

# Food Systems

Suggested Grade Level: 2-3



## The Big Idea

Students will begin to explore where our food comes from by looking at each step in the food system. They will begin to observe how food systems provide food in communities around the world.

## Activity Notes

- In many cases, there is overlap in the stages of a food system. Help students by explaining that the food systems map they have explored is a model and that in the real world food systems can be immensely complicated and dynamic.
- The pictures demonstrate a single family or group and are not indicative of every individual in the country or community. It is important to provide context when appropriate. To avoid the "danger of a single story," encourage a non-judgemental approach and deconstruct stereotypes if they do arise during this discussion.
- Be sure to foster a safe and inclusive space for all students during discussion. For example, consider food access, cultural background, varying definitions of healthy foods, and ensure that food is discussed in a positive manner without judgement. Refer to the Teach Food First resource for more teaching tips.
- Consider finding local field trip opportunities, resources, and programs in your area to use as extension activities, such as cooking programs, farmers market/grocery store tours etc. Be mindful of associated cost and potential impact on access and student participation.
- In-class extensions: Share family recipes or favourite meals in a class cookbook; ask students to do mini-assignments on current food topics or a community issue; research and explore solutions (e.g. food waste).
- Also consider starting this lesson with a book that celebrates equity, diversity, and inclusion (E.g. Stone Soup or others by diverse authors).

## Learning Goals

- I am learning to identify and ask questions about foods and plants from around the world that are important to other people and cultures.
- I am learning about the steps and people involved in growing and supplying food globally, and actions I can take to reduce negative effects.
- I am exploring the pros and cons of local food and connecting it to my own experience.
- I am discovering new local and global foods and thinking about the benefits of trying them, using a variety of examples.
- I am exploring healthy food options and factors in the world that may affect my food choices.

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## Activities

Total Time: 60 Minutes

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| • Introduction: Brief Discussion                       | • 5 - 10 minutes  |
| • Activity 1: "Introduction to Food Systems" video     | • 5 - 10 minutes  |
| • Activity 2: Food Systems Matching                    | • 10 minutes      |
| • Activity 3: "What the World Eats" photo presentation | • 20 - 25 minutes |
| • Wrap-Up & Conclusion                                 | • 5 minutes       |

## Success Criteria

Students will be able to:

- Describe foods from plants around the globe and the importance of those plants to the people who live there.
- Talk about the impact of growing and supplying food worldwide, and how students can personally contribute to positive change.
- Discuss pros and cons of locally grown food.
- Explain why choosing a variety of foods, such as local and cultural foods, can benefit them personally.
- Identify healthy food choices and some factors that impact people's food choices.

## Preparation

Download the associated resources;

- ["Introduction to Food Systems" video](#)
- ["Food Systems Matching Activity"](#)
- [Food Systems Definitions](#)
- ["Hungry Planet, What the World Eats" presentation](#)
- ["Hungry Planet, What the World Eats" presentation notes](#)
- ["Growing Chefs! Ontario Food Systems Map"](#)
- ["Blank World Map"](#) (label countries referenced in the "Hungry Planet" presentation)
- Guiding Questions on pages 5 and 6.

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## Introduction

Facilitate a class discussion about food and food systems. This could include a discussion about cultural foods, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community food systems if possible. Ask students what their favourite foods are and whether they are involved in food production or preparation at home. See more guiding questions on page 5

## Activity 1: Introduction to Food Systems Video

- Have the class watch the "Introduction to Food Systems" video
- Review the food systems language and terminology used in the video with students:  
Production = Growing/Collecting/Hunting; Consumption = Eating; Preparation = Making;  
Disposal = Getting rid of waste, etc.
- Share that the food systems we are learning about today are not representative of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit community food systems in Canada, which are different and unique in many ways.
- After the video, review the "Growing Chefs! Ontario Food Systems Map" with students. Using this map, have students identify examples from their own community. eg. local grocery stores, markets, restaurants, farms, factories, food delivery trucks, etc.
- See more guiding questions on page 5.

## Activity 2: Group Photo Matching Activity

- Students will continue to strengthen their understanding of the different parts of the food system by working in groups to match pictures to the appropriate stage in the food system using the accompanying "Food Systems Matching Presentation."
- As they match photos, ask students to reflect on parts of the food system with their experience and understanding. E.g., Do you know where the food you eat comes from? What happens to the food you don't eat?
- See more guiding questions on page 5

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## Activity 3: "Hungry Planet: What the World Eats" Photo Presentation

Introduction:

- "Food systems look quite different around the world! It's important to understand how we get food onto our plate and how that process is different for people around the world."

Show The "Hungry Planet, What The World Eats" photo presentation.

- Explain that families in these photos only represent their specific family. The photos are not representative of every single family in that country, so it's important that we don't make assumptions or stereotype countries based on these photos.
- From the photo presentation, ask students to compare and contrast one week's worth of food from different countries around the world.
- Make observations and describe what is present in each photo including: setting, types of food, landscape, etc.
- Identify similarities and differences from one photo to the next.

Note: Teachers may want to have a world map handy to show the location of each country.

See more guiding questions on page 5

## Wrap-up & Review

- Review the "Growing Chefs! Ontario Food Systems Map":
- What steps does food need to go through to get to our plate?
- Identify how this process may change for countries the class explored.

## Additional Resources

- Book: "What the World Eats" by Faith D'Aluisio and Peter Menzel is available for purchase online and is a great resource to have in the classroom
- [Growing Chefs! Ontario Youtube channel](#)

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## Guiding Questions

- Introduction:

- What is a sweet or salty food that you enjoy?
- What is a sweet or salty food that you have eaten, that you think some people in class might not have tried before? How would you describe it? Does it have a name in another language that you could share with us?
- What is a fruit or vegetable that you've eaten before?
  - Class follow up: For anyone who has tried that food - how did you eat it - raw? In a recipe? What did it look like? Smell like? Taste like?
- What are some foods you think kids can help prepare (for themselves or family)?
- How can we get food other than going to a store to buy it?
- What are some benefits we get from growing, raising, or hunting for our own food?
- Have you been to a market to buy food before? What are some differences between a farmers market and a grocery store? What foods have you seen at a farmers market?

- Activity 2:

- Share that there is no single form of a food system - they are different all around the world (and even between communities), and change over time.
- After having completed the slideshow Activity 2, flip through some of the photos again and ask students what some stages of the food system looks like in their own experience.
  - Is this what making food looks like in your home?
  - Different families, cultures and communities make and eat food differently. Would you like to share a story of how your family makes or eats food?
- It's okay if these photos don't match your experience exactly. Every family, culture, and community is different and these photos don't represent everyone.
- Let's look at the preparation photo of the chef plating food in a restaurant. Is that what food preparation looks like for everyone? Why or why not?
- What is your favourite food? Think of one ingredient to make that food - do you know where it comes from? Do you know how it might have gotten to the store? Sometimes food has to travel a long way to get to us. If we grew most of our food locally, how might that change how we get our food?
- Sometimes not all families have access to all the foods they want or need. Why is it important that everyone has access?

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## Guiding Questions

- Activity 3:
  - Before presenting the slides, talk about the food consumption differences (e.g. types and amount of food, when/where food is eaten, etc.) in your own class and emphasize that there are a variety of responses even in this small space. These statements may help:
    - Families make a variety of food choices for their children, and those choices can change over time.
    - All families want their children to have energy to learn, do activities with friends, and be happy.
  - Does anyone want to share an example of something they ate for dinner last night?
    - Ask class: Is that exactly the same as what the rest of you ate? (Yes / No)
  - Can someone give me an example of what they ate for lunch yesterday?
    - Ask class: Is that exactly the same as what the rest of you ate? (Yes / No)
  - Explain that even within the classroom, each student will have different foods at home at any given time. The slides that they will be looking at will show a family from a certain country with the types of food that they might eat in a week and where they might eat it. Just like we saw in this class, these pictures do not show EVERY family that lives in that country (e.g. Not all American families eat McDonalds and pizza every week - even though the USA photo has both).

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## Ontario Curriculum Connections

### **Science & Technology**

#### **Grade 3**

Strand B - Life Systems:

Overall:

- B1. Relating Science and Technology to Our Changing World: Assess ways in which plants are beneficial to society and the environment, and ways in which human activity has an impact on plants and plant habitats

Specific:

- B1.1. Assess ways in which plants are important to humans and other living things, taking different perspectives into consideration, and identify ways in which humans can protect native plant species and their habitats
- B1.2. Assess ways in which human activities have an impact on plants and plant habitats, and identify personal actions that they could take to minimize harmful effects and enhance positive ones
- B1.3. Assess the benefits and limitations of locally grown food

### **Health and Physical Education**

#### **Grade 2**

Strand D - Healthy Living

Overall:

- D2: Making Healthy Choices: demonstrate the ability to apply health knowledge and social-emotional learning skills to make reasoned decisions and take appropriate actions relating to their personal health and well-being.

Specific:

- D2.2 demonstrate an understanding of how to make healthy food choices for meals and snacks, considering the factors they can and cannot control (e.g., the food that's available in the home; the food that's available when eating out; energy needed at different times of day; allergies; food guidelines associated with medical conditions such as diabetes or celiac disease; food safety related to food preparation, storage, handling, and cleanliness)

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## Ontario Curriculum Connections

### Health and Physical Education

#### **Grade 3**

Strand D - Healthy Living

Overall:

- D3 demonstrate the ability to make connections that relate to health and well-being – how their choices and behaviours affect both themselves and others, and how factors in the world around them affect their own and others' health and well-being

Specific:

- D3.1 explain how local foods and foods from various cultures (e.g., berries, curries, chapatis, lychees, kale, lentils, corn, naan, wild game, fish, tourtière) can be used to expand their range of healthy eating choices