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Heritage Banner or Quilt

To illustrate the legacy of the Columbian Exchange on American food customs, students assemble a banner or quilt.

What You Need to Know

Nowhere is the legacy of Columbus's voyages as profound as in the United States, where the cultural mosaic is largely the result of changes initiated more than 500 years ago. Unless students are North American Indians, they or their ancestors came to the United States from other countries. Immigrants brought with them food preferences, traditional recipes, and festive rituals that were part of their cultural identity.

What You Need to Have

- fabric scraps
- construction paper
- large piece of fabric for quilt backing
- pictures cut from magazines and travel brochures
- family snapshots
- country flags
- foreign coins and paper currency
- paste or glue

What You Do

1. Determine the size of the class banner or quilt, and allocate a portion to each student.
2. Ask students to find out the countries that are represented in their family's history and to collect images and objects that represent these countries and some of the food customs associated with them. (Some students may not know which



countries their ancestors emigrated from. If this is the case, students may know in which parts of the United States their ancestors originally settled.)

3. Have students paste their images onto fabric or paper squares.
4. To complete the banner, glue all the squares onto the fabric backing.



Doing More

International Day Unveil the banner at an International Day Festival. Have students plan an agenda for the event, and ask them to bring in and share a dish of food, game, flag, costume, song, or dance from their countries of origin. Invite other classes and students' families to participate in the celebration.

