

Session Guide: Understanding Ugali

Session Outline

Description

In this session learners are brought to reflect on their country's main staple food, ugali. In the first part of the session, they discuss, prior to a reading activity, what ugali is made of and how old ugali is to their culture. In the second part of the session, they read some materials on the crops used to make ugali in old times and today, and answer a few questions to compare their nutritional and environmental properties. In the third part of the session, they will be asked to discuss further in light of these readings.

Session Objectives

The objectives of this session are to:

- Reflect on the history of ugali.
- Compare nutritional and environmental properties of the crops used to make ugali in old times and today.

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the session learners will have:

- Reflected on and deepened their knowledge about ugali.
- Read and discussed articles from the web.

Areas involved

- Citizenship
 - Socio-cultural activities
- Life skills
 - Communication
- Home science
 - Food



Activity: Testing Knowledge

Objectives

To reflect on ugali and its place in Kenyan food culture, and think of what crop(s) it is made with.

Expected Outcomes

Learners will test their understanding of ugali and how old maize ugali is with respect to Kenyan food culture.

Teaching Instructions

Learners are divided into small groups (4 to 5) and asked to answer two questions: what the ugali they usually eat is made of, and how old it is in their culture. One person per group shares the answers with the rest of the audience. No feedback is given by the teacher at this stage, as the following activity will help learners to find the right answers.

Student Instructions

Work in small groups (4 to 5) to answer the following questions:

Think of the ugali you usually eat.

- What is it made with?
- How old do you think the tradition of making ugali this way is?

Activity: Reading

Objectives

To reflect on:

- How ugali was traditionally made.
- How the way to make ugali has changed over time
- What this means thinking of Kenyan culture.

To compare nutritional and environmental properties of crops used to make ugali in old times and today.



Expected Outcomes

Through reading articles from the web, learners will have challenged and deepened their understanding of ugali and its place in Kenyan food culture.

Teaching Instructions

Reading activity - Learners read the given materials. Then, they work in small groups (4 to 5) to answer a few questions (see student instructions below).

Suggested Guidelines

Basic answers or outlines to the questions are described here. However, there is a wealth of online resources available and these answers are neither complete nor exhaustive.

- 1) Ugali is generally made of maize. However, traditionally it used to be made mainly with millet and sorghum, and sometimes adding cassava. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ugali>)
- 2) Millets and sorghum. The most generally accepted hypothesis is that after being taken from the Americas to Europe in 1494, maize was introduced to the African continent through several routes between the 16th and 17th century. Before this, sorghum and millet were the staple cereals in most of Sub-Saharan Africa. The full replacement of these crops with maize took place in the latter half of the twentieth century. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ugali>)
- 3) Millets are high in protein and antioxidants, and have a low glycemic index, which can help prevent or manage diabetes. Pearl millet, in particular, is very high in iron and has twice the protein of milk. Finger millet has three times more calcium than milk. Kodo millet includes three times the dietary fiber of wheat and maize, and ten times that of rice. (<https://foodtank.com/news/2018/04/icrisat-millets-sorghum-forgotten-foods-future/>)
- 4) Sorghum is rich in vitamins, minerals, protein, and fiber. It can help reduce the risk of certain cancers, as well as aid in diabetes control and prevention. (<https://foodtank.com/news/2018/04/icrisat-millets-sorghum-forgotten-foods-future/>)
- 5) Millets and sorghum can be more reliable crops for farmers in spite of dry, hot conditions because they are usually the last crops standing in droughts. Not only can millets grow in about half the time of wheat, using few or no fertilizers and pesticides, but they also require 30 percent less water than maize and 70 percent less water than rice. (<https://foodtank.com/news/2018/04/icrisat-millets-sorghum-forgotten-foods-future/>)

Student Instructions

Read the following articles:



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Reading 1: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ugali>

Reading 2: <https://foodtank.com/news/2018/04/icrisat-millet-sorghum-forgotten-foods-future/>

After reading, work in groups to answer the following questions.

- 1) What is ugali made of today? What was it made of in old times?
- 2) Is maize an indigenous crop? What is the history of maize in Kenya? What about millets and sorghum, are these indigenous crops?
- 3) What do you understand about the nutritional value of millets?
- 4) What do you understand about the nutritional value of sorghum?
- 5) Which crops cope better with drought? Sorghum, millets or maize?

Activity: Discussion

Objectives

To discuss ugali and its place in Kenyan food culture in the light of the readings.

Expected Outcomes

All learners engage in a discussion about what they have learned during the session, referring to interesting points/ideas that have been brought up during the session.

Teaching Instructions

Lead a discussion where each team shares a summary of their answers to the questions in the previous activity and receive feedback from their peers. The feedback should clearly identify good points, points of agreement and areas for improvement.

After all teams have shared and discussed, you can lead a reflection based on how surprising they found the information, if they already knew about it, and if it has changed their views about Ugali in any way.

