animals on farms, the depletion of natural resources, unfair working conditions for produce workers, and the unavailability of healthy foods in low-income areas. <http://www.foodispower.org/take-action/>
  - Information on child slavery in chocolate production: <http://www.foodispower.org/slavery-chocolate/>
- Talk with a local bakery about the chocolate they are using and why. Compare and contrast with chocolate the students are familiar with in their homes. What impact does price have on this bakery's decisions? What about flavor?



### COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- Visit a local chocolate factory and see how they process chocolate and make it into varying confections or products
- Visit a local chocolate manufacturer or shop that stocks baking cacao and an assortment of confections. Inquire about types of chocolate products they make and types of chocolate they source. Compare and contrast with chocolate the students are familiar with.

### RECIPE OR TAKE-HOME ACTIVITY

**Recipe and take-home activity:**

Send home the recipe for the Ancient Aztec Xocolatl drink to try at home -- students can compare and contrast with the version they tried in class (if you did option 2) or another type of hot chocolate they have had before.

Traditional Xocolatl - serves 5-6

<https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/216166/xocolatl-aztec-chocolate/>

- 5.5 cups water, divided
  - 1 green chile pepper, sliced
  - ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
  - 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1. Bring 1 1/2 cup water to a boil in a pot; add the chili pepper, seeds included, to the boiling water and cook at a boil for 5 to 10 minutes.
  2. Strain the chili pepper and seeds from the water; return the water to the pot.
  3. Add 4 cups water to the chili pepper-infused water, reduce heat to medium-low, and bring to a slow boil.
  4. Stir the cocoa powder and vanilla extract into the boiling water, then continue to cook and stir until powder dissolves completely (5 to 10 minutes).

*Lesson adapted from lesson by: Amy Peterson, Jason Hammel, and Eric Shaw*