

Azeri Kitchen

Lesson Objective & Summary

Objective: Students will use their five senses to observe, experience, and describe different food samples representing some of the food found in Azerbaijan. Students will then create a product pamphlet using creative, descriptive vocabulary, which explains some of the Azerbaijani products they studied.

Summary: Students will watch the [Products of Azerbaijan](#) episode and [read the blog](#). Students will then sample different types of cheese, fruit, and spices that are found in Azerbaijan. As they try each food/spice, students will write notes to describe each item, using language that reflects their understanding of the five senses (How does it look? How does it smell? How does it feel? How does it taste? How does it sound?). Students will then take one, two, or three of their favorite food samples and create a brochure to explain their chosen product(s), using descriptive, sense-based vocabulary.

Grade Level:
Upper Elementary

DURATION:
1 - 2 Lessons

SUBJECTS:
Social Studies, Language Arts

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Standards & Benchmarks

From the Common Core Standards for Language Arts

- Students will integrate information from several different sources to write or speak about a subject knowledgeably. (*Common Core Standards for English Language Arts, Grades 3-5, Reading Standards for Informational Text*)
- Students will write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. (*Common Core Standards for English Language Arts, Grades 3-5, Writing, Standard 2.2*)
 - a. Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
 - b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
- Students will produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (*Common Core Standards for English Language Arts, Grades 3-5, Writing, Standard 4*)

Background Information for Educators

Azerbaijan's location on the Caspian Sea, in the southern part of the Caucasus Mountains, makes it a prime place for fishing and growing fruit and vegetables. Azerbaijan is especially well-known for its pomegranates, of which there are more than ten varieties. Pomegranates are not only eaten plain, but they are also incorporated into sauces, soups, stews, and juices that create a unique flavor in Azeri cooking.

Azerbaijan's agricultural heritage is seen particularly in the different types of foods eaten. Lamb kebabs, or grilled seasoned lamb skewers, are a local favorite. Lamb's milk, goat's milk, and cow's milk are all used to create a variety of cheeses. Spices such as saffron, thyme, and mint are commonly used in cooking and grow in abundance in the countryside.

Azeri cooking is infused with many different regional influences, boasting flavors reflective of its Turkish, Iranian, and Russian neighbors.

Guiding Questions	Key Vocabulary
<p>What are some of the major products found in Azerbaijan?</p> <p>What do these products reveal about Azerbaijan (specifically, its geography)?</p> <p>What sensory words can be used to describe different food products?</p> <p>How do your five senses help you when seeing and trying different foods?</p>	<p>Sweet</p> <p>Pungent</p> <p>Agriculture</p> <p>Whey</p> <p>Curdled</p> <p>Texture</p> <p>Spices</p> <p>Saffron</p>

Lesson Plan

1. Ask students to recall the five senses. Then ask students to consider how these senses might be used when exploring food.
2. Divide the class into five groups (or into groups of five), one to represent each of the five senses (sight, smell, taste, hear, touch). Then have each group (or student in a group of five) write down a list of words that relate to that particular sense (i.e.: for "touch," students may write words like, "soft, smooth, rough, squishy," etc). Have students share their thinking and record their thoughts on a class list.

3. Watch the [Product of Azerbaijan](#) and [Food Finds: Azerbaijan Edition](#) videos. Have students record notes as they watch, paying special attention to what products are explored, and what other examples of sense words they hear. Also, challenge students to consider what the food items found in the market tell people about the landscape of Azerbaijan (i.e.: the abundance of fish tells us that Azerbaijan is near a body of water).
4. Provide several samples of food products for students to try. While the food samples you bring will not likely be directly from Azerbaijan, they should reflect some of the food samples that students observed from the videos. Food samples will, of course, vary depending on availability in the region where you live, but try to provide a variety of samples so that students are required to use their senses. Some suggested samples include:

Cheese varieties: (from cow, goat, and/or sheep's milk: i.e.: feta, ricotta, Neufchatel, etc)

Fruits and Vegetables: Pomegranates, Figs, Raisins, Eggplant, Spinach

Herbs & Spices: Dill, Thyme, Mint, Tarragon, Saffron (if available)

Nuts: Almonds, Walnuts, Chestnuts

Classroom Management Suggestion

Create several food sample stations available around the classroom, where each station features a different type of food found in Azerbaijan (i.e.: a cheese station, a spices/nuts station, and a fruit/vegetable station). Food samples should be pre-cut into small pieces or portions. Use toothpicks, paper cups, and/or small spoons to help manage sampling.

5. As students try each food sample, have them record notes about each item, focusing specifically on what each food sample "looks like, smells like, tastes like, and feels like." In some cases, students may be able to explain what the food "sounds" like (i.e.: nuts crack and crunch when chewed), but the hearing sense will not be as necessary for completing students' culminating assignment. Encourage students to be as specific and descriptive as possible.
6. Once students have finished sampling, they should choose 1 to 3 items and create a brochure that uses descriptive vocabulary to explain each item. Students can draw or use pictures and images, but their utmost goal is to be able to use descriptive, sensory language to describe their products. Challenge students to imagine that they are trying to sell their chosen items, and they want their descriptions and explanations to be as enticing as possible.
7. Have students share their brochures with small groups or with the class. Add other descriptive words to the class list as necessary.

Possible Lesson Extensions

Have students research an Azeri recipe and examine what ingredients are found in the recipe. Challenge students to try to cook their recipe (with adult supervision) and reflect on what they learned through the experience.

Have students create their own Azeri menu, where they describe some of the flavors and ingredients of Azerbaijan, using language that will make their readers drool.

Challenge Questions

What sensory words can be used to describe some of the local foods found in your community?

What other roles do our senses have in our daily life?

Curriculum Connections

Writing: Students will write using descriptive language.

Social Studies: Students will examine how local foods and menu items reflect the geography and climate of a place.

Science: Students will explore and make observations using their five senses.

Additional Resources

AZ Cookbook: Food from Azerbaijan and Beyond

<http://www.azcookbook.com/>

Encyclopedia of the Nations

<http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Asia-and-the-Pacific/Azerbaijan-AGRICULTURE.html>