



# Preserving the Harvest

## Lesson Description

Students learn about drying foods to preserve them for winter. They participate in one or more activities led by an invited Tribal Elder.

- Lesson time: 60 minutes
- Location: Classroom or garden

## Learning Objectives

- Understand why and how foods were traditionally preserved for winter.

## Materials and Preparation

- Materials for the chosen activity (corn husk dolls, sun-dried tomatoes, dried fruit or pumpkin seeds)
  - Materials for each activity are listed on the teacher resource pages
- Invite an Elder to speak about preserving the harvest in a traditional way
  - The Elder may choose to lead one of the suggested activities and/or lead an activity of their choosing on a topic related to preserving the harvest in a traditional way
-  **Corn Husk Dolls Activity**
-  **Sun-Dried Tomatoes Activity**
-  **Dried Fruit Activity**
-  **Pumpkin Seed Harvest and Roast Activity**
- Prepared vegetable snack of the week – 1 for each student
- Water to drink during the Class Warm-up – water dispenser in the classroom and 1 cup or a water bottle for each student

## Class Warm-up: Champion Cheer and Veggie Taste Test (5-10 minutes)

- Give each student a cup of water or ensure that they have a filled water bottle in front of them.
- Give each student the prepared veggie snack of the day.
- Lead the students in enthusiastically reciting the  **Champion Cheer**.
- At the end of the cheer, drink water and eat the veggie snack together.
- Have students complete their  **Taste Test Observations** about the vegetable snack of the week.

**Review of Last Lesson (2-3 minutes)**

- Review the evaluation questions from last week's lesson. Evaluation questions from all lessons are listed at the end of the workbook .

**Class Discussion (5-10 minutes)**

*Have you ever dried foods or helped can foods with your family before?*

*Drying and preserving food is an ancient tradition. Many of you have eaten dried and preserved food before. It has been passed down from many generations. Have you ever dried any foods harvested from the garden before? Do you know of any methods of drying foods?*

*Drying food is known to be an ancient form of food preservation. Since before recorded history, people have dried herbs, fruit, meat, and vegetables for use at a later date. The oldest forms of drying foods include: smoking, sun drying, and air-drying. In the more modern world, we have added a few more ways to dry food such as by way of a dehydrator, oven, and microwave. Today, we still use all of them to dry certain foods. Have you heard of beef jerky, smoked salmon, sun dried tomatoes, raisins, spices, or apple chips? All of those food items are dried.*

*Drying removes enough moisture from the food so bacteria, yeast, and molds cannot grow. Drying also slows down the action of enzymes, a natural chemical in fruits and vegetables that causes food to ripen and eventually spoil.*

*Have you seen canned foods before? Canned green beans, corn, pickles, and even jam are canned foods. You can find them in the grocery store, or you might have made them with a family member at home. Canning began in the early 1800's when a military man from France wanted to prevent food spoilage. Canning has become a part of our everyday lives, whether it's canning at home with your family/friends or whether you purchase canned goods from the grocery store. Why do people dry and can foods? (Answers: for later use in the winter months, when we don't have fresh produce growing in the gardens) Do you think Native Americans introduced some of these ideas to the European settlers? Why or why not?*

*We are going to do an activity together that will help us understand traditional food storage.*

At this time, you have the option to pass the lesson to the elder or complete the rest of the lesson and only have the elder speak at the end of the lesson. If you choose to have the elder teach the rest of the lesson, please refer them to the activities suggested and have them decide what fits their tradition of preservation/drying. Feel free to use any traditional preservation activity, even if it's not listed below.  
\*Make sure the elder teaches around the topic of preservation/drying!

**Activities**

Choose one of the following activities. Please note you may only be able to do part of the process with the students and have to finish the process after class. You can then share the finished product with students at the following class session.

-  **“Corn Husk Dolls” (35-40 minutes):** Students make their own corn husk doll.
-  **“Sun-Dried Tomatoes” (35-40 minutes):** Students prepare sun dried tomatoes from scratch.
-  **“Dried Fruit” (35-40 minutes):** Students prepare dried fruit from scratch.
-  **“Pumpkin Seed Harvest and Roast” (35-40 minutes):** Students prepare and roast pumpkin seeds from scratch.
- **“Open Tribal Elder Activity” (34-40 minutes):** Invited Tribal Elder may choose their own traditional activity around preserving the harvest.

### Elder Discussion (15 minutes)

Please ensure the Elder addresses the following topics whether or not they choose to lead the lesson activity with the students.

- Food preservation in their community
  - *When do you think preservation of food started in your community?*
  - *Have preservation methods been passed down for many generations?*
  - *Why is it important to preserve food in your community?*

### Evaluation Questions (5 minutes)

1. *What are some examples of dried foods?* (Answers: jerky, raisins, spices, fruit chips like apples, bananas, etc.)
2. *Why do people dry foods?* (Answer: to preserve the food for winter when crops don't grow)
3. *Does drying food remove moisture (water) from the food or add moisture (water) to the food you are drying?* (Answer: removes)
4. *What are two ways to dry foods?* (Answers: sun, smoking, air drying, oven, dehydrator)
5. *How much water should you drink every day?* (Answer: at least 6 cups of water a day)
6. *How many fruits and vegetables should you eat every day?* (Answer: at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day)
7. *Does gardening connect you to your culture and help you learn new words in your language?* (Answer: yes)

### Preparation for Future Lessons – Reminder for the Instructor

- Review the materials and preparation needed for the next lesson.
- Remember that an Elder guest instructor is needed for these Fall lessons: Lesson 2 (What is a Plant?), Lesson 4 (Seed Exploration), Lesson 6 (Preserving the Harvest), and Lesson 10 (Companion Planting and Traditional Cooking).

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