

Area of Study

Creativity and Subject Taster

Overview

This unit provides an opportunity for students to work creatively with food and develop practical cookery skills while at the same time opening up issues of interest and relevance to young people. It helps them to think more critically about the food they eat, where it comes from and who influences their choices. It also helps them to understand the importance of healthy food choices. The students will enjoy being actively involved in the learning and appreciate the degree of choice they have in the unit to pursue individual topics of interest.

Related learning

In addition to the link with Leaving Certificate Home Economics this transition unit provides interesting opportunities for cross-curricular work with SPHE (self-image, dieting), Biology (nutrition), and English (the role of the media in influencing our food choices). ICT will be useful for presenting projects and the internet will be accessed for gathering research.

Outline of the unit

The TU is broken into three parts.

Part 1.

The Changing Irish diet Students will investigate how the Irish diet has changed over the last century and the reasons why. They look at the origins of some Irish foods (e.g. the potato) and other popular foods. They also examine how Ireland has become a more culturally diverse society and the impact this has had on our food choices (survey of range of products in the supermarket).

Students cook a traditional Irish dish using the foods that were available in the last century. They then take an existing traditional Irish recipe and add a modern twist.

Students will look at ways of adapting recipes, e.g. making them low in fat, vegetarian alternatives. Discuss substitute ingredients. They will choose a recipe and change some ingredients to bring it more in line with requirements of modern consumers.

They will discuss the benefits of including fresh produce in one's diet.

Outline of the unit

Part 2.

Project based work In this part of the unit students will investigate three different countries/continents with a focus on their contribution to the food styles of today. Each investigation includes a cookery task.

Italy

- Investigate Italian foods currently available on the market in Ireland, including ready-made meals and also convenience products such as sauces.
- Carry out sensory analysis and record results.
- Analyse the health benefits of choosing traditional Italian foods and the effects of these foods on the health of the Italian population.
- Cookery task: Cook a traditional Italian dish (savoury) and an Italian dessert.
- Investigate the production process of pasta or pizza making.

USA

- Investigate the fast food culture and its impact on health.
- Carry out a class survey to determine the frequency of consumption of fast food and the most popular food choices.
- Watch the film 'Super size me'. This will include a discussion afterwards to allow the students to give their opinions on the film, in particular the serious health implications of eating a lot of convenience foods.
- Carry out an investigation on obesity, its causes, effects and methods of prevention.
- Cookery task: cook a selection of traditional American dishes.
- Modify a recipe to make the dish low fat by substituting ingredients with low fat alternatives.

Asia

- Investigate foods from Asia looking at the variety of ingredients used in a number of different Asian countries.
- Investigate the health benefits of the ingredients used in Asian cookery.
- Cookery task: cook a selection of Asian dishes

Part 3. Special diets and diet related problems

- Explore different diet choices made for health and religious/ethical reasons:
 - Vegetarianism and veganism
 - Religious diets
 - Fair Trade Foods

- Investigate the causes and effects of the ever-increasing phenomenon of diet-related problems:
 - Diabetes
 - Anorexia Nervosa
 - Bulimia
 - Coeliac disease
 - Heart Disease
 - Osteoporosis
- Cookery task: cook a product suitable for a person with diabetes or coeliac disease, or cook a meal using as many Fair Trade products as possible.

Breakdown of the unit (how timetabled)

One double class (80 mins.) for one year. Class contact: approx 40 hours Within this time practical cookery work will take place. Class time will also be allocated to group research.

Students will also engage in independent research of approximately 5 hours (e.g. surveying supermarket produce, interviewing people on food preferences).

Aims

This transition unit aims to:

- develop students' practical cookery skills
- develop student's knowledge and appreciation of the cultural diversity that is a part of Ireland today, and how our table has been enriched by different foods that have come to us from different cultures
- encourage students to make healthy food choices based on an understanding of the value of different foods and an awareness of the importance of a healthy diet
- encourage students to become independent learners, through research tasks, mini projects, and self-assessment.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this unit students should be able to:

- demonstrate a range of cookery skills
- give examples of the cultural diversity of Irish food choices today and discuss reasons for the changes that have taken place
- show respect and appreciation for a diversity of cultures and foods
- analyse the impact of American food choices on current health problems
- adapt a recipe to suit particular dietary needs
- explain the signs of common eating disorders
- differentiate between healthy and unhealthy food choices
- research information from a range of sources and summarise and present findings.

Key skills

How evidenced

information processing	researching, recording and evaluating information related to food products from different countries using a range of sources
critical and creative thinking	critically evaluating the effects of different foods and adapt recipes using their own ideas
communicating	presenting research findings to class group; listening to other points of view and expressing opinions in small group and class discussions
working with others	organising and delegating work within a group; taking responsibilities for sharing the work and completing it to agreed timeframe
being personally effective	planning a menu and cooking to time allocated; being able to give and receive feedback on their cooking.

Learning approaches

Practical cookery, group work, project work, research, use of ICT, survey of supermarket products.

Assessment approaches

- Folder of work submitted by each student: including a record of their investigations, recipes and the cookery tasks they carried out, along with personal/group evaluations of foods cooked.
- Students self-assess practical skills developed and discuss with teacher.

Evaluation methods

Students will complete an evaluation sheet and discuss with teacher. Key questions will include: What parts of the unit they felt were interesting or beneficial? What skills they have learned? What skills do they still need to build up and how? What parts of the unit were least enjoyable? How would they like to see the unit developed or changed for future class groups.

Resources

A range of websites including:

History of Irish food www.ravensgard.org/prdunham/irishfood.html

(excellent resource on the origins of foods)

www.open2.net/everwonderedfood/interactiveswhere_in_the_world.rtf

Timeline of foods www.foodtimeline.org/

www.malaysianfood.net

www.diabetes.org.uk

www.coeliac.co.uk

www.vegsoc.org

Cookery books

Supersize me DVD

Resources

Websites related to environmental issues.

www.enfo.ie Irelands public web site on environmental issues, will organise guest speakers, visits to the centre, they have a lending library of media resources for teachers, plenty of posters and leaflets on a variety of issues. Very good and helpful!

www.sei.ie Sustainable Energy Ireland, site for energy saving ideas and lots of alternate energy sources bio fuels, wind turbines, solar panels, lots of download, leaflet on alternates on. Etc

www.ecounesco.ie Eco Unesco; competition for the Young environmentalist. They will visit your school and give workshops/guest speakers, etc.

www.cultivate.ie Organise events and lectures on sustainable living, green issues such as powering down- life after peak oil production.

www.epa.ie The Environmental Protection Agency. Site describing the work of the EPA.

www.npws.ie National Parks. Site dedicated to Irelands National Parks, their flora and fauna.

www.iwt.ie Irish Wildlife Trust.

Websites related to environmental issues.

Recycling http://www.repak.ie/find_your_local_bring_bank.html

Composting <http://www.compostireland.ie/training.html>

Wormeries <http://www.ipcc.ie/compwildwormsupp.html>

Digesters <http://www.greencone.com/home.asp?lang=1>

Community Gardens http://www.indymedia.ie/openwire?search_text=community+gardens

Seed saving <http://www.irishseedsavers.ie> Seeds can be collected in September – October from trees and slightly earlier for flowers and plants.

Resources

Planting Trees <http://www.treecouncil.ie/> register your school for free trees for national tree week, get facts and identification guides for trees etc.

Birds www.birdwatchireland.ie information on birds, their habits and how to identify, and feed them.

The Green School campaign is run by **an Taisce** <http://www.antaisce.org/> as is **National spring clean week**.

The Department of the Environment <http://www.environ.ie/en/> for legislation and laws.

Your local Urban/County Council will have an educational officer who is usually willing to visit the school and talk to the students about the work they do. They can arrange for trips to recycling centres. Some will even give you a free composter! Your local tree surgeon may be willing to donate bark mulch, which is great for suppressing weeds.

Resources for practical work

A variety of garden tools can be used to carry out the practical work. Your school caretaker may have some, and you can always ask the students to bring in what they have from home. Spades, forks, hedge clippers, saws, brushes, buckets, gloves, watering cans, wheelbarrows, etc. are all very useful.