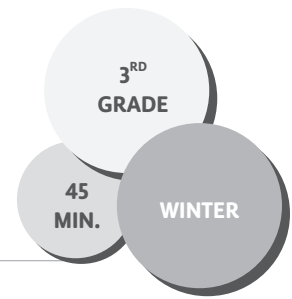


Tortilla Time!

THEME: MAKING HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do the foods we eat get from the plant to our plate?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to distinguish whole foods and processed foods.
- ✓ Students will be able to prepare homemade tortillas.

LESSON DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students learn to distinguish between whole and processed foods by making corn tortillas from masa harina, and they learn about the cultural tradition of tortilla making through listening to a read-aloud.

MATERIALS

- Dried corn on the cob and/or a jar of corn kernels
- Empty bag of corn chips
- Tortilla ingredients
- Mixing bowl
- Induction burner
- Extension cord
- Nonstick pan
- Cutting mats (2–3 for each group of students)
- Plate for each student
- Materials for cleanup
- *The First Tortilla* by Rudolfo Anaya (YouTube read-aloud)
- 4–6 rolling pins (optional)
- Grinder (optional)
- Mortar and pestle, with newspaper underneath (optional)
- Tortilla press (optional)

Tortilla Ingredients

(for 30 6-inch tortillas)

- 3 cups masa harina
- 1/3 tsp kosher salt
- 2 1/4 cup hot water

PREPARATION

- ▶ Find out if you have any students whose family members know how to make tortillas and, if so, invite them to teach the students how to press and cook tortillas.
- ▶ Recruit a second adult, if possible, to cook the tortillas while you guide the students in an activity while they wait.
- ▶ If you haven't made tortillas before, practice on your own to become familiar with the process, and address any challenges ahead of time.
- ▶ Find a read aloud on YouTube of Rudolfo Anaya's *The First Tortilla* to show to students.
- ▶ Set up a station with your induction burner and pan. If you have a mortar and pestle or grinder, set up a station where students can take turns independently grinding corn with these tools.
- ▶ Follow the directions on your masa harina package to prepare the tortilla dough beforehand.
- ▶ Divide the dough evenly for groups of 4–6 students to make one tortilla each. (A ball the size of a ping-pong ball will make approximately one 6-inch tortilla.)

ACTION STEPS

1. Engage: Explain to students that today you'll be talking about whole versus processed foods and getting to know corn a little better. Say, *Every day we typically eat a mix of some whole and some processed foods.* Show students the corn on the cob and the empty corn chip bag. Say, *Think in your heads which one of these is whole and which one of these is processed.* Then take a vote. Reveal the answers. **(5 min.)**

2. Defining Whole Versus Processed: Ask students to turn and talk to a partner to come up with a definition of what a whole food is versus what a processed food is. Share answers, and come up with definitions as a class. Ask, *Do you think the corn chips have been processed just a little bit or a lot?* Have students show you with their hands the extent to which they think the corn chips have been processed. Explain that the more steps a food undergoes and the more additional ingredients added, the more processed it is. **(5 min.)**

3. Explain the Activity: Tell students that today they're going to process corn to make a new food themselves: tortillas! Explain that Mexico and other countries in Central America have been making tortillas from corn for centuries. Show students the jar of corn kernels and the jar of masa harina. Ask, *How do you think the corn went from this to this? Discuss grinding the corn.* If you have a grinder or mortar and pestle, show these tools, and tell students they'll have the opportunity to use them soon. Then show students the prepared tortilla dough. Ask, *How do you think I processed the masa harina to make this dough?* Tell students about adding water, mixing, and kneading the dough. **(5 min.)**

4. Model: Model for students how to make a tortilla. Pinch off a ping-pong sized amount, and roll into a ball. If you don't have a tortilla press or rolling pins, show students how to press the ball with the palm of their hands until it's about six inches in diameter. Explain that once they're finished making their tortilla, they'll bring it up to you on their plate, where you'll cook it for them. **(5 min.)**

5. Making Tortillas: Pass out cutting mats, and provide groups of students with tortilla dough. If you have grinding tools, this is the time to invite students to practice using them. Heat up your nonstick pan as students begin pressing the dough. Cook the tortillas for one or two minutes on each side. Be sure students keep a safe distance from the burner as you cook their tortillas. You may want to allow students to eat their tortilla when they return to their seat while it's still warm or when everyone at their table has one. **(15 min.)**

6. Enjoy! Consider playing a read-aloud of *The First Tortilla* by Rudolfo Anaya to share more about the tradition of tortilla making and to keep students engaged once they've made their tortilla. **(5 min.)**

REFLECTION

Have students discuss the following questions in small groups, then share with the class: **(5 min.)**

- *How many steps did it take to go from corn on the cob to our tortillas?*
- *Do you think some processed foods are healthy choices? Do you think all processed foods are healthy choices?*
- *What are some words you would use to*

describe our tortillas' smell? Taste? Texture?

- What tips or tricks did we find for creating our tortillas?

ADAPTATIONS

Tasting Extension: Conduct a taste test comparing homemade tortillas with store-bought ones.

ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 3 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

