



Cultural Melting Pot Secondary



Historic Homes • Gardens • Artifacts • Costumed Crafts People
Boat Tours • Gift Shop • Restaurant



Standards

Standards as developed by the Louisiana Department of Education. Available online at <http://www.vermilionville.org/vermilionville/educate/lesson-plans>.

Grade 7

Social Studies

Historical Thinking Skills

- **GLE #46:** Explain the causes, effects, or impact of a given historical event in U.S. history (H-1A-M3)

Grade 8

Social Studies

Places and Regions

- **GLE #9:** Explain ways in which goals, cultures, interests, inventions, and technological advances have affected perceptions and uses of places or regions in Louisiana (G-1B-M4)

Physical and Human Systems

- **GLE #11:** Explain why humans settled and formed societies in specific regions or why immigrant groups (e.g. Acadians) settled in specific areas of Louisiana (G-1C-M3)
- **GLE #12:** Describe the causes and effects of cultural diffusion and the effects of cultural diversity in Louisiana (G-1C-M5)

Louisiana History

- **GLE #71:** Describe major early explorers and explorations significant to Louisiana or early settlers in Louisiana (H-1D-M1)
- **GLE #75:** Describe the contributions of ethnic groups significant in Louisiana history (H-1D-M1)

Objectives

1. Students will identify different methods of architecture used in South Louisiana in the 1800s.
2. Students will match ingredients with the group of people that introduced them into the regional cooking methods.
3. Students will make *bousillage* to create a wall.
4. Students will come to understand how three cultures were represented in architecture and food in Louisiana.
5. Students will understand that, eventually, all three of the cultures shared and borrowed ideas to create the blended culture we have today.



Pre-Visit Activity

Teachers. We have made two introduction documents available to you on our website – a word document as well as a PowerPoint with pictures depicting the cultures that we represent. Please take some time to review these two documents with your class prior to your visit here. You can access them [here](#), by clicking on

- Introduction to Vermilionville and
- Vermilionville PowerPoint

Write the following terms on the board and discuss what students know about the terms and how they interrelate.

Acadians: see Anchor Lesson below.

Creoles: see Anchor Lesson below.

Culture: the beliefs, customs, arts, etc., of a particular society, group, place, or time.

Cultural diffusion: the spread of cultural beliefs and social activities from one group to another.

Economic indicator: statistic about an economic activity that allows for analysis of economic performance and prediction of future performance.

Gumbo: a soup thickened with okra pods or filé and containing meat or seafood.

Huey Long: also called The Kingfish, he was an American politician who served as the 40th Governor of Louisiana from 1928 to 1932 and as a member of the United States Senate from 1932 until his assassination in 1935.

Jambalaya: a spicy dish of rice cooked usually with ham, sausage, chicken, shrimp, or oysters.

Natural resource: Derived from the environment. Some of them are essential for our survival while most are used for satisfying our wants.

New Orleans: Louisiana's biggest city.

Vermilionville: Living History Museum located in Lafayette, Louisiana. Also what Lafayette was called between 1824 and 1884.

Having a basic understanding of these terms and concepts will help students with the anchor lesson.

Anchor Lesson

Materials needed: 6 big rings (hula hoops), words of ingredients (document #1), plastic bag (to pick up Spanish moss)

Students are invited during their Vermilionville visit to pick up Spanish moss that has fallen on the ground. Please do not pick up moss that is still in the trees as it is still living. Students will be able to use the moss to make *bousillage* (boo-zee-ahge) after their visit here.

Louisiana is known as a cultural melting pot. Today, we will look at the three major cultures of Louisiana: Acadian, Creole, and Native American. These three cultures brought their own traditions to Louisiana and created a culture that is one of the most unique in the world.



Acadian

The first culture we will look into today is the Acadian culture. Acadians in Louisiana are exiles from the French territory now known as Nova Scotia. Several years after the 1755 deportation of Acadians, some settled in Louisiana where they were accepted and allowed to keep their culture and traditions. They were common people who lived simple lives and lived off the land while keeping family at the heart of their culture.

Native American

The first Native Americans reached Louisiana more than 10,000 years ago and the first Europeans came less than 500 years ago. That leaves a very long period of at least 9,500 years between their encounters. We know very little about tribal names and languages during most of that long period and direct connections between these first Natives and any current tribes are unknown. What we do know is that when the first Europeans arrived, Native tribes in what is now called Louisiana included: the Atakapa, Caddo, Chitimacha, Choctaw, Houma, Natchez, and Tunica, among others.

Creole

The third culture with a rich heritage in South Louisiana is the Creole culture. Originally, the term Creole was used to describe the Louisiana-born descendants of European settlers. As time passed, the term Creole was used to describe people of wholly European descent. Then, it referred to people of either French or Spanish descent, or a blend of either of the two with Black people. Today, Creole refers to descendants of colonial settlers in LA, mainly free people of color.

These three cultural groups, Acadians, Native Americans, and Creoles, are dominant in South Louisiana and many things we do in our daily lives come from these people. Today, we are going to teach you about these groups of people and some of their culture.

Architecture

There are a few words that need defining before we briefly explain the different architecture related to our three cultures.

Colombage

Colombage is a French word that refers to half-timbered frames. People would put a few vertical posts and fill-in the space between them with bricks, rocks, or *bousillage* instead of having walls completely made out of logs. This saved a lot of wood. In southern Louisiana, where bricks or rocks were mostly unavailable, *bousillage* was used as the matrix (the material that fills the space between the posts).

Bousillage

In North America, *bousillage* is a marriage between European and Native American architectural traditions. It uses indigenous natural ingredients – mud or clay and retted (cured) Spanish moss. Read the Post-Visit Activity to see how *bousillage* is made.

Native American Dwellings

Thousands of years ago, Native American tribes settled in present-day Louisiana and established communities. The way Native Americans built their homes was no different than many other people did all over the world – using mud and wooden frames. The wooden frames would be weaved with branches to make wattle. Then, it would be covered with daub for protection.





Wattle in construction

Creole Houses

Creoles used *bousillage* on their houses for many years and today, you can still find old homes that have original *bousillage* as walls.

Creole houses will typically have more than one room, with a chimney at the very center, and a front porch with two front door entrances. Today, many people still build their homes with these features.

Acadian Houses

Acadians lived in very small houses that consisted of one main room. These homes were commonly referred to as a single-pen home for that reason. Whenever a family grew and needed more space, they would add a room, making the home a double-pen home, which was basically a mirror image of the single-pen one. You can always identify an Acadian single-pen home by the chimney on one side of the house rather than the center, its narrow rooms, and small porch.

The Maison des Cultures here at Vermilionville was built in the 1840s and it was built with easy to find materials in south Louisiana. Show the *colombage* (framing made of heavy wood posts – on the porch), the *barreaux* (horizontal wood bars that help to keep *bousillage* in place – chimney) and the *bousillage* itself (visible on the porch).

Food

Perhaps the main area where you can see cultures coming together is with the preparation of food. This has certainly been true in Louisiana, where our three main cuisines have overlapped. But each group of people discussed in this lesson brought their own flavors and ingredients to this region. Today, we will show you the ingredients that are unique to each group and some that are used by all. Then, we will have a competition on pairing ingredients with its culture.

Native Americans

- Lived off the land
- Used what was readily available
- Lots of grains
- Wild game



Acadians

- Family-based 1 pot recipe
- Used what was readily available
- Wild game and seafood
- Inexpensive meat such as pork – most often, sausage
- Dishes often a combination of what was on hand

Creoles

- More sophisticated version of Acadian cooking
- Used farm-raised ingredients – they had more money to spend
- Spicy and flavorful

Venn diagram game

Split the group into two teams. Each team will receive a list of words (document #1). Each team will have three rings or hula hoops that represent each of the three cultures. Some of the ingredients will appear more than once, telling students that it belongs to more than one category. Teams will race to put all of their ingredients in the right ring. When they are done, teacher will review according to the following lists.

Acadian ingredients (cheap and readily available)

- Rice
- Sausage
- Ham
- Pork
- Alligator
- Frogs
- Turtles
- Peppers

Creole ingredients (local)

- Tomatoes
- Okra
- Beef (expensive therefore Acadians could not afford it)
- Butter
- Cream
- Chicken/turkey

Native American ingredients

- Corn
- Corn bread
- Grits
- Sweet potatoes
- Squash

Acadian & Creole

- Cayenne pepper
- Hot sauce
- Trinity (celery, onion, bell pepper)

Acadian and Native American

- Wild game (deer, rabbit, squirrel, raccoons, possums, etc.)



All three

- Filé (introduced by Native Americans but used by all three). Filé is made by drying and grinding sassafras leaves.
- Seafood
- Stocks (seafood and bone sticks)

Post-Visit Activity

Materials mud and Spanish moss, big bucket, gloves, recipe cards

The teacher will lead a discussion with the class on how the contributions of each of these culture groups affect their lives and Louisiana culture today. They will also receive three recipe cards to try at home with their families.

The next activity will take a few weeks to complete. First, the class will cure the Spanish moss. When it is completed, students will be able to make their own *bousillage*.

Bousillage

1. Retting (curing) the moss – Spanish moss is hard to work with when fresh, but when the gray-green outer covering of the fibers is removed, the black, shiny inner fiber is left behind. Put the Spanish moss that you gathered at Vermilionville and/or around your house and put it under water. You can use a big bucket. Weigh the moss down with rocks. Check the moss every week, move the moss around and when all of it has turned black, take it out, wash it off, and let it dry completely (a few days). This curing process will be faster if the bucket of wet moss is left outside in warm weather.
2. Mix the retted moss with mud.
3. Shape into bricks.
4. Let dry for a few days. Write your name on the brick before it dries.

Evaluation

Teacher will assess student comprehension of the food lesson from their ability to accurately place ingredients in the Venn diagram.

Differentiation of Instruction

Tactile learners will benefit from making *bousillage* and also from the Venn diagram activity.



Document #1

Give these words to students for the Food game. Each group will receive a set of words to put in the hula hoops.

Rice	sausage	ham
Pork	alligator	frogs
turtles	peppers	tomatoes
Okra	beef	butter
cream	chicken	corn
corn bread	grits	sweet potatoes
squash	cayenne	hot sauce
	wild game (deer, rabbit, etc.)	filé



seafood	stock	trinity (celery, onion, bell pepper)
cayenne	hot sauce	trinity
wild game	filé	filé
seafood	seafood	stock
stock		



Creole recipe - Shrimp Creole

Ingredients

- ½ cup finely diced onion
- ½ cup chopped green bell pepper
- ½ cup chopped celery
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 (14.5 ounce) can stewed tomatoes
- 1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 dash hot pepper sauce
- 1 pound medium shrimp – peeled and deveined

Directions

1. In a 2 quart saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion, green pepper, celery, and garlic; cook until tender.
2. Mix in cornstarch. Stir in stewed tomatoes, tomato sauce, Worcestershire sauce, chili powder, and red pepper sauce. Bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Stir in shrimp, and cook for 5 minutes.
3. Serve over hot rice.

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Acadian recipe - Jambalaya

Ingredients

2 cups cooked chicken
½ pound smoked sausage, sliced
2 cups chopped onions
3 garlic cloves, minced
½ cup chopped bell pepper
½ cup chopped celery
1 ½ tablespoons olive oil

2 bay leaves
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/8 teaspoon white pepper
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
¾ cup uncooked rice
2 cups chicken broth
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

Directions

1. In a large Dutch oven, cook the smoked sausage in the olive oil until browned; add the onion, garlic, bell pepper, and celery and saute until golden and transparent.
2. Add the uncooked rice and cook, stirring briskly, until just starting to turn golden, then add the chicken broth and Worcestershire sauce, stirring to combine.
3. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and add the cooked chicken, bay leaves, cayenne pepper, white pepper, and black pepper.
4. Cook, covered, over low heat for about 30 to 40 minutes; add more liquid if you need to.
5. Season to taste with salt and more pepper if you like.

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Native American Recipe - Fry bread

Ingredients

3 cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 ½ cups warm water (110F)
Oil, for frying (or shortening)

Directions

1. Put flour, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. Mix well, add warm water and stir until dough begins to ball up. On a lightly floured surface, gently knead dough. Do not over-work the dough. Add flour if dough is too sticky. After working dough, cover the bowl and place it in a warm place for ½ to 1 hour.
2. Heat oil to 350 degrees in a frying pan or kettle. Lightly flour surface and pat and roll out baseball size pieces of dough. Cut hole in middle with a knife (so the dough will fry flat) to ¼-inch thickness and place in oil and cook until golden brown and flip over and cook opposite side until same golden brown. Dough is done in about 3 minutes depending on oil temperature and thickness of dough.
3. Some say that you absolutely have to use shortening to fry. Others use vegetable oil.

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