

Feasts

Geography by food has proven to be extremely popular and a worthy educational tool. The verbal picture at the beginning of each unit sets the scene through sensual visualisation. The feast at the end of each unit reinforces the smells and tastes of each region as it creates a sense of community among participants. We do between 2 and 4 feasts during the course.

Participants sign up to bring dishes from various countries in each unit. Some may prefer to buy cheese and biscuits, others will create culinary masterpieces. Everyone brings their own plates, bowls, and utensils. Access to a microwave is marvellous, and crockpots warming before lunch whet everyone's appetites. But if freezers and stoves are not available, just announce that and encourage people to work around the facilities. The important things are variety and participation. Encourage everyone to try at least a tiny bit of everything. Once our palates have sampled wurst or brie, it may be a little harder to go back to hamburgers.

I have little international flags which we stick into the quiche, spring rolls, and perogies. Some classes like to put flags on world maps to locate their dishes. Some classes enjoy decorating the room. One favourite, was a reverse drawing of a Paris street scene as if seen from inside a cafe. Some classes like to bring in recipes which I then collect, collate, and copy into a keepsake book. I still use the guacamole recipe from a former Mexican political prisoner. Geography by food is a marvellous way to thank speakers or people who have supported your program. The feasts are also a great way to showcase your program, to increase enrolment for next year.