

CATEGORY: WRAP-UP

CONCEPTS: FOOD

ACTIVITY: A LATIN AMERICAN BANQUET. A complete Latin American meal can teach a great deal about different countries' products, family life and ethnic heritage. It is also a good way to finish the Latin American unit or end the school year on a festive note. Many schools incorporate a banquet into a complete Latin America Day.

Most of the following recipes were used for just such a Latin American day for the Sixth graders of the Baraboo, Wisconsin, Public Schools. They invited school administrators, parents, school board members and other guests.

OBJECTIVES: Students will enjoy tasting and perhaps preparing a complete Latin American meal.

MATERIALS: See individual recipes.

HELPFUL HINTS: Be prepared for an almost universal youngster's comment about new food: "It's yucky!" Generally speaking, the joy of unusual tastes is something developed later in life, if ever. A discussion of why we like what we like (familiarity) will help put this in perspective. A discussion also of courtesy when experiencing something new from other cultures will also be helpful as teachers have been embarrassed more than once by such comments as "This food stinks" directed at visiting guests from Latin America or elsewhere.

RELATED ACTIVITIES: To accompany the banquet you might consider the following:

1. records of Latin American music,
2. placemats with Latin American motifs made ahead of time by students,
3. written or read aloud descriptions of the national dishes and their background.

Here are the recipes:

**LEVEL: MIDDLE GRADES**

**Source:** Gibbs, Virginia G. *Latin America: Curriculum Materials for the Middle Grades*. Center for Latin America, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. 1985/1989.

CANJA (Brazilian)  
Chicken, ham and rice soup

Brazilian cooking is a mixture of the country's many ethnic backgrounds: Portuguese, Indian and West African. It is also a mixture of ingredients which originated in the Americas and those brought from around the world. Rice, which is contained in this soup, is one of Brazil's basic food items, generally speaking, replacing our potato.

Ingredients: 3 1/2-4 lb. chicken, cut into 6 or 8 pieces  
1 medium onion, cut in half  
1 qt. chicken stock, fresh or canned  
2 qts. cold water  
6 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded and coarsely chopped  
1 cup finely diced carrots  
1 cup raw long-grain rice  
freshly ground black pepper  
1 cup finely diced ham  
1 tsp. finely chopped parsley

In a 5-quart flameproof casserole, combine the chicken, onion, chicken stock and water. Bring to a boil over high heat, meanwhile removing all scum from the surface as it forms. Reduce the heat to low, cover the casserole and cook undisturbed for 30 minutes, or until the chicken is tender but not falling apart. Transfer the chicken to a plate to cool. Strain the stock through a fine sieve into a bowl and discard the onion. Skim off and discard as much of the surface fat as you can and return the stock to the casserole. Add the tomatoes, carrots, rice and a few grindings of black pepper, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to low, cover the casserole and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes, or until rice is tender.

Remove the skin from the chicken with a small, sharp knife or your fingers. Cut or pull the meat away from the bones. Discard the bones and cut the chicken meat into strips about 1/8 inch wide and 1 to 1 1/2 inches long. Add the chicken and ham to the simmering soup, and cook for 4-5 minutes to heat them through. Stir in the parsley, taste for seasoning, and serve at once, directly from the casserole or from a large tureen.

PICO DE GALLO (Central America)  
Rooster's Beak Fruit Salad

Pico de Gallo is called "rooster's beak" because it is eaten with finger and thumb, suggesting the pecking of a rooster. A common vegetable used in the salad is the jicama. The jicama is a brown-skinned root common all over Mexico and Central America. It has a slightly sweet taste. The jicama is becoming popular in many parts of the United States where it is being used as a raw vegetable like celery and carrots.

- 1 jicama, peeled and cut into small wedges
- 3 oranges, peeled and cut into thin slices and bite-size pieces
- 2 bananas, sliced
- fresh pineapple
- powdered chile, mild or hot, according to taste
- salt



### BUÑUELOS (Mexico) Fritters

In Mexico these crisp pastries are sugar glazed and eaten as a mid-afternoon snack. This type of fried and sweetened dough confection is found all over Latin America in slightly differing varieties and undoubtedly shows the Spanish and Portuguese heritage. In these countries, this type of pastry can be traced to the Arab influence.

Pre-packaged flour tortillas

Oil for frying

Sugar mixture: 1/2 cup sugar, 2 tsps. cinnamon, pinch of powdered cloves

Place tortillas in hot oil and brown on both sides. Remove, let cool somewhat and sprinkle with sugar mixture, serve.

### MOLE (Mexico)

Mole is a dark brown, spicy chocolate sauce served with chicken or turkey. In Mexico, and parts of Central America it is a typical holiday food. In its original version it includes many different types of chile peppers. The chocolate in mole and in our candy bars originated in Mexico. To the Aztecs it was a prime delicacy and after the Conquest the Spaniards introduced it to Europe. From there, it has spread all over the world to become a favorite international treat.

1 large turkey	6 spice cloves
1/2 cup chile peppers(chopped)	1 small hard roll-breaded
1 cup almonds	1 large corn tortilla-in small pieces
1 cup raisins	4 tomatoes (chopped)
2 large unsweetened chocolate bars	1 large onion
4 tablespoons sesame seeds	1 garlic clove
2 tablespoons cinnamon	vegetable oil
	salt and sugar

Cut the turkey into bite-sized pieces, place in a large kettle and boil with the onion (halved), the garlic clove, and salt to taste. When the turkey is tender, add the chile sauce and bring to a full boil before serving.

The chile sauce: Brown all the ingredients in vegetable oil, except for the chocolate. Then, using a mortar and pestle (Mexican style) or a blender (much easier) convert the mixture into a puree. Melt the chocolate bars and add to mix, which is then refried. Add to the turkey, bring to a full boil and serve.

(A very good collection of recipes from all over Latin America has recently appeared: From Guacamole to Rocambole. It can be purchased for the moderate price of \$4.50 a copy - plus \$.65 for mailing - from Center for Latin American Studies, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY 42101. There are recipes for years of banquets.)