



Dear Families:

A natural foods educator with the Midwest Food Connection will be visiting our classroom a total of four times this winter to teach a series of lessons called “Gifts from Many Cultures.” Sponsored by Twin Cities Natural Foods Co-ops, we have the wonderful opportunity to study a wide variety of seasonal foods and healthy eating habits.

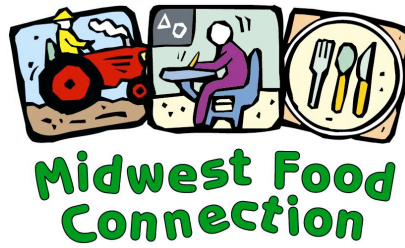
1. In Gifts of Grain, students will hear a story and sample a snack to highlight four of the different grains that are grown and eaten around the world as staple foods.
2. In Bountiful Beans, students will be introduced to a sampling of beans and bean dishes from the vast array consumed around the world. Students will investigate the anatomy of a bean plant and will learn the nutritional significance they have as a protein source. Art and geography activities, along with the sampling of a traditional Indian bean dish, round out the lesson.
3. In Potatoes, More than Fries, students will follow the amazing journey of the potato from South America over Europe and back again to our continent. We will explore the colorful variety of potatoes grown around us for healthy winter meals. Activities will include acting out a potato plant, creating tasty recipes and making potato art.
4. In our last lesson, Global Fruits, students will learn that new fruits from different climates around the world are constantly introduced to our country. While drawing and tasting, children gain an appreciation for tastes of tropical and foreign fruits.

At the grocery store, or while cooking -- to reinforce lesson content -- parents are encouraged to ask their children to point out, maybe explain, some of the foods they have been exploring at school. Also, listed below are a few questions you could ask your children that directly correspond to the lessons listed above (in that order):

Intermediate and Primary Questions

1. What were the four grains that you learned about today? What continents were they associated with?
2. What part of the plant is the bean? What part of a complete meal is a bean dish? List three or more bean foods. In what countries are these bean foods eaten?
3. What are at least three types of potatoes? Is there nutrition in the skin? What is at least one healthy way to eat a potato without a lot of salt and fat?

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4. Name at least four of the fruits you looked at today and what countries they come from.