

The Living History Classroom

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FALL 2007

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Foodways

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A Multi-Cultural Diet

What is your favorite food? Pizza? Tacos? Have you ever stopped to think about the history of the food you eat? As North Carolinians and Americans our diets—just like we ourselves—have a multi-cultural history. As settlers came to the New World from diverse backgrounds and traditions, they brought with them the foods they were used to eating and their own ways of preparing different dishes. When they arrived, they encountered foods that were new and unusual to them, and they started incorporating these foods into their own diets. They also sent new foods back home—did you know that people in Ireland did not eat potatoes until they were discovered in the New World?

Looking at your own diet today, you can see evidence of many different cultures. The beans, corn, and tomatoes you eat were first cultivated by the American Indians who lived here long before European settlement. The yams and okra that complete many a Thanksgiving table came to us by way of Africans—most of whom were forced to come to this continent as slaves. European foods like wheat, lettuce, onions, cabbage, and turnips still form a vital part of our meals today. More recently, foods from other parts of the world have become an ever more significant part of our American diet. Asian and Hispanic cuisines are influencing our meals increasingly as more people come here from Asia, Central and South America.

In this fall's issue of *Living History Classroom*, we will take a look at the many



Library of Congress

These North Carolinians are peeling potatoes, a New World crop that became a staple of the American diet, 1897.

diverse foods and cultures that have come together to create our American diet. Hopefully these different histories will lead you to think about your own family's traditions more carefully. Where did your grandmother's famous gumbo recipe come from? What about the wonderful lasagna your dad makes? You will find that—like the diverse people who make up this nation—the meals we eat are truly multi-cultural.

Native American Gift: Corn

When the earliest settlers arrived in the New World, they were saved from starvation by the introduction of the three sisters of the Native American diet, beans, squash and corn. Little did they or the Native American know how corn would effect the economic and cultural impact on the world.

Corn has always been a sacred food for Native Americans, and different tribes have different names for corn, but all of them mean "Life". A corn legend says that corn was a gift from the Great Spirit and considered divine. Corn was eaten at almost every meal. It was easily dried and stored for future use during the cold winter.

There were many uses of corn, and the entire plant was used for some purpose. Corn could be ground into corn meal, it could be combined with beans to make succotash, dried corn could be used to make hominy, and corn could be used to make corn syrup or corn pudding. The husks from the corn cob could be braided to make masks, sleeping mats, baskets, shoes and even cornhusk dolls. Corncobs could be burned as fuel, or made into ceremonial rattling sticks.

Corn was unknown to the earliest settlers.

When the Native Americans shared seed with them and taught them how to grow corn, it changed the world food supply forever. Corn grows quickly and produces good crops in various climate zones. It has bolstered economies and resulted in population growth.

Today there is a new use for corn. It is being used to create ethanol. Ethanol is added to gasoline to improve the emissions quality



of gasoline. While this may improve our environment and air quality, does this mean that the world's food supply is reduced? If the world's food supply is reduced, what will save the starving population of our planet?



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The Living History Classroom

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Indian Women Preserving

American Indian women not only cooked the food, they also grew, gathered and preserved much of the food supply for their families and villages. The men did the hunting and fishing but the women were responsible for practically everything else.

Their food consisted of cultivated crops; corn, beans, squash, wild plants, roots, nuts, berries and fruit. The methods of cooking were roasting, broiling, boiling and baking.

To boil foods Indian women used fire proof containers of pottery, or even bark that could be hung close enough to the fire to bring water to a boil, without burning through.

Some meats and vegetables were roasted in their own skins like ears of corn roasted in the husks. Indian women baked bread directly in warm ashes or by laying the dough on "baking stones" over a flame or coals. They had no refrigeration so to preserve foods they dried animal and plant foods in the sun and by the fire. Strips of dried meat called jerky could be stored in containers without further processing, but often it would be made into Pemmican a sort of power bar or portable food often taken on hunting trips. The Pemmican was made by pulverizing jerky and mixing it with dried, mashed wild berries and suet (animal fat) it could then be packed away and kept for up to a year.

- Why do you think dried fruit and beef would be used in this recipe?
- Do you think Pemmican was eaten in summer or winter?
- A food processor is used in preparing this recipe, what tools do you think American Indian women used to prepare this dish?



John White, The British Museum, in Thomas Parramore and Douglas Wilms, North Carolina: The History of an American State.

Many Native peoples ate their food off of containers placed on mats.

Pemmican

Ingredients

- 1 4 oz. package beef jerky
- ½ cup golden raisins
- ½ cup dried apricots
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 3 table spoons bacon fat

In food processor process jerky until it's in small pieces. Add fruit to jerky and process until the fruit is cut in small pieces and well mixed. Add 3 table spoons bacon fat. Process several short pulses until well mixed. Place mixture in a large mixing bowl. Use extra bacon fat to oil hands, working mixture with hands shape into flat rounds about the size of a half dollar. Place on cookie sheet between two sheets of wax paper, oiled with reserved bacon fat. Chill for two hours and taste.

Equipment

- Wax paper
- Food processor
- Large mixing bowl
- Measuring cup
- Cookie sheet
- 2 table spoons reserved bacon fat

AFRICAN FOODWAYS:

Barbecue, Collards, Black-eyed Peas and Grits

Slave ships plying their transatlantic trade along the Middle Passage from Africa to North America brought more than an enslaved work force to the New World. They brought traditional African foods that would impact the eating habits of the New World for centuries to come.

During the passage, slave merchants included staples of the African diet; rice, okra, black-eyed peas, peanuts, collard greens, kidney and lima beans, and the yam (sweet potato). Europeans brought rice, pork and chicken to the New World.

By 1750 enslaved Africans were cultivating rice in coastal Carolina in ways similar to how rice had been grown in Africa for hundreds of years. The traditional West African dish of rice and black-eyed peas, known as hoppin' John, was eaten on New Year's Day

for good luck in the coming year.

The enslaved African cook influenced the eating habits of the slave owner and his family. Peanuts were used to make peanut pie and peanut soup. Okra was included in a soup Africans referred to as gumbo. Pork fat was used for seasoning and a cooking technique common to Africa, deep fat frying, was used.

The African custom of roasting pigs on an open spit with a pan of sauce on the side for dipping may be the source of barbecue. After moving to Greene County, N.C. in 1853, Sarah Hicks of New York wrote a letter to her family describing the preparation of pork in a traditional Carolina fashion. "Red pepper is much used to flavor meat with the famous 'barbecue' of the South and which I believe they esteem above all dishes is roasted pig dressed with red pepper and vinegar."



Fred Smith's sketch book, 1862.
Aunt Betty

"Red pepper is much used to flavor meat with the famous 'barbecue' of the South and which I believe they esteem above all dishes is roasted pig dressed with red pepper and vinegar."



Photo by Henry P. Moore, 1862, in Before Freedom Came, Museum of the Confederacy and the University Press of Virginia.

Shared work routines, living spaces, and cultural traditions together created a community among distinct groups of slaves."

Your Family Recipes

Food is much more than simple nourishment for the body. Chicken soup has a way of making you feel better when you're sick that has nothing to do with its medicinal properties. At holidays, many families prepare the same meal year after year; if the green bean casserole was missing, it just wouldn't be Thanksgiving.

Many foods can provide emotional comfort or evoke memories of the past. Mealtimes can also be an important way for family and friends to come together and share their lives. Some foods can even represent an entire culture or community, and preparing them helps preserve a part of that group's history.

Student Activity

Select a recipe that is one of your favorites and bring it in to share with your class. Why do you like this recipe so much? Do you have it often, or only at special times of the year? Is it a new recipe, or something your family has been eating for many years? Where did your recipe come from? If you don't know all of these answers, try talking with some of your family members to see what they know about your recipe.

Teachers: Have your students write an essay of 100 words or less that answers some of the above questions about their recipe. Make sure students write their names, ages, grades, and schools on their essays. Send their recipes and their essays to:

Living History Classroom, Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens, PO Box 1007, New Bern, NC 28563. We will publish the winning recipes and essays in the next issue of the Living History Classroom, due out in February 2008.

Submissions must be received no later than December 1, 2007. 



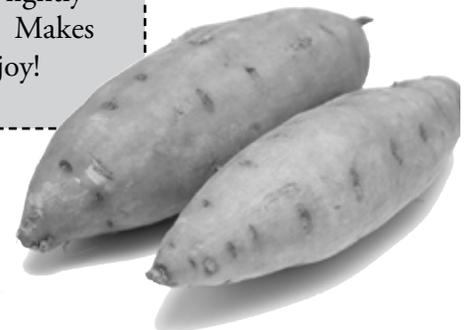
Thomas Jefferson's Sweet Potato Biscuits

- 2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ t. allspice
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup margarine, cut into small pieces
- 1 T. baking powder
- ½ cup milk
- ¾ t. salt
- 1 large or ¾ cup sweet potatoes, mashed
- ½ t. cinnamon
- ½ cup pecans, chopped
- ½ t. ginger

Combine dry ingredients. Add margarine. Combine milk and sweet potatoes; add to flour mixture. Add pecans. Knead dough with your hands until it is a smooth mass. Roll out on a surface to ½ " thickness and cut with a 2" biscuit cutter. Place on a greased baking sheet 2" apart. Bake at 450 degrees F. (preheated) for about 10-15 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on wire rack. Makes 19 -12 (2-1/4 ") biscuits. Enjoy!

Take It Farther: Have a classroom cook-off! Have students make their recipes at home, then bring in to share with the rest of the class. Students can vote for winners in categories such as "Favorite Dish," "Favorite Recipe They've Never Had Before," "Best Dessert," etc.

Paul D. Escott in his *Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth-Century Slave Narratives* indicates that this was a recipe created by the African-American slave.



Kitchens: The Heart of the Home

During the Colonial period, the kitchen was literally the “heart of the home.” For early settlers, often it was the only room in their cabin(s). As colonial life grew easier and larger houses were erected, rooms became more specialized, but kitchens remained the “heart of the home.” Even as houses grew larger, in the South it was customary to separate the kitchen to keep odors from the main living quarters and to protect the main house from fire hazards. Kitchen fires were rarely allowed to go out.

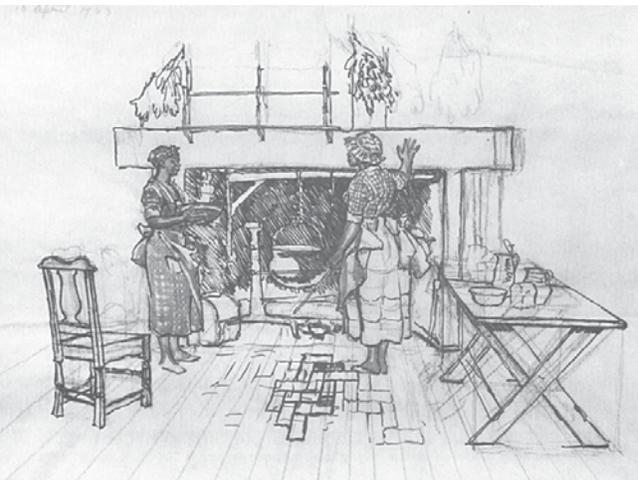
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Eighteenth century kitchens focused on an open fireplace surrounded by an assortment of pots, pans, skillets, skewers, and other utensils made of iron, copper and brass. Remarkably good and diversified cooking was created by roasting, baking, broiling, boiling and all the processes used today that may be achieved with microwaves and electrical kitchen gadgets. The foods and preparation techniques used by colonial Americans varied depending upon the wealth and social standing of the citizenry. Meals served at the Governor’s Palace may have been prepared by professionally trained European cooks known as “principal cooks.” These cooks, often men, were the highest paid servants in the Governor’s household. A royal governor’s kitchen may have as many as ten cooks, each specializing in one area just as today fine restaurants employee specialized “chefs.” The cooks may have served an apprenticeship in Europe and had a level of training and skills unmatched in other colonial households. It is known that Governor Tryon, while residing in Brunswick Town, employed a French cook, Pierre LeBlanc. We can’t be sure that he actually worked in the Palace at New Bern.

The next social level in colonial America was the “landed gentry”—those individuals with wealth and status. They demonstrated their social standing by providing a wide variety of meats and sweets at each meal prepared in a more traditional English fashion. In the South gentry had slave cooks who were less formally trained than the governor’s cooks, but they were extremely skilled nonetheless. Highly skilled cooks were prized and expensive.



Cook in Tryon Palace Kitchen Of
Courtesy, TPHS&G.



Edward Penfield, New York Public Library, in Laura Schenone, A Thousand Years Over a Hot Stove.

African Americans brought African cooking traditions with them to the New World. Even though most were enslaved, their foods have influenced the way all Americans eat.

The “working class” middle class was less variety and choices of food could on a daily basis. they prepared a feast for holidays such as



...ice making a pie.

The “working class” known as the middling class was less able to provide the variety and choices of foods than the gentry could on a daily basis. On special occasions they prepared a feast just as we do today for holidays such as Thanksgiving. The upper middling class(es) may have had a cook, either indentured or enslaved, while the less well-off relied on the mistress of the house to prepare meals. Families ate their main meal, dinner, in the middle of the day around 2 in the afternoon. Supper, the evening meal, and breakfast consisted of leftovers from dinner.

Most colonial Americans fell into the lower level of the social classes. They were poor and had limited cooking equipment, often having only one cast iron pot. The wife of the house prepared basic soups and grain porridges. The most common type was hominy, made from corn, often flavored with salt-cured pork and vegetables. The basic diet was supplemented with whatever meats and vegetables they could raise.



Cuisinier, Pâtissier, Traiteur, Rotisseur
engraving from
Diderot's Encyclopédie
of 1771.
Gentry's Kitchen

Let them drink Chocolate!

Once cocoa-bearing ships reached North American eastern seaports, the chocolate “nuts” were off-loaded, roasted, shelled, and ground into chocolate. Chocolate, along with coffee and tea, was considered a “necessity” and found widespread use as a hot beverage throughout the colonies, to be drunk at breakfast, afternoon dinner, or evening supper.



...ss” known as the
...ss able to provide the
...foods than the gentry
... On special occasions
...ust as we do today for
...s Thanksgiving.

In 1670 Dorothy Jones and Jane Barnard, two colonial entrepreneurs, received licenses to serve “Coffee and Chocaletto” in their Boston houses of “Publique Entertainment.” Benjamin Franklin also offered locally manufactured chocolate in his Philadelphia print shop for his customers. Colonial demand for chocolate increased so dramatically that by 1773 the annual import of cocoa beans by English colonists had exceeded 320 tons, and was shipped and traded between East Coast ports throughout North America. (*The Historic Division of Mars, Inc.*)

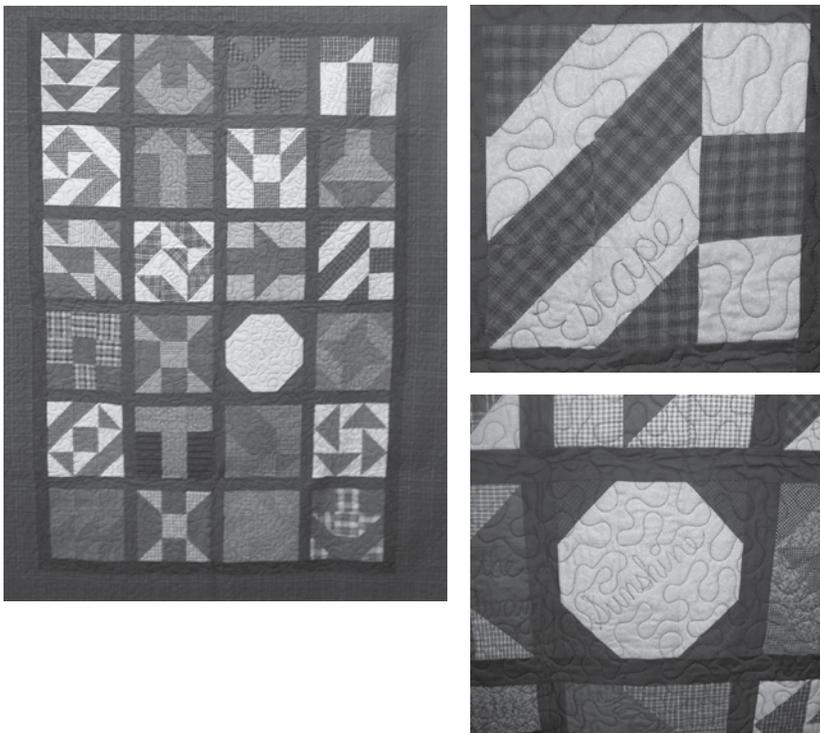
Activities

In our spring issue of *Living History Classroom*, we discussed African American experiences during Reconstruction era and talked specifically about the strong tradition of quilting in the black community. As a project we asked students to make their own quilt squares—of either paper or fabric—that said something about their life and family. We were thrilled with the response from area schools. Three elementary classes sent in quilts. The quilts will be displayed in our visitor center, and images of them will be published in the fall issue of *Palace Magazine*. Stop by Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens to see these wonderful works of art on exhibit. 

Ms. Connie C. Butterfield's 4th grade class, New Hope Elementary School, Wilson, NC



Mrs. Cherly Gourley, 4th grade class, North Ridge Elementary, Raleigh, NC



Ms. Joanne Madore Pipkin's, 4th grade class, Magnolia Elementary, Lumberton, NC



Your Family Recipes

Through many years of North Carolina's history have been characterized by slow growth and progress, this is decidedly no longer the case. Our state is currently growing rapidly, and with growth comes change. Between April 1, 2000 and July 1, 2006, the state's population has increased 10.1%, making it the ninth fastest growing state in the country.

In the past decade and a half, the fastest growing populations in North Carolina are people of Hispanic, Asian, or multi-racial backgrounds. It is important to realize that within these groups, there is also great diversity. For example, North Carolina's Latinos trace their heritage to Mexico (65%), Puerto Rico (8.2%), Cuba (1.9%), and a variety of other Central and South American countries, or other Spanish-speaking countries (24.8%). The state's Asian population is equally as diverse, with the majority of residents coming from countries as varied as India, China, Vietnam, Korea, the Philippines, and Japan.

Just as all Americans don't share the same culture (residents of Eastern North Carolina have a very different lifestyle than people living in New Mexico), people of Hispanic and Asian descent also have varied backgrounds and traditions. In moving to our state, they bring many elements of their culture with them, including what they eat. This is clear in the increasing variety of restaurants offering food other than the traditional barbecue and collard greens.

Below are two recipes you may not have tasted before. Try them to sample some of the richness and variety our state's newest residents bring to North Carolina food and culture. 

Pozole (Mexican pork & hominy stew)

Yield: 4-6 servings

- 1 ½ to 2 lbs. pork shoulder or roast
- 2-3 c. hominy, canned or fresh, rinsed
- 2-5 whole garlic cloves
- 6 c. water or stock
- 2 tsp. salt

Garnishes: shredded cabbage or iceberg lettuce; finely diced onion; thinly sliced radishes; lime cut in wedges; diced avocado; dried oregano.

1. Add pork, hominy, garlic, stock or water and salt to a large pot. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 1 ½ to 2 hours until meat is very tender.
2. Remove pot from heat, remove meat from pot and cool. Remove meat from bones and shred with your hands. Add meat back to the pot and simmer another 10-15 minutes. Adjust seasoning.
3. Serve pozole with little bowls of your choice of garnishes so each diner can garnish his or her own serving.

Sources:

- U.S. Census Bureau. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/>
- Children's Services Practice Notes, "Latinos in North Carolina." http://ssw.unc.edu/fcrp/Cspn/vol7_no3/

Gari (Japanese pickled ginger)

Yield: About 1 cup

- ¼ lb. gingerroot, peeled, very thinly sliced
- ½ c. rice vinegar
- 2 T. sugar
- ¼ tsp. salt
- Red food coloring (optional)

1. Bring water to a boil in a saucepan. Add ginger and simmer 1 minute. Drain. Place ginger in a heatproof jar.
2. Bring vinegar sugar, salt and food coloring to a boil in a small saucepan.
3. Pour over ginger and marinate for at least one hour.



WORD SEARCH

Multi-Cultural Foodways

S K K S S D X O C T Y X K H L S L S X A Y L B
 B G I A T L I O R B B A F C B E P E R S E U B E
 C L T T E S K P W C Q L I H E I D L N C R J J
 O P C R E A L L I E A U V I T R J B K E C P A
 L W H Y W S J G S E V R N C R R X A A C G F S
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 D H T L G R Y C U S L M E J K D V E H X A E O
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 O E U C E B R A B M A B Y H N K R O P N P Q M

SUPPER
 BARBECUE
 GUMBO
 VEGETABLES
 ROAST
 PEMMICAN
 CORN
 OKRA

LEFTOVERS
 SUET
 SQUASH
 AFRICAN
 RICE
 BROIL
 FEAST
 BERRIES

KUSH
 PORRIDGE
 CHICKEN
 COLLARDS
 SWEETS
 JERKY
 KITCHEN
 REFRIGERATION

EUROPEAN
 CHOCOLATE
 VARIETY
 FIREPLACE
 PORK
 HOMINY
 YAMS
 SKILLET

Featured Programs



The fall and winter months are a special time at Tryon Palace Historic Sites & Gardens! Contact our group sales manager at (252) 514-4935 or kpierson@tryonpalace.org to schedule your group's visit, or check our website for information on the following tours.

North Carolina Begins Here

See where North Carolina began as you tour North Carolina's first capitol, visit the kitchen office, blacksmith shop, and stroll outside in the nationally acclaimed gardens. Enhance your palace experience by visiting the New Bern Academy Museum. (Grades K-12)

Touching the Past

Explore the day-to-day lives of the Governor, his servants, and the townspeople of New Bern in this program that combines tours of the Palace, kitchen and stable, blacksmith shop and gardens with a hands-on program in the Hay House. (Grades 3-5)

The Making of a State

Designed to connect 21st-century students to the American Revolution, character vignettes bring stories alive as students participate in dramatic interpretations while surrounded by the landscape and objects of the period. (Grades 6-12)

Daytime Christmas Tour

Enjoy an unforgettable visit and learn about changing American holiday traditions from the last three centuries as you tour the decorated first floors of all of our historic buildings. The sights, sounds and smells of Christmases past make this an extraordinary time to tour! (Grades K-12) 

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Classroom 

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