



# Ancient Egypt and Food Preservation

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**Service Site:** Fayetteville Public Schools (Fayetteville, Arkansas)

**Theme:** Food and Culture

**Ages/Grade Level:** 6-8

**Subject Area:** Social Studies

**Lesson Title:** Food Preservation in Ancient Egypt: Mummified Food!

**Prep Time:** 2-5 hours

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:**

- ✓ Cart or table with materials to demonstrate how you made the pickles
- ✓ Napkins to give each student when you hand out their samples
- ✓ Tongs to use for handing out pickle samples
- ✓ Pre-made refrigerator pickles for students to sample (See attached recipe)

**Topics/Goals/Learning Objectives:**

This lesson relates the Ancient Egyptian practice of mummification to various methods of food preservation. Students learn about the foods eaten by Ancient Egyptians and the methods they used to preserve the foods they ate. Students then relate the methods used back then to the food preservation techniques used today. They are presented with a demonstration on how to make refrigerator pickles and then given samples of the end product. Through the tasting, students are shown that other things can be pickled besides cucumbers. Those students interested are given a recipe to try what they learned at home.

**Opening:**

By simply bringing food into the classroom, you are getting the students interested in the lesson. At the beginning of class, ask students what they have already learned about the Ancient Egyptian practice of mummification. Then, help them see the similarities between how humans have been preserved or “mummified” throughout history and how food can be preserved for later consumption.

**The Plan/Procedure/Lesson Activities:**

1. Discuss the process of mummification and where mummies have been found throughout history.
2. Relate mummification to preserving food.
3. Discuss why preserving food was historically important.
  - a. Define seasonality
  - b. Health implications of not being able to eat whatever you want whenever you want, like most of us are able to do today



4. Discuss various methods of food preservation employed by the Ancient Egyptians.
  - a. Drying
  - b. Dry Storage
  - c. Salting
  - d. Fermentation
  - e. Pickling
5. Demonstrate the steps involved in making the pickles that the students are about to sample.
6. Make distinction between refrigerator/quick pickling and shelf-stable pickling and make the point that you can pickle just about anything.
7. Pass pickle samples out to each student.
8. Pass out recipe to those interested in trying it at home.

**Wrap up:**

End lesson with an activity that allows students to match various foods they are accustomed to with the food preservation method that was used to preserve it. Allow teacher to assess students' understanding of what was taught in a test at the end of the unit.

**Extensions:**

If there's extra time, discuss other methods of food preservation that are used today. Ask students if their families practice any of the methods discussed. If you can, bring in examples of other preserved food (EX: beef jerky, dried fruit, jam).

**Lesson Resources and/or Credit for Adaption:**

- ✓ eNotes: <http://www.enotes.com/preserving-reference/preserving>
- ✓ Oklahoma Ag in the classroom: <http://oklahoma4h.okstate.edu/aitc/lessons/intermed/keeps.pdf>
- ✓ Grit Magazine: <http://www.grit.com/Preserving/Preserve-Food-with-Salt.aspx?page=3>