

Foods of Latin America:

A Spanish Cultural Lesson



University of Arizona- Center for Latin American Studies

For additional outreach information and resources visit:

<https://las.arizona.edu/curriculum>

This lesson is designed for high school students.



COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Latin American Studies

Learning Spanish with Latin American Foods
Problem Based Unit
Teacher Guide- High School

Lesson Summary:

This is a lesson for cultural studies in a Spanish language class. There are suggestions to implement grammar and vocabulary as you learn about different cultures, and the students will conclude with a presentation. This could be used as an opportunity to allow the students to present fully or partially in Spanish, depending on their proficiency level.

This lesson is designed to teach students about the cultural significance of food in Latin America, while also giving them with the opportunity to use vocabulary and grammar necessary to discuss food in the Spanish language. Students will work individually and collaboratively to research different dishes and their cultural significance to their corresponding country, creating a presentation at the end designed to solve a problem. This lesson is designed to be completed in 7-10 days but can be adjusted as depending on curriculum and classroom needs.

Suggested Dishes and Countries to Research:

- Mole- Mexico
- Arepa- Venezuela/Columbia
- Empanada- Argentina
- Pupusa- El Salvador
- Encebollado- Ecuador
- Soup Joumou- Haiti

NOTE: Students can choose another dish and country, but resources will only be provided for what is listed above. Students should be aware that additional research will be necessary if a different dish is selected. Some sources provided are in Spanish for students who are more advanced.

Arizona Department of Education: World and Native Languages Standards

Proficiency Levels

Intermediate:

The student communicates with sentences and some connected sentences while expressing and elaborating on basic needs. The learner controls the language with enough accuracy to be understood by one accustomed to dealing with language learners.

Advanced:

The student communicates in various time frames in extended, organized paragraph length discourse to *respond to and resolve problems*. The learner controls the language sufficiently enough to interact effectively with someone unaccustomed to dealing with language learners.

Cultural Competencies

Intermediate:

Investigate and describe similarities and differences in practices, products, and perspectives used across cultures (e.g., holidays, family life, historical and contemporary figures) to understand one’s own and others’ ways of thinking.

Advanced:

Analyze and evaluate practices, products, and perspectives of the culture studied and describe how they are interrelated to topics of philosophy, social issues, *regionalisms*, history, and traditions of their own cultures (as applicable).

Presentation Speaking

Intermediate High:

Make general presentations on events and experiences with some control of various time frames.

Advanced Low:

Deliver detailed presentations on events, interests, experiences, and academic topics in various time frames.

Lesson Overview

This lesson is designed to be a two-week mini unit, but according to the needs of the students this can be adjusted as necessary. Within the lesson there is suggested grammar and vocabulary lessons, however, depending on the level of the students and the timing of the curriculum, these can be substituted for more basic/advanced concepts.

Week 1: Introduction and Research

Day 1: Preliminary Introduction to the Problem	
Materials	Instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Guardian: The Caravan https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILkbOOIwlFM Center for American Progress https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2018/06/01/451474/still-refugees-people-continue-flee-violence-latin-american-countries/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read the article and watch the video to learn about refugees seeking asylum from Latin America. Lead students in a discussion about the hardships that refugees and potential struggles even if they are granted asylum

Day 2: Group and Role Assignment	
Materials	Instruction

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student introduction sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present the student introduction sheet and the problem that the students will be attempting to solve. • Students will be assigned in groups of 5 (can be expanded if additional roles are added or multiple students work together on one role) and be assigned one of the 5 research topics • Review each role and clarify any questions
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Day 3: Individual Research	
Materials	Instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet Access • Research Notes Sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a teacher you will guide the students as they use provided links or their own searches to research more about their topic- have the students organize what they learn on the Research Notes Sheet • Remind the students that they will need to know the specific vocabulary to present on their topic, they can record it under Vocab in the Research Notes Sheet

Day 4: Grammatical Instruction	
Materials	Instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook, internet, whatever method you have found effective. • Possible resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comparison https://www.thespanishexperiment.com/learn-spanish/comparisons ○ Ordering food https://spanishandgo.com/learn/how-to-order-food-in-spanish ○ Pedir https://www.spanish.academy/blog/pedir-conjugation-free-spanish-lesson-exercises-and-pdf/ ○ Conditional https://www.realfastspanish.com/grammar/the-spanish-conditional-tense-5-uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of this lesson you could include grammar instruction on what you deem useful for the students to present their ideas. You can use practice time to give the students opportunities to apply the instruction to what they are learning about <p>NOTE: If your students are advanced enough it may be appropriate to ask them what grammar skills they need to complete their tasks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible grammar subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comparing and contrasting (foods and countries) ○ How to order food (verbs like “querer” and “pedir”)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrative adjectives https://studyspanish.com/grammar/lessons/demonstrative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The conditional (used when making polite requests) ○ Demonstrative adjectives (used when presenting)
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Day 5-6: Sharing and Group Research	
Materials:	Instruction:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet Access • Research Notes Sheet • Proposal Description Sheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will meet with their groups to share what they have learned on their own. • Groups will begin to discuss how their research connects and begin to formulate ideas on how to solve their problem. • Groups should be encouraged to practice together using the previously taught grammar skill and vocabulary to discuss their research. • Students learn more about what a project proposal is and the steps to make one

Day 7-8 Planning and Designing Presentations	
Materials:	Instruction:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet Access • Research Notes Sheet • Proposal Description Sheet • Digital presentation medium (PowerPoint, Prezi etc.) • Physical presentation materials (poster, markers, paper etc.) • Grammar resources (see above) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are encouraged to design a creative solution to the problem and prepare to present it to the class • Students should work equally on the project proposal and prepare to present their role's contribution to the final product.

Day 8-10: Presenting and Evaluating	
Materials:	Instruction:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each group will present their project proposal to the class demonstrating

	<p>what they have learned about the culture and food of their assigned region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• After all the presentations, a general class wide discussion could be useful to discuss the importance of food in Latin American culture.
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Student Roles

- You are the **food historian!** Your job is to research the origin of the dish assigned to your group. You will work closely with the cultural anthropologist to assess how and why this dish became important to the people of the region. Your input on the final project proposal is essential to ensure true understanding of the refugees. Some questions to consider in your research may be:
 - Why did this dish develop in this specific location?
 - How long has the dish been around, and has it changed over time?
 - What are the historical influences of the food? (i.e. Indigenous, African, European)
- You are the **local regional specialist!** Since you are trying to make the refugees feel welcome in a new place, it is helpful to understand your own town's characteristics for comparison. Your input on the final project proposal will be essential when it comes to adapting your town's resources to help the refugees feel welcome. Some questions you may consider are:
 - What is your own town's history with immigration?
 - Where have immigrants traditionally come from? Is there already a strong presence of the immigrants from your project country in your town? If so, how could they be consulted for help?
 - Are the required ingredients for your dish available in your town?
 - Are there any comparable cultural practices practiced here in relation to the country where your dish is from?
- You are the **cultural anthropologist!** Your job is to examine the cultural significance of your food and its current ties to tradition in the country of origin. You will work closely with the food historian to understand the cultural significance of your specific dish. Your contributions will be essential on the final project proposal to help the refugees feel more welcome in a foreign place. Some questions to consider in your research may be:
 - What traditions, holidays, etc. are associated with your dish?
 - Has your dish ever been appropriated and modified by another country?
 - Does class factor into your dish? Is it traditionally enjoyed by upper or lower classes, or both?
 - How does this dish compare to other Latin American dishes?
- You are the **foreign regional specialist!** You are responsible for giving your group a better understanding of the country where your dish is from and the people that call it home. Your contribution to the final project proposal will be essential to understanding the hardships of these refugees. Make sure to compare what you learn with the local regional specialist! Some questions you may consider are:
 - What are some of the current difficulties that this country faces that might be affecting the refugees?
 - What is the agriculture like in this country? Does that influence your dish?
 - What is a refugee experience like for somebody from this country? What are specific hardships for them in a foreign land?

- You are the **head chef!** You are responsible for being an expert on your group's specific dish, as well as the larger culture of food in the corresponding country. Your input will be essential for the final project proposal to make the refugees feel welcome. Some questions to consider in your research may be:
 - What are the basic ingredients of your dish? Are any of them unique to this country?
 - Where do the ingredients come from? Are they unique to your country, or were they imported?
 - Does your dish vary regionally within its own country? If so, what are some of those variations?
 - Does your dish require any special non-food materials or tools for preparation?

Suggested Topics and Resource List

NOTE: There is a great series on Netflix called *Latin American Street Foods* that features some of the foods below and many more. Students should not be discouraged from picking a different food. Below are many good starting places for information on the foods, but that is just the beginning. There are books to be checked out, videos to watch; encourage students to consult diverse sources on their food and country for their research.

- Mole- Mexico
 - <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/09/colonial-history-mole-mexicos-national-dish/597880/>
 - <https://theculturetrip.com/north-america/mexico/articles/a-brief-history-of-mole-mexicos-national-dish/>
 - <https://www.epicurious.com/archive/blogs/editor/2014/09/the-7-definitive-types-oaxacan-mole.html>
 - <https://www.thecuriousmexican.com/mole/>
 - <https://time.com/3742067/history-mexican-immigration/>

- Arepa- Venezuela/ Columbia
 - <https://www.telesurenglish.net/bloggers/Brief-History-About-the-Arepa-and-its-Versatility-20150312-0001.html>
 - <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2017/07/26/538515889/arepas-are-conquering-the-world-but-dying-at-home-in-venezuela>
 - <https://www.thespruceeats.com/masarepa-precooked-corn-flour-for-making-arepas-3029290>
 - <https://people.howstuffworks.com/culture-traditions/national-traditions/venezuelan-tradition1.htm>
 - <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/bogota/el-festival-de-la-arepa-colombiana/>

- Empanada- Argentina
 - <https://blog.amigofoods.com/index.php/argentine-foods/history-of-argentinian-empanadas/#:~:text=The%20History%20of%20Argentinian%20Empanadas&text=It's%20believed%20that%20early%20Spanish,and%20different%20types%20of>

[%20meat.&text=Historically%2C%20an%20empanada%20was%20a,meat%2C%20pork%2C%20or%20beef.](#)

- <https://vamospanish.com/discover/the-story-of-argentine-empanada/>
- <http://www.peperonatapasta.com/history-of-empanadas-in-argentina#:~:text=In%20Argentinian%20culture%2C%20empanadas%20are,easy%20to%20carry%20dough%20pocket!>
- <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/lifestyle/el-mapa-definitivo-empanadas-argentinas-sus-14-nid2175466>
- <https://wander-argentina.com/empanadas-the-tasty-pastry-that-everybody-loves/>

- **Pupusa- El Salvador**
 - <https://www.thefooddictator.com/the-hirshon-el-salvadoran-pupusas/#:~:text=Pupusas%20were%20first%20created%20centuries,now%20known%20as%20El%20Salvador.&text=In%20the%20late%201940s%2C%20pupusas,and%20cities%20of%20the%20country.>
 - <https://elsalvadorinfo.net/salvadoran-pupusas/>
 - https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/food/pupusas-through-thick-and-thin/2012/04/03/gIQAxmG1sS_story.html
 - <https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/decretos/details/1535>
 - <https://web.archive.org/web/20150716020748/http://losangeles.univision.com/mesa-de-la-hispanidad/article/2011-07-27/origen-de-las-pupusas-salvador-honduras>

- **Encebollado- Ecuador**
 - <https://weblogtheworld.com/countries/southern-america/encebollado-ecuadors-national-dish>
 - <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Encebollado-Voted-Ecuadors-Most-Emblematic-Food-for-2015-20150508-0020.html>
 - <http://www.gastronomiaperu.com/noticias/detalles.php?d=2534>
 - <https://www.laylita.com/recipes/encebollado-de-pescado-or-tuna-soup/>
 - [https://www.adventure-life.com/ecuador/articles/history-and-culture-of-ecuador#:~:text=Ecuadorian%20food%20consists%20mainly%20of,rice%2C%20eggs%2C%20and%20vegetables.&text=Tubers%2C%20like%20potatoes%20and%20yuca,guinea%20pig\)%20are%20popular%20delicacies.](https://www.adventure-life.com/ecuador/articles/history-and-culture-of-ecuador#:~:text=Ecuadorian%20food%20consists%20mainly%20of,rice%2C%20eggs%2C%20and%20vegetables.&text=Tubers%2C%20like%20potatoes%20and%20yuca,guinea%20pig)%20are%20popular%20delicacies.)

- **Soup Joumou- Haiti**
 - <https://www.epicurious.com/recipes-menus/haitian-independence-soup-joumou-recipe-article>
 - <https://haitian-recipes.com/history-soup-joumou/>
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEdM3xS7JCY&ab_channel=MyHaitiInside
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5A_o-nU5s2U&ab_channel=CrashCourse
<https://visithaiti.com/food-drink/soup-joumou/>

Student Introduction Sheet
Food in Latin America
Project Proposal

Introduction:

For this project you will work individually and with a group to learn more about food and cultural in Latin America. As you have seen, there are thousands of refugees seeking asylum that enter the United States each year. You and your team work for a local non-profit organization dedicated to feeding and supporting these refugees. You are tasked with creating a proposal that advocates for the use of a specific foreign dish to help the Latin American refugees feel more welcome. You will present a plan to implement serving this dish to the refugees, along with any other accompanying ideas to help them adjust.



Suggested Topics to Research:

- **Mole- México**
- **Arepa- Venezuela/Columbia**
- **Empanada- Argentina**
- **Pupusa- El Salvador**
- **Encebollado- Ecuador**
- **Soup Joumou- Haiti**

Project Timeline:

You will be guided during a two-week period to work on the proposal and learn the skills necessary in Spanish to present your topic.

Week one- Introduction and individual research

Week two- group collaboration and presentation

Student Roles:

Each student will be assigned one of 5 roles to narrow their research and will share what they learned later with fellow group members.

- You are the **food historian!** Your job is to research the origin of the dish assigned to your group. You will work closely with the cultural anthropologist to assess how and why this dish became important to the people of the region. Your input on the final project proposal is essential to ensure true understanding of the refugees. Some questions to consider in your research may be:
 - Why did this dish develop in this specific location?
 - How long has the dish been around, and has it changed over time?
 - What are the historical influences of the food? (i.e. Indigenous, African, European)

- You are the **local regional specialist!** Since you are trying to make the refugees feel welcome in a new place, it is helpful to understand your own town's characteristics for comparison. Your input on the final project proposal will be essential when it comes to adapting your town's resources to help the refugees feel welcome. Some questions you may consider are:
 - What is your own town's history with immigration?
 - Where have immigrants traditionally come from? Is there already a strong presence of the immigrants from your project country in your town? If so, how could they be consulted for help?
 - Are the required ingredients for your dish available in your town?
 - Are there any comparable cultural practices practiced here in relation to the country where your dish is from?

- You are the **cultural anthropologist!** Your job is to examine the cultural significance of your food and its current ties to tradition in the country of origin. You will work closely with the food historian to understand the cultural significance of your specific dish. Your contributions will be essential on the final project proposal to help the refugees feel more welcome in a foreign place. Some questions to consider in your research may be:
 - What traditions, holidays, etc. are associated with your dish?
 - Has your dish ever been appropriated and modified by another country?
 - Does class factor into your dish? Is it traditionally enjoyed by upper or lower classes, or both?
 - How does this dish compare to other Latin American dishes?

- You are the **foreign regional specialist!** You are responsible for giving your group a better understanding of the country where your dish is from and the people that call it home. Your contribution to the final project proposal will be essential to understanding the hardships of these refugees. Make sure to compare what you learn with the local regional specialist! Some questions you may consider are:
 - What are some of the current difficulties that this country faces that might be affecting the refugees?
 - What is the agriculture like in this country? Does that influence your dish?

- What is a refugee experience like for somebody from this country? What are specific hardships for them in a foreign land?
- You are the **head chef!** You are responsible for being an expert on your group's specific dish, as well as the larger culture of food in the corresponding country. Your input will be essential for the final project proposal to make the refugees feel welcome. Some questions to consider in your research may be:
 - What are the basic ingredients of your dish? Are any of them unique to this country?
 - Does your dish vary regionally within its own country? If so, what are some of those variations?
 - Does your dish require any special non-food materials or tools for preparation?

Suggested Topics and Resources

NOTE: You are not limited to the selections below, your group can decide together to research another food from Latin America.

- Mole- Mexico
 - <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2019/09/colonial-history-mole-mexicos-national-dish/597880/>
 - <https://theculturetrip.com/north-america/mexico/articles/a-brief-history-of-mole-mexicos-national-dish/>
 - <https://www.epicurious.com/archive/blogs/editor/2014/09/the-7-definitive-types-oaxacan-mole.html>
 - <https://www.thecuriousmexican.com/mole/>
 - <https://time.com/3742067/history-mexican-immigration/>
- Arepa- Venezuela/ Columbia
 - <https://www.telesurenglish.net/bloggers/Brief-History-About-the-Arepa-and-its-Versatility-20150312-0001.html>
 - <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2017/07/26/538515889/arepas-are-conquering-the-world-but-dying-at-home-in-venezuela>
 - <https://www.thespruceeats.com/masarepa-precooked-corn-flour-for-making-arepas-3029290>
 - <https://people.howstuffworks.com/culture-traditions/national-traditions/venezuelan-tradition1.htm>
 - <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/bogota/el-festival-de-la-arepa-colombiana/>
- Empanada- Argentina

- <https://blog.amigofoods.com/index.php/argentine-foods/history-of-argentinian-empanadas/#:~:text=The%20History%20of%20Argentinian%20Empanadas&text=It's%20believed%20that%20early%20Spanish,and%20different%20types%20of%20meat.&text=Historically%2C%20an%20empanada%20was%20a,meat%2C%20pork%2C%20or%20beef.>
- <https://vamospanish.com/discover/the-story-of-argentine-empanada/>
- <http://www.peperonatapasta.com/history-of-empanadas-in-argentina/#:~:text=In%20Argentinian%20culture%2C%20empanadas%20are,easy%20to%20carry%20dough%20pocket!>
- <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/lifestyle/el-mapa-definitivo-empanadas-argentinas-sus-14-nid2175466>
- <https://wander-argentina.com/empanadas-the-tasty-pastry-that-everybody-loves/>
- **Pupusa- El Salvador**
 - <https://www.thefooddictator.com/the-hirshon-el-salvadoran-pupusas/#:~:text=Pupusas%20were%20first%20created%20centuries,now%20known%20as%20El%20Salvador.&text=In%20the%20late%201940s%2C%20pupusas,and%20cities%20of%20the%20country.>
 - <https://elsalvadorinfo.net/salvadoran-pupusas/>
 - https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/food/pupusas-through-thick-and-thin/2012/04/03/gIQAxmG1sS_story.html
 - <https://www.asamblea.gob.sv/decretos/details/1535>
 - <https://web.archive.org/web/20150716020748/http://losangeles.univision.com/mesa-de-la-hispanidad/article/2011-07-27/origen-de-las-pupusas-salvador-honduras>
- **Encebollado- Ecuador**
 - <https://weblogtheworld.com/countries/southern-america/encebollado-ecuadors-national-dish>
 - <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Encebollado-Voted-Ecuadors-Most-Emblematic-Food-for-2015-20150508-0020.html>
 - <http://www.gastronomiaperu.com/noticias/detalles.php?d=2534>
 - <https://www.laylita.com/recipes/encebollado-de-pescado-or-tuna-soup/>
 - [https://www.adventure-life.com/ecuador/articles/history-and-culture-of-ecuador#:~:text=Ecuadorian%20food%20consists%20mainly%20of,rice%2C%20eggs%2C%20and%20vegetables.&text=Tubers%2C%20like%20potatoes%20and%20yuca,guinea%20pig\)%20are%20popular%20delicacies.](https://www.adventure-life.com/ecuador/articles/history-and-culture-of-ecuador#:~:text=Ecuadorian%20food%20consists%20mainly%20of,rice%2C%20eggs%2C%20and%20vegetables.&text=Tubers%2C%20like%20potatoes%20and%20yuca,guinea%20pig)%20are%20popular%20delicacies.)
- **Soup Joumou- Haiti**
 - <https://www.epicurious.com/recipes-menus/haitian-independence-soup-joumou-recipe-article>
 - <https://haitian-recipes.com/history-soup-joumou/>
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEdM3xS7JCY&ab_channel=MyHaitiInside_r
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5A_o-nU5s2U&ab_channel=CrashCourse
 - <https://visithaiti.com/food-drink/soup-joumou/>

Student Notes Sheet

Food Historian: Why did this dish develop in this specific location?
How long has the dish been around, and has it changed over time?
What are the historical influences of the food? (i.e. Indigenous, African, European) What is the history of its ingredients?

Notes:

Source:

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Local Regional Specialist: What is your own town's history with immigration and refugees? Where have immigrants traditionally come from? Is there already a strong presence of the immigrants from your project country in your town? If so, how could they be consulted for help?
What about immigration issues in your country as a whole?
Are the required ingredients for your dish available in your town?
Are there any comparable cultural practices practiced here in relation to the country where your dish is from?

Notes:	Source:

Cultural Anthropologist: What traditions, holidays, etc. are associated with your dish?
Has your dish ever been appropriated and modified by another country?
Does class factor into your dish? Is it traditionally enjoyed by upper or lower classes, or both?
How does this dish compare to other Latin American dishes?

Notes:	Source:

Foreign Regional Specialist: What are some of the current difficulties that this country faces that might be affecting the refugees?
What is the agriculture like in this country? Does that influence your dish?
What is a refugee experience like for somebody from this country? What are specific hardships for them in a foreign land?

Notes:	Source:

Head Chef: What are the basic ingredients of your dish? Are any of them unique to this country?

Where do the ingredients come from? Are they unique to your country, or were they imported?

Does your dish vary regionally within its own country? If so, what are some of those variations?

Does your dish require any special non-food materials or tools for preparation?

Notes:

Source:

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