

CROSS-CURRICULAR TEACHING IDEAS

The following ideas provide practical suggestions for further learning around the topics of bananas, food and Fairtrade in a range of curriculum areas.

Maths

- Compare the prices of bananas in your local shops, supermarkets and markets. *How do the prices differ? What reasons might there be for this? How much do bananas cost individually? Per kilo?*
- Investigate the weight and length of a banana. *How much do single bananas weigh? How long is a banana? What difference is there between the smallest and the largest banana in a bunch?*
- Ask learners to collect data when they go shopping on where some food items come from and how much they cost. Learners could record their data using the table provided in *Investigating our food* (Activity sheet 1). Alternatively, you could bring in some food items or packaging so that learners can carry out this activity in the classroom. *Note: When recording the cost, ask learners to specify whether this cost is per item or per weight.*
 - Discuss the following questions:
 - *Does all food cost the same? Why do you think some food items are more expensive than others?*
 - *Is there any relationship between where food comes from and its cost? Are food items from particular countries or continents cheaper than those from others? If so, why do you think this is?*

English

- Use role play to act out the journey of a banana from being grown to being sold in a supermarket (or eaten!) in the UK. Learners could create costumes and props to support their performance.
- Investigate poetry inspired by the theme of fruit. Use *Fruits* by Jamaican poet, Opal Palmer Adisa, as a starting point for a collection of poems on this theme (see *Fruits* - Activity sheet 2).
 - Make an illustrated class dictionary of the fruits featured in the poem. Encourage learners to think about ways of getting more information about these fruits. *Are there any local shops or markets that sell Caribbean produce? Are any of these fruits available in your local supermarket?*
 - As a shared writing activity, compose a poem about food inspired by “Fruits”. Let learners choose foods which they enjoy such as fruits, cakes or ice-cream flavours. Start by working together to create a list of possible foods or flavours. Support learners to explore the techniques used in the poem, before creating a class poem which has a similar structure.
- Ask learners to create a poster, leaflet, or blog post to share their learning about bananas and Fairtrade.

Science

- Identify, draw and describe the functions of different parts of the banana plant such as the leaves, flowers, stem (or trunk) and roots. Try growing a banana plant and then closely observing its development. Learners could vary growing conditions such as light, temperature and the amount of water the plant is given, to see what effects these factors have on the banana plant's growth.
- Investigate the life cycle of a banana plant and compare this with other plants (either in the UK or elsewhere in the world).
- Research the conditions required for bananas to ripen or decay. Observe changes in appearance, texture, taste. *Why does banana flesh discolour once it has been peeled? Can this be prevented?*

Geography / Social studies

- Develop learners' awareness of their role in a globalised world and their links with other countries through the food they eat, the clothes they wear, communications and travel.
 - Ask learners to circulate around the room and find someone else who:
 - *has eaten food from a different country in the past week*
 - *is wearing an item of clothing made in another country*
 - *can say hello in another language*
 - *has phoned, texted or emailed someone living in another country recently*
 - *has a relative or friend living who lives in another country*
 - Bring learners back together and ask them to share their responses. You could ask learners to come up to the board and point out the countries they discussed on a world map. As you receive responses, mark a line from the UK to the country mentioned. By the end, there should be lines stretching out across the world to reflect the global links that the members of the class have.
- Survey local shops, supermarkets or markets. *How many brands of banana are available in the shops in your area? Where do the bananas come from? What other fruits are there and where do these come from?*
- Identify geographical similarities and differences between a country where apples are grown (such as the UK) and a country where bananas are grown (such as Colombia or the Dominican Republic).

History

- Investigate the history of the Caribbean, how it was colonised by the British, and the links between the slave trade and plantations.
- Research how shopping habits in the UK have changed over time and the reasons for this, for example development in trade links and transportation.

Physical education

- Support learners to think critically about issues and values related to the theme of fairness. Think about how rules can make sports fair and discuss examples where the “normal” rules could be altered in order to make sports fairer for the participants. Organise a “Fairer Sports Day” which is completely fair for everyone taking part, including those of different ages, genders, abilities and needs. Try Oxfam’s *A Sporting Chance?* education resource (see the PE Session: *Fairer Sports for All*):
www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/a-sporting-chance
- Learn about the importance of Fairtrade in the production of sportswear and equipment. Use this video from the Fairtrade Foundation to explore how footballs are made in northern Pakistan and to learn about the difference that Fairtrade has made to the lives of workers at the bottom of the global supply chain:
schools.fairtrade.org.uk/resource/football/

Art and design

- Look closely at a collection of bananas. *How many different colours are there in a single banana? In a bunch or several bunches?* Try drawing a banana from different angles.
- Design an alternative FAIRTRADE Mark. Encourage learners to think about how they could use different patterns, symbols and colours to illustrate the meaning of Fairtrade; ensuring that farmers and workers get a fairer price for the work they do, improving working conditions and protecting the environment. Learners explore what Fairtrade means in Unit 3 – *What is Fairtrade?*

Music

- Create a tune, song or rap to promote Fairtrade.
- Use Oxfam’s *Sing Up* education resource to explore global issues through music. Try *Part 5: Mama Will You Buy Me A Banana?* to develop listening skills by working in groups. Use the follow-up activity to consider how land ownership affects small farmers and their livelihoods:
www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/sing-up

Design and Technology

- Make a banana cake (see *Banana cake recipe* – Activity sheet 3). Try to use as many Fairtrade ingredients as possible.
- Look at a selection of banana labels and packaging. *What types of designs are used? Do you think these are effective? If so, why?* Now design and create your own.
- Try out some Caribbean recipes using cooked green bananas or plantains.
- Design a re-usable box which could be used to prevent a banana from being squashed in a school bag or rucksack.

Computing

- Create a spreadsheet or database to show the countries where some common food items in our shopping baskets come from. Insert additional columns to record the continent of origin, food miles and price. Learners could work out the price per kg to make any comparisons fairer. Sort the data using different criteria and explore any patterns or correlations. *Which are the most common countries or continents? Is there a link between the distance travelled by a food item and its price? Is there a relationship between the continent or country that an item comes from and its price?* Note: Learners could calculate the food miles of different items by using the website: www.foodmiles.com
- Construct an online survey to collect data about learners' preferences for different types of fruit. Learners could then use a tablet or computer to present data on the favourite fruits of their class or school.

Foreign language / Modern foreign language

- Find out the official languages that are spoken in the countries where the bananas we eat in the UK come from. For example, French in Côte d'Ivoire and Spanish in Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Peru. *What other languages are spoken in these countries? What words and phrases do you know in these languages? How do you say "banana" in these languages?*

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Fruits

Activity sheet 2

mangoes
and ripe bananas
jelly coconut
and pomegranates
jack-fruit
and stinking-toe
june plum
and nase-berry
sweetsop
and sour-sop
tamarind
and jimbeli
cane-juice
and coolie-plum
star-apple
and custard-apple
navel orange
and wild cherries
fruits everywhere
brimming with life
spread out in front
of market women
buy some
and experience delight

By Opal Palmer Adisa, Jamaican writer

About the poet: Opal Palmer Adisa grew up in the Caribbean. Her family lived mainly on sugar estates where her father was a chemist working in the sugar refineries and her mother managed the estate offices. Writing has always been part of Opal's life and she published her first poem at the age of thirteen.

For more information: www.opalpalmeradisa.com

Banana cake recipe

Activity sheet 3

Ingredients

- 250g (8oz) organic white self-raising flour
- 1/4 of a Fairtrade nutmeg, ground (a challenge to find, but it does exist, honest!)
- One teaspoon Fairtrade cinnamon
- 125g (4 oz) Fairtrade caster sugar
- 125g (4oz) organic margarine
- Grated rind of a Fairtrade lemon
- Two organic free range eggs
- Three medium Fairtrade bananas, mashed with a fork (it is better if they are a bit old and squashy)
- Handful of Fairtrade sultanas
- Six heaped tablespoons Fairtrade honey
- One whole firm Fairtrade banana (optional)
- Organic butter for spreading on baked cake (optional)

Method

Heat the oven to 180°C/Gas Mark 4.

Sieve the flour, nutmeg and cinnamon into a bowl, and rub in the margarine. Using a wooden spoon, fold in the sugar, eggs, lemon rind, sultanas, mashed bananas and honey.

Pour half of the mixture in the tin, drop in the whole firm banana (optional) and add the rest of the mixture.

Bake for 1¼ to 1½ hours or until a skewer pushed into the cake comes out clean (avoid pushing into the whole banana!).

Leave to cool in the tin for ten minutes before turning out onto a rack to cool. Slice, spread with organic butter (optional) and eat!

Source

Recipe sent in by Liam, a visitor to Oxfam's *Cool Planet for Children* website. *Cool Planet* no longer exists but the Oxfam Education website has plenty of other ways to help you engage your learners about the world around them.

See: www.oxfam.org.uk/education