

# What's in Your Picnic Basket?

## Objective

Students read about the history of picnics and identify the agricultural sources of some typical foods and objects associated with picnics. Students research and write about products used in picnics and about festivals around the state. Students write creative stories about picnics. Students use their math skills to plan a class picnic.

## Background

The first picnics were fashionable social events similar to what we know today as “potluck” dinners. Everyone was expected to contribute something. The practice of holding them outdoors in a beautiful setting came later. The earliest picnics in England were hunting feasts, served as a break from hunting expeditions.

The first known usage in print of the word picnic was the French *pique nique*. Its origin is unknown but it may be from the French *pique*, meaning, “pick,” paired with the nonsense syllable *nique*, just for the sake of rhyming.

After the French Revolution in 1789, royal parks became open to the public for the first time. Picnicking in the parks became a popular activity amongst the newly enfranchised citizens. Over time Bastille Day, French Independence Day, became a popular day for picnics. In 2000, a 600-mile-long picnic took place from coast to coast in France to celebrate the first Bastille Day of the new Millennium.

In the US, we celebrate our own Independence Day with 4th of July picnics. Most of our picnics include cooking outdoors. The choice of food depends on the part of the country and the foods that are plentiful in those areas. In coastal areas, the picnic might include seafood. In the Midwest it probably includes corn on the cob.

In Oklahoma, picnics often involve cooking food outdoors on a grill. Hot dogs, hamburgers, steaks, barbecue chicken—even vegetables, like squash, eggplant, asparagus and peppers—are popular foods for grilling.

## English Language Arts

1. Bring a large basket to class and fill it with items that might be needed for a picnic. (See the list provided with this lesson.) In the course of the following discussion, pull out items as needed to trigger ideas.
  - Before reading background information ask students to discuss the question “What is a picnic?”
  - Read and discuss background and vocabulary.

## Oklahoma Academic Standards

### GRADE 3

Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3;  
W.1,2. Critical Writing: W.1.  
Research: R.1,2,3,4; W.1,2,3  
Number & Operations: 2.5,7

### GRADE 4

Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3;  
W.1,2. Critical Writing: W.1.  
Research: R.1,2,3; W.1,3  
Social Studies Content—1.2D,3,4  
Number & Operations: 1.5

### GRADE 5

Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3;  
W.1,2. Critical Writing: W.1.  
Research: R.1,2,3; W.1,2,4  
Social Studies Content—2.1  
Number & Operations: 1.4

## Materials

picnic basket, or other large basket  
picnic blankets  
first aid kit  
household cleaning kit  
chocolate milk  
football  
bread  
corn chips  
cookies  
jar of peanut butter  
box of raisins  
paper plates  
plastic cups  
napkins  
potato  
can of beans  
lunch meat  
cheese  
plastic forks  
bug spray  
disposable camera  
cotton hat  
sunglasses  
avocado  
apples  
grapes  
lemon  
orange  
grapes  
carrots  
tomato  
table cloth  
hard bound book  
clay bowl  
chewing gum

—Students will name their favorite picnic foods. Write the items on the board. Discuss the ingredients for each item. What is the agricultural source of each ingredient? Is it something that is produced in Oklahoma? (See answer key, included with this lesson.)

—Students will make a list of the nonfood items needed for a picnic. Use the contents of the picnic basket to help students think of items (plates, napkins, etc.) Discuss the source for each of the items listed. (See answer key, included with this lesson.)

2. Students will select picnic-related items and use online or library resources to research and write reports about the selected items. (“Ag Facts” on the AITC website is a good source for basic information about various agricultural commodities grown in Oklahoma. Click on “Additional Resources” and then “Ag Facts.”)  
—Students will share their reports with the class.  
—Provide copies of the chart provided with this lesson.  
—Students will fill out the chart as they listen to the reports from their classmates.
3. Each student will write a story about the best picnics he/she can remember or make up a story about a picnic.  
—Where was it located?  
—What did you eat?  
—Who was there?  
—What games did you play?  
—What time of year?  
—Was it a celebration of something? If so, what?

## Social Studies

1. Students will use online or library resources to research regional picnic foods that reflect the diverse but unified nature of the American people and the different climates and natural resources (Examples: New England clambake, Texas barbecue, New Orleans shrimp boil). Students will develop picnic menus from the different regions.
2. Students will use online or library resources to research festivals around Oklahoma associated with particular crops (peach festival, pecan festival, etc.) Students will work as a class to place the festivals on a map of Oklahoma. Students will each choose one of the festivals and write a history or produce a poster, PowerPoint, etc., to promote the festival.

## Math

1. Students will plan a class picnic and develop math problems to determine how much they need of each item, how much space they will need, etc., based on the number of students in the class.  
—Send a letter home to parents with a list of the items needed and

ask for contributions to the picnic. In the spirit of the original picnics, each person should contribute something.

## Extra Reading

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- Fowler, Allan, and Allen Fowler, *The Wheat We Eat*, Scholastic, 2000.
- Gibbons, Gail, *Corn*, Holiday House, 2009.
- Gibbons, Gail, *Pigs*, Holiday House, 2003.
- Gleason, Carrie, *The Biography of Cotton (How Did That Get Here?)*, Crabtree, 2005.
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- Leavell, Chuck, and Nicholas Cravotta, *The Tree Farmer*, VSP, 2005.
- Levenson, George, *Bread Comes to Life*, Tricycle, 2008.
- Marshall, Pam, *From Tree to Paper*, Lerner, 2002.
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- Taus-Bolstad, Stacy, *From Grass to Milk*, Lerner, 2004.
- Taus-Bolstad, Stacy, *From Wheat to Bread*, Lerner, 2002.
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## Vocabulary

**enfranchised**— given full privileges of citizenship, especially the right to vote

**expedition**— a journey or trip undertaken for a specific purpose

**millennium**— a period of 1000 years

**picnic**— a meal eaten outdoors often during a trip away from home

**potluck**— a gathering of people where each person or group of people may contribute a dish of food prepared by the person or the group of people, to be shared among the group



# What's in Your Picnic Basket?

## (Answer Key)

Picnic item	Made From	Grown in Oklahoma?
picnic basket, or other large basket	wood	yes
picnic blankets	cotton or wool	yes
table cloth	cotton	yes
first aid kit	soybeans or other oilseeds or animal fats	yes
household cleaning kit	soybeans or other oilseeds or animals fats	yes
chocolate milk	milk	yes
football	leather from hide of pig, sheep or cow	yes
bread	wheat	yes
corn chips	corn	yes
oatmeal cookies	flour from wheat, oatmeal from oats, egg, butter or cooking oil from oilseeds, raisins from grapes	yes
jar of peanut butter	peanuts	yes
box of raisins	grapes, box from wood, ink from soy	yes
potato chips	potatoes, oil from peanuts, cotton, soy or other oilseeds	yes
can of beans	beans	yes
lunch meat	beef, pork, chicken or turkey from farm animals	yes
cheese	milk from dairy cow, sheep or goat	yes
paper plates	wood	yes
plastic cups	plastics from soy or other oilseeds	yes
napkins	wood	yes
plastic forks	plastics from soy or other oilseeds	yes
bug spray	cedar oil from trees, plastic from soy	yes
disposable camera	film is made from hooves and horns of farm animals	yes
cotton hat	cotton	yes
sunglasses	plastic from soy and other oilseeds	yes
avocado	avocado	no
apples	apple	yes
grapes	grapes	yes
lemon	lemon	no
orange	orange	no
carrots	carrot	yes
tomato	tomato	yes
hard bound book	glue from soy or hooves of farm animals, ink from soy	yes
clay bowl	soil	yes
chewing gum	feet of farm animals	yes