

Growing and Eating Food Around the World: The Story of Rice

Grade Levels & Subjects: Grades 9 - 12 English Language Arts

Learning + Food Objectives:

Students will learn about food sources and origins by watching how rice is grown and cooked in different ways around the world and then writing a story about the journey of a grain of rice from field to plate from the point of view of the rice.

Common Core Standards:

Common Core English Language Arts

Writing a story using a narrator and a specific point of view

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-12.3](#)

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-12.3.A](#)

Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- “Arroz con Leche” with Chef Christopher Del Cid: <https://vimeo.com/417668558>
- Worksheet below - could be recreated in Jamboards, Pear Deck, or other online learning platform

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)

1. Activate students' background knowledge about rice, asking "How have you eaten rice? Was it fried rice, rice and beans, chicken and rice, and/or in the school cafeteria?" If students have difficulty thinking of specific dishes, teacher could show photos of common rice dishes on a slide/on the computer.
2. Teacher can list the different dishes (or show photos) and ask students where they have eaten these different types of rice dishes. This could be "at home, at a Mexican restaurant, with sushi, in the cafeteria..." No answer is wrong. If students are able to identify where a dish may have originated or is often eaten, that is great. Teacher could also prepare a few examples and where the dish originated. For example:
 - Sushi from Japan
 - Rice and beans from West Africa, Brazil, and many other countries
 - Fried rice from China
 - Paella from Spain
 - Arroz con Leche (Rice Pudding) from Spain and Latin American cultures
 - Chicken Tikka Masala with Rice from India
 - Tahdig from Iran
 - Risotto from Italy
3. After listing several examples, teacher can take a class poll (using chat features in video chat or thumbs up, thumbs down) to see how many people have had different types of rice dishes.

INSTRUCTION (45 minutes – 1 hour)

1. Tell students how today they will learn more about rice and the different ways it can be eaten, starting with how rice is grown. Videos below are several examples about growing rice, both in the US (Missouri) and in other countries.
 - "How Rice is Made" video by Deutz-Fahr <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JqEse7JffE>
 - "Remarkable Ride: How Does Rice Grow?" (in the United Kingdom) by Tesco Eat Happy Project <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxAEiHCErSA>
 - "Missouri Rice Farming" by Missouri Farm Bureau <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=orwWM33drJw>
 - "Bill Green's Growing Carolina Gold rice part 1 and 2" by Bill Green (Gullah Geechee)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmxC32YfCMQ> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3loGvTNqcY>
2. Now that students understand a bit more about how rice is grown, think about how this one common ingredient is eaten in all sorts of ways around the world. Rice is a common ingredient in cooking in many countries and many cultures. It is a food that connects us!
3. Tell students that they are now going to watch a video about one way to prepare rice that is popular in Spanish and Latin American cooking: "Arroz con Leche" with Chef Christopher Del Cid: <https://vimeo.com/417668558>

4. Optionally, students (and/or the teacher) could learn more about the history of Arroz con Leche through research online or perhaps through students and students' families.
5. Students will work together to write a short story about a rice dish such as Arroz con Leche - **from the viewpoint of the rice** - starting from where it was grown to how it ended up in that dish.
6. Ask students to start the story, reminding them this should be written in first person since it is from the point of view of a grain of rice! It should start with the rice in the field and end when the rice gets to the grocery store. If students struggle, offer to share part of the exemplar (below) to help them get started. Give students 10 minutes to start their story.
7. Come back together and ask students to share what was difficult about writing in this way. Have 3-5 students share out.
8. Have 5-7 students share a few sentences of their story, encouraging peers to point out what made that students' work a strong point of view narrative (Did it capture the emotion of the rice? Was it clear dialogue? Was it descriptive language?)
9. Now, ask students to choose their favorite rice dish and tell its "story" starting from the beginning of the recipe. Students could use the steps in the Arroz con Leche recipe or they may need to google a recipe for their favorite rice dish. Remind them to focus just on the rice's "part" in the recipe as they retell it. Refer students to the brainstormed list of recipes during the introduction if they struggle to come up with a recipe.

Example of Arroz con Leche from the viewpoint of a grain of rice:

The Story of a Grain of Rice in Arroz con Leche (students can be creative in the titles of their short stories)

I woke up with a yawn as I felt the sun warming me, signaling another beautiful day of growing in Campeche, Mexico. My ancestors have been growing here for hundreds of years. They have told stories about how our ancestors were brought over from Asia and then thrived in the warm, wet climate here in Mexico. How proud they would be of how tall we are growing now! Today, I noticed that the rest of my family on the stalk were hanging low. We had felt ourselves transform from tall flowers to drooping grains. Our time was coming and I could not wait! I had heard stories of all that happens when you leave the rice fields and get moved to beyond! No one really knows what happens in the "beyond" but I could only imagine all the sun, water and carbon dioxide that must be out there for us to enjoy!

I could see the workers coming down the aisle, snatching up the stocks that were as tall as ours. Surely today was our day! As they approached, I felt a cool breeze shift us back and forth, threatening to make me fall off before we got plucked. Just as the worker approached, sweat glistening on his tanned forehead, the wind went still and suddenly I was lifted upward in an instant. I watched as some of the older grains were flung to the ground as the worker shook us off. We were gathered with families that were growing near us and tied to a rod. I watched in awe as we were carried through hundreds - no, thousands! - of families, all wishing they were the ones being carried away.

CLOSING (teacher discretion)

1. Students should share their writing with a peer and offer feedback or ask questions. If appropriate, encourage students to take a photo the next time they eat rice. If they make a rice dish, ask them to also notice where the rice is from - this is usually listed on the bag of dry rice near the nutrition label as a "product of xx country".

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *Everybody Cooks Rice* By Norah Dooley
- Informational texts on rice:
 - "Where is Rice Grown" - <http://ricepedia.org/rice-as-a-crop/where-is-rice-grown#:~:text=Rained%20lowland%20rice%20is%20grown,of%20the%20world's%20rice%20productio>
[n.](http://ricepedia.org/rice-as-a-crop/where-is-rice-grown#:~:text=Rained%20lowland%20rice%20is%20grown,of%20the%20world's%20rice%20productio)
 - "Rice Facts for Kids" - <https://easyscienceforkids.com/rice/>
- "Rice" - <https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/rice/276721>

RECIPE FROM VIDEO

Video: "Arroz con Leche" with Chef Christopher Del Cid: <https://vimeo.com/417668558>

Below is the recipe from the video in this lesson. Pilot Light Anywhere lessons are designed to be able to be delivered from a remote setting; however, this recipe can be demoed by the teacher virtually/in person, sent home to families, or used for reference.

Arroz con Leche

Serves 5

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups of white rice (most white rice will do the trick!)
- 2 cups of water
- 1 ½ cups of milk (your choice of skim-whole)
- ¾ cup of evaporated milk
- ½ cup of condensed milk
- 1 Cinnamon stick
- 1 tsp of Vanilla extract
- Optional ingredients: ½ cup raisins, ½ tsp ground clove (or 2-3 whole), 1 star anise, and/or granulated sugar for sweetness
- Topping suggestions: feel free to get creative and make this your own, and serve in small bowls!
 - Banana slices, blueberries, strawberries, and peach slices
 - Dash of cinnamon and/or cocoa powder

Materials:

- Heat source
- Medium pot with lid
- 1 cup and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup measuring cups
- 1 tsp measuring spoon
- Stirring spoon

Preparation:

1. First, make sure you clear your working area and that you've gathered all necessary ingredients.
2. Grab a medium pot and add the two cups of water, the rice, and the cinnamon stick.
3. Place a lid on the pot, set the heat on high, and wait until you bring the water to a boil.
4. When the water is boiling, bring the heat down to medium low and keep the lid closed.
5. Let the rice simmer for 10 minutes or until most of the water has evaporated.
6. Add 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of milk + the $\frac{3}{4}$ cups of evaporated milk + $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of condensed milk + 1 tsp of vanilla extract.
 - If desired, this would be the time to add the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of raisins, the $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of ground clove (or whole clove), star anise, and/or sugar!
7. Using the stirring spoon, mix ingredients together gently as you're adding them, then continue to stir slowly, allowing the mixture to thicken. Allow about 8 minutes. Adjust the heat accordingly.
8. After those 8 minutes have passed, turn off the heat and allow the rice to sit and cool down, keeping the lid closed during this time. Wait about 10 minutes.
9. Serve and enjoy!

The student worksheet below can be printed or copied onto
any online learning platform.



The Story of Rice

As a class, we will write a story about how rice moves from the fields to our plate. We will write this from the point of view of a grain of rice! You will finish writing the story by describing how the grain of rice is made into Arroz con Leche or another rice dish!

Pre-Writing Brainstorm:

What are the steps of growing and harvesting the rice?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

What are the steps of the rice recipe?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across most of the width of the page. On the left side, there is a vertical margin line, creating a narrow left margin. The paper appears to be from a notebook or a standard ruled document. There are no markings, text, or drawings on the page.

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Peer feedback: