



3

Cultural Borrowings

Students learn that the names of many of the foods they eat, as well as many food-related items, are derived from other languages.

What You Need to Know

Colonizers, explorers, and emigrants bring food preferences and customs with them. On the other hand, colonists export foods from conquered lands back to their home countries. Columbus, for example, took corn back to Spain after his first voyage, and, on his return voyages to the Americas, he brought seeds and cuttings with him. Today, the transplanting of food customs has been accelerated by increased international travel, rapid transportation systems, and the globalization of processed food products such as American soft drinks.

In many cases, the names of the foods are exchanged as well. The French, for example, use the English word *sandwich* (pronounced *san-weach*) while we use the French word *omelette*. Students will be surprised at how many of the names of the foods they eat have been adopted from other languages.

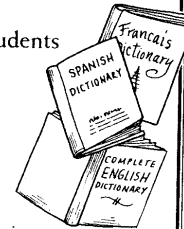
What You Need to Have

- dictionary
- marking pens
- tag board
- string
- Food Words Origins chart



What You Do

1. Cover up the "Language of Origin" column of the Food Words Origins chart, and ask students how many of the words they know. See if students know or can guess the words' origins before revealing the Language of Origin column.
2. Have students use a dictionary to find examples of their own.
3. Compile a class list. Have students make a tag board label for each food word and tack labels on a world map.



Doing More

Have students look up in a dictionary the names of New World foods on the Foods Origins chart to determine if the name we use today was given by Old World colonizers, was adopted from native languages, or is a blend of both. For example, the English word *potato* was derived from the Spanish *patata* which was a variation of the South American Indian *batata*.



FOOD WORDS ORIGINS

Word	Language of Origin
barbecue	Haitian
macaroni	Italian
pretzel	German
omelette	French
okra	West African
chocolate	Aztec
pasta	Italian
croissant	French
restaurant	French
menu	French
mousse	French
pita	Greek
shish kebab	Arabic
hamburger	German
paella	Spanish
taco	Mexican Spanish
tortilla	Mexican Spanish
banana	Spanish or Portuguese
caramel	Spanish
celery	French
chili	Aztec