

Farm to Fork: Exploring Taste with School Garden Produce



Curriculum Links

Scotland
I enjoy eating a diversity of foods in a range of social situations
HWB-29
By investigating the range of foods available I can discuss how they contribute to a healthy diet.
HWB-30

UK
use the basic principles of a healthy and varied diet to prepare dishes
I understand where food comes from.

Key Concept

I can explore and taste food grown in the school garden, describing its taste, texture, and aroma, and reflecting on the journey from garden to plate.



Background

In this mouth-watering lesson, students will embark on a sensory journey as they taste food grown in the school garden. From planting seeds to harvesting fresh produce, students will learn about the journey of food from farm to fork while developing their appreciation for locally grown ingredients.

Resources

- Fresh produce harvested from the school garden (e.g., fruits, vegetables, herbs)
- Cutting boards
- Knives (for teacher or adult use)
- Plates and utensils
- Napkins
- Pitchers of water
- Paper and pencils for reflection

Wider Skills

- Food Literacy: Understanding the origin and characteristics of different foods.
- Sensory Awareness: Developing an appreciation for taste, texture, and aroma.
- Environmental Stewardship: Recognizing the importance of sustainable food practices.
- Communication: Expressing thoughts and feelings about food experiences.

Lesson

1. Introduction to School Garden Produce (10 mins):

Begin by discussing the journey of food from seed to table, highlighting the importance of locally grown and fresh ingredients.

Show students the variety of produce harvested from the school garden, discussing the different fruits, vegetables, and herbs available for tasting.

2. Tasting Session (20 mins):

Set up tasting stations with plates of sliced or prepared garden produce, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, strawberries, and herbs.

Invite students to explore the taste, texture, and aroma of each food item, encouraging descriptive language and sensory observations.

Provide pitchers of water for students to cleanse their palate between tastings and napkins for clean-up.

3. Guided Reflection (15 mins):

After the tasting session, gather students for a guided reflection on their food experiences.

Encourage students to share their favorite tastes and textures, as well as any new foods they discovered or enjoyed.

Prompt students to consider the journey of the food from the garden to their plate, discussing the efforts involved in growing, harvesting, and preparing the produce.

4. Garden-to-Plate Activity (10 mins):

Engage students in a discussion about the environmental benefits of growing food locally and the importance of sustainable food practices.

Invite students to draw or write about their favorite garden-to-plate recipe, incorporating ingredients from the school garden.

Encourage students to think creatively and consider the nutritional value and flavor combinations of their chosen recipe.

5. Closing Reflection (5 mins):

Conclude the lesson with a brief reflection on the importance of fresh, locally grown food and its impact on health and sustainability.

Encourage students to share any newfound appreciation for garden produce and their commitment to supporting local food initiatives.

Assessment:

Observation: Assess students' engagement and participation during the tasting session, noting their willingness to try new foods and their descriptive language skills.

Reflection: Review students' written or verbal reflections on their food experiences, assessing their ability to articulate sensory observations and make connections to broader concepts of sustainability and health.

Older Classes

To adapt the lesson for older students, deepen their understanding of food production and sustainability. Begin by discussing the broader concepts of food systems, including agricultural practices, food distribution, and environmental impacts. Emphasize the importance of local and sustainable food sourcing, highlighting the benefits of reducing food miles and supporting local farmers.

During the tasting session, encourage students to explore the complexities of flavor profiles and culinary techniques. Provide opportunities for more sophisticated sensory analysis, such as identifying subtle flavor notes and evaluating texture and mouthfeel. Encourage students to compare and contrast different varieties of produce, discussing factors such as ripeness, freshness, and growing conditions.

In the guided reflection, prompt students to critically reflect on the socio-economic and environmental implications of food choices. Encourage them to consider issues such as food justice, access to healthy food options, and the role of consumer behavior in shaping food systems. Challenge students to brainstorm practical solutions for promoting sustainable food practices within their school community and beyond.

During the garden-to-plate activity, engage students in a deeper exploration of recipe development and culinary creativity. Encourage them to research and experiment with innovative ways to incorporate garden produce into diverse and nutritious meals. Facilitate discussions about the nutritional value of different ingredients and the importance of balanced diets for health and well-being.

Finally, in the closing reflection, encourage students to reflect on their personal values and beliefs about food and sustainability. Encourage them to consider how their choices as consumers can contribute to positive social and environmental change. Foster a sense of empowerment and agency by highlighting the potential impact of individual and collective actions in creating a more sustainable food system.

Younger Classes

For younger learners, simplify the concepts and activities to make them more engaging and accessible. Begin by framing the lesson as a fun exploration of colours, shapes, and tastes. Introduce the idea of tasting fresh fruits and vegetables from the school garden as a sensory adventure. Use descriptive language to talk about the vibrant colours, interesting shapes, and delicious flavours of the produce.

During the tasting session, focus on basic sensory experiences, such as observing the colours and textures of the fruits and vegetables, feeling their smooth or rough surfaces, and tasting their sweet or tart flavours. Keep portions small and manageable for young children, and provide plenty of encouragement and positive reinforcement as they explore new foods.

Incorporate interactive elements into the lesson, such as singing songs or playing games related to fruits and vegetables. Use props and visuals to make the tasting experience more engaging and interactive. Encourage children to use their senses to describe the foods they taste, and model descriptive language for them to imitate.

During the reflection activity, provide simple prompts for children to express their thoughts and feelings about the tasting experience. Use open-ended questions to encourage children to share their favourite fruits and vegetables, as well as any new foods they discovered or enjoyed. Keep the reflection activity short and age-appropriate, allowing children to express themselves in their own words and at their own pace.

Finally, conclude the lesson with a positive and encouraging message about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables to stay healthy and strong. Encourage children to continue exploring new foods and flavours, both in the school garden and at home.