



Chapter 2

Diversity at the Table

Foods from Different Cultures

Directions: Read the following selection. Then answer the questions under *Thinking Critically*, and complete the activities as directed by your teacher.

Have you ever thought about what you might be eating today if people throughout history had been less open to the foods of different cultures? If European explorers in the 1500s had ignored the customs of South American natives, chocolate might be unknown. Do you like oranges? Thank the medieval Arab traders who brought the dimpled fruit across the Mediterranean and the European merchants who bought it.

You might say that accepting new foods has changed the course of world events. The first American colonists averted starvation only by embracing the diet of the native peoples, while at the same time continuing to practice their own cooking and farming methods.

Look over the chart on this page. It shows traditional dishes that people in diverse countries enjoy worldwide. Note the differences and similarities among the “foreign” foods and between these foods and the foods you like.

Country	Main Dishes	Side Dishes	Sweets
Belgium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Carbonnades flamandes</i> (Flemish beef stew) ◆ Mussels (steamed in broth; grain; etc.) ◆ <i>Waterzooies</i> (soups) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Belgian endive (served hot in many different ways) ◆ <i>Charcuterie</i> (basket of bread) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Chocolate ◆ Belgian pralines (filled chocolates)
Congo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Sardine and greens stew ◆ Chicken <i>moambé</i> (chicken in peppery palm nut butter) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Saka-saka (simmered cassava leaves and onions) ◆ <i>Baton de manioc</i> (mashed cassava root boiled in banana-leaf packets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Coconut pie ◆ Fool (custard and fruit dessert) ◆ Fruit salad (mixed fruits tossed with honey, topped with peanuts)
Haiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Rice with bean sauce ◆ Pumpkin soup ◆ <i>Griots</i> with <i>ti-malice</i> (browned pork bites with hot pepper sauce) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Rice with <i>djondjon</i> (mushrooms) ◆ Fried plantains (banana-like fruit) ◆ <i>Accra</i> (cakes of fried malanga, a starchy root) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Fresh melon or guava ◆ <i>Pain patate</i> (sweet potato cake) ◆ <i>Blanc manger</i> (gelatin dessert made with coconut milk)
Turkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Wedding soup (lamb shanks in egg broth) ◆ Red lentil soup ◆ <i>Prizolla</i> (thin lamb chops) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Rice or bulgar pilaf ◆ <i>Zeytinagli</i> (peppers or tomatoes and olive oil) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Filo dough desserts ◆ Puddings of rose water and saffron ◆ Dried apricots drenched in syrup

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Thinking Critically

1. Imagine that you are hosting an exchange student from one of the countries listed in the chart on page 10. Which of the foods that your family regularly serves do you think the exchange student would enjoy? Which might be less appealing? Why?

2. If you were visiting one of the countries listed in the chart, which foods would you be willing to try? Why? Which would be difficult for you to try? Why?

3. List three foods that are popular today but were unfamiliar to your parents when they were teens. What trends or influences do you think are responsible for introducing these foods to our culture?

4. What impact has *fusion cuisine* had on the food you eat? Explain.

For Further Study

- ◆ How culturally diverse is your community? Tour a local supermarket. Which cultural foods are sold there? (Be sure to check these sections: canned, frozen, produce, and packaged foods.) Write a brief report summarizing your findings and turn it in to your teacher.
- ◆ Conduct a quick study of popular magazines. Find and list menu items that express a regional food custom that makes effective use of a cook's resources, and reflects a festive or special occasion. How do the media support regional and cultural traditions? How does this affect what foods you eat? Summarize.
- ◆ Research the food served at the first Thanksgiving Dinner. How many of these foods are still served today? Why? How has the tradition and culture of the first Thanksgiving Dinner survived over 200 years? Prepare a PowerPoint® presentation, (8–10 slides), of a Thanksgiving Dinner today. Link your presentation to the first Thanksgiving Dinner.