

FOODS OF THE PIONEER FAMILY

By Lois Shelton

GRADE LEVEL: Elementary

Prepared in partial fulfillment of requirements for

"FOODS OF THE PIONEER FAMILY"

a project of the Historic Southern Foodways Alliance

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by

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for

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## INTRODUCTION

The goals and purpose of this lesson is to understand and

today were eaten by Indians, in one of the Americas thousands of

The difference in winter and summer meals varied greatly as fresh foods were never available in the winter except for meat. Children can see how the pioneer wife "made-do" with whatever was on hand. They should be able to understand that though pioneer life may sound exciting, it was a very harsh and difficult life. Everyone had to work and even small children had little time for play as all worked toward survival.

By doing this unit on "Pioneer foods", children should not only get the feel of monotony of eating beans, pork and cornbread

for months on end, but should also understand the

with green herbs once again, and variety in meals. They need to understand the green foods also broke up diseases that made many sick from lack of Vitamin C which we now take for granted.

Children should get the opportunity to collect

## Lesson Plans for Unit - Pioneer Foods

### Objectives

1. The children of 4th and 5th grade levels learn about what Indiana Pioneers are in the 1800's.
2. Children learn the ancient tribes of Indians gave us many of our foods.
3. They compare the vast variety of food we have today with the sparse meals settlers sometimes endured for weeks.
4. Children find what foods came directly from Indiana as the pioneer wife improvised to find a healthy variety for her family.

### Opening of Unit

three meals and snacks.

2. Ask children where and how they got their food.
3. Begin research on Indiana pioneers and what they ate.

### Developing Unit

1. Have children research any of the Indiana groups mentioned plus Indiana Indians to find what foods they ate. Library books, encyclopedias, etc.
2. Have children group and choose a food from recipes brought

B. Evaluate the unit.

1. Activity or worksheets graded

2. Discussion about what has been learned



Activity 1

List all foods you eat in one full day and where they came from to you. Example: Breakfast: Apple Cherrios-bought packaged at grocery store, milk-bought in carton at grocery store.

Breakfast

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Lunch

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

- 2.
- 3.

Dinner (or supper)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Snack before bed

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



Worksheet 2

Directions: Read the story, then answer the questions as directed.

created one of the most distinguished civilizations perhaps of all ancient peoples. They built beautiful and well planned cities. They built pyramids. They developed the most complex writing system found in the New World. They developed astronomy which may have been used to decide when to plant crops. They cultivated

crops which they planted and kept free of weeds by chopping them. Some foods they introduced to the Spanish explorers were pineapple and tomatoes.

Worksheet 2 (con't)

Chocolate or chocolatl was served to Cortes by Montezuma, an Aztec chief, in 1519. Chocolate was taken back to Spain where it stayed until 1657 when a Frenchman opened a "Chocolate House".

Choose the best answer:

1. When the Spanish explorers arrived, how did the Aztec Indians treat them?

- (a) Ran them off                      (b) Killed them all                      (c) Sat and watched

(d) Showed them how to eat the food                      them

2. Some archeaologists think maize or corn has been cultivated for some\_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) 50 years                      (b) 600 years                      (c) 6000 years                      (d) 1000 years

3. Although the Indians all over the Americas called maize, "maize", the Europeans thought of it as a food grain, so called it\_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) beans                      (b) corn                      (c) Mayola                      (d) conola

4. The Aztec thought that ashes from burned ground-cover made good \_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) food                      (b) fertilizer                      (c) decorations                      (d) portion

5. Most Europeans took a long, long time to accept the Aztec food, tomatoes, because they thought they were\_\_\_\_\_.

- (a) poisonous                      (b) too pretty                      (c) sour                      (d) too hard to keep

Answer the questions:

1. What were the foods that could be easily grown before and after

Worksheet 3

Directions: Read the story, then answer the questions as directed.

The Aztec Indians of Mexico helped the Spanish explorers to find  
food and showed them \_\_\_\_\_

had cultivated corn for some 6000 years according to some archae-  
ologists. Mexico is the probable source of maize and from there  
it spread to South and North America. Maize was \_\_\_\_\_

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ Indians of \_\_\_\_\_ gave us many tasty foods.
2. Spanish \_\_\_\_\_ found them cultivating \_\_\_\_\_ and using ashes for fertilizer.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ mean the food grain that is so widely grown in Indiana today.
4. A common food grown in Mexico was the pumpkin and \_\_\_\_\_
5. An Aztec chief served \_\_\_\_\_ to Spanish explorer Cortes who took cocoa beans back to Spain.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ were believed to be poisonous by European people and were not accepted for hundreds of years.

Worksheet 4

Directions: Read the story, then answer the questions as directed.

Spanish explorers found the Incas raising sweet potatoes, white

and lima beans. Peanuts stored in jars were also found as well

as pottery with pictures of peanuts on it. Pictures would show  
they were roasted then pounded into paste. Oil was also

Unit: Pioneer Foods  
Foods Settlers Brought

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Worksheet 5

Directions: Read the stories below, then choose one of the foods and research it. Write a story about it in your own words

Indochina around 3000 B.C. Columbus sold Ferdinand and Queen Isabella on the idea of sugar, oranges, and pineapple plantations in the New World. His reports are dominated by plants. He was America's first explorer as well as importer of plants. The oranges were to prevent scurvy on the return trip to Europe. Peach trees were among the first trees

Worksheet 6

Directions: Read the stories, then do as directed after the stories.

- A. When settlers could, they brought domesticated animals with them. These would include oxen or horse teams, a milk cow, pigs, ducks, geese and chickens. Sheep were kept mainly for wool, however, many settlers came with only their wagonload of basic covers, seed for corn, and a minimum of clothing and furniture. They literally lived off the land until the first crop of corn and beans were gathered. Acorns were used for a substitute for flour, but many times they had only meat plus perhaps berries or herbs in season.
  
- B. As winter progressed, the usual meal included beans, cornbread and whatever meat was available. After the bears were gone, there was pork. Many families had a cow which provided milk and butter but this would not be available when the cow was "dry". As food preservation, they dried fruits and vegetables as well as making preserves with honey or maple sugar. A springhouse kept butter and milk. Where these were not available, cisterns or wells were

used by lowering the milk, butter and cheese down on a rope to hang in the coolness. Salting or pickling preserved meat and some vegetables, but finding salt was a big problem. Cider and cider vinegar were made for pickling after apple trees were established. Smoking and drying meat and fish was used but occasion-

Worksheet 6 (con't)

A big help to Indians was the introduction to the iron pot or  
kettle. Iron kettles were standard equipment for the settlers.

for they held up well over the open fires used for cooking. A  
"spider" was often used. This was a kettle with legs that held  
it up over the hot coals.

Activity: Pretend you are a settler coming to Indiana from one of  
the other states. Write a story about how you would set



Indiana History

Unit: Pioneer Foods

Foods found in Indiana

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Worksheet 7

Directions: Read the story then follow directions below

accomplished after building a lean-to. Corn was the base of pioneer agriculture. Corn grew easily in Indiana soil and Indiana climate. Often it was planted among trees and stumps. It quickly became the staple of every pioneer for family and animals.

Pioneer women served green corn boiled on the cob. They pounded and grated corn into meal. The meal was used for Johnny cake and corn pone. Hominy was made by soaking in ash water to remove hull, then boiled, fried or made into cakes. It was also made into whiskey.

Indiana History

Unit: Pioneer Foods

Foods Found in Indiana

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Worksheet 8

Directions: Read the following stories, then do as directed. choose from the following suggestions as directed by your teacher. Note: The following projects are done with adult supervision. Activities are for whole class or extra credit.

B. Potatoes

Although potatoes came back to North America from Europe, they were not eaten until 1719 when Irish settlers planted and ate

them. By the 1800s, they were commonly grown by Hardier settlers.

Worksheet 8 (con't)

D. Sunflowers, squash and pumpkin

A regular part of any garden was sunflower, squash, and pumpkin. The seeds of all three were used as nuts for snacks and in other foods. The seeds were dried and ground into a meal to be used as flour. Squash and pumpkins were also made into puddings, baked and eventually baked in pies in later years.

1. With your parents or teacher's help, try baking sun-

Start with a Butternut squash, cut in half and remove seeds. Bake in microwave oven or crockpot until tender. Mix so pulp is soft, add maple syrup (or brown sugar), butter, raisins, and nuts. Eat while warm.

E. Berries and Fruit

Indiana grew an abundance of fruit. In the spring and summer,

Worksheet 9

F. Nuts and Herbs

Nuts were important to the settler's diets. Walnuts, pecans, hickory nuts, butternuts, pinon or pine nuts, and acorns were used. They were eaten as a snack, put into candies and baked foods and ground into flour for breads. Sometimes the oil was extracted and used as a substitute for milk as the Indians did. Many herbs found in Indiana were new to the settlers. This was any plant that could be gathered and eaten and might be used as medicine as well. The newer word is vegetable which is from the Latin word vegetabilis and means life giving. Some of these included sweetflag, ginseng, sassafras for tea, sourgrass, pokeweed shoots, sourdock, wild onions, wild turnips, and cattails. Wild roses were used for

beauty and food. Maple sugar and honey were used as sweeteners. Green stocks of corn were used to make corn syrup or molasses.

1. Have a parent identify a sassafras tree and dig roots to bring to class and boil for tea. (buy roots, if possible, or liquid tea at store)
2. Gather and crack hickory nuts and make candy with them or eat as a snack.

G. Meat and Fish

Many pioneers depended upon wild game and fish for some years until they could afford to get pigs for pork. Sometimes they ate

# Word Search of Foods Found in Indiana

potatoes  
corn  
beans  
leather britches  
sunflowers  
squash  
pumpkin  
wild grapes  
buffalo  
deer  
elk  
bears  
rabbits

walnuts  
pecans  
butternuts  
pinon  
sassafras  
spearmint  
peppermint  
maple sugar  
ginseng  
cattails  
popcorn

quail  
turkeys  
grouse  
squirrels  
sweet potatoes  
cranberries  
blueberries  
blackberries  
raspberries  
haw  
paw paw

Answer Sheets

Worksheet 1

1. Most Europeans ate bread, milk and cheese with some fruit according to climate and season.
2. Answers will vary.
3. The Incas, (1) cultivated plants, (2) installed irrigation systems (3) terraced hillsides and (4) rotated crops.

Worksheet 2

- |         |      |
|---------|------|
| A. 1. T | 5. F |
| 2. F    | 6. T |
| 3. T    | 7. T |
| 4. T    |      |

B. Answers will vary.

Worksheet 3

- |                                 |              |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Aztec - Mexico               | 5. chocolate |
| 2. explorers - corn (or squash) | 6. tomatoes  |
| 3. Maize - corn                 |              |
| 4. squash                       |              |

Worksheet 4

- |              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| 1. pinto     | 4. kidney |
| 2. navy      | 5. lima   |
| 3. black-eye |           |
2. 1. Easy to grow
  2. Seeds light and easy to carry with them
  3. Could be eaten while green
  4. ~~Could be dried and stored for winter and seed~~

5. They were nutritious and filling

Worksheet 5

Word Search of Foods Found in Indiana Key



mom's mother)  
married)



(mom's father)



dad's mother)  
married)



father  
father)



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Jefferson City, Mo., 1973

A well compiled book of recipes used by Rebecca Boone

Esterer, Arnulf F. and Louise A., Food, Riches of the Earth.  
Julian Messner, New York, 1973

This book tells of the foods brought to be used as medicine  
by the colonists.

Hays, Wilma P. and R. Vernon, Foods the Indians Gave Us.  
New York, N.Y., Ives Washburn, Inc., 1973

This is a fascinating book going way back to before Columbus.  
It tells of the research into the foods.

Joanne Landers Henry Log Cabin in the West

Veale Suggestions

1. Make projects depicting life in pioneer days. (May be helped by family). optional)
2. Make foods - corn bread, Johnny cake, persimmon pudding, etc. and eat in class.
3. Make maps of Indiana showing three divisions or main rivers and towns.
4. Have "Pioneer" dinner

2. Pretend you are in "old time" school

3. Have spelling bee.
4. Cook "Pioneer" dinner - black beans, hominy, cornbread, raisins, sunflower seeds, and popcorn. Drink sassafras and mint tea.