

# Cultural and Ethnic Foods

4-H MANUAL



# Acknowledgements

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**NOTE: This manual is currently under revision for the 2024-2025 4-H year.**



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### Information Page:

Cultural or Ethnic Group Selected:

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Your Name:

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4-H Age:

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Address:

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City:

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Zip Code:

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County:

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Club Name:

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Guardian's Signature:

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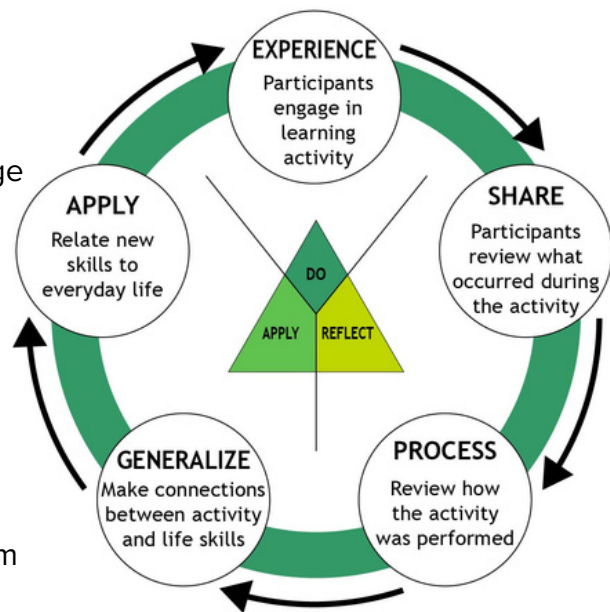
Leader's Signature:

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# Experiential Learning Process

The 4-H program utilizes a process where adult leaders ask open-ended questions that challenge youth to think. Through this inquiry, youth can propose hypotheses and determine their own solutions. The Experiential Learning Model developed by Pfeiffer and Jones (1985) and modified by 4-H includes five specific steps that can be summarized into three main processes: Do, Reflect, and Apply.

The Experiential Learning Model encourages discovery with minimal guidance from others. A situation, project or activity is undertaken for individual thought and problem solving. Minimum outside assistance is provided, but support is offered to the individual by questioning at each stage. The youth participating in an activity reflect on what they did and then assess how what they learned can be applied to a life situation. Below are questions that might help during each stage of learning.



## 1) Experience (Doing)

Questions: What sources of information are available? What is possible? What do you expect to see? How is it working? What else might you try?

## 2) Share (Reflecting on what occurred)

Questions: What was your goal for this project/activity when you began? What happened? What were the results? What was most difficult? How do you know? What did you learn? What surprised you? How did you share this project/activity with others?

## 3) Process (Reflecting on what's important)

Questions: What problems seemed to reoccur? How did you solve them? What similar experiences have you had? How was the experience like or unlike experiences others had? Would you do anything differently? What did you learn about making decisions? What suggestions would you have for someone else who wanted to do a similar project/activity? What life skills were you developing through your project? Why are life skills important? What new questions do you have about yourself, others, and future goals?

## 4) Generalize (So what?)

Questions: What did you learn about yourself or about the activity? What key points have you learned? How did you decide what to do? What else could you have done? How does this relate to something else in life? Where have you faced similar challenges in your life? Where might this situation occur in the future? Why is it important to have plenty of information before making decisions? What did you learn about your own skill in communicating with others?

## 5) Apply (Now what?)

Questions: How does this project/activity relate to your everyday life? Why is this project/activity important to you? Where else can this skill be used? How will you use this in the future? What will you do differently after this experience? How can I make an impact? What will I create next? In what ways do people help each other learn new things? What are qualities you think are important in a leader? If someone helped or mentored you in this project, what would you tell them you learned and what difference it has made in your life? How would you express your appreciation?



Image: Hendricks, P. (1998) "Developing Youth Curriculum Using the Targeting Life Skills Model" <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/4H/skls.eval.htm>

## Targeting Life Skills

A skill is a learned ability. Life skills are those abilities that assist individuals to lead successful, productive, and satisfying lives. In 4-H, we use the Targeting Life Skills Model to help youth become competent and prepared for adulthood. The Targeting Life Skills Model categories are based on the four H's from the 4-H clover (Head, Heart, Hands, and Health). Under each of these main categories, there are four categories and eight subcategories listing specific skills youth learn in 4-H. The main goal in 4-H positive youth development is to provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for youth to experience life skills and to be able to use them throughout a lifetime. By understanding the importance of the 4-H framework and its structure, 4-H members, parents, professionals, and leaders will know the expectations and will be able to effectively use 4-H delivery methods to help youth learn these life skills.

## About the 4-H Thriving Model

The 4-H Program Leaders' Working Group developed the 4-H Thriving Model to advance and support the accomplishment of the 4-H Youth Development 2025 National Strategic Plan. They describe the 4-H Thriving Model as follows:

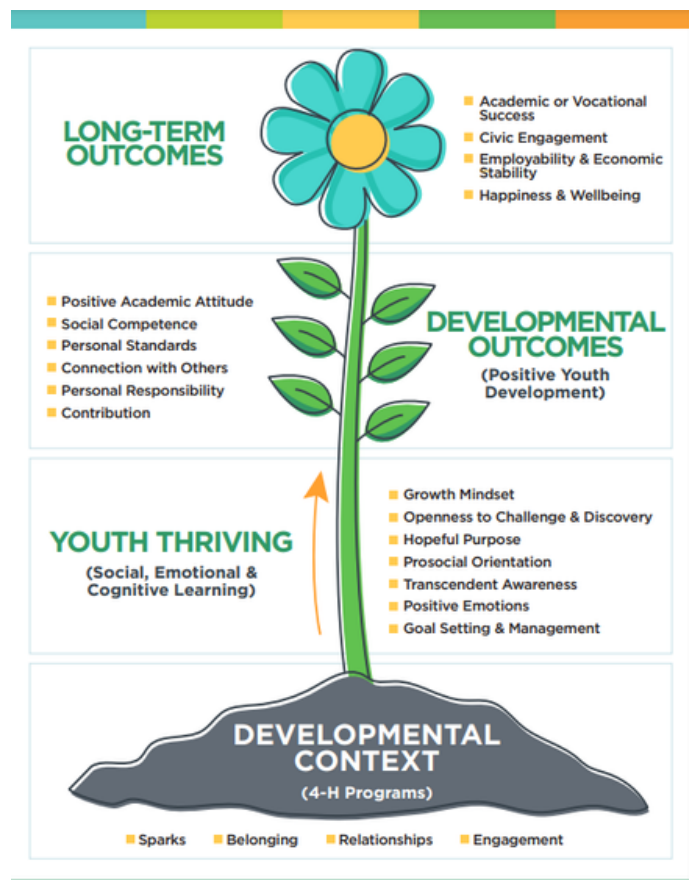
The 4-H Thriving Model illustrates the process of positive youth development in 4-H programs by connecting high quality program settings to the promotion of youth thriving.

High quality 4-H program settings provide youth a place to belong, matter and explore their personal spark. High quality settings foster developmental relationships with youth, relationships that express care, challenge growth, and share power. These components help ensure that 4-H programs provide a nourishing developmental context – a place where youth can belong and grow.

High quality 4-H programs contribute to Positive Youth Development (PYD) through the intentional promotion of social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral habits of mind. In the 4-H Thriving Model, this process of PYD is described by seven indicators of thriving: Openness to challenge and discover, growth mindset, hopeful purpose, pro-social orientation, transcendent awareness, positive emotionality, and self-regulation through goal setting and management.

Youth who experience high quality developmental settings in 4-H with an emphasis on these key social-emotional skills achieve key positive youth development outcomes, including academic motivation and success, social competence, high personal standards, connection with others, personal responsibility, and contribution to others through leadership and civic engagement.

Youth who achieve positive developmental outcomes are more likely to also achieve long-term outcomes marked by vocational or academic success, civic engagement, employability and economic stability and happiness and well-being. (Learn more at <https://helping-youth-thrive.extension.org/>.)





## Introduction to Cultural and Ethnic Foods

Welcome to 4-H Cultural and Ethnic Foods! You have an opportunity to investigate a wide variety of food choices during the coming year. Select one cultural or ethnic group within the United States to study in depth.

A cultural group is defined simply as a collection of individuals who share a core set of beliefs, patterns of behavior, and values. The groups may be large or small, but they are identified by their ways of thinking and behaving. All cultural groups are marked by intragroup variation.\*

Ethnicity is defined as an ethnic quality or affiliation. Commonalities that tie one to an ethnic group include skin color, religion, language, customs, ancestry, and occupational or regional features. People belonging to the same ethnic group share a unique history different from that of other ethnic groups. Usually, a combination of these features identifies an ethnic group. For example, physical appearance alone does not consistently identify one as belonging to a particular ethnic group.\*

Preparing food enables us to better understand the basic food patterns, culture, and customs of an ethnic or cultural group. Each is unique, which makes the experience exciting and fun. Remember to follow food safety tips as you think about foods you want to prepare for this project.

\*Definitions from Curricula Enhancement Module Series, National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development.

(<https://nccc.georgetown.edu/curricula/awareness/D17.html#:~:text=A%20cultural%20group%20is%20defined,are%20marked%20by%20intragroup%20variation.>)

### OBJECTIVES OF THE CULTURAL AND ETHNIC FOOD PROJECT

- Learn dietary patterns of an ethnic or cultural group.
- Plan, prepare, and serve ethnic or cultural meals.
- Gain a broader understanding of an ethnic or cultural group.
- Share experiences with others to promote greater understanding and appreciation of different cultures.
- Follow food safety procedures.





## PROJECT EXPECTATIONS

Select an ethnic or cultural group within the United States to study. Share with your leader the ethnic or cultural group you selected to study. Learn about the selected group such as:

- customs that influenced their food choices,
- nutritional aspects of their diet,
- menus and recipes,
- traditional food preparation techniques, and
- holidays and foods associated with them.
- Record in your own words the information you collected and experienced about the ethnic or cultural group.
- Assemble and keep information.
- Plan, prepare, and serve a minimum of three ethnic or cultural meals. At least one meal should be typical of the group you selected to study.
- Describe which of the three meals you like best and why.
- Write a story describing your experiences with the project.
- Present a demonstration to others on an ethnic or cultural foods related topic. Do a food-related community service project.
- Judge or evaluate food products to determine how well they meet acceptable standards or to select the best quality product.

## RESOURCES

The following are possible resources that may be of help to you. Can you think of others?

- Public Library - information about and cookbooks from different ethnic or cultural groups.
- Internet - offers a large number of sites containing information on ethnic cookery. Some possible search terms include: food, cooking, home and family, ethnic cookery, regional food, etc.

Record the web addresses for those sites you found most helpful.

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## IDEAS OF WHERE TO LOOK FOR RESOURCES

- Check within your community and contact individuals who may represent the ethnic or cultural group you are interested in.
- Check with a local college or university to see if they have programs that offer opportunities to learn about different cultural or ethnic groups.
- Visit ethnic food markets or grocery stores and cultural centers.
- Check with kitchen supply stores to see if they offer any cultural or ethnic cooking classes.
- Tour a culinary institute. To find a culinary institute in a city near you check the internet or phone directory under schools.
- Book stores offer a wide variety of materials on ethnic groups, foods, etc.

## FOOD SAFETY TIPS

When preparing food for your project, follow these tips to maintain food safety.

### 1. Tie hair back

Use a hair tie, hat, or bandana to keep hair from falling into food.

### 2. Wash hands

Wash hands in warm, soapy water before and after handling food.

### 3. Clean surfaces

Clean countertops and working surfaces before preparing food.

### 4. No licking the spoon

Do not lick fingers or utensils while preparing food. Also, do not taste uncooked foods like dough or batter that contain raw eggs or flour.

### 5. No double-dipping

Avoid double-dipping and putting spoons or utensils back into food after using them for tasting.

### 6. Separate foods

Keep unwashed and uncooked foods separate from ready-to-eat foods.

If you exhibit a food item at your county fair, select food that would display well. The food product must be safe to hold at room temperature during judging and display. For example, baked goods such as bread, pastries (without cream or custard filling), muffins, strudels, or fruit pies would be good items to consider. Dried foods like apples or leathers, cereals, or cookies and bars that do not require refrigeration would be acceptable.



## Exhibit Requirements

Include the following in your exhibit.

A. Completed e-Record and this manual including: Activity 1 on page 16; Activity 2 on page 16; Record on pages 17-23 including the Meal Report pages 19-20; with emphasis in your story about your accomplishments presented in a sturdy binder/notebook.

B. Include the following information on the Foods and Nutrition page:

1. Foods prepared
2. Number of times
3. Special concerns

C. A food product with recipe representative of the cultural or ethnic group within the United States that you selected.

D. Exhibit will be evaluated on the quality of content in the e-Record and manual activities (50 percent) and the quality of the food product (50 percent).

Note: The food product must be safe to hold at room temperature during judging and display.

Your records should include:

- a description of the cultural or ethnic group's food customs, traditional food preparation practices, holidays celebrated, and foods associated with them,
- reasons you selected the cultural or ethnic group,
- your goals for the project,
- how the goals were accomplished,
- nutritive value of the diet of the cultural or ethnic group studied,
- how the project broadened your understanding of the group you selected,
- a record of your demonstration, community service, and judging/evaluation experiences during the year,
- a story emphasizing your accomplishments.





## Food and Traditions

### ETHNIC FOODS

In the United States, food helps us understand our own cultures as well as the culture of others. Food reflects the story of a person or region's culture. Throughout the centuries, people prepared their meals based upon what they had learned and practiced in their country of origin or by what was available in their environment. Over time, many of these rich traditions changed in response to availability of new food products that cut preparation time, equipment that eliminated the need to do everything by hand, and less time to prepare authentic foods from scratch. Today traditional meal preparation methods are often reserved only for special holidays or family celebrations.

Advertising and meal programs helped introduced people to foods different from their traditional meals. This has resulted in foods once associated with one ethnic group becoming more widely enjoyed by others, for example, tacos, spaghetti, and rice.

The introduction of ethnic markets in communities has made traditional ingredients more readily available. This enables many individuals to again enjoy their traditional foods that could not previously be found in local grocery stores. These ethnic markets have also made it more convenient for others outside that ethnic group to purchase ingredients to use in ethnic meals as well.

### NATIVE AMERICAN COOKERY

Many Native American foods come from a wide variety of locations on our continent. If you want to cook traditional Native American meals, you need to pick a geographic location first, so you can choose the types of ingredients that would have grown there naturally many years ago. One resource for discovering regional food items is available at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352618116300750>. The Fish and Corn Mush recipe on the next page comes from this website.

Over time, some groups adapted to new sources of subsistence depending on plant availability or pressure on animals they hunted. Often food eaten in a region tells a story of that place and the experiences of the people. As you are doing your research, look for how foods changed over time due to events in history and environmental changes.





Following are two recipes that are incorporated into Native American cooking.



## RECIPE

### *Hopi Corn Stew*

1 cup roast beef or ground beef, chopped    1 cup zucchini squash, cubed  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil    2 cups plus 2 tablespoons water  
Salt and pepper to taste    2 tablespoons cornmeal  
2 cups fresh corn, cut from cobs

Heat shortening in a large heavy skillet. Brown meat and add salt and pepper to taste. Add squash, corn and 2 cups water. Simmer about 30 minutes, or until vegetables are almost tender.

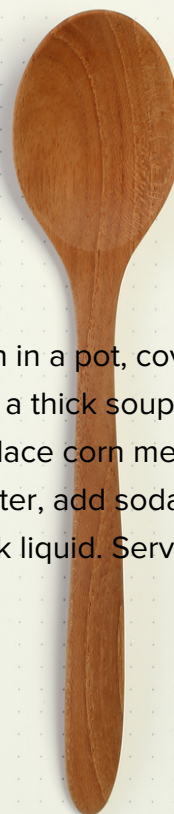
In a cup, stir together cornmeal and 2 tablespoons water to make a paste. Stir thickener into stew. Stir about 5 minutes to prevent sticking.

Makes 4 servings.

### *Fish and Corn Mush*

2 mediums sized fish  
cooked on a stick  
1 cup corn meal  
Pinch of baking soda  
Pinch of salt

Place finely chopped fish in a pot, cover with water, and boil until a thick soup is formed. In another pot place corn meal with 3 times as much water, add soda and salt and cook until a thick liquid. Serve together as a meal.





## **Cultural Foods**

Early American immigrants brought and planted seeds from their native countries introducing new foods to the region. They discovered plants that provided food, such as the Sugar Maple tree that provided sap for syrup. Diets relied on food sources available in the region, such as wild game, fish, roots, fruits, and berries. This trend continued throughout the civilization of the continent thus the variance in localized food habits.

Cultural food preparation often is a blend of traditional foods, due to sharing by individuals from different cultures who come together in new communities. Foods were blended to produce a richness of flavors unique to that group or region. Marriage resulted in the blending of food customs from each individual's family to form new practices as well.

### **PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH COOKING**

Pennsylvania (PA) Dutch cookery is one of the oldest and most distinctive of the many regional styles of cooking in the United States. Early German settlers brought with them a love of good food and knowledge of good cooking. They adapted their traditional old country recipes to use the limited ingredients they had available in their new land. Because they produced almost everything they used, their recipes become based upon the flocks, herds, and grains they had available to them.

Dough is used extensively in PA Dutch cooking. Rivals, noodles, dough balls, and all kinds of dumplings are used in soups, meat dishes, with vegetables and even in deserts. Dough and potatoes are often used in combination with meat in pot pies made in a kettle on top of the stove, not baked in an oven.

Potatoes are a favorite food of the PA Dutch and they are prepared in many different ways. They may be served at each meal starting with fried or hash browned for breakfast and as a part of a stew or pot pie for lunch or dinner. Cabbage, corn, beans, sugar peas, and Jerusalem artichokes are other popular vegetables used.

#### **Salads**

Hot potato salad is a common recipe used as compared to a lettuce-based salad due to the short growing season. There are only a few typical salads used for that reason.



### Sweets and Sours

Pickles, relishes, preserves, and spiced fruits are common in many kinds of regional or national cookery. Some of the most typical sweets are apple butter, spiced cantaloupe, and cinnamon apples, as well as a wide variety of preserves, jams, jellies, and fruit butters. Favorite sours include cabbage-filled peppers, pickled cabbage, chow chow, pickled beets, and pickled eggs.

### Desserts

Cakes, cookies, puddings, and custards are plentiful in PA Dutch cooking. Pies are a specialty and made daily with whatever ingredients are available. During the summer and fall, fruits are plentiful and used in their recipes. During the winter, when other things are not available, there are always Shoofly Pies and other pies made from dried fruits (raisins, dried apples, and apricots).



#### *Shoofly Pie*

Pastry for a 1-crust, 9-inch pie

1 cup all-purpose flour

2/3 cup light brown sugar, packed

1 tablespoon cold butter

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 egg

1 cup light molasses

3/4 cup cold water

1/4 cup hot water

1 tablespoon baking soda

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Roll out the pastry and line a 9-inch pie pan. Set aside. In a food processor bowl, combine the flour, brown sugar, butter and salt. Remove 1/2 cup of the mixture and set aside. Transfer the rest to a medium mixing bowl. In a small bowl, beat the egg lightly. Add the molasses and cold water and blend, but do not beat. Set aside.

In another small bowl, mix the hot water and the baking soda. Blend into the molasses mixture. Add to the flour mixture and mix well. Pour into the pie shell and top with the reserved crumbs.

Bake for 35 minutes. The pie will appear quivery but will firm up as it cools.

Transfer to a rack to cool completely before cutting.

Makes one 9-inch pie; serves 8.



## Creole and Cajun Cookery

The word Cajun originally comes from the word Acadian, which specified French-speaking individuals who were exiled to the Louisiana area in 1753. They are world-famous for great tasting food. Authentic cuisine does not include the recently popularized "blackening" technique nor extreme levels of spices. Cajun cooks know the secrets of using a variety of simple, fresh, locally-available ingredients with just the right seasonings.

The Acadian refugees made excellent use of the seafood, wild game, and fresh vegetation available to them to feed their families. Early Cajuns experimented with local herbs and prepared homemade seasonings to enhance the flavor of their plain meals. The modern Cajun kitchen includes at least one black cast-iron pot. Pantries usually are stocked with these essential items: rice, flour, oil, salt, pepper (black, red and white), beans (red, white and others) hot sauces, seasoning mixes, cane syrup, and sugar.

The first step in some Cajun cookery is to make a roux ("roo"), which is the key to successful gumbo, sauce piquante ("pee-kaht"), fricasse ("free-kah-say"), etouffee ("aye-too-fay") and stews. The basic procedure for a dark roux (Cajun's favorite) requires heating flour and oil, in roughly equal proportions, until the mixture is a rich chocolate color. This involves constant stirring, and depending upon the level of heat, may take 20 minutes to an hour. Well prepared roux smells like roasted nuts.

Cajuns are known for preparing lots of food for a meal.  
The tasty leftovers often are used for meals later in the week.



There is a trinity of chopped vegetables - onion, bell peppers, and celery - that are standard ingredients in many recipes. Other vegetables may be added to the recipe, but these three often are the basis for the recipe.

Creole cooking evolved to be applied to those with an elegant lifestyle, which featured a cuisine heavy in butter and cream. Creole-designated recipes tend to be heavier in tomatoes, but also include the trinity of vegetables - onions, green peppers, and celery.





The use of filé powder is distinctly Creole. This ingredient is powdered leaf of the sassafras tree and was first used by the Choctaw Indians as a thickener for soups and stews. It has a woody flavor, very much like sassafras tea. Creole cooks prefer the light-colored roux whereas the dark, chocolate colored roux was preferred by Cajuns. Today the distinctions between Cajun and Creole cookery is much less clear, and the entire cuisine of Louisiana's bayou country can be correctly called either Cajun or Creole, depending upon the family in which it evolved. Some modern cookbooks and restaurants offer menu items loosely identified by either label.

### ***Olive Salad (Creole)***

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 2 cups sliced pimento stuffed olives | ½ cup diced pickled pepperoncini peppers |
| ½ cup pickled cauliflower, drained   | 1 cup sliced Greek black olives          |
| 3 tablespoons capers                 | ½ cup cocktail onions, drained           |
| 4 stalks celery, minced              | Dressing:                                |
| 1 teaspoon celery seed               | ¼ cup olive oil                          |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced              | ¼ cup vegetable oil                      |
| 2 tablespoons oregano                | 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar           |
| ½ teaspoon black pepper              | 1 teaspoon sugar                         |

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Combine dressing ingredients and toss with vegetables. Refrigerate for a couple of days before using.

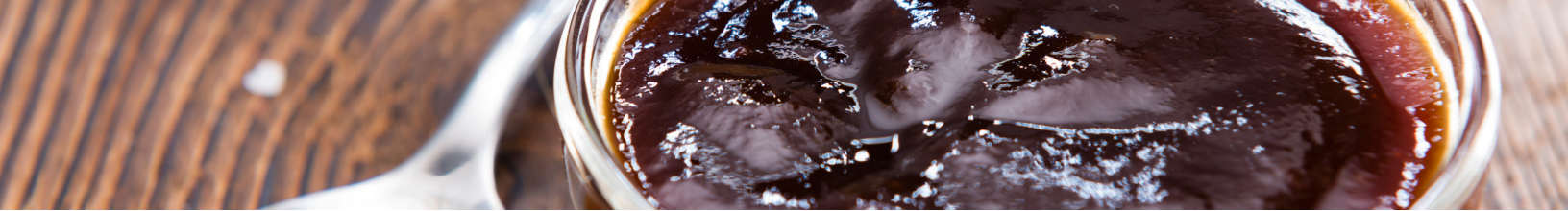
### ***Basic Beignets ("ben-yay" - Cajun)***

- |                             |                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 cup water                 | 1 teaspoon salt           |
| 1 cup milk                  | 2 teaspoons sugar         |
| 1 large egg                 | pinch of nutmeg           |
| 3 cups all purpose flour    | 4 to 6 cups vegetable oil |
| 2 tablespoons baking powder | confectioners sugar       |



Combine the water, milk, and egg in a large mixing bowl and mix well. Add the flour, baking powder, salt and sugar and mix until the batter is smooth. Pour the oil into a large, deep pot or a deep fryer and heat to 360 °F. Drop the batter by spoonfuls into the hot oil and fry, turning two or three times, until golden brown. Drain on paper towels and sprinkle with confectioners sugar. Makes 2 dozen.





## Barbeque, Barbecue, or BBQ

The real origin of barbeque remains obscure and some assume its origin is derived from the French word "barbe-a-que," which means "from snout to tail". The word was used in the state of Virginia before the 1700's, and the institution of the barbecue is probably of southern origin.

The term means a whole animal roasted or broiled in its entirety for a feast or the feast at which such a meat is served. Therefore, a barbeque is either a form of cooking, or a social event. It is not to be confused with the cooking of steaks, hot dogs, and hamburgers on the grill, that is called grilling.

To barbeque is to slow-cook the meat at a low temperature for a long time over wood or charcoal. A large barbecue takes about 24 hours of preparation. First the meat is marinated for a number of hours and the fires prepared. Then the BBQ or basting sauce is mixed according to the recipe used. The animal is placed on a steel spit over the fire and the roasting begins. The spit is turned at regular intervals and the basting is done by dipping the brush or broom in tubs of sauce and swabbing the meat evenly.



Different areas of the country have different meat priorities and preparations. For example, the Southeast prefers pork, Texas seems to prefer beef barbeque, and the West coast seem to love chicken or seafood.

The sauce is what helps define a BBQ. In the South, they tend to like thinner sauces, with a more vinegary taste. Other parts of the country seem to prefer the thick, sweet, tomato based sauces. In some areas of the South, they season their meat with a dry-crumbs mixture of seasonings before roasting.

It is suggested that you collect sauce recipes that goes well with your preferred meat/poultry/seafood choice and best represents your family's tastes. Check the library, cookbooks, and the internet for recipes that sound fun.

Do the activities on the next pages to begin your cultural food exploration.



## Activities

1

**Think about the foods your family eats on a regular basis. Identify:**

One ethnic food your family eats: \_\_\_\_\_

One cultural food your family eats: \_\_\_\_\_

Identify when your family began eating these foods and why they tried them.

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2

**Imagine moving from Colorado to another part of the country.**

Where would you move? \_\_\_\_\_

What common foods are eaten in that region?

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How does that compare to foods commonly eaten in Colorado?

How are they alike? \_\_\_\_\_

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Your challenge during the coming year will be to discover traditional ethnic and cultural foods and practice their preparation methods. Once you have accomplished that task, you will feel more comfortable trying other foods from around the country.



## CULTURAL AND ETHNIC FOOD RECORD

1. Describe the food customs of the ethnic or cultural group you selected.

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2. What are their traditional foods, and how are they prepared?

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3. What holidays do they celebrate, and what foods do they prepare for those holidays?

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## REPORT ON MEAL PREPARED

Share the three menus for the cultural or ethnic meals you prepared this year.

Menu #1

Cultural or ethnic group represented:

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Number of people served:

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To whom was the meal served:

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Menu #2

Cultural or ethnic group represented:

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Number of people served:

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To whom was the meal served:

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Menu #3

Cultural or ethnic group represented:

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Number of people served:

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To whom was the meal served:

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## Demonstration

Title of Demonstration	Where was it given and to whom?	Number in Audience

## Community Service

Tell about the food-related community service project you participated in this year.

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## Judging/Evaluation Experiences

Share your experiences comparing food products or items to determine how well they met acceptable standards or to select the best quality product.

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## **Pictures**

If desired, include one page of project-related pictures. (Optional)





### **Colorado 4-H Mission**

4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential by working and learning in partnership with caring adults.

### **Colorado 4-H Vision**

A world in which youth and adults learn, grow and work together

### **4-H Pledge**

I pledge.....

My head to clearer thinking,  
My heart to greater loyalty,  
My hands to larger service,  
My health to better living  
for my club, my community,  
my country and my world.

### **Promesa 4-H**

Prometo usar mi mente para pensar con más claridad,  
mi corazón para ser más leal,  
mis manos para ser más servicial,  
mi salud para cuidarme más,  
por mi club, mi comunidad, mi país y mi mundo.

### **4-H Motto**

“To Make the Best Better.”



[Colorado4h.org](http://Colorado4h.org)