

IT'S A SMALL WORLD: CHINA

Project Skills:

- Youth will celebrate a traditional Chinese festival with food and decorations that they have made.

Life Skills:

- Accepting differences

Academic Standards:

- Social Studies E.4.
Describe how families are alike and different, comparing characteristics such as size, hobbies, celebrations, where families live, and how they make a living.

Grade Level: 3

Time: 60 minutes

Supplies Needed:

Moon Cakes Activity

- Baking equipment (bowl, spoon, measuring cups and spoons, cookie sheet, oven, hotpad)
- Flour
- Sugar
- Salt
- Vanilla
- Eggs
- Jam
- Butter
- Biscuit cutter

Chinese Lanterns Activity

- Paper suitable for lanterns
- Staples
- Crayons, markers or colored pencils
- String to hang the lanterns for the party!
- Scissors

Enhance/Simplify

- Ready-made cookies

BACKGROUND

Not every country in the world has the same holidays! In this lesson, learners will experience traditions involved in the Autumn Moon Festival of China.

In China, every fall when the moon is completely round (the fifteenth day of the eighth lunar month), the people of that country celebrate their *Moon Fest*. Families are an important part of the festival and people will travel a long way to be with their family during the moon fest. This is the time that families eat a very special dessert called a moon cake...while they are looking at the full moon.

WHAT TO DO

Activity: Chinese Moon Cakes

These moon cakes (see recipe below) may not look very much like traditional moon cakes, but they sure taste good!



Encourage youth to talk about holidays that are important in their families. Share with the children the traditions involved in the Autumn Moon Festival of China, including one of the traditional foods – moon cakes.

Explain that they will be making a simplified version of the cakes in today's session. The youth can mix the "cakes" up, and while the dough chills, they can begin their craft activity. If time is limited, you might have the dough already mixed, chilled and ready for rolling and filling. While baking the cakes, the youth can construct their Chinese lanterns.

Moon Cake Recipe:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine:

- 1 cup flour
- Pinch of salt

Cream:

- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ cup salted butter

Add:

- 1 egg
- ½ tsp vanilla
- Add flour to creamed sugar/egg mixture.

Then roll the dough on floured board to ⅛ inch thickness. Form the dough into a ball and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Cut into small rounds with biscuit cutter. Place about one teaspoon of jam in the center of each cookie. Place another flattened cake over the top. Pinch the edges and prick with a fork (in a decorative pattern) and sprinkle the tops with sugar. Bake on a lightly greased sheet for about 10 minutes. Cool and eat!

Try these shape options for the moon cakes:

- Fill half of one side of a cookie with jam. Fold in half and pinch edges for a half moon!
- Cut a tiny circle in the second cookie round (use a vanilla cap). Place over the first jelly-filled round and seal the edges.

Sources:

- Created by Paula Rogers Huff, 4-H Youth Development Agent, UW-Extension, Oconto County

Activity: Craft Chinese Lanterns

Decorate for the Moon Fest the way that they do in China – with paper lanterns! Lanterns are common sights in China. The Chinese invented paper-making centuries ago and lanterns were one of the items that they made from paper.

Procedure for making Chinese Lanterns:

1. Have traditional Chinese drawings and other art work available for learners to enjoy and to use as patterns or inspiration, if they so choose.
2. Take one sheet of paper and begin decorating for the lantern body. A large pattern in the middle portion of the lantern, repeated on the borders (1 inch from each long end of paper), makes a very attractive lantern.
3. When the lantern is decorated, fold the paper in half length-wise. Make half-inch cuts from the folded side to the border until the length of the lantern is scored.
4. Staple the top edges and the bottom edges of the lantern together. Attach a handle and staple together. String the lanterns around your party area.

**TALK IT OVER****Reflect:**

- What are some ways that your family decorates for an important holiday?
- What are some special foods that you have during these holidays?

Apply:

- How are the celebrations in your family different from those in China?
- How are the celebrations in your family like those in China?

ENHANCE/SIMPLIFY**Enhance for Older Children:**

Allow youth the option of using computers to create colorful designs for their lanterns. Print and assemble as above.

Simplify for Younger Children:

Use ready-made cookies. Encourage creativity in decorating by having lots of sprinkles of various shapes on hand!

Reviewed by Wisconsin 4-H Afterschool Team: October 2004.