

ACTIVITY GUIDE

Texas Foodways: Bread

Grades PreK-7



Pan de campo. Wikimedia Commons.

Overview: Making the State Bread of Texas

Texas history and traditions are deeply rooted in the cultures of other peoples. *Pan de Campo*, also known as “cowboy bread,” represents one example of this cultural diffusion in Texas. Originating with the vaqueros of South Texas, *pan de campo* was easily cooked in the dutch oven or skillets of the open range during the time of westward expansion. In this activity, learners read and follow a simple recipe to bake the official state bread of Texas.

Objectives

- Identify the cultural heritage of a Texas trail food staple
- Demonstrate the ability to follow a recipe and bake a Texas flatbread

Social Studies TEKS

4th grade: 17

7th grade: 18A-C, 6A, 6D

Vocabulary

cultural diffusion (KULL-cher-uhl dih-FYOO-zhun) noun: the spreading out of culture, culture traits, or a cultural pattern from a central point

knead (NEED) verb: to massage or squeeze moistened flour with hands

vaquero (vah-KER-oh) noun: Spanish word for a cowboy, or cattle driver

Westward Expansion (WEST-werd ek-SPAN-shun) noun: the populating of land within the continental United States by Europeans.

Historical Context

For 19th century vaqueros and cowfolk traveling along the dusty cattle trails, food needed to be filling and made from only a few ingredients. *Pan de campo*, a big, crackly biscuit commonly made from wheat flour, salt, fat and water, became a staple meal element in the camps of west and south Texas. In 2005, the state legislature declared this trail staple the state bread of Texas. There are many variations of *pan de campo*. The recipe presented here is a basic trail version.

Activity

45-60 minutes

Ask learners pre-activity questions to help them think about the role of this food staple in Texas history. Example questions might include:

- What does the Spanish name for this bread mean? (*pan de campo* means “camp bread”)
- Why was this a good bread for traveling cowboys/vaqueros to eat along the trail? (It was easy to make over a campfire and didn’t require them to carry a lot of ingredients to make it.)
- What would you choose to eat with this bread during a meal? (answers will vary)

Help learners read the recipe aloud and then collect all ingredients and baking supplies listed in the recipe below. Pictures or videos of baking processes (i.e. kneading) could be helpful to review before beginning. **NOTE:** This activity involves using a hot stove, so make sure safety issues are addressed.



Texas chuckwagon circa 1900. Wikimedia Commons.

PAN de CAMPO Recipe

Ingredients

2 cups all-purpose flour plus extra for kneading surface
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon sugar
¾ cup whole milk
6 tablespoons shortening or lard, slightly chilled and cut into pieces

Supplies

measuring cup and spoons
large mixing bowl
stirring spoon or spatula
aluminum foil
potholders

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350F.
- Spread some flour on a bread-kneading surface.
- Mix all dry ingredients together in the bowl.
- Add the shortening/lard to the dry mixture. Use hands to mix the shortening/lard into the dry ingredients.
- Add milk and mix all together with hands until the dough forms a ball.
- Move the dough to the floured surface. Knead for about 2 minutes.
- Move the dough to a piece of aluminum foil that is large enough to completely wrap the dough. Flatten the dough to about ½ inch thick. Seal the foil to form a packet around the dough.
- Bake for about 6 minutes then turn the foil packet over and bake for another 6 minutes.
- Use potholders to remove the packet from the oven and carefully open it to cool. Once cooled, enjoy a slice of the State Bread of Texas!