

MÉTIS TRADITIONAL FOODS #1

Subject/topic

Math, Social Studies, Cooking, Traditional Métis Foods

Overview/focus questions

Students will learn how three traditional Métis dishes are prepared by watching the video *Traditional Foods* and will make bannock (*la gaalet*) together as a class. Students will learn Michif words associated with cooking and traditional Métis foods.

Developed by

Teri Thrun

Time

60 minutes

Grade level

Grades 1-4

Learning Goals

Students will:

- Learn Michif words related to food and cooking.
- Learn the steps of making bannock and familiarize themselves with the components of a recipe.
- Cook bannock by following instructions and using measurements.
- Demonstrate knowledge of Michif words learned in the lesson by connecting Michif words to pictures.
- Identify traditional Métis foods.

Lesson Description

Teacher preparation and background information:

In Canada, there are three recognized groups of Indigenous peoples: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. The Métis Nation are self-defining people from a specific region (mainly the Canadian western prairies but also parts of British Columbia, Ontario, Northwest Territories, North Dakota, and Montana) with a unique culture, language, and history. The Métis are those who self-identify as Métis and are descended from Indigenous and European/Euro-Canadian people, and who acknowledge the conscious choice of their ancestors to identify as Métis because of a common history and past.

The official language of the Métis Nation is Michif, though there are other languages spoken by the Métis as well. Michif is spoken in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Manitoba, as well as Montana and North Dakota. Dating to the late 18th century, Michif is a hybrid language that blends together different languages, most commonly English, French and Cree.

Michif is an oral language and, until very recently, had not been written down. There is no standardized orthography, and spelling will vary depending on the speaker and region, as words are spelled phonetically. When learning Michif, the focus is not so much on the spelling and the writing of the words, as on the speaking. There are also other Michif languages, including French Michif and Northern Michif. As such, teachers will see words spelled in numerous ways throughout the lesson plans and videos in the Future of Michif project. The Michif primarily referred to and used in these lesson plans and through the online dictionaries and apps is known as Michif or Heritage Michif; however, you will see other spellings and pronunciations.

You will also hear some speakers in the videos use the term “Michif” to describe a people, and not only a language. The Michif are Métis who speak Michif, versus other languages spoken by the Métis, such as Cree or French.

The Métis traditionally obtained food through hunting, gathering, and farming. They lived according to the natural cycles of the land on which they lived or traversed. Métis hunted or trapped bison, wolves, deer, migratory ducks and rabbits (to name a few), with each season bringing different sources of food. Plants such as raspberries, Saskatoon berries and chokecherries were gathered or harvested. The late spring and early summer may have seen some people staying put on the land, growing wheat.

Prior to the lesson, teachers should watch the *Traditional Foods* video to learn about traditional Métis foods and culinary history, to become familiar with the process of cooking bannock, and to note what preparations or adjustments might need to be made for their class.

MÉTIS TRADITIONAL FOODS #1

Materials Needed

- Bannock (*la gaalet*) recipe card
- Flour
- Lard
- Baking powder
- Salt
- Water
- Sugar
- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Bowl
- Stove
- Cast iron pan (or a pan safe for oven use)
- Saskatoon berry jam
- Butter
- Plate for bannock
- A knife for jam, butter and cutting bannock
- Oven mitts
- Traditional Métis Foods image cards
- Michif Cooking Terms teacher card
- *Traditional Foods* video
- *Aen ooshihaayahkook lii bayng avik noohkoom (Making Beignes with Kohkum)* of the Taanishi book series for emergent readers from the Gabriel Dumont Institute

Connection to the Canadian Geography Learning Framework

Concepts of Geographic Thinking

- Patterns and trends
- Geographic perspective
- Interrelationships

Student Activities:

Minds on: Students will think about their favourite foods and what makes those dishes special. The class will then watch the video *Traditional Foods* and learn about three traditional Métis foods, the process of making them, and associated Michif words.

Action: The teacher will review the Michif words for the ingredients used in making bannock. Students will assist the teacher in making bannock and practise saying the Michif words.

Conclusion: The teacher will read *Making Beignes with Kohkum (Aen ooshihaayahkook lii bayng avik noohkoom)*. Students will have the opportunity to eat bannock and complete an activity that reviews Michif words they have learned.

Lesson Implementation

Minds on

Engage students in the subject of food and cooking by asking about some of their favourite dishes and why those foods are special to them. Possible discussion questions:

- What do you eat on special occasions?
- Does your family cook meals together? What do you cook?
- Do any foods make you think of certain events or people in your life?

Tell students that they will be making a favourite food of the Métis called bannock (*la gaalet*) and watching a video about some of the traditional foods of the Métis.

Write the word *la gaalet* (bannock) on the board and practise saying it with students.

Watch the *Traditional Foods* video with students, which models how to make three traditional Métis foods: bannock (*la gaalet*), fried Saskatoon berries (*lii pwayr*), and goose (*zway*) breast fried in lard (*la gress*). As Michif words appear in the video, pause and practise saying these words with students. Possible discussion questions about the video:

- Have you or your family ever eaten any of these foods?
- Have you or your family ever cooked something like this?
- Why do you think these are traditional Métis foods?
- Do you think these ingredients are available any time of the year?

Action

Before the lesson, you can pre-measure the ingredients in the recipe for bannock (*la gaalet*) and have the necessary equipment laid out. Review safety and sanitary protocols with students surrounding hand washing, clean work stations and equipment, stove use, allergies, etc.

MÉTIS TRADITIONAL FOODS #1

Tell students that today, they will get the chance to make and eat a traditional Métis food called bannock (*la gaalet*).

Show students the ingredients and equipment used to make bannock and go over what they are in English and Michif (see the Michif Cooking Terms teacher card). Practise saying the words in Michif. Show students the recipe they will be following and point out the different components (e.g., measurements, time, temperature) needed to write a recipe.

Have students wash their hands. Follow the bannock recipe at the end of the lesson plan. Lead the making of the bannock and invite student volunteers to assist.

1. The teacher should preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. The teacher will melt the lard in a frying pan and set it aside.
3. If the ingredients are not already pre-measured, have students take turns measuring out the ingredients.
4. Add each of the dry ingredients one at a time to a mixing bowl. Invite a new student up for each dry ingredient. Have students repeat the Michif word for each ingredient.
5. Have a student make a well in the middle of the dry mixture.
6. Have a student add water into the well and have another student stir until blended.
7. Have a student add lard and have another student mix it all together.
8. Have students wash their hands again. If possible, give each student a chance to mix the bannock with their hands and knead until a dough is formed. Alternatively, use another kneading method (such as with spoons). See the video for information on what the dough should look like.
9. The teacher will put the bannock in the oiled pan, then place the pan in the pre-heated oven and bake until golden brown.
10. Check bannock after 20 minutes as cooking time will vary depending on the oven. Refer to the video for what the finished product should look like.

Conclusion and Consolidation

While the bannock is cooking, the teacher will read the book *Making Beignes with Kohkum* (*Aen ooshihaayahkook lii bayng avik noohkoom*) to the class. While reading, point out that beignes are a type of bannock that are fried instead of baked. Highlight Michif words throughout the book and have students practise saying them.

Once you are finished reading and the bannock is done cooking, take the bannock from the oven, and let it cool, turning off the oven. While it is cooling, show students the Saskatoon berry jam and explain the importance of this jam to the Métis, as they often lived and travelled where Saskatoon berries were plentiful. This can be connected to the Traditional Harvesting video and lesson plan through a discussion on how different foods are harvested. Once the bannock has cooled, give students a piece to eat with butter and jam.

MÉTIS TRADITIONAL FOODS #1

After students have eaten, hang the Traditional Métis Foods image cards around the room so that students can see them. Review the name of the item in Michif for each image by calling them out. Explain to students that their job is to move to the correct image. For example, if the teacher calls out *la gaalet*, students should move towards where that image is posted. If there is not enough space, have students point to the correct image.

Extend your geographical thinking

- Research other traditional foods of the Métis and why these were traditional foods of the semi-nomadic Métis.
- Explore the cyclical nature of food availability and how this would have impacted, and still does impact, the Métis.
- Investigate what mealtime in each season may have looked like for the Métis in the 1800s.
- Research the connection between the Métis and the land. Refer to the Geographical Terms lesson plan for more information.
- Create a word wall of Michif terms.

Modifications

- Create a display that shows everything needed for the recipe. This can be a poster, an image on a Smartboard, or the actual ingredients laid out on a table.
- Pre-measure ingredients or get older students to help out.
- Project and read the recipe aloud and allow students to read it for themselves.
- Use gluten-free flour if needed or replace lard with butter if certain ingredients are hard to come by.
- Complete the activity using the image cards outdoors or in a gym so that students have more room to move. Just ensure that the bannock is digested!
- Extension: Have students write or speak the ingredients portion of the recipe in Michif.
- Extension: Share the bannock with another class and use the opportunity for students to present what they have learned about traditional Métis foods.

Assessment Opportunities

- The teacher can assess students' ability to move or point toward the correct image for understanding of new Michif words.
- Observational notes can be taken during the lesson of students' accuracy when measuring, their ability to follow instructions, and their participation during discussions.

MÉTIS TRADITIONAL FOODS #1

Sources and Additional Resources

- Métis Nation of Saskatchewan
- Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture
- Michif To Go (Google Play) and Heritage Michif To Go (The App Store) apps
- Gabriel Dumont Institute Michif Dictionary
- Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada - Métis