

## Colonial America: Harvest Season

**Grade:** 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

**Season:** Fall/Winter

**Larger IGS Unit:** Farms; Garden Design

### **Essential Questions:**

- What did the early colonists eat?
- Where did their food come from?
- Why and how did their diets differ from the Old World?
- Why was the harvest season so important?
- What does it mean to eat “seasonally”?
- How do the diets of colonists compare to our diets today?

### **Standard Connections:**

3.3 - Identify who the Pilgrims were and explain why they left Europe to seek religious freedom; describe their journey and their early years in the Plymouth Colony. (H, G, C, E)

**Objective:** Students will be able to identify the different types of food that the colonists ate, and the reasons why those crops were typical for Colonial America.

Day 1.

*What did early colonists eat? Where did their food come from?*

- In pairs, students read one paragraph from “New England Food and Cooking” Worksheet. Then share with the class, and make a list of all the foods.
- Students look at recipes from Colonial America. Work in groups or pairs. Make list of common food items today, and unfamiliar food items.

*Why would their food vary from Europe/Old World?*

- Students explore a map of the world, with origins of food. Discuss in groups why there are different foods in different regions.
  - o Climate
  - o Cultural influence
  - o Tools available for cooking/preserving
- Introduction to the 3 Sisters Garden

*Why was the harvest season so important? Is it still important today?*

- Halloween (**pumpkins**)
  - o Colonial uses for pumpkins (food, fodder for farm animals, drink, dried/preserved, hollowed out for lantern)
  - o Read poem
- Thanksgiving/Christmas (**turkeys**)
  - o Why would colonists eat turkeys over other types of meat?

- Hunting/gathering
- What is seasonal eating?

*How do the diets of colonists compare to our diets today?*

- Brainstorm w/Venn Diagram. Compare and contrast foods from Colonial America and today.
  - Types of food
  - Methods of cooking

Slideshow from Colonial Williamsburg

Students choose 3 recipes to have as part of their feast. Identify where these ingredients might come from. Any from the island?

Next class, students will work together to make these three dishes. (Alternately, these dishes could be prepared in advance and brought in to be served at the Harvest Feast.

**Homework:** Students are given colonial jobs, and research those jobs over the next week. They must find out:

What would this person wear?

What tools would they carry?

What food would they eat?

What would their home look like?

They create a name, family, and story of this colonial character.

Day 2.

Harvest Feast. Students come dressed as their colonial character. They feast together. Afterwards, students complete a journal entry from the perspective of their colonial character.

**Materials:**

- Colonial recipe cards
- *Williamsburg Cookbook*
- Colonial food slideshow
- Map(s) of food origins
- Pumpkin, gourds for display

**Resources:**

- <http://www.history.org/Foundation/journal/Autumn09/pumpkins.cfm>
- <http://recipes.history.org/recipeindex/>

## **Recipes:**

### **STEAMED PUMPKIN PUDDING**

6 tablespoon butter  
3/4 cup brown sugar  
1/4 cup granulated sugar  
2 eggs  
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger  
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
3/4 cup mashed cooked pumpkin or canned pumpkin  
1/2 cup buttermilk

Cream butter and sugar together until light. Beat in eggs. Stir together flour, salt, soda cinnamon, ginger, and nutmeg. Mix pumpkin and buttermilk; add to creamed mixture alternately with dry ingredients, mixing well after each addition. Spoon into greased and floured 6 1/2 cup ring mold. Cover tightly with foil. Bake 350 for one hour. Let stand 10 minutes. Unmold. Serve with whipped cream. Serves 12 to 16.

### **SUCCOTASH**

2 cups fresh or frozen baby Lima beans  
2 ounces salt pork  
1/2 cup water  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon sugar  
Dash pepper  
2 cups fresh or frozen whole kernel corn  
1/3 cup light cream  
1 tablespoon all purpose flour

In saucepan combine beans, pork, water, salt, sugar and pepper. Cover; simmer until beans are almost tender. Stir in corn. Cover and simmer until vegetables are tender. Remove salt pork. Blend cream slowly into flour. Stir into vegetables. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. Serves 6.



### **APPLE BUTTER**

Ingredients: 4lbs. apples, 1/4 cup water, 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar, 1/2 cup brown sugar, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon cloves (ground) Core and quarter unpeeled apples; chop or put in blender with water and vinegar.

Cook in a saucepan over low heat until the mixture gets thick and turns brown. Stir occasionally. This will take 2-3 hours (1/4 of that time in a microwave oven). Add sugar and spices and cook for 1/2 hour more. Refrigerate, then spread on toast or muffins.



### **MAKE HOMEMADE BUTTER**

Need:

Baby food jars

A bowl of ice

Small bowl to put the butter in the ice

Spoon to press butter on the bowl

Measuring spoon

1. Put 2 tablespoons whipping cream in each baby food jar. Put lid on tightly and shake as long as can.
2. Remove lid and pour off excess liquid.
3. Spoon butter into the smaller bowl and set this bowl in the bowl of ice.
4. As butter chills, continue to press it again the side of the bowl to get rid of any remaining liquid.
5. When ready...enjoy on some good bread or rolls!

Tip: To speed up the process you can add a marble to the jar when shaking it.

## **DRIED APPLES**

Needed:

Apple corer, Apples, String, Paring knife or vegetable peeler

Using the apple corer, core the apples.

Peel the apples and cut them into slices with the hole in the middle.

Pass a length of string through the apple rings.

Hang the apples up to dry. This will take about three weeks.

When they are dry, try storing them in paper bags until spring and use them in a recipe. Before using them, soak the dried apples in warm water until they are soft and use them as you would fresh apples in pies or sauce.

## **JOHNNY CAKES**

During colonial times, Johnny cakes were likely to appear at any meal. Many think that the original name was "Journey Cakes", because they were so often taken along on a journey, since they could be stuffed into a traveler's pockets. Try them hot or cold, with butter and syrup.

Ingredients:

1 cup yellow cornmeal

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 cup boiling water

1/2 cup milk

Mix the cornmeal and salt.

Add the boiling water, stirring until smooth.

Add the milk. Stir well.

Grease a heavy, 12-inch frying pan. Set over medium-low heat.

Drop teaspoons of the batter onto the pan. Cook until golden, about five minutes.

Turn the cakes carefully with a metal spatula.

Cook the other side five minutes.

Serve the cakes hot with butter and maple syrup. Makes 12-15 cakes. Source: Colonialcooking

A poem dating from the 1630s tells the important role pumpkin played in their diet:

*Stead of pottage and puddings and custards and pies  
Our pumpkins and parsnips are common supplies,  
We have pumpkins at morning and pumpkins at noon,  
If it were not for pumpkins we should be undoon.*