

Jaiden

8th Grade Cooking

If you're like me, the first thing your mind goes to when you get home from school is food, but you can't always just eat sweets and chips when you get there. My mom works pretty late some days, so sometimes I make my own food rather than junk in the pantry. It's not always easy but I try my best. My name is Jaiden and for my 8th grade project I'm taking on cooking. In this essay I will address food origins, spices, easy foods to make, and WHY foods matter. Making healthy foods isn't always easy, but I hope to help with that. Eating better food can make a difference and you'll feel it.

There are thousands of different spices, and sometimes it can get confusing. I'll explain some common pantry herbs and spices, what they do, and their medicinal purposes. Martha Rose Shulman says, in her book *Mediterranean Light*, Bay leaf is an achromatic leaf (46). It is used in cooking to bring flavor, and commonly used in soups or stews. Cayenne is a spice derived from a spicy pepper, used to bring flavor to savory dishes. Joe Leech says in his article titled "10 Delicious Herbs and Spices With Powerful Health Benefits", cayenne contains capsaicin and may have anti-cancer properties (6). Cumin that we use in cooking is from the seed of the plant used to bring nutty flavor in dishes. Ginger is a ground plant; we use the root of ginger to add flavor in foods and it has health benefits for stomach problems. Leech states that ginger is loaded with nutrients and bioactive compounds (7). Shulman also states oregano is a

flowering plant, used on common foods like pizza or made into oil for Italian cuisine (89). Thyme is an herb used in cooking and can be used in tea and other drinks and foods.

Cooking techniques can bring out flavors of different foods. For example, caramelizing onions can make a completely different flavor. Grilling is a cooking technique used in many dishes, mostly meats, used by taking dry heat and applying it to the surface from above, below, or the side. In his article, Alfaro says braising is a form of cooking mostly used in foods like brisket (s.3). It makes moist meat by using wet and dry heat to cook the food. Roasting is cooking something in an oven or open fire. Alfaro says hot air cooks the food and covers it evenly when roasting. I learned from my sister that baking is a form of cooking most commonly associated with treats. Baking is using dry heat and slowly cooking from the outside to the inside for a hard shell and soft inside. Frying is cooking food in oil, sometimes with a base of egg and flour to get a crisp outside. Shulman also says frying is cooking food in oil or another fat (103).

It's good to know where the food you're eating originated from. Here I'll tell you some interesting food origins you might not have known. The author of the article "history of bread" says Bread originated from Egypt, although it did not have yeast, so it was originally flatbread called aish baladi similar to matzo. The Caesar salad was not named after the famous Julius Caesar but was in fact named after Caesar Cardin, who owned a restaurant in 1924. In his article Constantine says Cardin was from Mexico. The

Author of “catsup vs. ketchup” says Ketchup originated from China; it was called ke-tsiap, meaning pickled fish sauce, and traveled to America in the 1700s. Spyrou Constantine also states Cheesecake originated from ancient Greece, and artwork can be seen carved into pots and walls of ancient Olympians eating cheesecake before the first Olympic games.

Traditional African food consists of cereal grain, locally available fruits and vegetables, as well as milk and meat products. Pele Omori, in his article “List of African foods”, says Mafe is a peanut or groundnut stew or sauce served over rice or couscous; the place of origin is Mali. Ugali is a flour porridge. It is referred to by many other names, like ngima, obusuma, kinyet, nshima, Mieliepap, phutu, sadza, kwon, isitshwala, and more. Some people in America call it corn fufu. It is light in texture and fluffy, almost like mochi. Jollof rice, or just Jollof, is a one-pot dish. Omori says jollof rice is eaten as a side dish in Africa and garnished with plantains. Fufu is a starchy stew made with many different ingredients and variations, but most plantain fufu is most common.

Europe is home to some of the finest, most elegant dishes, foods brought over from hundreds of countries, and developed over the years to make wonderful and delicious food. The crepe is a very thin pancake-like food folded almost like an omelet with a sweet or savory inside, found in France, says Adam Groffman in his article. Arancini are small rice balls covered in breadcrumbs with vegetables or cheese. When I was younger I would get these from my favorite Italian restaurant and I loved them.

Groffman says goulash is a stew consisting of pasta, vegetables, and meat from medieval Hungary; it is one of the national foods and a symbol of unity in Hungarian culture. Currywurst is a steam fried pork sausage from Germany, cut into bite-sized portions, and sometimes served with french fries and with curry sauce. Groffman says it's a common fast food dish in Germany.

Middle Eastern food is diverse and really has no labels as to what it has to be. The food varies across different countries and cultures and unites people of each country. In his article, Saad Fayed says hummus is a spread or dip made from mashed cooked garbanzo beans, delicious with chips or pita bread. Tabbouleh is a Levantine vegetable salad consisting of finely diced parsley, tomato, mint, and more fayed states. Fayed says Moutabal/Baba ghanoush is a thick spread made of eggplant, usually used as a salad dip.

I'll be explaining how to make a delicious ham and potato soup. The ingredients for this soup are the following: 1 1/2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and diced, 1 medium onion diced, 1 medium carrot diced, 1 rib celery diced, 8 ounces smoked ham diced, 3 cloves garlic sliced, 3 tablespoons butter, 1/4 cup flour, 4 cups chicken broth, 2 cups water, 1/2 cup heavy cream, and salt and pepper for flavor. Stir in the carrot, celery, onion, ham, and garlic in a stockpot for 5-6 minutes until the vegetables are soft and onions are translucent. Stir in the flour and add chicken broth, one cup at a time. Gradually stir it in, add water, and stir in as well. Turn the heat to high, simmer for fifteen

minutes, and stir occasionally. Add salt and stir in the potatoes for another 15 minutes. Mash the potatoes, leaving some chunks, and add cream, if desired. Add cayenne for spice, and/or a mint garnish. 195 calories per serving. (Lynn Sacko).

Need something to dip with your soup? How about some delicious homemade bread? Ingredients are as follows: $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water (lukewarm), 1.5 tablespoons dry active yeast, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour, and 1.5 tablespoons kosher salt. Mix the water and yeast until the yeast is dissolved. The water cannot be too hot or the yeast will die -- Yes! Yeast is a living organism. Add flour and salt, and mix until all is combined. Now let the dough rise at room temperature for 2 hours, covered with a kitchen towel. Divide the dough into two loaves and add a light portion of flour on the top. Place the unbaked loaves of bread on a pizza peel dusted with cornmeal, and cut three slashes on the top of the bread using a serrated knife. Now cover the loaves with a towel and rest for another 40 minutes. Preheat the oven to 450° F with a baking stone on the center rack. When the bread is ready to go in the oven, slide the dough off the pizza peel onto the hot stone. Put one cup of water at the bottom of the oven in a safe pan, and close the oven to allow the bread to steam and create a crusty outside. Bake for 30 minutes and allow to cool before slicing. 79 calories per slice. (Chef John).

What's dinner without dessert? How does apple pie sound? You'll need $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter, 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup white sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

packed brown sugar, and 8 Granny Smith apples peeled, cored and sliced. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit. Melt the butter in a saucepan, add the flour, water, white sugar, and brown, and bring it to a boil. Reduce the temperature and let it simmer. Place the crust at the bottom of your pan and add apples. Add a cover of latticework crust and pour the butter and sugar mixture over the crust slowly. Bake for 15 minutes in the preheated oven. Reduce the temperature to 350 degrees Fahrenheit, and continue baking for 35 to 45 minutes or until the apples are soft. 512 calories per serving. (Moashasmama).

Thousands of people and pets go hungry, so even if you can feed some, it can make a difference. For a portion of my service work, I helped make soup at a soup kitchen for homeless people and children in poverty, I helped workers chop vegetables, make broth, and cook soup. I learned a lot about the homeless community and the upsetting details about how many homeless people starve in the U.S. I also helped feed veterans' service dogs while veterans had time to talk and share common interests. I spoke to some veterans and learned about veterans coming out of service and having nowhere to go, sometimes even being mentally or physically disabled. Many veterans also come out of service with no money and hungry, having nowhere to go and becoming homeless.

Even knowing how to use the things you have around you to make a meal can be one of the most useful things. Eating healthy, sustainable food with the nutrients and

protein you need can change your mood and overall make you a better feeling happier person. Cooking in some situations can also save your life, like knowing what to do in a survival situation and what foods will give you the energy you need to survive. I hope you learned some things from my essay, and you use them in the future or now!

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