

# What's Cookin' in the Classroom? Soul Food

**Grades:** Lower Elementary

**Time Needed:** 1 hour

## Knowledge Objectives:

Students will:

- Understand the importance of calcium.
- Name foods rich in calcium.

## Behavioral Objectives:

Students will:

- Prepare and eat fun and easy foods with children using vegetables and fruits.
- Select non-dairy foods that are high in calcium, like collards, sardines and salmon with bones.

## Materials:

### Pre-Prep:

- White sheet
- Waterproof markers
- Two chicken bones
- One bowl
- Distilled white vinegar (1 cup)

## Lesson Preparation:

### Map of the United States Tablecloth

1. Trace the United States traced on a white sheet using waterproof markers.
2. Using markers highlight the key southern states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia

### Chicken Bones

1. Soak one chicken bone in vinegar for 48 hours.
2. Leave second bone on plate to dry.

### Activity 1:

- United States Tablecloth (see Lesson Preparation above)
- Wall Map of United States
- Pictures of Greens (Collards greens, mustard greens, turnips, dandelion greens and kale)

**Activity 2:**

- One dry chicken bone (Pre-Prep)
- One chicken bone soaked in vinegar (Pre-Prep)

**Activity 3:** \*Food amounts are based on a class size of 20 students

- Collard Greens (1 pound- washed)
- Knife (to cut collard greens)
- Cutting board (1)
- Large sauce pan (5 quart)
- Hot plate (1)
- Wooden spoon (1)
- Measuring cups
- Measuring spoons
- Electrical skillet (1)
- Olive oil (2 tablespoons)
- Onion (½ cup, chopped)
- Tomatoes (2 medium, peeled, seeded and chopped)
- Salt (¼ teaspoon)
- Black Pepper (¼ teaspoon)
- Lime juice (1 tablespoon)

**Activity 4:**

- “Which Foods Contain Calcium?” Sheet (One per student)

**Activity 5:**

- “Do you like collard greens with lime?” sheet (one per student)
- Paper plates (1 per student)
- Rating Sheet (1 per child)
- Plastic Forks (1 per student)
- Napkins (1 per student)

## **Background**

Soul food is part of African American culture and history. Soul food is food made with feeling and care. It came from African American customs. Soul food is a mixture of southern cooking, mixed with Native American, West Indian, Caribbean and French cooking.

Soul food brought families together. Meals were a time for sharing and talking. This made families and friends stronger. Food was a comfort and cooking was a pleasure.

It started in the Southern United States. The eleven states in the south are: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

Soul food is made up of a variety of foods, mostly vegetables. "Vegetable plates" are very common in soul cooking. Vegetable plates are made of vegetables and starches. Sometimes they are served with cornbread or yeast rolls and sliced onions. Green leafy vegetables are often used in vegetable plates. They include: collard greens, mustard greens, turnips greens, dandelion greens, kale, spinach, and pokeweed. All of these vegetables are known as "greens." Greens are a major part of soul food cooking and are grown all year.

Soul Food also includes cereals from grains, rice, nuts, fish, onions, yams, mangoes, melons, sesame seeds, cowpeas, black-eyed peas, okra, roots and leaves. Grains, rice, fruits, and vegetables provide us with carbohydrates. Our bodies change carbohydrates into energy.

Collard greens are a very important part of Soul Food. African Americans cooked greens for long periods of time with bacon or fat back which is like bacon only with more fat. African American farm workers needed the extra energy that comes from fat. For most people today extra energy from fat is not needed. High-fat, high-calorie, high cholesterol foods may increase the risk of diseases that affect African Americans. These diseases include diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. A low fat diet reduces the risk of diseases and helps maintain body weight. Making collard greens with less fat will help us have good health. If you cook Collard greens for long time it can lose calcium and vitamin C. Steaming or cooking greens quickly will keep most of the vitamins.

Collard greens have lots of calcium, beta-carotene, vitamin C, fiber and other important nutrients. Beta-carotene is a nutrient that changes into Vitamin A in our bodies. This vitamin has many important jobs in our body. The biggest job is vision. Vitamin A helps us to see in the dark and to see different colors. Also, Vitamin A helps us to grow properly and to have healthy skin and hair. Vitamin C helps keep our teeth, gum, bones and muscles strong. It helps us heal when we have broken bones, scrapes or cuts. Vitamin C also helps our bodies fight infection. Fiber keeps our intestines healthy.

Collards, kale and turnip greens are rich sources of calcium. Calcium is the major mineral that keeps our bones healthy and strong. Calcium helps: Build strong bones and teeth, the heart to beat, muscles to work, blood to clot, and healthy pregnancies.

It is important that women, growing children, and teens eat calcium everyday. Teenaged girls need more calcium because they do not produce calcium like teen boys. Growing children need calcium to prevent the bone disease osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a disease that causes your bones to become weak and brittle. This disease usually occurs when you are older, but eating calcium when you are young can prevent it.

Sources of calcium are: Milk and milk products (cheese and yogurt), broccoli, canned fish (sardines, salmon, mackerel eaten with bones), dried beans (navy, kidney), fortified cereals, fortified orange juice, calcium rich tofu, and soymilk.

Some people have a hard time digesting milk or dairy products. This is called lactose intolerance. These people are sensitive to the sugar naturally found in milk. It is important for them to eat other sources of calcium. Collard greens, kale and turnip greens are good non-dairy sources.

### **References:**

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Dorothy I. Height & The National Council of Negro Women, Inc. The Black Family Dinner Quilt Cookbook. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster 1993 p 200-204.

Margen, Sheldon. The Wellness Encyclopedia of Food and Nutrition. Edited by the University of California at Berkeley Wellness Letter. New York, NY: Health Letter Associates 1992 p 101-106.

1995 The American Dietetic Association: Soul and Traditional Southern Food Practices, Customs, and Holidays. P 1-4 used by permission.

## Activity 1: Soul Food

1. Spread out United States tablecloth on floor or on table.
2. Tell students:
  - Soul food is part of African American culture and came from the states in the Southern United States.
  - Soul Food is food made with feeling and care.
  - When they ate soul food they share their feelings and spoke about their day.
3. Point to each state on the tablecloth and tell everyone these are the states in the south: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.
4. Ask the student's if they have ever visited any of these states.
5. Explain that African Americans in these states often grew “greens” in their gardens. Kinds of greens that are: collards, mustards, turnips, dandelion greens and kale. Pass around pictures of each.
6. Ask students:

**Q:** Has anyone ever eaten greens before?

**A:** *Will vary*

**Q:** How were they cooked?

**A:** *Will Vary*

7. Collard greens are very popular in African American cooking. Explain that Collard greens were often cooked for long periods of time with fatback or bacon. Fatback and bacon are high in saturated fat.

8. **Q:** Is a lot of saturated fat good for us?

*A: No. Too much saturated fat may increase the chance of diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. Diets high in fats and oils can make it hard to stay a healthy weight. It is healthier to make collard greens with less fat.*

## **Activity 2: Calcium**

1. Tell students:

- Collard greens are a vegetable. They are really good for you.
- Collard greens have calcium, beta-carotene which becomes vitamin A in your body, vitamin C, fiber and other things your body needs to for good health.
- Beta-carotene that is a nutrient in the plant that gives it orange color. You will find this in veggies like carrots and sweet potatoes. Beta-carotene changes into Vitamin A in our bodies. Vitamin A helps with good vision.
- Vitamin C helps keep our teeth and gums healthy. It also helps our bodies fight infection.
- Fiber helps keep our food moving through our bodies.
- Calcium also helps with this.

2. Ask the students:

**Q:** Can anyone tell me why calcium is good for your body?

*A: It keeps your bones strong and your teeth healthy.*

**Q:** What do you think would happen if we did not get enough calcium?

*A: Our bones may become weak as we get older and teeth our teeth will not be as healthy. Our bones would break more easily and our teeth could fall out!*

3. Show students the two chicken bones.

a. First, pass around the strong bone.

b. Ask students to describe the bone.

(Strong)

c. Next, pass around the boned soaked in vinegar.

d. Explain that this bone does not have any calcium.

Ask students to describe the bone.

*A: Bendable, or soft*

Ask students:

**Q:** Which kind of bone do you want in your body?

*A: Strong bones*

**Q:** Does anyone know other foods or drinks that have calcium?

*A: Milk, cheese, yogurt, collards greens, mustard greens, turnip greens, kale, canned fish- sardines, salmon, mackerel with bones, dried beans-navy and kidney, fortified cereals, broccoli, .*

### **Activity 3: African Collard Greens with Lime**

1. Show collard greens to the class.

2. Remove the stem and cut the greens crosswise into half-inch wide strips.

(1 pound)

3. Fill large pot with one inch of water and bring to a boil. Put collard greens in the pot and steam for 10 minutes.
4. Spread them out to dry.
5. Heat 2 Tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet and sauté ½ cup chopped onions until tender.
6. Add 2 medium tomatoes (chopped) and cook for 2-3 minutes or until soft.
7. Stir in collard greens, ¼ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper.
8. Sprinkle in 1 Tablespoon of limejuice.

If you cannot cook at your site, make the collard greens before and see if there is a place to heat them up.

#### **Activity 4: Which Foods Contain Calcium?**

1. Give each student the “Which Foods Contain Calcium?” Sheet
2. Ask students which of these foods they think has calcium.
3. Review the correct answers.

*A: Should include cheese, Milk, Collard Greens, kale, mustard greens, Yogurt, Tofu and Frozen Yogurt.*

For students in grades Kindergarten thru 2:

Have the student color in or circle the foods and drinks that have calcium

For students in grades 3 thru 4 or 5<sup>th</sup> grade:

On the back of the paper ask the students to write why collards are good for us.

Also, ask them to list calcium foods they will eat at home.

## Activity 5: Taste Test

1. Pass out a paper plate, plastic fork, and napkin to each student.
2. Give each student the “Do you like collard greens with lime?” sheet
3. Give each student some collard greens with lime to taste.
4. Ask the students to circle the smile if they liked the collard greens, no expression if they weren’t sure, and the frown if they did not like collard greens. Tell the students it is a secret taste test.
5. Collect papers and tally results.
6. Tell students the final outcome of the tally.
7. Discuss why the class liked or disliked the food.
8. Discuss that this cooking method preserved the most calcium.
9. Ask students why calcium is needed for their bodies. (Strong bones and teeth)



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# Which Foods Have Calcium

Circle the foods that have calcium, the mineral that makes bones strong and teeth healthy



**Cheese**



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**Bread**



**Apple**



**Milk**



**Collard Greens**



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**Banana**



**Yogurt**



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**Eggs**



**Tofu**



**Apple Pie**



**Broccoli**



**Frozen Yogurt**



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you like collard greens with lime?



Yes! I like it



I am not sure



No! I do not like it



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