The Columbian Exchange:
A Study of Origin and Cultural Diffusion Through Food

Overview: This lesson is designed as an introductory lesson that explores cultural origin and diffusion through the lens of food, and applies those ideas to the Columbian Exchange. Students will use maps, venn diagrams, and complete a Document Based Question (DBQ) to define the concept of cultural diffusion in the context of the Columbian Exchange, and its impact on human geography. The summative assignment for the lesson is a DBQ with primary and secondary sources about the Columbian Exchange.

National Geography Standard:
Geography Standard 10: The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of the Earth’s cultural mosaic

Oregon Geography Content Standards:
HS.14. Create and use maps, technology, imagery and other geographical representations to extrapolate and interpret geographic data.
HS.17. Explain how migration, immigration and communication (cultural exchange, convergence and divergence) lead to cultural changes and make predictions and draw conclusions about the global impact of cultural diffusion.

Common Core Standard:
9-10.WHST.9 Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Objectives:
SWBAT Use maps and original documents (photos, recipes, article) to present a case study which demonstrates their understanding of the definition of origin and cultural diffusion, and how cultural diffusion impacts Latin America and Iberia.
SWBAT Use primary and secondary source documents to create a thesis statement and synthesize concepts about the Columbian exchange and its impact on the “Old” and “New World”.

Grade level: 9-12, part of a World Studies Unit on Latin America

Time: One 90 minute class, with the DBQ completed as homework

Materials: white board, class sets of documents and document analysis sheets (appendix), computer hook up to screen and/or personal technology to show a short video and the online food map, 2 different colors of highlighters, DBQ and rubric for each student (or class set).
**Background:** Students have already learned the impact of geography as the Portuguese and Spanish led the Europeans in the exploration and conquer of Latin America (Guns, Germs, and Steel, Episode 2, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UsKBFXe7biQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UsKBFXe7biQ)). This lesson serves as an introduction to how Iberia’s culture was spread to Latin America, and vice versa, by using a case study of foods that changed the cuisine of both worlds. In the larger picture of world history, this lesson also gives students background of the Columbian exchange and how it impacted Latin America.

**PROCEDURE:** Introduction to topic (11-15 minutes total): Post the following essential question and definition on the board and have students copy into their notebooks, leaving two spaces after the definition for students to rewrite it in their own words:

**EQ:** *How does cultural diffusion impact social, economic, a political development in Latin America?*

Cultural Diffusion (source, AP Human Geography): The expansion and adoption of a cultural element, from its place of origin to a wider area.

Think: Ask students to think about their favorite foods that they eat at home, writing down as many as they like on a scrap piece of paper or in their notes (1 minute).

Pair: Ask students to pair with another student to discuss their answers. (1 minute)

Pair again: Ask students to pair with another pair to discuss their answers and see if they have any answers in common (2 minutes).

Share: Ask one member from each student group of 4 to share the results...do they have any specific food in common, what are the most common answers (student reporter writes these on the board). (2 minutes, or less, depending on size of the class).

Ask: What do you think is considered the “National Food” or the food that best represents the U.S.? Is this food readily available here in Oregon? Hint, if you need to: What American fast food restaurant is in nearly every country of the world? Answer you are seeking is the Hamburger, and McDonalds. (if students say fries with that burger, fries are a Belgian invention). And yes, Oregon has cows and local beef, produces wheat for buns, products for condiments, see map below or Appendix 1.


Is the Hamburger truly American? (5-7 minutes)
Show video (2 min, 11 sec), have students take quick notes about where the hamburger came from (the origin) and where it went and how it changed (the diffusion).


Ask the students about the origin and diffusion of hamburgers...are they really “American”?

Have students rewrite the definition of cultural diffusion in their own words in their notebooks.

Activity One (20 minutes): What was the Columbian Exchange, and how did it create cultural diffusion between the “Old World” and the “New World”?

Hand out copies of Appendix 2, The Columbian Exchange Intro

PROCEDURE: Have each student read the article and take Cornell notes in their notebooks. These notes should include any vocabulary that students are not familiar with. Students may use their personal technology, or dictionaries in the classroom, for definitions. In their notes, students should answer the activity one question. Students should NOT write the summary or level questions for their Cornell notes until the end of class (or as homework). 

ALTERNATE PROCEDURE: This article could be read out loud, and as a class, summarize each paragraph to be sure students have the main ideas and can answer the question.

Teacher is circulating the room and reading student work (formative assessment)

Activity Two (30 minutes): How did the Columbian Exchange impact and create cultural diffusion in the cuisines (foods) of Iberia and Latin America?

PROCEDURE: Have students choose partners. Using materials in Appendix 3, give one partner the Portuguese food pictures (with recipes copied on opposite side), and the other partner the corresponding Brazilian page. Do the same with the Spanish/Latin America pages (there are two photos and recipes/page to save paper. After copying front to back, cut pages in half). Hand out document guides (Appendix 4) that students will use to analyze the pictures. Ask students to look at the pictures, answer the document guide questions in their notebook, and follow the instructions on the document guide.

With their partner, students create in their respective notebooks a Venn diagram that lists the ingredients of the New World dish and the Old World Dish, putting common ingredients in the center of the diagram (where the circles overlap). Using two different colored highlighters and the food maps (Appendix 5), highlight the ingredients that came from Latin America in one color, and Europe, Asia, and Africa in another.

After students have completed their Venn Diagrams, they should answer the question for the activity in their notebooks.

Teacher is circulating in the room and reading student work (formative assessment)
NOTE: This is a good time to remind students that Spain and Portugal had thriving trade routes in both Asia and Africa before the conquistadores arrived in Latin America. Their cuisine was already a product of cultural diffusion from those areas (especially spices and seasonings from India), and some of the ingredients may not be specifically called out on the maps, ie, smoked cod is a staple in both Brazilian and Portuguese cooking, and it comes from the N. Atlantic.

Activity Three (20 minutes, rest as homework) (summative assessment): How did the Columbian Exchange impact the social, political, and economic development of the indigenous peoples of The Americas?

PROCEDURE: Hand out DBQ packets (Appendix 6) and read the question with students. Explain to them that they will have to write an answer to the question at the end of the DBQ (which could be a thesis statement for an essay as an extension of the lesson or for an Honor’s assignment), so they should reread this question after they answer the questions for each document. Each document’s questions should be answered using complete sentences, in paragraph form (min. 5 sentences), using evidence from the document (cited parenthetically). Read grading rubric together. Look at document one, and work on it as a class or in small groups. Answer questions.

CLOSURE: Ask students to share an example in their everyday life of cultural diffusion. Remind them to finish their Cornell notes (summary and level questions) for grading (formative assignments) and to finish the DBQ for grading (summative assessment).
Appendix 2

The Columbian Exchange

The Columbian Exchange (also sometimes known as The Great Exchange) has been one of the most significant events in the history of world ecology, agriculture, and culture. The term is used to describe the enormous widespread exchange of plants, animals, foods, human populations (including slaves), communicable diseases, and ideas between the Eastern and Western hemispheres that occurred after 1492. Many new and different goods were exchanged between the two hemispheres of the Earth, and it began a new revolution in the Americas and in Europe. In 1492, Christopher Columbus' first voyage launched an era of large-scale contact between the Old and the New World that resulted in this ecological revolution: hence the name "Columbian" Exchange.

The Columbian Exchange greatly affected almost every society on earth, bringing destructive diseases that depopulated many cultures, and also circulating a wide variety of new crops and livestock that, in the long term, increased rather than diminished the world human population. Maize and potatoes became very important crops in Eurasia by the 1700s. Peanuts and manioc flourished in tropical Southeast Asian and West African soils that otherwise would not produce large yields or support large populations.

This exchange of plants and animals transformed European, American, African, and Asian ways of life. Foods that had never been seen before by people became staples of their diets, as new growing regions opened up for crops. For example, before AD 1000, potatoes were not grown outside of South America. By the 1840s, Ireland was so dependent on the potato that a diseased crop led to the devastating Irish Potato Famine. The first European import, the horse, changed the lives of many Native American tribes on the Great Plains, allowing them to shift to a nomadic lifestyle based on hunting bison on horseback. Tomato sauce, made from New World tomatoes, became an Italian trademark, while coffee from Africa and sugar cane from Asia became the main crops of extensive Latin American plantations. Also the chili / Paprika from South America was introduced in India by the Portuguese and it is today an inseparable part of Indian cuisine.

Before the Columbian Exchange, there were no oranges in Florida, no bananas in Ecuador, no paprika in Hungary, no tomatoes in Italy, no pineapples in Hawaii, no rubber trees in Africa, no cattle in Texas, no burros in Mexico, no chili peppers in Thailand and India, no cigarettes in France and no chocolate in Switzerland. Even the dandelion was brought to America by Europeans for use as an herb.

Before regular communication had been established between the two hemispheres, the varieties of domesticated animals and infectious diseases were strikingly larger in the Old World than in the New. This led, in part, to the devastating effects of Old World diseases on Native American populations. The smallpox epidemics probably resulted in the largest death toll for Native Americans. Scarcely any society on earth remained unaffected by this global ecological exchange. Source: "The Columbian Exchange." Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. N.p., n.d. Web.
Appendix 3-Classic Portuguese Dishes

Portuguese Migas (upper item) and Pork Stew, from Evora

Portuguese Fried Cod cakes with rice and beans /Fried Cod cakes with rice sprouts, Lisbon
Classic Portuguese dishes ingredients
Migas and Pork Stew
Wheat Bread
Olive oil
Garlic
Red Peppers
onion
Cilantro
Parsley
Water
Pork
Red Pepper paste

Fried Cod cakes, rice with beans, rice with herbs
Salt cod
Potatoes
Wheat flour
Olive Oil
Cilantro
Rice
Red beans
Parsley
Classic Brazilian Dishes


Classic Brazilian Dishes Ingredients

Pamonha

- Corn
- Milk
- Sugar
- Butter
- Salt
- Corn husks for wrapping and steaming


Fried Salt Cod Cakes Ingredients

- Potatoes
- Green onions
- Parsley/Cilantro
- Onion
- Nutmeg
- Cayenne Pepper
- Eggs
- Bread Crumbs
- Vegetable Oil

Classic Spanish Dishes

Salmorejo, Cordoban Tomato Bread Soup

Meat Paella, from Madrid

Classic Spanish Dishes Ingredients
Classic Spanish Dishes Ingredients

Salmorejo, Tomato Bread Soup

Tomatoes
Bread (made from wheat)
Olive Oil
Garlic
Salt
Hard Boiled Egg (garnish)
Spanish Cured Ham (garnish)

Meat Paella

Rice
Olive oil
Spanish Cured Ham
Chorizo sausage
Pork strips
Red Peppers
Peas
Paprika
Spanish Saffron
Fresh Rosemary
Classic Latin American Dishes


Arroz Atollado, Colombian Pork Risotto

Classic Latin American Dishes Ingredients
Gazpacho

Bread
Tomatoes
Cucumber
Green Pepper
Red Pepper
Garlic
Olive Oil
Red Wine Vinegar
Cumin
Cayenne Pepper


Colombian-Style Pork Risotto

Pork Stock
Vegetable Oil
Tomatoes
Green Onion
Garlic
Red Pepper
Garlic Powder
Cumin
Mexican Saffron
Cilantro
Rice
Potatoes
Chorizo sausage
Hard Boiled Egg Garnish
Appendix 4- Document Analysis Guides

1. Look at the photograph you have been assigned. In your notebook, describe what you see. In your description, include ingredients that you know, make guesses as to what ingredients might be in the dish, and be sure to specify things like color and texture.

2. When both you and your partner are finished with Step 1, compare the two photographs you have. Discuss what looks the same in the two photos, and what looks different. Do the two photos look related?

3. Turn over both photographs and look at the list of ingredients. In your notebook (and your partner in theirs), draw a Venn Diagram. In the left circle, write the ingredients that only appear in the Latin American dish. In the right circle, write the ingredients that only appear in the Portuguese or Spanish dish. In the intersection of the circle, write the ingredients that both dishes share.

4. Now look at The Columbian Exchange and Origins and Primary Regions of Diversity of Agricultural Crops maps. Using one color highlighter for foods that originated in Latin America, and a different highlighter for foods that originated in Europe, Africa, and West Asia, highlight your Venn Diagram.

5. After you have highlighted your Venn Diagram, answer the following questions in complete sentences:

   What ingredients did the conquistadores bring to Latin America to be able to eat familiar dishes?

   What ingredients did the conquistadores bring back to Portugal and Spain to enhance their dishes?

   Compare and contrast the two dishes. Which dish do you think was created first and diffused, and why (hint: look at where the most ingredients come from)?

Write a thesis statement to answer the following question: *How did the Columbian Exchange impact and create cultural diffusion in the cuisines (foods) of Iberia and Latin America?*
Appendix 5 Origins and Primary Regions of Diversity in Agricultural Crops

Appendix 6
Summative Assessment, DBQ

Please answer the questions under the documents in full sentences, using evidence from the text. Cite parenthetically, ie: (document 1), and write your answers in paragraph form.

At the end of Document 5, write a thesis statement that answers our essential question:

EQ: How did The Columbian Exchange (cultural diffusion) impact social, economic, and political development in Latin America?

Document 1

The Arrival of Europeans

The arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Caribbean in 1492 had a tremendous impact on the future of that region. The passage below describes that arrival. It is taken from an abridgement of Columbus' personal journal made by Bartholome de las Casas.

“In order to win the friendship and affection of that people, and because I was convinced that their conversion to our Holy Faith would be better promoted through love than through force, I presented some of them with red caps and some strings of glass beads which they placed around their necks, and with other trifles of the insignificant worth that delighted them and by which we have got wonderful hold on their affections.”

From the diary of Christopher Columbus during his first voyage of exploration.

Saturday, 13 October. [1492] At daybreak great multitudes of men came to the shore, all young and of fine shapes, very handsome; their hair not curled but straight and coarse like horse-hair, and all with foreheads and heads much broader than any people I had seen; They came loaded with balls of cotton, parrots, javelins, and other things too numerous to mention; these they exchanged for whatever we chose to give them.

1. What is the topic of these documents?
2. Above are two excerpts from a diary or journal. Who is being quoted in both entries?
3. According to the first quote, what were the Europeans planning for the natives? How did he intend to accomplish his goal?
4. How did the Europeans describe the natives?
5. From reading both of these quotes how did the Europeans viewed the natives? Cite evidence to support your answer.

Document 2:
The Spread of Disease

The Spread of Disease from the Old World to the New
The list of infectious diseases that spread from the Old World to the New is long; the major killers include smallpox, measles, whooping cough, chicken pox, bubonic plague, typhus, and malaria (Denevan, 1976, p. 5). Because native populations had no previous contact with Old World diseases, they were immunologically defenseless. Dobyns (1983, p. 34) writes that “before the invasion of peoples of the New World by pathogens that evolved among inhabitants of the Old World, Native Americans lived in a relatively disease-free environment. . . . Before Europeans initiated the Columbian Exchange of germs and viruses, the peoples of the Americas suffered no smallpox, no measles, no chickenpox, no influenza, no typhus, no typhoid or parathyroid fever, no diphtheria, no cholera, no bubonic plague, no scarlet fever, no whooping cough, and no malaria.”


Read the text, look at the population graph, and the drawing, which accompanied a text in Book XII of the 16th-century Florentine Codex (compiled 1540–1585), showing the Nahuas of conquest-era central Mexico suffering from smallpox. Answer the following questions.

1. What is the topic of these documents?
2. What happened when the Europeans colonized Latin America?
3. The Europeans enslaved the indigenous peoples of Latin America to work their farms. What group of people did they bring to Latin America to replace the dying population?
Agricultural Change

Exchanging crops proved to be a far more intricate, involved process than ever could have been imagined at the time. Remarkably, the people of the Americas realized that crops with higher caloric value could not only feed more people, but also allowed people to work harder because they were more energized. This led to an adoption of American crops by European peasantry that changed entire cuisines in various cultures and spread rapidly through the Americas, Europe and finally, Africa. An important crop in Europe was potatoes, as they could be left in the ground until they were ready to be eaten and allowed many Europeans to evade taxes, as tax collectors did not go so far as to dig up not yet harvested crops. Similarly, potatoes were also a helpful crop and food source because when armies invaded and rounded up food for themselves, they were similarly unable to steal the potatoes; thereby, leaving food for the European people. Animals were also a key part of the Columbian Exchange. Horses, pigs, sheep, and cattle were all European animals that flourished rapidly in the Americas because they were able to reproduce without being hindered by predators. Pigs were also a key animal used during ocean travels because they could be dumped on the way to a country or place and then picked up and eaten on the way back. The horse, too, was also a very useful animal as it helped with battle; it allowed for faster travel, it allowed for the surprising of opponents, and allowed people to fight from a higher level.

Source: “Columbian Exchange” March 31, 2006 Lauren Rees

1. What is being the topic of Document 3?
2. What were the benefits of the crops from the Americas?
3. How did these crops effect European culture?
4. The potato became an important crop in Europe, why?
5. Animals played an important role in the Columbian Exchange. Which animal had the biggest impact in the Americas? Support your answer.
A New Economic System

When they established colonies in the Americas, the Spanish created a new economic system, the encomienda system, in which Native Americans worked on Spanish-owned estates. The basis for that system was laid out in a letter from King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella to the governor of Hispaniola in 1503:

“Our desire is that the Christians not lack people to work their holdings and to take out what gold there is. It also is our desire that the Indians live in community with the Christians, because they then will help each other cultivate and settle the island, take out the gold, and bring profit to Spain. Therefore, we command you, our governor, to compel the Indians to associate with the Christians. The Indians should work on the Christians’ building, mind the gold, till the fields, and produce food for the Christians. This the Indians shall perform as free people, which they are, and not as slaves. Also, see to it that the Indians are well treated, with those who become Christians better treated than the others. Do not consent or allow any person to do them any harm or oppress them.”

1. What is the topic of Document 4?
2. Define encomienda system.
3. What is the source of this text? How do you know?
4. By reading the above text was seemed to be the main goal of the Spanish? Why?
5. Explain how the author(s) of the text felt the natives should be treated. Was everyone to be treated the same, why or why not?
1. What do you think is meant by the term mother country?
2. What things did the mother country gain from the colonies in the New World? What did the colonies gain?
3. In this diagram, what is filling the treasury of the mother country? Why is this important?
4. Examine the picture in the middle of the diagram, what is it telling us? Why is this important to the mother country?
5. Draw a conclusion from this diagram. If the mother country is gaining wealth from the colonies how will this affect the colonies in the long term? Explain.