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FOOD

POPULAR CHILEAN FOODS

Chilean foods such as empanadas, completos [com-play-toes], and sopaipillas [so-pah-pee-yuhs] are an integral part of Chilean culture (see Traditions Visual 2). Countless stores and stands on the street sell these foods in order to earn extra money and participate in Chile’s Independence Day festivities.

Starting Points

1. Make and bring empanadas, completos, and sopaipillas for the students to sample (see Additional Resources).
2. Discuss the types of food that Americans eat on the Fourth of July. Compare those foods to the foods Chileans eat during their Independence Day festivities.
3. Show pictures of Chilean foods and have the students write a description of what they see (see Traditions Visual 2 and Food Visuals 1 and 2).

Information

Typical Foods

The food eaten in Latin America varies from country to country. Many people think that Chileans eat burritos, but it is uncommon to see anything that resembles Mexican food in Chile. Chileans eat a lot of rice, chicken, and mashed potatoes. They are very particular about the way that rice is presented on the plate when it is served. They put it in a cup, often with mayonnaise mixed in, and then empty it onto the plate, creating a small tower of rice.

In addition to rice, chicken, and mashed potatoes, Chileans eat a lot of soup dishes. An example of a Chilean soup is *casuela* [ka-sway-luh]. This soup is made with an entire potato, a cob of corn, and a slab of meat. The person eating the casuela is expected to dice the meat and potato into bite-size pieces and cut or eat the corn off the cob as he or she eats the soup. Another soup-like dish is the inexpensive *porotos* [po-ro-toes] soup, or bean soup. Beans are also sometimes added to a noodle salad. A common bean in Chile is the lentil. This is usually served with some type of pasta and small pieces of pork. As salads go, *la ensalada Chilena* [en-sa-la-da chee-lay-na] (the Chilean salad) is probably the most popular. This salad is made by cutting up onions and tomatoes and adding cilantro and oil.

Empanadas

The empanada is by far the food most commonly eaten during the holidays and throughout the year (see Traditions Visual 2 and Additional Resources). Empanadas can be filled with a variety of foods, ranging from meat to fruit. Empanadas filled with meat are considered a filling dinner, while empanadas with fruit in them...
are considered a dessert. Meat-filled empanadas often also have raisins, olives, onions, and hard-boiled eggs in them. It is important to note that most Chilean olives still have the pit in the middle. When you eat an empanada with olives in it, you must be careful not to swallow the pit or crack a tooth on it. Empanadas found in stores in the United States usually come without the pit.

When Chileans are full and can’t eat anymore, they say they are satisfied rather than saying that they are full. Chileans find the expression “I’m full” offensive.

**Sopaipillas**

Another common food in Chile is the sopaipilla (see Additional Resources). This food is shaped like a small round disc and resembles a thick tortilla. Chilean sopaipillas are not like those made in Mexico and the southwestern part of the United States. Chilean sopaipillas are made with squash, lard, and a number of other ingredients. Usually sopaipillas are covered with ketchup or mustard, but for a sweet snack, they can be treated like scones and covered with honey. Sopaipillas are a popular after-school snack sold by street vendors; they are also eaten during times of festivity. Street vendors prepare the dough and keep a frying pan filled with hot oil ready to provide customers with fresh, hot sopaipillas. Some families have a tradition of making sopaipillas on rainy days.

**Completos**

Another food item sold on the street and eaten during times of festivity is the famous completo (see Food Visual 1). The North American equivalent of this food is the hot dog. However, Chilean “hot dogs” are very different from American hot dogs. The bread Chileans use tastes different because it is made with lard. The meat is also different because Chileans add avocado (palta) and tomato to the sausage. On top of these items, they usually put a lot of mayonnaise (Chilean mayonnaise resembles a mix of United States mayonnaise and mustard). Along with the mayonnaise, Chileans apply a fair amount of ketchup and mustard.

As the name suggests, Chilean hot dogs are called completos because Chileans believe that they are more complete than American hot dogs. There are other kinds of completos in Chile, such as the Italiano, which has more avocado. Another kind of completo is covered by sauerkraut. Completos are easy to prepare.

**Completos Recipe**

**You will need:**

- 4 hot dogs
- 1 ripe avocado
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 T vegetable oil
- 1 tomato (diced) (opt.)
- 4 buns
- mayonnaise (opt.)
- mustard (opt.)
- ketchup (opt.)

**Preparation**

1. Boil the hot dogs until they are cooked.
2. Split the avocado and dig it out of the shell with a spoon.
3. Place the avocado in a bowl and add the salt and vegetable oil. With a fork, mash the avocado until it can be smoothly applied to the hot dog.
4. When making the completo, put the avocado on first so that the other items will stick to it. Add whatever condiments you want after this.

Yield: 4 servings

Fruit
Chile is famous for its fruit. The climate and geography of central Chile are ideal for growing all types of fruit. During the summer, farmers grow watermelons, avocados, cactus fruit, and grapes. Chile uses its fruit to make products such as marmalade (jelly) and juice (see Food Visual 2).

The fruit that Chile can grow because of its warm climate is a great resource for countries that live north of the equator. When it is winter in the United States, it is summer in Chile. Because grapes can’t grow in the United States during the winter, stores buy grapes from Chile. The next time you eat grapes in the wintertime, don’t forget to thank your friends in Chile!

Sweets
Stores in Chile offer a variety of sweets such as pastries and chocolates. Some of the chocolates they sell include the Super 8, which is a wafer cookie surrounded by chocolate, Golpe (goal-pay), which is filled with caramel-like liquid, and many other Nestle products. These chocolates are tasty and inexpensive. They usually cost fifty to one hundred pesos each, which is between seven and fourteen United States cents. There are also more expensive chocolates, but if you’re looking for a quick treat, the inexpensive chocolates are satisfying.

Alfajores [all-fey-hoar-es] are another treat commonly seen on store shelves. They are like a cookie that has been wrapped in chocolate and caramel. There are different types of alfajores and many are imported from other countries. Argentina is famous for these delicious sweets.

Activities
1. Make completos.
2. Divide into groups and with your group, create a poster that advertises your favorite Chilean food.
3. Write a letter to an imaginary pen pal from Chile and describe your favorite North American food (see Folklore & Language Activities). Also write what you like about Chilean food.
4. Divide into groups and with your group look at a picture of a Chilean food item (see Traditions Visual 2 and Food Visuals 1 and 2). Take a few minutes to write a description of each food as if you were writing for a food magazine that is trying to sell the food products to the public. Share your favorite description with the rest of the class.
Discussion Questions

1. How is Chilean food different from the food we eat in the United States?
2. What types of food do people in the United States eat at parties?
3. What influences the kinds of food people eat?
4. In the winter, the United States gets grapes from Chile. What products might Chile get from the United States?
Traditions Visual 1: Diabolo and Emboque
Traditions Visual 2: Empanadas, a Chilean Flag, and a Copper Plate Depicting the Cueca
Traditions Visual 4: Guitar, Rain Stick, Zampoña, and Flute
SEPTEMBER WORD SEARCH

Find the words listed below in the word search. Words may be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal.

Allende
Asado (BBQ)
Barricades
Completos (hot dogs)
Coup
Diabolo
Embassy
Empanadas (meat pie)
Fútbol (soccer)
Micros (buses)
O’Higgins
Once (eleventh)
Pinochet
Protests
Queso (type of cheese empanada)
San Martín
September
Socialism
Volantín (kite)
**SEPTEMBER WORD SEARCH**

Find the words listed below in the word search. Words may be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal.

Allende  
Asado (BBQ)  
Barricades  
Completos (hot dogs)  
Coup  
Diabolo  
Embassy  

Empanadas (meat pie)  
Fútbol (soccer)  
Micros (buses)  
O’Higgins  
Once (eleventh)  
Pinochet  
Pino (type of empanada)  

Protests  
Queso (type of cheese empanada)  
San Martín  
September  
Socialism  
Volantín (kite)  

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Traditions Visual 5: September Word Search Answer Key (2 of 2)

Name: __________________________

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Find the words listed below in the word search. Words may be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal.
Activity 2: Possible Words

- Cowboy Outfit
- Diabolo [dee-ah-bow-low]
- Eggs
- Emboque [em-bow-kay]
- Empanadas [em-pah-na-duz]
- Guitar
- Instruments
- Kite
- Meat (for the BBQ)
- Olives
- Pan Flute
- Rain Stick
- Raisins
- Recorder
- Soccer Ball
- String
- White Handkerchief

Activity 3: List of Possible Characters for Skits

18 September 1810
- Army
- Bernardo O’Higgins
- Mapuche Indians
- San Martín
- Spaniards in Santiago

11 September 1973
- Allende’s supporters and other officials that accompanied him in the Moneda
- General Pinochet, General of Armed Forces (Lead Coup)
- Members of the armed forces
- Salvador Allende, President of Chile