Long ago, people could eat only what they grew or what they could catch. They couldn’t just go to the grocery store and buy whatever was on the shelf. In 1492, when Christopher Columbus came to America, he saw plants and animals he had never seen before. He took them back with him to Europe. Columbus’ trips were the beginning of an exciting time in the history of food. People would be able to taste different foods; foods with flavors, shapes, and textures they had never experienced before!

It is estimated that nearly two-thirds of the foods consumed today are from the “New World” or the Americas. Right this minute, people all over the world are eating, or shopping for food or preparing food to be eaten. It is a way of life. Everyone must eat to survive. What are they eating? Often times that depends on where they live. What plants and animals live in that area? What kinds of transportation are available to the area? Can planes, ships, or trucks deliver food that was grown in another part of the world?

What foods have you consumed this week? Where did they originally come from? Where are they grown today? The world map on this page shows the origin of many of today’s common foods. What percentage of what you consumed came from the “New World?” to learn more about the origin of our farmed crops and animals, visit the Food Timeline web page (www.foodtimeline.org).

Origin of Foods from Plants and Animals

Where in the World....

Look at the following New and Old World foods and then locate where they originated on the world map like the examples of chocolate, wheat and grapes.

Old World Foods
- Broccoli, Northern European Coast
- Carrots, Central Asia (Afghanistan)
- Cattle, Turkey
- Coffee, Ethiopia
- Egg Plant, India
- Grape, Turkey
- Lettuce, Asia Minor (Iran & Turkistan)
- Okra, Africa
- Onions, Pakistan
- Oranges, Pakistan
- Peas, Northwest India & Afghanistan
- Pigs, South West Asia
- Radish, China
- Rice, India
- Sheep & Goats, Middle East (Iraq, Iran)
- Soybean, Northeastern China
- Sugar Beets, Europe (Austria)
- Wheat, Turkey
- Yams, Africa

New World Foods
- Avocado, Southern Mexico
- Beans, Central America
- Cacao (chocolate), Southern Mexico
- Corn, Central America
- Cranberry, Northeastern America
- Peanuts, South America (Bolivia)
- Peppers, Central America (Peru)
- Pineapple, South America (Brazil & Paraguay)
- Potatoes, South America (Bolivia)
- Pumpkins, Mexico
- Squash (summer), South America
- Strawberries, North America (Pennsylvania)
- Sunflowers, North America (Nebraska)
- Tomatoes, Southern Mexico
- Vanilla, Southern Mexico