



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2006 Volume II: Latino Cultures and Communities

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## **Breaking Bread - Building Bridges through the Art of Latino Cuisine**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 06.02.05

by Diane M. Nichols

This is a unit on Latin American cuisine, with a particular focus on Mexican and Puerto Rican cuisine. I wrote this unit as a starting point to introduce my students to many other Latin American cultural themes. Young adolescents have a fascination with everything related to themselves, as well as food. I hope to hook my students' natural interest in this topic and then move on to such topics as immigration and the role of the Spanish language in America.

I focus on Mexican and Puerto Rican cuisine because a high percentage of my school's Latino student population is of Mexican or Puerto Rican descent. I have chosen two important staple foods from Latin America: corn and chocolate. It is my hope that my students will understand there is a lot more to Latin American cuisine than what they see at the fast food chains. When people come together to the table to "break bread," barriers begin to fall. My intention is to break down barriers and build an understanding as well as an appreciation of the Latino culture. This unit was designed for my level I Spanish classes. I teach Spanish IA to seventh graders and IB to eighth graders. In middle or grammar school, level I is divided into two years. It is the equivalent of year one in high school. It is recommended for beginning Spanish students level I; however, it can be adapted to any discipline that would like to promote a cultural understanding of the Latino culture and their communities.

(Recommended for Social Studies and Spanish I, grades 7-9.)

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