

Rethinking Food

Food is something we encounter every day, even if don't always put much thought into it. But there's a story behind every plate. From the origin of your food to the reason you chose it, you can learn a lot from what you eat.

Essential Questions

1. What is the importance of food?
2. What can we learn about the foods we eat?
3. How can food bring people together?
4. What do the foods you eat say about who you are?

Introduction to the Theme

Ask students to imagine they're having a new friend over for dinner. What might they want to cook for their new friend? Have them explain their choice. Then have them imagine an aunt, an uncle, or a grandparent is coming for dinner. Ask students to think about what their parents will cook. Will it be the same as what the student would cook for a friend? Why or why not?

Informational Text

These *TIME for Kids* articles can be used to discuss the theme of rethinking food.

1. **[“Fish for Lunch”](#)** (October 19, 2018) Sitka's Fish to Schools program is part of a trend to get local food into the lunchroom.
2. **[“Top Chef”](#)** (December 21, 2018) Cristeta Comerford is the executive chef at the White House. It's her job to prepare meals for the president and his guests.
3. **[“Eating Cactus”](#)** (April 20, 2018) The prickly pear cactus is one cactus that can be eaten.
4. **[“Learning to Love Ugly Veggies”](#)** (October 7, 2016) Ugly produce tastes just as good as perfect produce, and can help save the environment.
5. **[“A Growing Movement”](#)** (September 2, 2016) Students eat healthier when they learn where their food is coming from.
6. **[“A Taste of Tradition”](#)** (September 19, 2014) Americans celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with parades, dances, and food.
6. **[“Waste Not”](#)** (August 30, 2019) Schools are a major contributor to food waste, but there are some possible solutions to the problem.

Literary Text

These fictional texts can be used to discuss the theme of rethinking food.

1. **[Bread and Jam for Frances](#)** by Russell Hoban. Frances doesn't want to eat anything but bread and jam. Until her parents allow her to eat it at every meal.
2. **[The Sandwich Swap](#)**, by Queen Rania of Jordan Al Abdullah with Kelly DiPucchio. Lily and Salma do everything together, but can't seem to understand each other's lunch choices.
3. **[No More Beige Food](#)**, by Leanne Shirliffe. Wilma and her brother are sick of their parents boring dinners, so they visit their neighbors to try something new.
4. **[I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato](#)**, by Lauren Child. Lola is a picky eater. Until she learns to use her imagination.
5. **[The Ugly Vegetables](#)**, by Grace Lin. The narrator wishes her mother's Chinese vegetable garden could be as beautiful as her neighbors' gardens.

Optional Extension

Ask students to go home and discuss with their families a special dish that represents their family or their family's culture. Ask students to write the recipe on a recipe card or page. The front of the card should contain the ingredients and instructions for preparing the dish. On the back of the card, have students explain why it is a special food or describe their first memory of eating the food. They can add a picture or drawing to one side or both.

Once students have completed their recipe cards, assemble the cards into a class cookbook. If there are no dietary restrictions or allergies in your class, invite students to bring in a sample for the class.

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