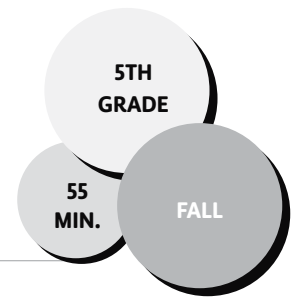


What's in My Salsa?

THEME: MAKING NOURISHING FOOD CHOICES



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What informs our food choices?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Students will be able to interpret nutrition labels.
- ✓ Students will be able to compare and contrast homemade and store-bought salsas.

CONCEPTS

knife safety preservatives
reading nutrition labels shelf-stable

ENGAGING THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

- If these students planted the salsa ingredients the prior year, schedule a time prior to the lesson for students to harvest the ingredients.
- During Action Step 5, suggest that the teacher help pass out materials to students and then circulate through the room, ensuring groups are working productively together.

LESSON DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students compare and contrast homemade and store-bought salsas by reading nutrition labels and making their own salsa. This lesson is designed to be taught in conjunction with fourth-grade lesson Plant a Salsa Bed! with the idea that the students who

plant the ingredients for salsa the prior school year can enjoy making it at the start of the new school year.

MATERIALS

- Salsa Ingredients (see recipe below)
- 2 jars of store-bought salsa
- Spoon for mixing
- 1–2 bags of tortilla chips
- Nutrition labels for one store-bought, shelf-stable salsa (the more processed, the better) and one store-bought, refrigerated salsa
- Salsa recipe (p. 503)
- Materials for cleanup

Tray with the following for each group of 4–6 students:

- Washed and portioned ingredients (see recipe)
- Cutting mats
- Knives
- Bowl of chips
- Bowl for salsa
- Bowl for store-bought salsa
- Container for compost

PREPARATION

- › As you prepare to teach this lesson, keep in mind that the goal is not to shame students for liking foods that are store-bought and include preservatives, but rather to promote conversation and critical thinking about food choices.
- › Find, print, and photocopy salsa nutrition label samples.
- › Display the salsa recipe on the board or chart paper.

- › Prepare trays of materials and ingredients for each group. Scale the recipe ingredients according to how many students and groups you have. You can always share leftovers with custodial, nutrition, or administrative staff!

SALSA (PICO DE GALLO) RECIPE

Yield: 30 servings, 4 tablespoons

Dressing

- 6 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 2 small onions, finely diced (about 1 cup)
- 2/3 cup cilantro, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 small jalapeno, finely chopped (optional)
- Juice of 1–2 limes, to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, more to taste

Mix all ingredients together in a bowl. Taste and adjust seasoning with lime juice and salt.

ACTION STEPS

1. Discussing: Gather students in a circle and ask, *Do you know what this is? Why do you think there are nutrition labels on your food?* You might consider sharing that, in 1990, the US government created a law requiring companies to put nutrition labels on food. *What does the nutrition label tell you? How does reading the label influence any choices that you make?* Have students turn and talk with each other for a minute, then share with the whole class. Explain that, today, students will get a chance to make their own salsa and compare it to store-bought salsa. **(5 min.)**

2. Comparing Ingredients on Nutrition Labels:

Pass out the sample nutrition labels for your two different types of salsa. Have students

read the labels in pairs and make observations. Provide guiding questions, such as, *What differences can you spot between the ingredients lists? Which has more ingredients? Are there any ingredients in the list that surprise you or that you've never heard of?* Share observations as a class and explain, *One of these is shelf-stable, which means it's made to last on a shelf for a long time, and the other is refrigerated. Can you guess which is which?* Discuss how we consider the shelf-stable one more highly processed, but the refrigerated ones sometimes have preservatives to make them last longer as well. Explain, *Preservatives are chemicals that are added to foods to prevent them from growing mold or spoiling. Instead of adding preservatives, we preserve fresh foods we've made at home by putting them in the fridge or freezer and eating them quickly. Salt and sugar are natural preservatives that help food stay fresh longer. Companies use these natural preservatives too. But that's why food that's prepared fresh and meant to be eaten in a few days needs less salt and sugar than shelf-stable food.* Have students preview the salsa recipe you'll be making together. Ask them to compare the ingredients to those listed on the store-bought nutrition labels. **(10 min.)**

3. Hand-Washing Break (5 min.)

4. Knife Safety Demonstration (5 min.)

5. Making Salsa: Assign team leaders in each group whose job will be to read the recipe and give roles to each person in the group. Pass out trays of ingredients and materials; (setting aside tortilla chips for now) and circulate through the room, making sure students are being safe; provide support where needed. Give

students a two-minute warning, and then have them clean up their spaces. **(15 min.)**

6. Tasting: Remind students that they're not going to eat until you say, then pass out bowls of chips and bowls of store-bought salsa. Remind students not to double-dip chips and to use a napkin rather than lick their fingers. Before having students taste, ask them to make observations of how the salsas look and smell. **(10 min.)**

REFLECTION

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

Social and emotional learning

- *Ask yourself: Was I cooperative and helpful with the classmates in my group?*

Check for understanding

- *What words describe the taste of our homemade salsa? How about the texture? How is it different from the store-bought salsa or salsas you've had in the past?*
- *What other ingredients would make our homemade salsa tasty?*
- *Do you think you're more or less likely to read nutrition labels after today's lesson? Why?*

ADAPTATIONS

Harvesting Extension: If students planted the ingredients for the salsa you'll be making today, give them the satisfaction of harvesting their efforts! Perhaps schedule the harvest a day or two before this lesson.

Literacy Extension: Have students draw Venn diagrams, and fill them in to show the similarities and differences between the store-bought salsa and the one they made.

Garden Setting: Have different groups make different salsas, depending on what's in your garden. You could have salsa that includes spicy peppers, a salsa that replaces tomatoes with sweet fruits like strawberries, a salsa made from tomatillos, or even green tomatoes that never had a chance to ripen!

Food Product Variation: Use this lesson as an outline to investigate a different food product that may be of interest to students.

ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

English Language Arts Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.7

Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.

Salsa (Pico De Gallo) Recipe

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- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup cilantro, finely chopped
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