

THE COALITION
FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD



Great Big Crunch



Activities Toolkit



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The Coalition for Healthy School Food is a growing network of 400+ non-profit member organizations (270+ members and 130+ endorsers) from across Canada. We are advocating for public investment in and federal standards for a universal cost-shared school food program that would see all children having daily access to healthy food at school. These programs will include food education and serve culturally appropriate food that is as local and sustainable as possible. See our guiding principles to learn more!

What is the Great Big Crunch?



The Great Big Crunch is a time dedicated to celebrating healthy food at school and highlighting the need for a universal, healthy school food program for Canada.

The Coalition for Healthy School Food has hosted the Great Big Crunch since 2020. A special thank you to FoodShare Toronto who first began the Great Big Crunch in 2008 and played a crucial role in creating many of the activities that are now part of it.

Our Goal for Canada

The federal government has promised to invest \$1 billion in school food over 5 years. As Budget 2024 approaches, we're calling on the government to act on its promise by committing funds to a National School Food Program.

We can stand in solidarity and raise awareness with a **Crunch**. Your crunch can be a special day, class, online meeting or lunch break ending with a synchronized **Crunch** into an apple or another crunchy fruit/vegetable.

How to Use This Toolkit

This toolkit offers a step-by-step guide on how to organize a Great Big Crunch event in your community. Feel free to adapt it for your own Crunch needs!

For high-res versions of Great Big Crunch logos and other communication materials, click [here](#). Check out our [Communication Guide](#) for more ways to engage online and spread the word!

This 2024 Toolkit is licensed under CC-BY, a Creative Commons license that allows reuse, redistribution, derivative works, and commercial use, provided that you give credit to the Coalition for Healthy School Food.

Many of our exercises are adapted from the work of Coalition members, governments and other non-profits across Canada. Please credit the source of the exercise when you use it.



Why Participate in the Great Big Crunch?



It's fun and you'll join hundreds of thousands of folks across the country (and beyond) celebrating nourishing food at school!



It's a great way to participate in Nutrition Month.



It's a simple way to show your support for [#NourishKidsNow](#), a grassroots campaign from the Coalition for Healthy School Food calling on the federal government to invest in a universal school food program for Canada. Learn more on [the Coalition's website](#).

When is the Crunch?

Join us **Thursday, March 7 at 1 pm ET** for a Virtual Canada-wide Great Big Crunch. Or organize your own Crunch any time throughout March!

This year also try the "Great Big Munch" - see Toolkit Activity #2 on pages 8 and 9.

Register and share details about your event. We want to count your crunches and munches no matter when or how you participate!

Who & Where?

Anyone can participate - whether you're at school, home, work or on a video call! Join us and get others to celebrate nourishing school food with you.



How to Take Part

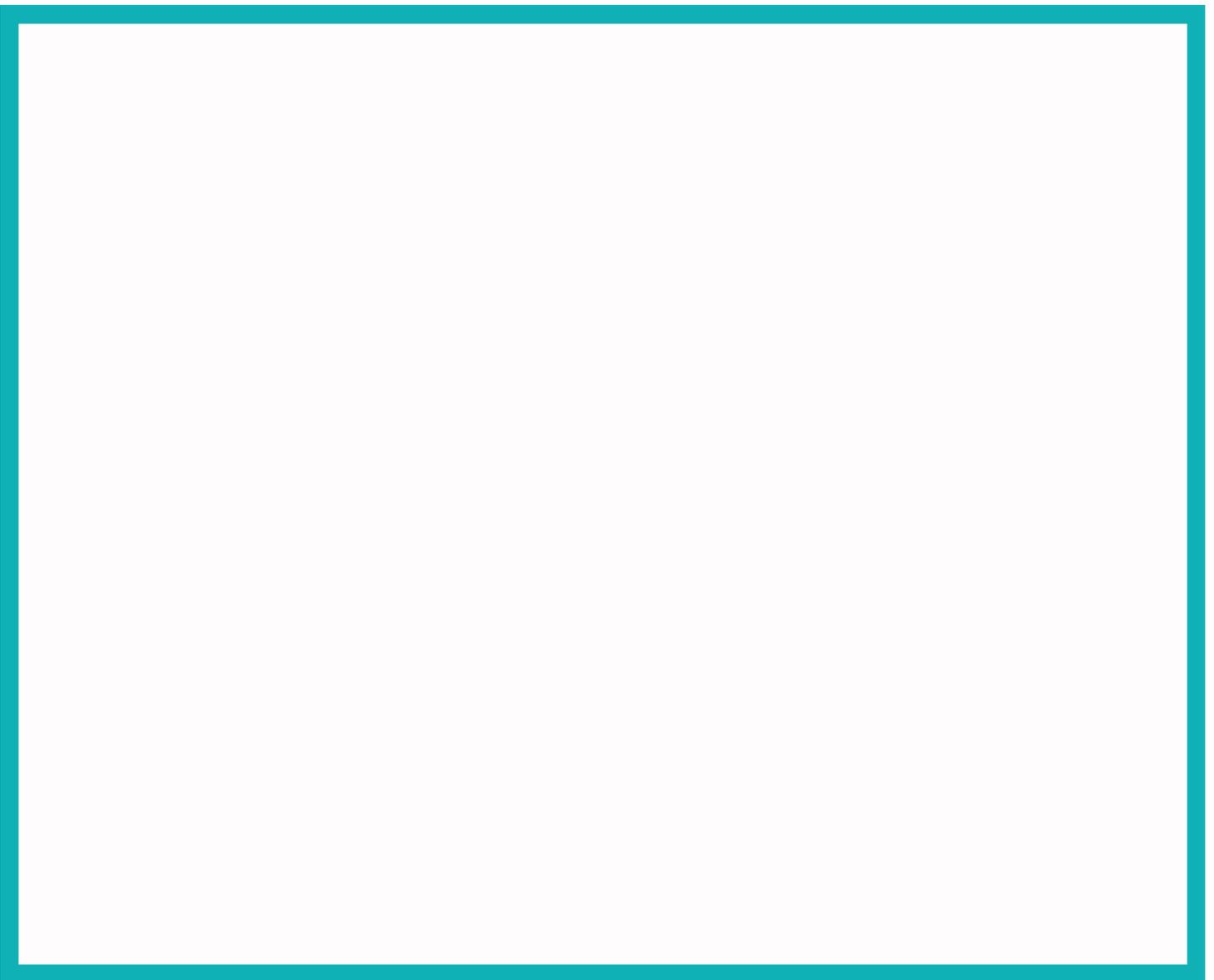
-  Organizing your own Crunch? Choose a date any time in March and invite colleagues, friends, or family to join you in person or online.
Or sign up to join us on **Thursday March 7 @ 1-1:30 pm ET** for the virtual Canada-wide Great Big Crunch.
-  Register your Crunch (or Munch – see Activity #2) here so that we can count the number of 2024 crunchers and munchers.
-  Prepare for your Crunch
 -  Use the activities below to bring the Crunch to life for your students. Also check out [past toolkits](#) and [additional resources](#) below.
 -  Gather what you're going to Crunch (choose locally sourced fruits or vegetables if possible).
-  Let your federal, provincial, territorial or city representative know you support a School Food Program for Canada and invite them, as well as local media, to your Crunch. Check out email templates in our [Communication Guide](#) !
-  Share your message and photo on social media! You can copy this message :
 -  Healthy food means healthy kids. That's why we're taking part in the [#GreatBigCrunch](#) and asking the Government of Canada to [#NourishKidsNow](#) by investing in a National School Food Program! [#cdnpoli](#)
 -  Tag us on Facebook: [@CHSF.CSAS](#), Twitter: [@C4HSchoolFood](#), Instagram: [@thegreatbigcrunch](#) or Tiktok: [@greatbigcrunch](#)
-  Share your Great Big Crunch highlight with us. Send us photos/videos of your Crunch and your story at greatbigcrunch@healthyschoolfood.ca. Or upload them [here](#). We will share your content on our site and social media.
-  Fill out our [evaluation form](#) to help us improve for next year!

Past Great Big Crunches:    

MY FAVOURITE SNACK

Draw your favourite snack below! Make sure to share your creation by emailing greatbigcrunch@foodsecurecanada.org or tagging us on social media #NourishKidsNow #GreatBigCrunch.

My name is _____ . I'm _____ years old and my favourite snack is _____ .



#NourishKidsNow

Activity 1: Farm / Producer Tour

Grade level: JK-12

For this activity, choose a virtual farm, garden or food forest tour. You could use any of [these videos from the National Farmers Union](#) or these from [Farm & Food Care Ontario](#) or another video you know of to take your students on a food production tour in Canada. Or review this photo collection from [Tea Creek Farm](#), an Indigenous-led farm in BC.

Directions

-  Discuss local farms, gardens, and/or food forests and what kinds of produce they grow with your students before watching the video
-  Ask students what type of farms or other food providers they may have visited, and what types of fruits, vegetables, herbs or medicinal plants were grown?
-  Watch the Tour (2 videos could be viewed to make comparisons, as time permits)
-  Discuss the Tour as a class using these Guiding Questions (feel free to make up your own too):
 - What is one new/interesting thing you learned from the video?
 - What types of crops and/or animals did the food provider grow or raise?
 - Where else in the world do you think the crops in the video grow?
 - What kinds of equipment did the producer use?
 - What types of chores or tasks need to be completed?
 - Where did the farmer sell its crops or animals?

Expand students' understanding of the entire food system and where food can be grown or harvested from by using the lesson plans below

-  Growing Chefs! Ontario: [Food Systems 2-3](#) (could be used/adapted for Gr. 4-6) or [Food Systems 7-8](#)
-  Teach Food First: [Exploring Where Food Comes From](#): Grade 3-5.
-  Bright Bites: [Where Do Our Fruits and Vegetables Come From](#): Gr. 3
-  Food is Science: [Eating in Season](#): Gr 3 (could be used/adapted to for Gr. 4-6)

Activity 2: The Great Big Munch

The Great Big Munch promotes inclusivity by celebrating cultures and countries where apples are not commonly eaten or grown. It was created by Asma Musa, an MPH student at U of T, to celebrate the versatility of bananas, fostering cultural exchange through their universal appeal.

Part 1 - Bananavaganza: All about Bananas

Grade Level: All

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: Bananas at 3 different ripeness stages, brown paper bag, plate with banana samples, and 5 senses chart.

Directions



Put students into three different stations where only the students at each station know the ripeness stage of their banana. The stations are as follows:

- Station 1: Unripe Banana
- Station 2: Ripe Banana
- Station 3: Overripe Banana



Each group should take some time to identify the sensory properties:

| | |
|---------|--|
| Smell | Do I smell like anything? |
| Sight | Am I a [name a colour]? Am I more than one colour? |
| Taste | Am I sweet? bland? flavourful? chewy? |
| Texture | Am I soft? firm? mushy? chunky? |
| Sound | Do I make a sound when I am peeled? |



Ask the groups to take turns asking questions about the ripeness stage of their banana. No group can repeat each other's questions. The first group to guess correctly wins.

Discussion



Prompt them with questions like:

Do you like eating bananas? How do you like to eat your banana? As part of a meal or a snack? Raw or cooked? Do you like yellow, green, red or brown bananas? Or with a few brown spots?

Credit: Part of this activity is based on Food Is Science's ["What Am I?" Food Literacy Activity](#), which was adapted from BC's Vancouver Coastal Health and Northern Health.

Part 2 - Where in the World

Grade Level: All

Time: 20 minutes

Materials: [Slides](#) and world map that a teacher can use to project or print out.

Directions

You will use the slides provided (with adaptable speaker notes for different grade levels) as a teaching tool for this activity. The slide breakdown is as follows:

Slide 2: Bananas of All Kinds

Discuss the four images of different bananas grown around the world and what they taste like:

- **Image 1** Red Banana
 - **Image 2** Blue Java Banana
 - **Image 3** Pink Seeded Banana
 - **Image 4** Pitogo Banana
- Discussion Prompts: Have you heard of or tried any of these bananas? Which one would you try?

Slides 3 & 4: World Map

Using the blank world map on slide 3 (printed or projected), have students guess and point to where the following countries are:

- Brazil, Guatemala, Cameroon, Tanzania, India and China
- Correctly identified and colour-coded on slide 4.

Think-Pair-Share: Which country in the world grows the most bananas? Why?

Slide 5: Fun Facts

Share these fun facts about bananas with students, feel free to add more:

- Bananas grow in large bunches called hands.
- Bananas are the most traded fruit in the world.
 - Prompt: What is fair trade? Why do you think it is important bananas?
- Bananas are being grown in colder countries like Canada.
- Peels can help if you get poison ivy or a rash.
- Bananas are grown in more than 135 countries.

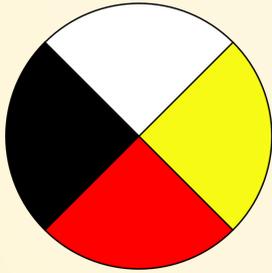
Slides 6-11: Foods Around the World

Teachers display images of international dishes and beverages where bananas are the main ingredient:

- Puerto Rican Tostones, Filipino Ginanggang, Peruvian Chapo, Banana Strawberry Smoothie, Ugandan Matooke, Indian Gulgulas, Yemeni Masoob and Banana Bread
- Discussion Prompts: What kinds of banana foods do you know about? Which one of these would you try? Were there any foods that made you say, "Wow, I didn't expect that!?" Did you learn something new today?

Activity 3: Connection through Circles

This activity is informed by resources from First Nations, Metis, and Inuit organizations and created in partnership by the Coalition's Indigenous Lead (BC), Sue-Anne Banks.



“The Medicine Wheel represents unity and balance between all things, including living a healthy life mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and physically. By understanding the teachings of the Medicine Wheel, we can gain a deeper understanding of our holistic health”. (Medicine Wheel Workbook)

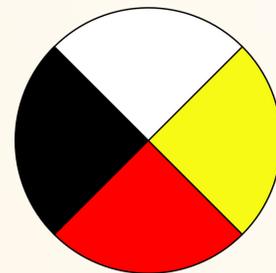
Part 1 - Medicine Wheel Teachings

Grade Level: 1-6

-  Share that different nations have different medicine wheel teachings according to their stories, beliefs, traditions, and values.
-  Explain that the 4 areas of the wheel can be assigned different “attributes”. E.g., 4 directions, 4 seasons, 4 elements, 4 states of Being, etc.
-  Have students identify the 4 seasons, elements, and directions, then have students guess which colour of the wheel they correspond to. As a class, ask students to share their guesses and explain why they think certain colours correspond to the attribute. Use the provided Medicine Wheel Poster on p. 13 to guide answers after students guess.

Grade Level: 7-12

-  Show students this [4-minute video \(Medicine Wheel Teachings 101\)](#) and provide them with the Medicine Wheel Poster found on the next page..
-  After the video, have students discuss 2-3 new learnings in pairs. Then, have students share their answers as a class.



Part 2 - The States of Being

Grade Level: All

-  To learn more about the 4 States of Being: Mind, Heart, Spirit, Body, ask students, in pairs, to generate ideas about things they do in the classroom and/or at home to nurture the Mind, the Heart, the Spirit, and the Body.
-  Have students write it on chart paper, and students can draw/colour too.
-  When done, share with the class and welcome an open discussion.

Prompts:  Was it hard to choose which category to assign things to? Why? (The idea here is that all four attributes work cohesively, so some things may seem like they could fit in any category)

Part 3 - Traditional Foods

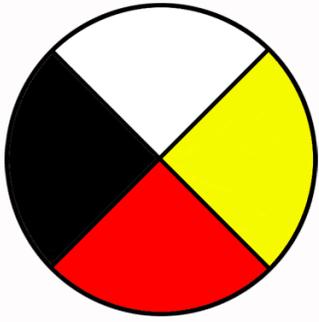
Grade Level: All

-  Provide each student with a blank Indigenous medicine wheel from p. 12 and a reference guide of Traditional foods.
-  Using this reference guide, ask students to pair up and generate a list of Traditional foods that match the 4 colours of the medicine wheel.
-  Ask students to draw and colour-in the foods on blank paper, then cut out and glue them to the corresponding colour quadrant within their wheel.
-  Ask pairs to share the foods they included with another pair, and then discuss as a class.

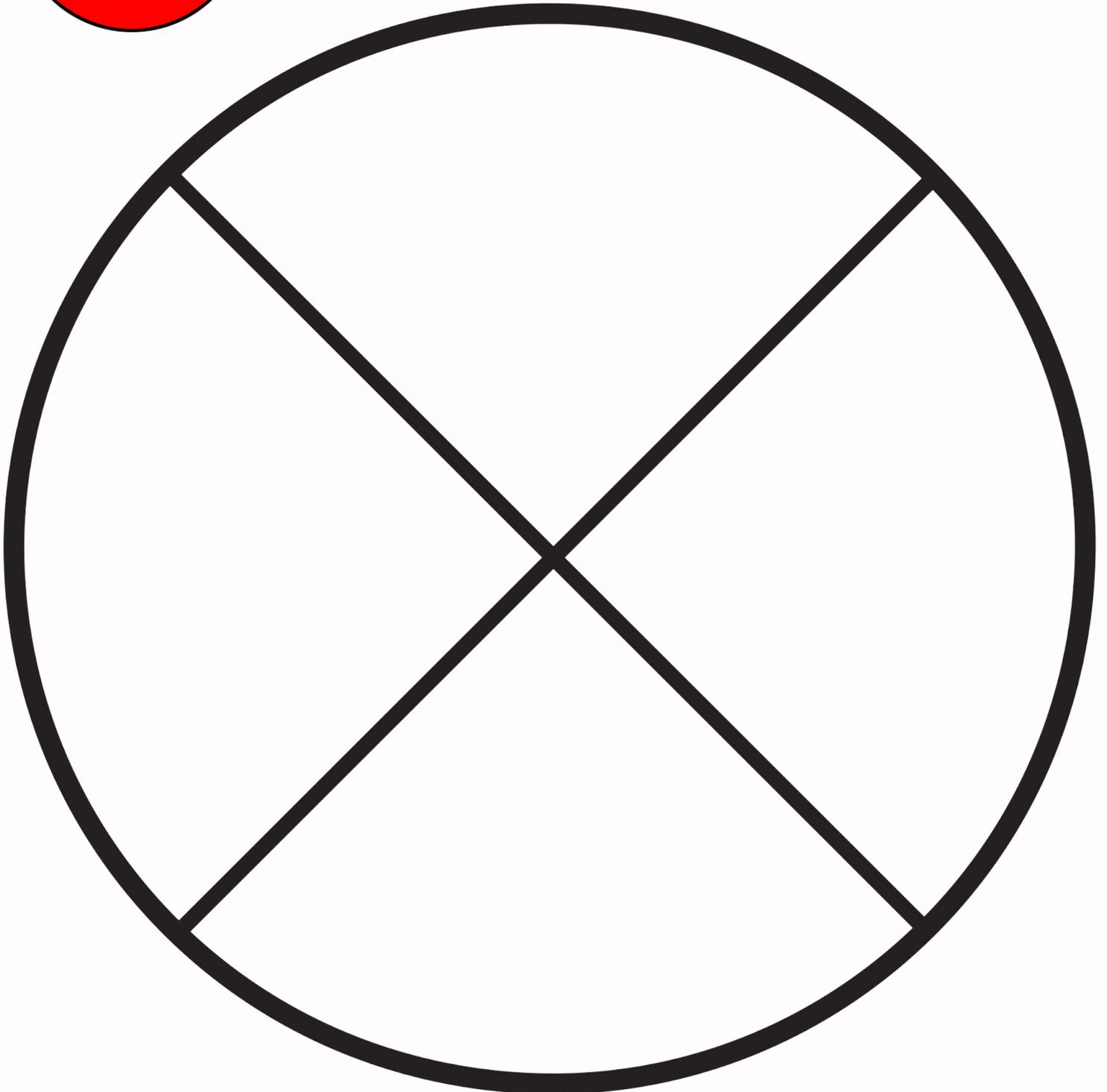
- Prompts:**  Have you ever heard of or tried these foods?
-  What are the benefits of these types of food (i.e., enjoyment, celebration, culture, nutritional content, protein source, energy, and medicine)?
-  Why are traditional foods important for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples?

Consider inviting a First Nations, Métis, or Inuit Knowledge Holder/Keeper, Elder, or community member into the classroom to help guide this activity in your local context.

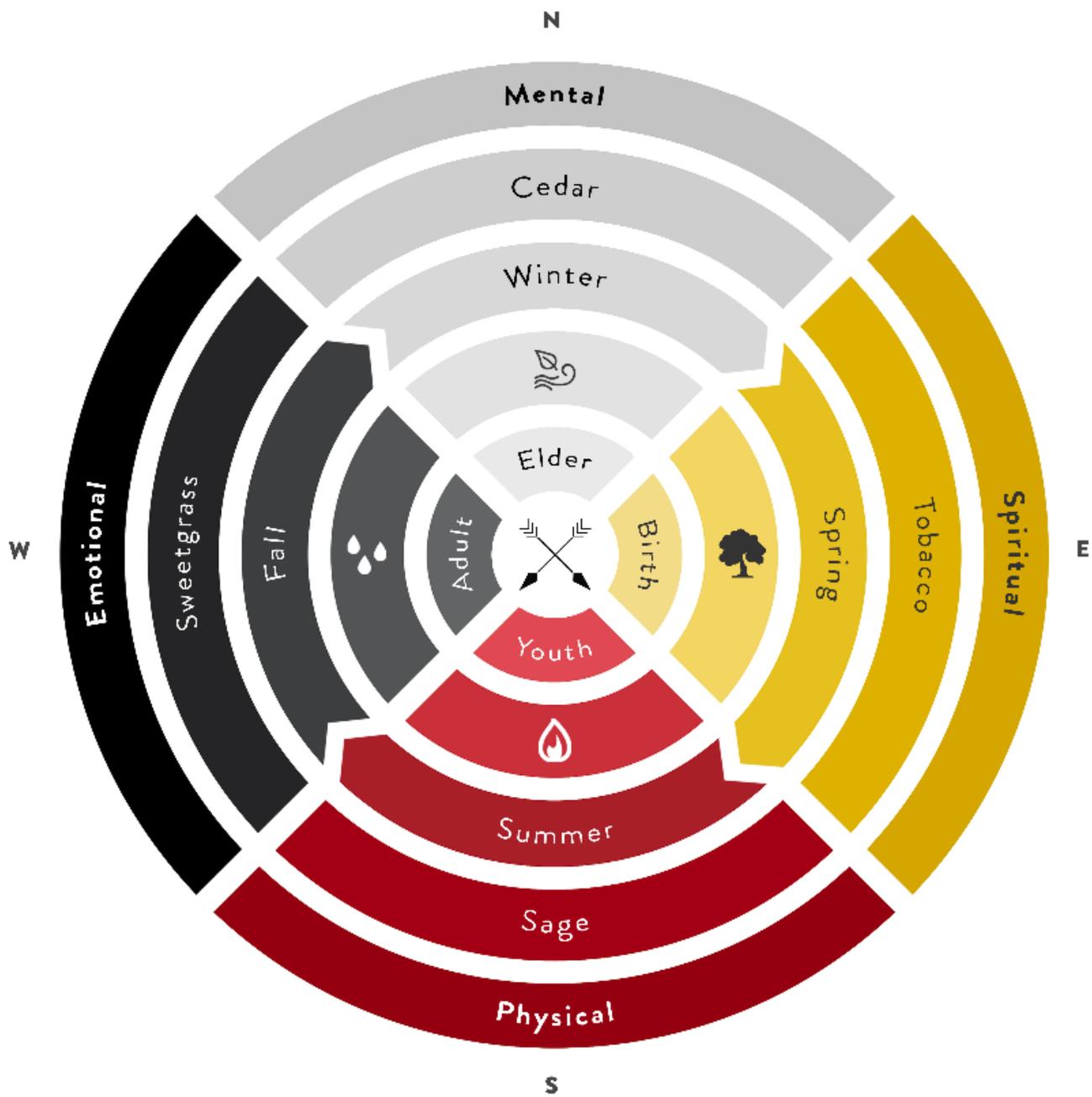




Traditional Foods



The MEDICINE WHEEL



The circle represents balance, connection, and the continuous nature of all creation.

A system of teachings and visual tool for passing down indigenous cultural knowledge.

To learn more visit tribaltradeco.com/medicine-wheel

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Activity 4: Superhero Veggies

Grade level: 1-6

For this activity, ask students to think about their favourite veggie and their favourite superhero traits. Could you make a superhero veggie?

Directions

-  It is easy to enjoy food when we think about what foods can give us energy or help us be active and strong – different foods can do different things for our bodies. Explore this idea with your class and explore the variety of foods that students eat and enjoy.
-  Prompt them with questions like:
what is your favourite food?
Why do you like that food? (taste, texture, colour, shape, memory etc.)
-  Students could share that food brings them comfort, reminds them of family members, is convenient while they are busy playing and not at the table, or what is in their cupboard at home. By exploring the taste and joy of food without labels we can offer students an opportunity to look at how their food can make them feel good and help them grow.
-  Learn more about this concept with the [Teach Food First Guiding Principles and Teaching and Talking to Students about Food and Nutrition resource](#).

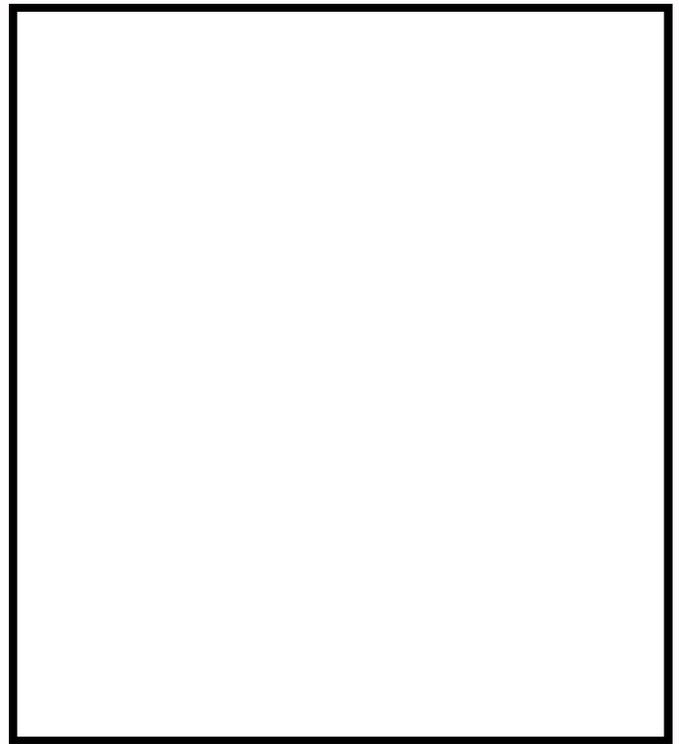
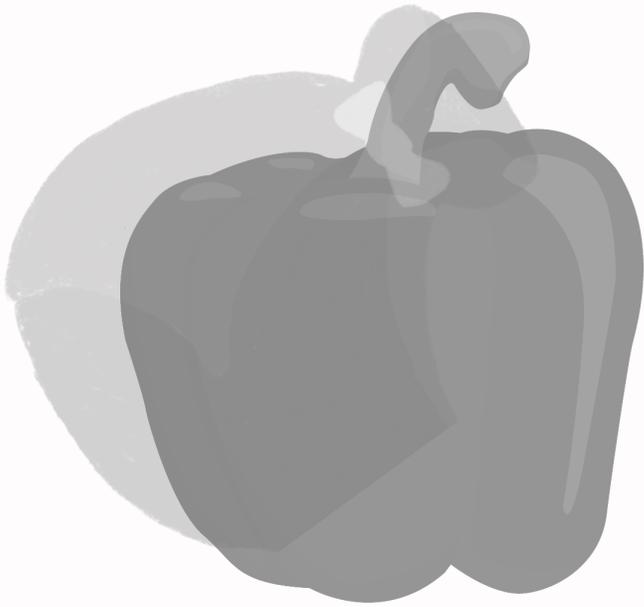
Expand students' understanding of the fruits and vegetables by exploring specific fruits and vegetables and by building a plant powered superhero

-  Discuss types of fruits and vegetables students in your class enjoy and eat
-  Discuss the power of plants and highlight that not only can fruits and vegetables taste delicious they also offer our body superpowers (e.g. keeping our hearts and eyes and bones strong, and healthy, keeping us from getting sick) and provide us with enjoyment and connection

Materials

-  Stationery items: Canada's Food Guide, superhero template with four superplants, writing, colouring tools

Design your Superhero Veggies



Make Your Own Superhero!

Canada's Food Guide

Source: Canada, H. (2024, January 11). Government of Canada. Canada's Food Guide. <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/food-guide-snapshot/>

**Have plenty of
vegetables and fruits**

Eat protein foods



**Make water
your drink
of choice**

**Choose
whole grain
foods**



Be Mindful of Your Eating Habits



Cook More Often



Enjoy Your Food



Eat Meals with Others



Use Food Labels



Limit Processed Foods



**Watch for Marketing that can
influence your choices**



Eat Well. Live Well.

Activity 5: Crunchy Puzzles



Grade Level: 1-6

This fun activity is a hands-on way to raise awareness around various foods and what they mean to each unique student. This activity was created by University of Toronto's MPH Student Nina Trask in 2022, and updated by MPH Student Flora Zhang in 2023.



Directions

-  Instruct each student to draw and colour-in their favourite crunchy fruit or vegetable on a piece of paper.
-  Ask them to cut the paper into X number of pieces. Put the pieces into small paper bags. Now they have created their "puzzle".
-  In pairs, have them share their "crunchy puzzle" with another student, and ask the other student to piece together the puzzle to identify their partner's favourite crunchy fruit/vegetable.
-  Once the pairs have guessed each other's food item, ask each student to share why they chose that particular crunchy fruit or vegetable.

Prompts:



Why is this food special to you?



Do you have a story or memory about this food you want to share?



Can you think of a way you would like to share/eat this food with your friend(s)?



Is there a name for this food in another language that you know?

Materials

-  Stationery items: Blank paper, writing and colouring tools, scissors
-  Small paper bags

Activity 6: Tasty Apple Names & Games



Grade Level: 1-12

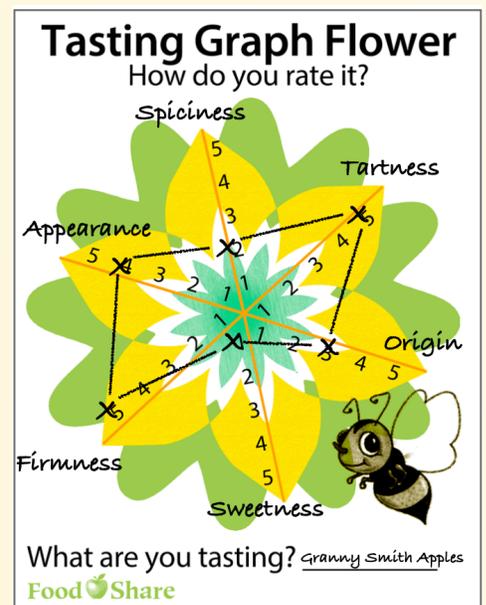
This sensory, creative activity will give students a chance to tune in on their senses and get their creative juices flowing! Everyone will be exploring, describing, and promoting apples in new ways. (Adapted from FoodShare)

Directions

-  Provide 2-3 apple varieties and enough of each type for all students to taste. Label the apples "1, 2,..." to keep the apple's name a secret.
-  Provide students with the Tasting Graph Flower on p. 20 (one graph per apple) to guide their apple-judging session.
-  Ask each student to create their own set of 6 criteria and record on each flower petal.
 -  Optional: Consider providing an example of 6 criteria for all students to use to make comparison easier.
-  Allow students to observe, feel, and taste each apple variety provided and ask them to compare/contrast the unique flavours, textures, and appearances of each apple variety using the Tasting Graph Flower on p. 20.
-  In pairs, ask students to share their flower graphs with each other.

Prompts:

-  Which apple variety did you prefer and why?
-  What factors may influence the flavour of produce?
-  What similarities and differences are there between each variety?



 Now, together as a class or in small groups, create a varied list of adjectives and nouns that do and don't relate to apples.

 Examples of adjectives: sweet, sour, bitter, salty, silly, sneaky, spiky, bumpy, shiny, round, etc.

 Examples of nouns: beauty, sphere, summer, flower, ball, someone's name, dessert, etc.

 *A [list of words to describe food](#) created by ODPH is available for inspiration for you and your students.

 In small groups or pairs, ask students to create unique names for the "mystery" apples by pairing the adjectives and nouns together.

 Using the newly named apples, engage students in making fun and creative advertisements, pitches, or songs about the "mystery" apples.

 Give students the opportunity to share their creations with the class.



Materials

 2-3 varieties of apples (provided by school/teachers)

 Tasting Graph Flower

 [List of Words to Describe Food \(EN\)](#)



Extension Activity (Optional)

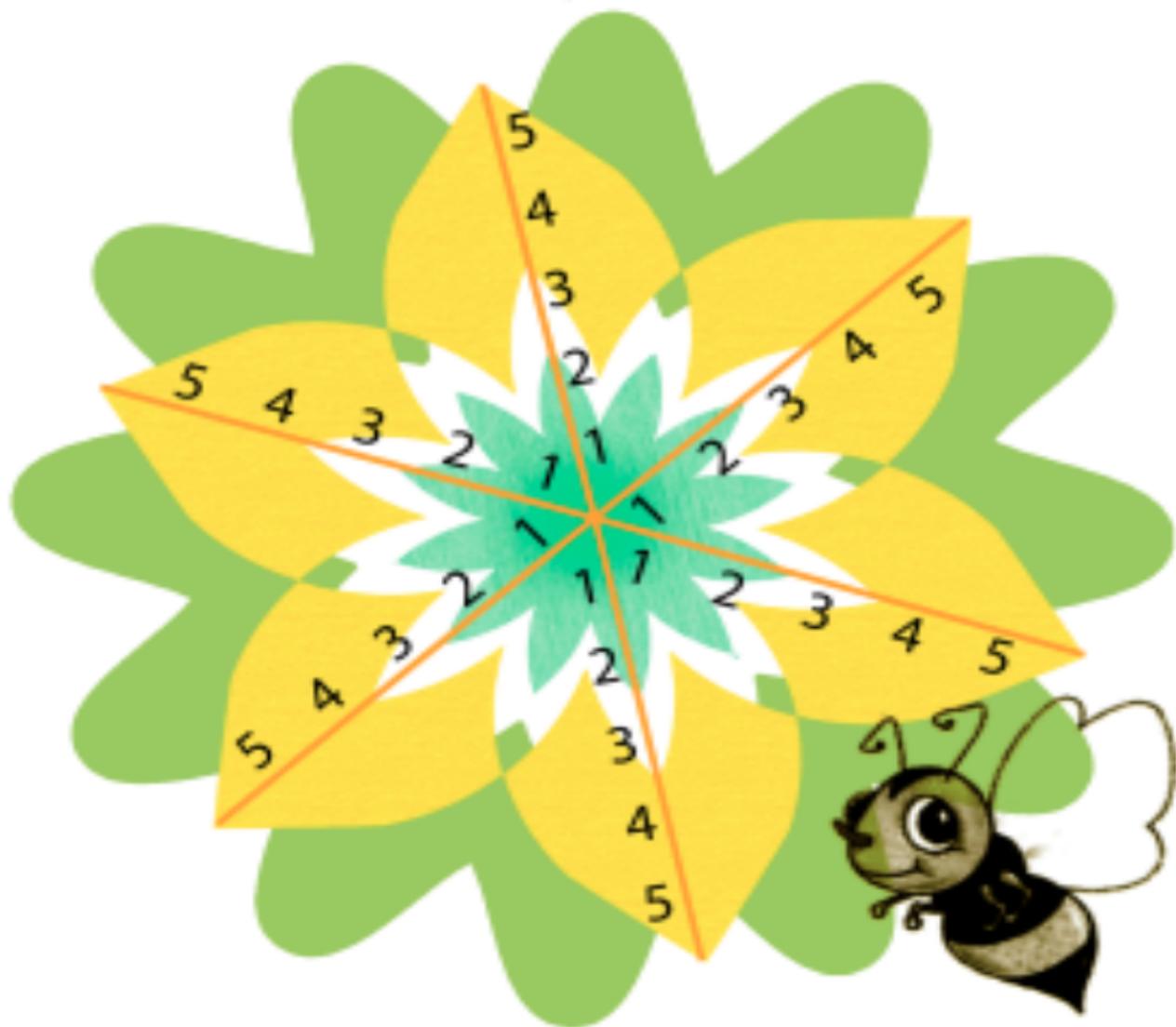
 Explore how tastes can differ within the classroom, across the country, and around the world to help student make community connections.

 Ask students if they know of any apple dishes/recipes or crunchy fruit or vegetable dishes/recipes. How would you describe these to someone who has never tried this dish or recipe before (encourage using newly learned vocabulary)?

Print this!

Tasting Graph Flower

How do you rate it?



What are you tasting? _____

Food  Share

Activity 7: Crunchy Poems



Grade level: 1-8

This simple and creative activity will have students critically thinking and learning about different crunchy fruits and vegetables, while nurturing their inner poet! (Adapted from GBC 2021 toolkit)

Directions

 Ask students to create a word puzzle or poem on blank paper about their fruit(s) and/or vegetable(s) of choice. Students can create more than one acrostic poem if they wish and can doodle/draw alongside their poem.

 Rhyming is not necessary. Simply start each line with the letters in the word. Here is an example to get their creative juices flowing:

Crunchy and crispy

Amazing carrots help your eyes see better

Ripe and fresh

Rich in flavour

Orange, bold, and bright

Tasty carrots are my favourite snack to eat!

 Ask half of the class to create a poem for **SEAWEED**. Explain that seaweed is a sea vegetable, and has been an important coastal food for Indigenous peoples for thousand of years. It can be crunchy, especially when dried!

 Ask the other half of the class to create a poem for **BLUEBERRY**. Explain that wild blueberries are the national fruit, enjoyed by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. A long drying session in the sun, a dehydrator or freeze drying can produce crunchy blueberries.

Activity 8: An Apple's Journey

Grade level: 3–12

For this activity, use the provided apple-related terms and pictures to test the knowledge of your students and increase their awareness of the journey of the apple, from seed to kitchen to compost.

Directions

-  Print off the terms and pictures on the next page for all your students. They have already been scrambled.
-  Ask students to cut out the terms and pictures.
-  In small teams, ask students to arrange them in order and then draw it out in their notebook.
-  Once complete, as a class, discuss the process that the apple goes through to get from seed to kitchen to compost.

Expand students' understanding of the apple food cycle with the following scenarios as a class. What happens if...

-  You turn the apple to apple pie or apple sauce?
-  You grew the apple yourself?
-  You live in a country that doesn't grow apples?
-  You don't compost the apple core?

Materials

-  Stationery items: Notebook, scissors, glue, writing, colouring tools

Selling the apple to a customer



Transporting the apple



Eating the apple



Growing the apple tree in the orchard



Packaging the apple



Composting the core



Planting the apple seed



Harvesting the apple from the tree



Preparing the apple in the kitchen for eating



Cut these out and arrange them in order!



Recipes: Apple Cider Vinegar



Grade Level: All

Apple cider vinegar is very versatile. It can be used to make tangy salad dressings, flavourful marinades, and delicious pickles. It can even be used to clean!

Apple cider vinegar is a great way to use up apples that may not be suitable for eating. It is made by crushing apples, squeezing out all their juice, and adding bacteria or yeast to the apple liquid to ferment it. Eventually, the sugars in the juice turn into acetic acid, which is what gives vinegar its tang!

Below, you will find 3 versatile recipes that incorporate apple cider vinegar:

1. Blueberry Sweetgrass Vinaigrette



(Image credit: Tawnya Brant)

Vinaigrettes can be used to dress so many different salads! Try this sweet [recipe](#) created by Mohawk Chef, Tawnya Brant:

- 2 cups blueberries (fresh or frozen)
- ½ cup pure maple syrup
- 2 tbsp sweetgrass
- ½ cup sunflower oil (or any oil)
- **½ cup apple cider vinegar**

Instructions

-  Place blueberries and sweetgrass in a pan and bring to a boil. Let simmer on low for 5 minutes. Turn off and set aside to come to room temperature.
-  At this point berries can be strained, or the sweetgrass pulled out and the whole berries can be used in the dressing.
-  Put blueberries in the blender and blend for 10 seconds.
-  Place the rest of the ingredients into the blender for 30 seconds. All done!

2. Tangy All-Purpose Vinaigrette

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup olive oil
- 2 tsp mustard
- 1 tsp honey or maple syrup
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup apple cider vinegar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp freshly ground pepper

Instructions



Whisk all ingredients in a bowl or shake them in a jar. You're ready to dress your crunchy salad!

3. Crunchy Pickles

Create the pickles of your dreams! You can pickle almost any vegetable or fruit – cauliflower, carrots, kelp, pears, the list goes on! We will show you a pickled onion recipe adapted from www.kitchn.com.

Throughout history, traditional food preservation methods like pickling, drying, and smoking have been important for many Indigenous Nations to increase their foods' shelf life while maintaining their nutritional value. When it comes to pickling, some Indigenous Nations pickle kelp, seal flipper or blubber, berries, and various seeds.

- 1 small red onion (or something else!)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp fine salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup apple cider vinegar (or white vinegar)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water



(Image credit: Dana Velden)

Instructions



Peel and halve the onion lengthwise. Thinly slice the halves and set aside.



Bring the vinegar, water, sugar, and salt to a boil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve the salt and sugar.



Remove from heat, add the onion slices, and stir to combine, making sure all the onions are submerged in the liquid. Let sit for 15 minutes before using.



Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 1 month.

Additional Resources

Below are additional activities and teaching ideas for your class to do!

Previous Great Big Crunch Toolkits

- [GBC Toolkit 2023](#)
- [GBC Toolkit 2022](#)
- [GBC Toolkit 2021](#)
- [Past GBC Activities from FoodShare](#)

Additional Activities and Recipes

- [Food Is Science](#) - Hands-on tools for teaching science through food, linked to the Ontario curriculum
- [Memory Game: Traditional Indigenous Foods](#) - Learn about traditional Indigenous foods in your community while playing a fun matching game!
- [Green Thumbs](#) - Consider vermicomposting with students after their Crunch!
- [BC Agriculture in the Classroom](#) - Plenty of food literacy activities and handouts highlighting apples, for grade 9-12
- Indigenous-inspired [Harvest Salad and Maple Vinaigrette](#).

Teaching Food Literacy in the Classroom

- Teachfoodfirst - [Grade-Specific Guiding Principles](#)
- Teachfoodfirst - [Tips for Teaching Food Literacy](#)

Educational Resources on Indigenous Teachings

- First Nations Education Steering Committee/First Nations School Association - [Teacher Resource Guides Units, Lessons, and Activities for Blended or Remote Learning Contexts](#)
- [Weaving Indigenous Education Into Your Practice: A Teacher's Resource Guide](#)
- [Medicine Wheel Workbook: Finding Your Healthy Balance](#) - Through a careful selection of teachings and interactive activities, the workbook will encourage children to live well and find their healthy balance with the help of the Medicine Wheel.
- Teachfoodfirst - [An Educator's Toolkit for Exploring Canada's Food Guide \(Traditional Foods\)](#)
- [Kidsnacks Indigenous Farm to School Curricula](#) - Traditional Foods for a Healthy Future: A Traditional Snack Guide Based on Ojibwe Foodsit