



# The Columbian Exchange

## Overview:

Students will learn how the Columbian Exchange had major social, economic and health impacts on the world. They will draw connections to how the Columbian Exchange shaped the world they live in.

## Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

-  **Discuss** the major economic and social effects of the Columbian Exchange on Eurasia, Africa and the Americas.
-  **Identify** crops indigenous to North America.
-  **Describe** how the exchange of food crops during and after the Columbian Exchange impacted the foods we eat today.
-  **Identify** crops in the garden indigenous to North America, and those that arrived here as a result of the Columbian Exchange.

## Preparations:

-  Prep the ingredients for guacamole.
-  Identify plants in the garden to highlight as natives and imports.

## Vocabulary:

-  indigenous
-  livestock
-  landmass
-  Columbian Exchange

## Materials:

-  Map of the world
-  Handout: “The Columbian Exchange”
-  Clipboards for each student
-  Onions
-  Garlic
-  Lime
-  Cilantro
-  Cutting boards
-  Knives
-  Aprons
-  Bowls for each chopped ingredient
-  Wooden spoon

## On the Board:

-  An outline of the world
-  Students Reflection Questions
-  Vocabulary

## Suggested Snack:

-  Guacamole and corn chips: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/alton-brown/guacamole-recipe.html>

-  Christopher Columbus
-  colonize
-  firearms

## Learning Activities:

1. Snack (5 min.)
  - A. Start this lesson with a snack. Serve a very basic version of guacamole — leaving out the lime, onion, cilantro and garlic — with corn chips.
  - B. Ask students if they think the guacamole tastes different than what they are used to.
    - Ask if they can identify the missing ingredients.
    - Tell students that if they lived in the Americas in the 1400's or before, they would not have known what onions, garlic and citrus fruits were.
    - Citrus fruits, cilantro, garlic and onions all came from Eurasia.
2. Presentation: The Columbian Exchange (15 min.)
  - A. Ask students to look at the World Map and identify the three major landmasses: Eurasia, Africa and the Americas.
    - Tell students that the Columbian Exchange was a worldwide exchange of animals, plants, cultures and human populations that began following Christopher Columbus' voyage to the Americas in 1492.
  - B. On the outline of the world on the board, review the empires or civilizations that existed on each land mass before the exchange:
    - In the Americas, the Incan and Aztec empires were thriving. From the previous lesson, "Food and Agriculture in the Ancient Americas," ask students to recall some of the major crops that originated in the Americas: avocados, corn, amaranth, quinoa, tomatoes, potatoes, cacao, chiles, beans and squash.
    - In Africa, the kingdoms of Ghana and Mali had built major trade routes with Northern Africa and the Arabian peninsula.
    - In Eurasia, cultures were trading along the Silk Road. They had also developed firearms.
  - C. Distribute the Handout: "The Columbian Exchange."
    - Emphasize that before the Columbian Exchange, certain crops and animals that are nowadays associated with certain places did not exist in those places.
    - Ask students to look at the map and discuss regions where modern day staple foods did not actually originate from that region. For example, before the Columbian Exchange there were:
      - no oranges in Florida.
      - no tomatoes in Italy.
      - no beef in America.
      - no pineapple in Hawaii.
      - no chile peppers in Thailand or India.
      - no chocolate in Switzerland.

- Europeans brought slaves, crops, animals, diseases, silk and guns from Eurasia and Africa to the Americas. They returned with different crops, gold, silver and rubber.
  - While the Columbian Exchange provided many societies with new foods they had never dreamed of, it also brought about many new interactions and exchanges. Not all of them were positive.
    - With the power that came with being the only civilization with firearms, the Europeans began to colonize Africa and the Americas.
    - European explorers brought back corn and potatoes from the Americas that became staple crops in many countries.
    - Before the exchange, the Americas had no domesticated animals. The Europeans brought cows, sheep, pigs, horses and chickens. However, animals often carry diseases and with them came smallpox, measles, and influenza.
- D. Ask students: Are there any crops or animals we have in America now that you are surprised to learn came from another part of the world?
3. Garden Activity: Scavenger Hunt (15 min.)
- A. Tell students that now, it is very easy to buy or grow many kinds of edible plants in the United States, especially in California where the climate is favorable to so many kinds of plants. However, there are still some plants that do not grow well in the California climate (e.g., pineapples).
- B. Distribute clipboards to students and send them into the garden.
- Ask them to walk through the garden, using the Handout: “The Columbian Exchange” and identify as many crops as possible from around the world that now grow in America, circling them on the sheet as they go.
  - Whoever can find the most wins!
4. Cooking Activity: Completing the Guacamole (10 min.)
- A. If time allows, or as an activity in a follow-up lesson, have students harvest onions, garlic, cilantro and limes from the garden. Or, provide them if they aren’t growing in the garden.
- B. Assist the students in chopping the ingredients and adding them to the guacamole. Serve with chips!
5. Have students answer the reflection questions in their garden journals. (5 min.)

### Student Reflection Questions:

1. Are there certain foods you eat now that originally came from a different part of the world? How would you feel if those foods had never been introduced to America?

### Assessment Questions:

1. What did the Europeans trade in the Columbian Exchange that no other civilization had developed yet?
  - **Firearms**
2. List two negative things that resulted from the Columbian Exchange.
  - **Increased demand for slaves**
  - **Spread of diseases**
  - **Colonization**
  - **Spread of firearms.**

### Standards:

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

### Acknowledgements:

Parts of this lesson were adapted from:

*Ghanian Black-Eyed Peas*. The Edible Schoolyard.

<https://edibleschoolyard.org/resource/k7-7-ghanaian-black-eyed-peas-esyb>