



Making an Aztec Chocolate Drink

Subjects Social Studies, Nutrition

Grades 6-7

Brief Description

Students will view the animated video 'Xocolatl' (Chocolate) as a class, then make a chocolate drink using an Aztec recipe. Optional activity: Students will find a Mayan, Olmec or Aztec design in the Museum database and reproduce it on a Styrofoam cup, later using that cup to drink the chocolate.

This activity may be done after the class has done the 'Chocolate Scavenger Hunt' activity.

Allergy Warning: Some people are allergic to chocolate, and many more are allergic to nuts. Chocolate is often packaged with nuts. Do not do this activity if allergies are a concern in your classroom.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify how ancient Aztecs made chocolate drinks.
- Compare how the ancients used chocolate with modern use of chocolate.

Keywords

Chocolate, Maya, Aztec, Olmec, food, ancient agriculture, recipe.

Materials Needed

- access to the *¡Hola Canada! The Latin-American Collections at the Simon Fraser University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology* web site
- speakers on the computer

Multiply these amounts by the number of students participating:

- 1 ounce of unsweetened baking chocolate
- 2/3 cup boiling water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- dash of chili or pepper
- bowl
- measuring cup and teaspoon
- potato masher
- spoon
- blender

Optional activity:

- Styrofoam cups
- permanent markers suitable for use on Styrofoam

Lesson

Have the students view the animated video 'Xocolatl' as a class and discuss the ways the ancient Olmec, Maya and Aztecs used chocolate. Discussion questions might include:

- Why was chocolate consumed by the Maya, Olmecs and Aztecs?
- Was chocolate consumption limited to certain people?

- Are there high status foods in our culture that might be comparable?
- What are some differences between the way the ancients used chocolate and the way we use chocolate?

Then, make Aztec chocolate for the students to drink. The teacher might want to make it before class, or invite a few students to make it for the whole class, or involve everyone in the making of the chocolate. Remind students that the ancient peoples were not used to eating large quantities of sugar the way we are, and that they may find the Aztec chocolate recipe too bitter. They may also be put off by the granular texture of the drink. If this is the case, this could be the beginning of a discussion on changing foods and the current widespread nature of processed and sugary foods.

To make a chocolate drink using an Aztec recipe:

Multiply these amounts by the number of students participating:

- 1 ounce of unsweetened baking chocolate
- 2/3 cup boiling water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- dash of chili or pepper

Grate the chocolate into a bowl. Dampen it with a little bit of the boiling water. Use the potato masher to mix it into a thick paste. Transfer the paste into the blender. Add the vanilla and the rest of the water. Beat until frothy. Add the chili or pepper to taste.

Allow the chocolate to cool. Beat until frothy again and serve immediately.

Optional activity:

Have the students search the web site image database for an Olmec, Mayan or Aztec image that contains a design they like (on a pot, a stone stela, a glyph, etc.) The students draw their interpretation of the image on their Styrofoam cup.

Evaluation

Students are graded on their participation in the discussion and, if called upon to prepare the drink, their accuracy in measuring and following recipe directions.