

MÉTIS TRADITIONAL FOODS #2

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*) in groups. Students will learn Michif words associated with cooking and traditional Métis foods.

Developed by

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Time

60 minutes

Grade level

Grades 4-7

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 saying the Michif words for different items.
- 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.

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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
- Plates 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

*Note: If this lesson is done in small groups, each group will require their own set of supplies.

Connection to the Canadian Geography Learning Framework

Concepts of Geographic Thinking

- Patterns and trends
- Geographic perspective
- Interrelationships

Note: This lesson plan is written with the intention of students making bannock together in groups. If desired, you can invite older student “leaders” to assist students. If the number of cast iron pans and oven space is an issue, you can make the bannock while inviting students to come and assist.

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 make bannock under the teacher’s direction and practise saying the Michif words of ingredients.

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?
- How does location and seasonality affect the availability of foods?
- Why do you think these are traditional Métis foods?
- Do you think these ingredients are available any time of the year?

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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.

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. Note: This lesson plan is written with the intention of having students make bannock in small groups. If desired, invite older students (leaders) to come in to assist groups in making the bannock. If there are not enough cast iron pans for groups, or not enough oven space, this lesson can be carried out with the teacher making the bannock and inviting students to assist throughout the process.

Divide students into groups of four. Tell students that they will be instructed which ingredients to add and when. Follow the bannock recipe found at the end of the lesson plan and guide students through the process.

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. Have students take turns adding each of the dry ingredients one at a time to a mixing bowl. Have them repeat the Michif word for each ingredient.
5. Have students 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 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. Assist the older student “leader” with putting the bannock in the oiled pan (or you can do this step).
10. Place the pan in the oven and bake until the bannock is golden brown. 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.

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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.

After students have eaten, have them complete a review of words they have learned today using the Traditional Métis Foods image cards. In pairs, one student will hold up an image card, and the other student will need to correctly say the Michif term for the image shown. Students can take turns so that each can practise saying the words.

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 image activity as a class instead of in pairs.
- 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.

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Assessment Opportunities

- The teacher can assess students' ability to correctly say the Michif terms for the images on the cards.
- Observational notes can be taken during the lesson of students' accuracy when measuring, their ability to follow instructions, and their participation during discussions.

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