

Extreme Foods: Native American

Grade Level: 4th through 12th, Grades

Subject: Social Studies, Science, Language Arts

Duration: 45 minutes

Materials: Tarp, grass place mats, baskets, food replicas, set of 5 "Tribes and their Homelands" cards, set of Food Clue Cards for each tribe



Next Generation Sunshine State Standards:

Common Core Standards:

Overview: During this activity students use their reasoning skills to match food clue cards to the actual food (or a suitable replica of a food). Clue cards contain clues about a food, without illustrating the food. Using deduction and the process of elimination the foods are identified. After matching foods to clues, the tribe is responsible for assembling and festively presenting their foods on various containers or plates for a banquet.

Objectives: Students will be able to identify at least three or four unusual plants/animals that were consumed by Florida's first people. They will have an intimate understanding of how adaptable, and sometimes desperate, early peoples had to be to survive a life with no backup food supplies. This exercise will help students get a better idea of what constitutes food, and the necessity to eat what one could to survive.

Background: First People were dependent on their own survival skills, from hunting and fishing, to gathering; and growing crops. With no backup food sources, an unsuccessful hunt, or bad weather that destroys plants could be deadly. Being able to find alternative foods in bad times, people could fill their stomachs and survive.

Florida's first people ate foods that we might find strange or frightening. Native Floridians knew of thousands of varieties of plants and animals they could eat for survival. Many survival foods are hidden from view (roots, seeds within pods) and some don't even look like food (tree fungus or oysters). Some toxic foods are only edible when processed by fermentation, washing, smoking or drying. These things may not even look or smell like food to our modern tastes.

For Florida's first peoples, understanding how to gather and preserve foods for hard times allowed some food security. The communal aspect of hunting, gathering and farming resulted in gatherings to feast and celebrate those times

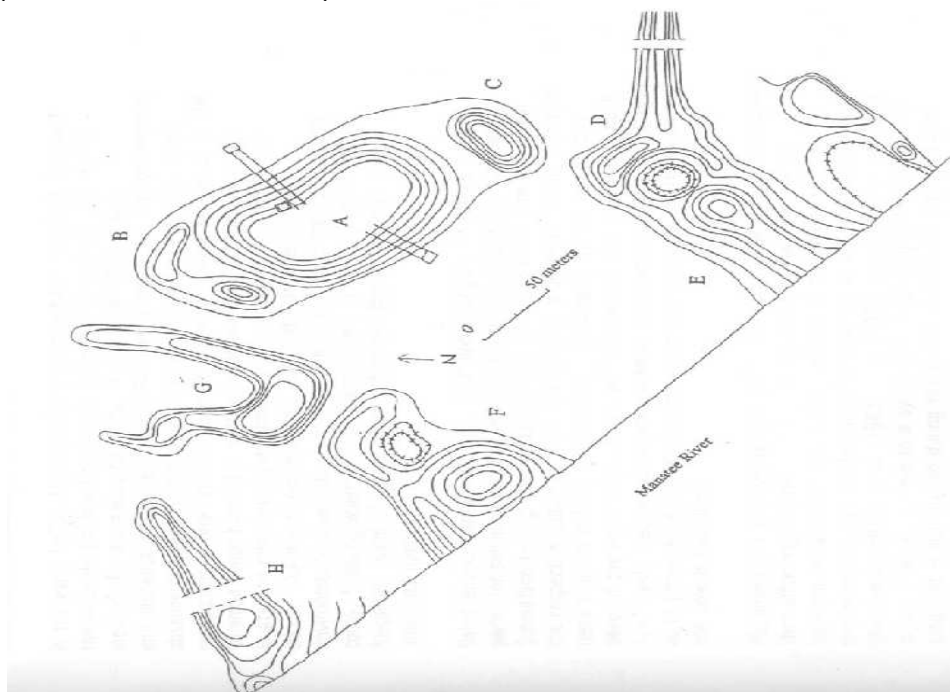
when food was abundant. Information on the tribes featured in this activity can be found at <http://www.trailoffloridasindianheritage.org/florida-indian-trial-featured.html>

Prehistory includes anything that happened before the time of written records. Archaeologists divide Native American cultures by time in the following manner:

Paleo-Indian	12,000 - 6,000 BC	Hunter-gatherers
Archaic	6,000 - 1,200 BC	Settled communities
Woodland	1,200BC - AD 1600	Complex political systems
Historic	After European contact, written records	

There is archaeological evidence of temporary camp sites within Emerson Point Preserve dating back to 2500 BC in the Archaic period. The people that built the Emerson Point ceremonial Temple Mound complex were here during the Woodland period of Native American habitation. This complex on the north shore of the Manatee River on Snead Island probably began as small shell middens around AD 700. Over the next 800 years each new chief added new layers onto the Temple Mound until it became an approximately 20' tall and 235' long platform.

A look at a topographic map of the site has prompted local archaeologists to theorize that the middens that surround the temple mound are effigy mounds - in the likeness or image of birds or animals. These effigies may correspond to clans within the tribe as is usual with the Mississippian tradition, of which our local Safety Harbor culture was part.



Everyone wants to know what tribe was here at Emerson Point, the short answer is "we don't know". The Tocobaga were a group of prehistoric and historic Native Americans living near Tampa Bay until roughly 1760. The archaeological name for this and adjacent groups of their time is the Safety Harbor culture. The peoples of Sarasota and areas south are known as the Manasota culture. Spanish records often refer to villages and chiefs with the same name. Some of the names we hear attributed to the Tampa Bay area are "Ucita", Hirrihigua", "Mocoso", "Tocobaga" and "Pohoy". These chiefs, known as *caciques* (ca-see-cays), an Arawak word used by the Spaniards, were not all prominent or active at the same time. Many years separated their presence in Tampa Bay.

The peoples of Tampa Bay were **not** part of the Timucua culture which only extended as far south as modern day Ocala. Neither were they part of the Calusa, which may have extended into southern Sarasota County. Both of these powerful cultures, Timucua (under chief Urriparacoxi) and Calusa (under chief Calos), did have interactions at times with the Safety Harbor cultures.

What did they look like? Our local natives were a tall people, probably approaching 6 feet in height. Men wore their hair pulled up in a *topknot*, giving them an even taller appearance. The Spaniards on the other hand, were short, averaging only 5 feet in height. Prominent people were tattooed according to tribal custom. In this area people wore animal skin clothing only in cold weather. Summertime clothing was minimal. Women would wear skirts of woven fiber, such as Spanish moss, for ceremony.



What did they eat? In southern Tampa Bay, diet was based on the bounty of the estuaries. Fish and shellfish were collected from both fresh and salt water. Fishing technology was very similar to the tools we use today. Hooks were fashioned from bones, spears were utilized, and nets were made from local plant fibers and weighted with heavy shells. Many of these fishing activities took place in *dugout canoes*. These vessels were built by placing burning coals along a harvested tree trunk. The charred wood was then scraped away with a sharp shell tool. This process was repeated until the canoe walls were about one inch thick. Plants were gathered from

the woods and animals hunted in interior hammocks. Large-scale corn agriculture occurred farther north in the Florida peninsula.

What were their villages like? Villages were built near or along bodies of water. Some houses were circular, built with wood posts and palm thatched roofs. Large villages had open ceremonial plazas, often beneath a temple mound. The chief's house and some kind of temple were often built atop the mound. Communities would gather here for festivals and religious ceremonies.

How did they defend themselves? The longbow was a very important defense against the Spaniards. Arrows were made with projectile points made from chert, bone, shell, or sharks' teeth. The spear could be thrown tremendous distances with the use of the *atlatl*: an Indian spear thrower usually made of wood. The atlatl (Aztec word for "spear thrower") acts as a lever and propels the spear farther, faster, and with great accuracy.

Where are the Native Americans today? The ultimate killer of Florida's natives was European disease. Chicken pox, smallpox, plague, and influenza all played a part in the demise of the Indian cultures of Florida. The chief victims of a new disease are the very young and the elderly. The cultural traditions of our native peoples were transmitted by word-of-mouth from one generation to the next. In Florida, within 150 years of Spanish encounter, all of our aboriginal cultures had died. Unfortunately, the stories of Florida's natives are lost to us. Oral tradition cannot survive without people to tell the story.

Who are the Seminole? By the early 1700s, out-of-state Creeks and Yamasees were raiding into Florida to capture native Florida Indians as slaves to sell in the British colonies, traveling down the length of the peninsula to do so. They were also using Florida as a hunting territory to obtain deerskins for the British trade.

About 100 years later the American's began their push south opening new territories for white settlements. As they did this, they pushed out the native peoples of the Carolinas and Georgia into Florida. These peoples included Creek, Micosukee, and other tribes. Some of these people banded together, along with freed and escaped slaves, and created a new culture here in Florida. The Spaniards called them "cimarrones" meaning "runaways", and these people became known as the Seminole. Today the Seminole Tribe of Florida owns land in the Everglades, near Lake Okeechobee, and just outside Tampa. Many elders are trying to keep the Seminole culture alive today in the age of modern technology. The separate Micosukee people of the Everglades also strive to maintain their culture.

Suggested Procedure: This activity is designed for 3 - 5 "tribes" each consisting of up to 5 members (min 3 max 5). This promotes lots of interaction, and allows each student time to be involved handling all the items, and adding ideas.

Woven grass mats are placed in the center of the tarp to define each tribes 'table' and the students sit around the perimeter of the tarp.

Native peoples around the world prepare and eat communally on the ground. The tarp allows the activity to take place outside in an authentic manner.

1. Give each "tribe" an informational card relating to their Tribe and Homeland. Apalachee, Windover, Tocobaga, Jaega, and Seminole (coordinated with www.trailoffloridasindianheritage.org website)
2. Give each "tribe" their respective set of Food Clue Cards, food props and containers for their feast. (about 10-12 sample foods)

THE SCENARIO

The premise is that the children of each of these Florida tribes are gathering at one of the villages for an annual feast. This feast is held at a different village each year and this year, the Tocobaga of the River tribe is hosting.

At this annual feast, the children of each tribe make a feast for the tribal elders. The foods represent specialties of their area of Florida. They prepare and display the foods beautifully. They are competing for bragging rights since the elders will judge the presentations before the feast begins.

3. Each tribe must match the food to the clue card.
4. Each tribe will prepare a festive table to present their banquet to the group.
5. Each group selects a speaker to describe 1 or 2 of their foods to the other tribes after they have assembled their feast.

TRIBES & THEIR HOMELANDS:

Each tribe represents a different geological, cultural ecology within Florida.

Tribe : **Apalachee, Ft. Walton**

Homeland : Northwest Florida Panhandle

Geography : This area is drained by many North-South running rivers, some originating in the area from freshwater springs, others flowing through Alabama and Georgia through Florida to the Gulf. The area has freshwater marshes, hardwood river bottomland, rolling sandhill ridges between the rivers. The trees

here produce nuts - acorns, hickory, pecan; and fruits (mulberry) that support large wildlife populations

Animals : Black bear, deer, freshwater fish, turkey, migratory birds, water fowl, raptors, gopher tortoise, tree frog, the highest diversity of reptiles and amphibians north of Mexico, freshwater mollusks.

Domesticated crops : beans, squash, pumpkins, corn, sunflowers.

Plants : Fruits, berries, nuts, plants that can live in the well drained sandy soil of the ridges (prickly pear cactus) , and those that thrive in the river bottomland (fiddlehead ferns)

Tribe : **Windover, Brevard**

Homeland : North Central Florida - Windover Pond is located inland of Cape Canaveral

Geography : This area also has many North-South flowing rivers. It also contains 16 of Florida's 27 first magnitude springs which add to the huge amount of fresh water hydrating this Karst (porous limestone) geology. In an area of periodic drought, these springs are a valuable resource that feeds the streams and rivers and produce circular sinkhole lakes. It also makes possible year-round agriculture. Archeological evidence proves that Florida's first people have been farming, as well as hunting and gathering in this part of Florida for thousands of years. It is home to hundreds of varieties of reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals. Most spend some if not all, of their life cycle in these environments.

Animals : Migratory birds, raptors, water fowl, reptiles, amphibians, fresh water fish, fresh water mollusks, crayfish, manatees, black bears, alligators, snakes, deer, turkey

Domesticated crops: beans, squash, pumpkins, corn, sunflowers.

Plants : Foods that grow in or near freshwater swamps and marshes like cattails;

Nut trees : oaks, hickory, walnut; Grapes; Mulberry trees

Tribe : **Tocobaga of the River**

Homeland : Central Gulf Coast, South Tampa Bay

Geography : Riverine estuary, mangrove islands, marshes and swamps near headwaters of rivers in the region, warm water (70 degrees) provides sanctuary for manatees in winter. Mangroves along estuaries provide rookeries for waterfowl. The huge variety of food made the Tampa Bay area one of the most heavily populated in Florida at the time DeSoto arrived.

Animals : Manatees, oysters, scallops, clams, whelks, fresh and saltwater fishes, blue crabs, wading and fishing birds, raptors, migratory birds, sea turtles

Plants: Oak trees (acorns), cattails, hickory trees, pine trees (pinenuts) blackberries, blueberries, sparkleberries, tree and ground funguses and mushrooms, grapes, seaweed

Tribe : Jaega, Jupiter Inlet

Homeland : Central Atlantic Coast at Jupiter Inlet

Geography : Mangrove islands, marshes, swamps and prairies form in these areas because subsurface drainage changes frequently. Pine and scrubby flatwoods interspersed with small wetlands.

Animals: otters along rivers, mullet, freshwater shrimp, freshwater fish, scrub jays, migrating waterfowl, gopher tortoise, deer

Plants : mangroves, cedars, oaks, pines, scrub oak, blackberries, saw palmetto

Tribe : Seminole, Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum

Homeland : South Florida, from Lake Okeechobee into the Everglades

Geography: This is one of the largest freshwater ecosystems in North America.

Water flows slowly in sheets across this area. The area is dominated by wetlands, sawgrass marshes, wet prairies and very few distinct rivers. It is interspersed by cypress domes, hardwood hammocks, pine Flatwoods.

Animals: Wading birds, raptors, water fowl, soft shell turtle, gopher tortoise, gopher frog, snakes, otters, river rats, freshwater fish

Plants: Pond apple (custard apple), American lotus, Cattails

PREPARING THE FEAST:

ANIMALS

For animal props, either plush stuffed, or plastic replicas are best. Even if not to scale (do not use a 4' alligator, inflatable or otherwise!), replicas will stand in for real or dried animals in most cases. Several organs (brains, heart and liver) stand in for deer and bear.

For fish, real, small dried fish and shrimp are preferred, for the 'yuck' factor. Kids love to hate stinky dried fish, and examine them closely to discover they still have their eyes! 'You can eat that?!'

PLANTS

When possible, real plants should be used. Forage fresh items that are available (acorns, beauty berries, smilax roots or tips). Otherwise, dried products from stores work well since they are very durable and can be reused many times.

Plastic or silk versions of plants also work well and are more durable, such as cattails, berries, grapes, grain grasses, corn.

Resources:

<http://www.TrailofFloridasIndianHeritage.org> - 6 featured sites detail the tribes featured in this activity

Who were the Jaega? <http://www.jupiterlighthouse.org/pdf/G4PCF.pdf>