From the Farm to Our Tables

Let's talk about your favorite foods. Do you like pie? How about ice cream? Pizza? Or maybe ice cold milk and cookies? All of those things end up on our lunch table because of farmers. The basic ingredients are grown on a farm, picked, or harvested and then mixed together into our favorite foods. If you like to cook, your family might buy just basic ingredients and mix them together at home. Or you might buy the food already made in a restaurant or mixed together in a factory and frozen, or put into a can. It doesn't matter—somewhere along the line those basic ingredients started out on a farm!

For example, what goes into a pie? Let's bake an apple pie. What ingredients will we need? For the filling, we need apples, sugar, and spices. For the pie crust, we need flour and maybe sugar and fat like butter or shortening, either from a plant or an animal. Where do those ingredients come from? We could go to a grocery store. On the shelves, we'll find the sugar and the spices and butter and even milk to drink later with our pie. We might buy our apples at a road-side stand or at an apple orchard. But where did those things come from before they got to the store or the road-side stand?

The ingredients came from a farm. Some of the farms are right here in Iowa. There are Iowa farms that have chickens which lay eggs, cows that produce milk for butter and cream, and corn for the oils in shortening. Apples might come from a tree on a farm here in Iowa or they might come all the way from Washington State. Farms are found all over the world. The sugar in our pie might come from sugar beet plants grown in Minnesota or sugar cane plants grown in Louisiana or even from Brazil! Cinnamon might come from trees in China. Ingredients on farms are just part of the story though. Who grew those foods? We forget to add in the faces of the people who take care of those plants and animals.

So who are these farmers? In Iowa, there are about 87,000 farms. That may sound like a lot, but actually it's a pretty small amount. Over 3.1 million people live in Iowa in 2020, but less than 143,000 people work on farms. That means for every 22 people living in Iowa, only one of those 22 people works on a farm. Those 143,000 people work pretty hard. They are helping to feed all of us other Iowans, and Americans, and people all over the world with their crops and livestock. Some Iowa farmers live in the country on their farmland. Some farmers live in small towns and travel to work on land in the country owned by someone else. Some farmers grow only plants or only vegetables, or only fruit trees. Some farmers raise livestock and no crops. Everyone farms a little bit differently and they all have stories to tell about how they work.
Meet a Farm Family!

Find out more about living and working on a modern farm by watching the videos found on the Living History Farms' Learning Fields microsite.

Visit Learning Fields

Upcoming Activities

On March 14, Living History Farms will celebrate National Ag Day. It's a day to spend time thinking about and thanking farmers for growing the foods we eat. It's a great day to think about where our food comes from and how it is grown and why. Do you know where your favorite food comes from? We invite you to spend time with us on March 14, 2020 for a look at some of the farmers, tools, and ingredients it takes to grow food in Iowa.

Because March 14 also happens to be Pi Day, we'll also celebrate with pie and pie themed activities. Drop into the Tangen House to help roll out pie dough, stop in the Drug Store and smell the cooking spices used for pies, and print a pie recipe in the Advocate Print Shop.

History Detectives

In this newsletter, we are looking at the farm ingredients that go into our favorite foods. Even the smallest measure of ingredients and spices can make a big difference in the finished recipe.

Can you match the ingredients in Column A to the finished recipes in Column B?

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<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Corn" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Cucumber Salad" /></td>
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Try This: Farm to Table Web Picture

In the center of a blank piece of paper, draw a circle about the size of your fist. In the circle, draw a...
Recipe to Try: Apple Handpies

Here's a quick and easy way to make a kid-sized apple pie! Farm wives in the 19th century wished it were this easy! You will need an adult’s help and these ingredients:

- 1-2 medium sized apples
- 3 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 Tbsp. melted butter
- A store-bought refrigerator pie crust or a tube of refrigerator biscuits

Roll out your pie crust on a floured table top and using a biscuit cutter cut an even number of 3 ½ to 4 inch circles. If using biscuit dough, separate the biscuits and roll each one out to about a 5 inch circle. Peel and slice your apple into thin slices. Toss the slices with sugar and cinnamon. For pie dough circles place a tablespoon (3 slices or so) of apple mix in center of circle. Place a second circle on the top and seal the edges by crimping with a fork. Poke three or four holes in top crust with a fork to let out the steam. Brush the crust with melted butter. (For biscuit dough, place apples on one half of each biscuit and fold the dough in half over the filling. Crimp the edges and poke steam holes with a fork. Brush the outside with butter.) Place your hand pies on a cookie sheet and bake for 10-15 minutes in a 375 degree oven until golden brown. Allow to cool slightly and enjoy!