

Throwdown with Tommy J., Early American Food Star

General

Grade Level

Middle School

Author Info

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Type of Lesson

Cooperative Learning

Duration

1-2 class periods of 45 minutes

Interdisciplinary Connections

Nutrition, food sciences, multi-culturalism

Objectives

Overview

Throughout time, food has connected people and cultures. Many changes in American cuisine and cooking techniques have been attributed to Thomas Jefferson, some rightly so, and others not. Dave DeWitt includes him in his book, *The Founding Foodies: How Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin Revolutionized American Cuisine*, because he would indeed have fit the description of a modern "foodie", a passionate student of various foods and cooking techniques. His guests often described meals served at his table as "half Virginian, half French" in style. This lesson will ask students to look at some

Thomas Jefferson food "firsts" and determine whether they are fact or folklore. Then they will have a chance to take one of the recipes Jefferson treasured and add their own ingredient ideas to blend the colonial Virginian with an ethnic heritage they love.

Prior Knowledge

Students should have a basic biographical knowledge about Thomas Jefferson and his travels and gardens. Useful links can be found on the Jefferson tab of monticello.org. Students should also have some background in modern food movements.

State Standards

Virginia Standards of Learning

US I.1- The student will demonstrate skills for historical and geographical analysis and responsible citizenship including the ability to

b.- make connections between the past and present.

US I.7- The student will demonstrate knowledge of the challenges faced by the new nation by

c.- describing the major accomplishments of the first five presidents.

Common Core State Standards

RH 6-8.7- Integrate visual information (eg., charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

RH 6-8.8- Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

WHST 6-8.9- Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Students will examine some claims about Thomas Jefferson and his food "firsts" and determine which of the selected assertions can be backed up by evidence and which are folklore.

Students will select one of his recipes to add their own ethnic ingredients in the manner he had his cooks make meals "half Virginian, half French".

If possible, students will prepare their revised recipes for tasting.

Technology Connections/outcomes

This lesson could be connected to nutrition, food science, and multi-culturalism.

Additional Learning Outcomes

Students should come away with an understanding that not everything passed down as history is backed up by evidence. Some things are folklore yet still may serve a purpose in passing on ideas. Students should be able to do further independent research on the topic from sources provided to answer their own questions.

Essential Questions

What did Thomas Jefferson add to American cuisine and cooking techniques that can be backed up by evidence? Was he really an innovator, an adaptor, or someone who popularized foods? Was he more farm to table or an importer? Why do we call him a "founding foodie"?

Procedures

1. 5-10 minutes

Using pictures of Thomas Jefferson's kitchen, gardens, and dining items, introduce him as someone who enjoyed quality food and drink and that he built his home, Monticello, with that in mind. Ask students some questions to get them thinking. What is a "foodie"? From what you just saw, does it look like he was one? Who do you think did his cooking? Have you ever heard any claims about him introducing new foods or techniques to Americans?

2. 10 minutes

In groups of three to four, have students mark their answer choices on the "Thomas Jefferson, Founding Foodie: Fact or Folklore" worksheet. (This could be projected instead and have one student record whole class results.)

3. 20 minutes

Now read the evidence handout and revise answers using that newly acquired knowledge. For additional information, check out *The Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia* at monticello.org. which contains thirty- nine articles related to food and drink and the info sheets provided by classroom.monticello.org.

4. 20-30 minutes

Using a recipe template and one of the recipes provided from Thomas Jefferson's Monticello collection, include other ingredients to make it "half-Virginian, half an ethnic group you love" in style.

If you can, try your new recipe out, taste it, and report your results to the class. (Optional)

Related Assets

Handouts and Downloads

- [Thomas Jefferson, Founding Foodie: Fact or Folklore](#)
- [Throwdown with Tommy J., Early American Food Star](#)
- [Evidence Handout for Thomas Jefferson, Founding Foodie: Fact or Folklore](#)

Materials

Materials Needed

"Thomas Jefferson, Founding Foodie: Fact or Folklore" worksheet

Evidence handout

"Throwdown with Tommy J., Early American Food Star" Recipe template

Info sheets on the recipes and people from classroom.monticello.org

Technology Needs

Computers or handheld devices to access the resources at classroom.monticello.org and *The Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia* at monticello.org. A single computer connected to a projection system and interactive whiteboard could also work.

Assessment

Homework

Optional: Actually make your new recipe, and do a taste test. Report back to your class the results.

Assessment

Students will revise their original decisions (fact v. folklore) after reading the evidence selections.

Students will turn in a copy of their revised recipe after sharing their ideas with other groups.

If possible, students will try their recipes for a taste test and report their results back to the class. (Keep in mind, some schools do not allow the sharing of home cooked foods nor do they allow students cooking opportunities at school.)

Accommodations

Accommodations – Students with Special Needs

This is meant to be collaborative and therefore can be inclusive.

Accommodations – Advanced Learners

Advanced students could take a look at more than just food in terms of things credited to Thomas Jefferson and whether they were fact or folklore (eg., inventions).

The logo for Thomas Jefferson MONTICELLO. It features a dark blue rectangular background. On the left side, the name "Thomas Jefferson" is written in a white, elegant cursive script. Below it, the word "MONTICELLO" is written in a white, all-caps, serif font.