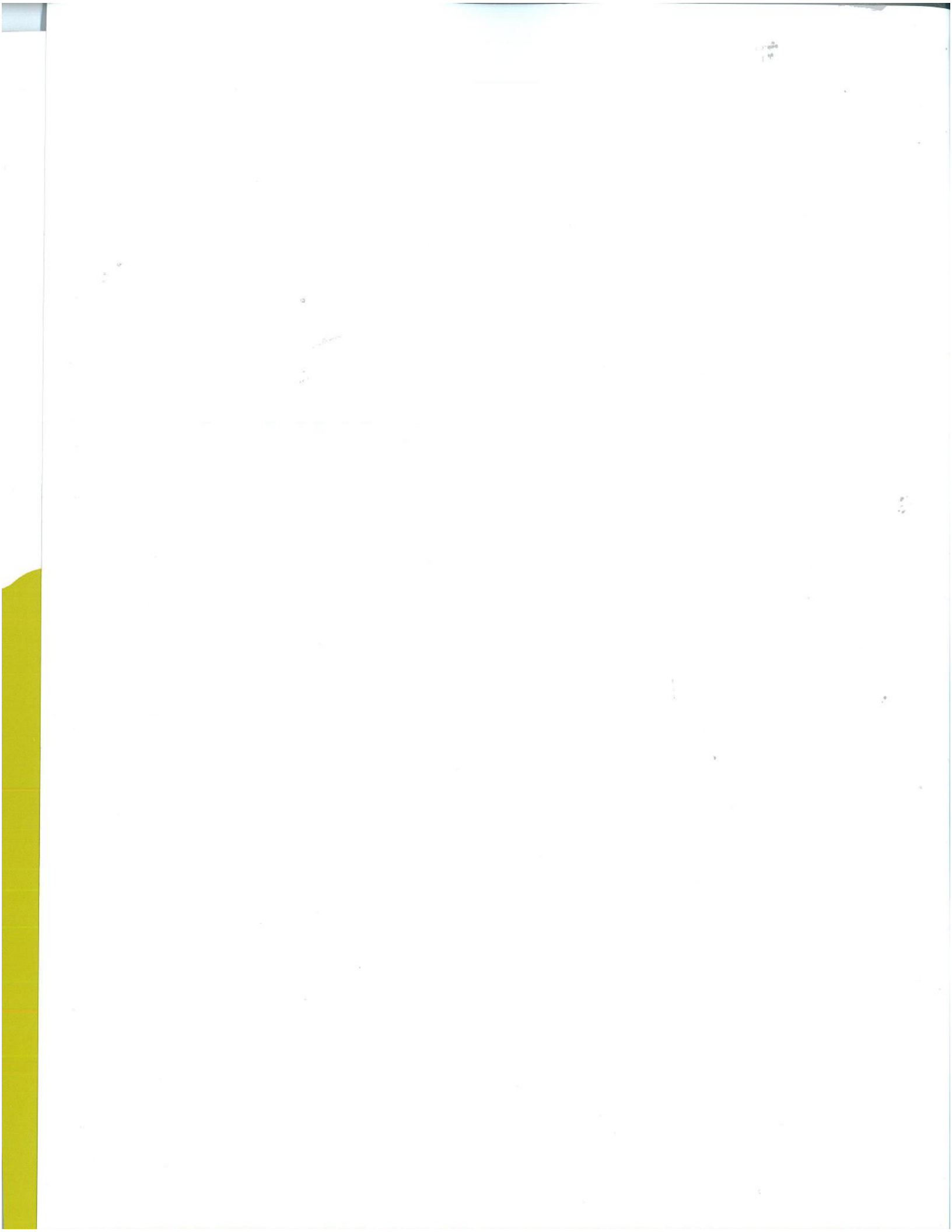
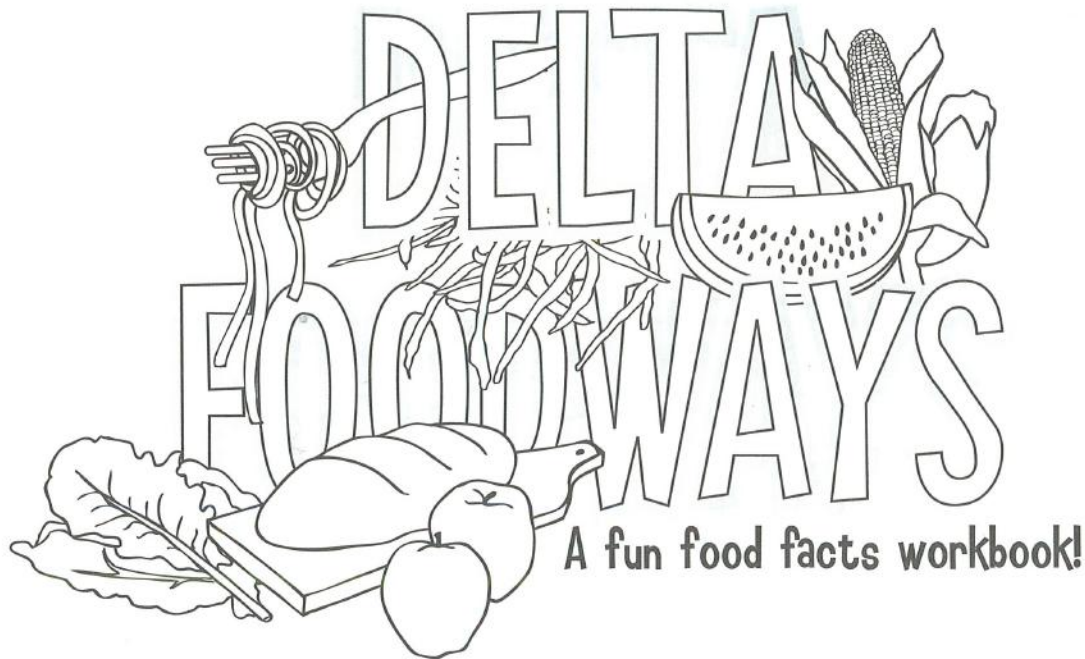


A fun food facts workbook!





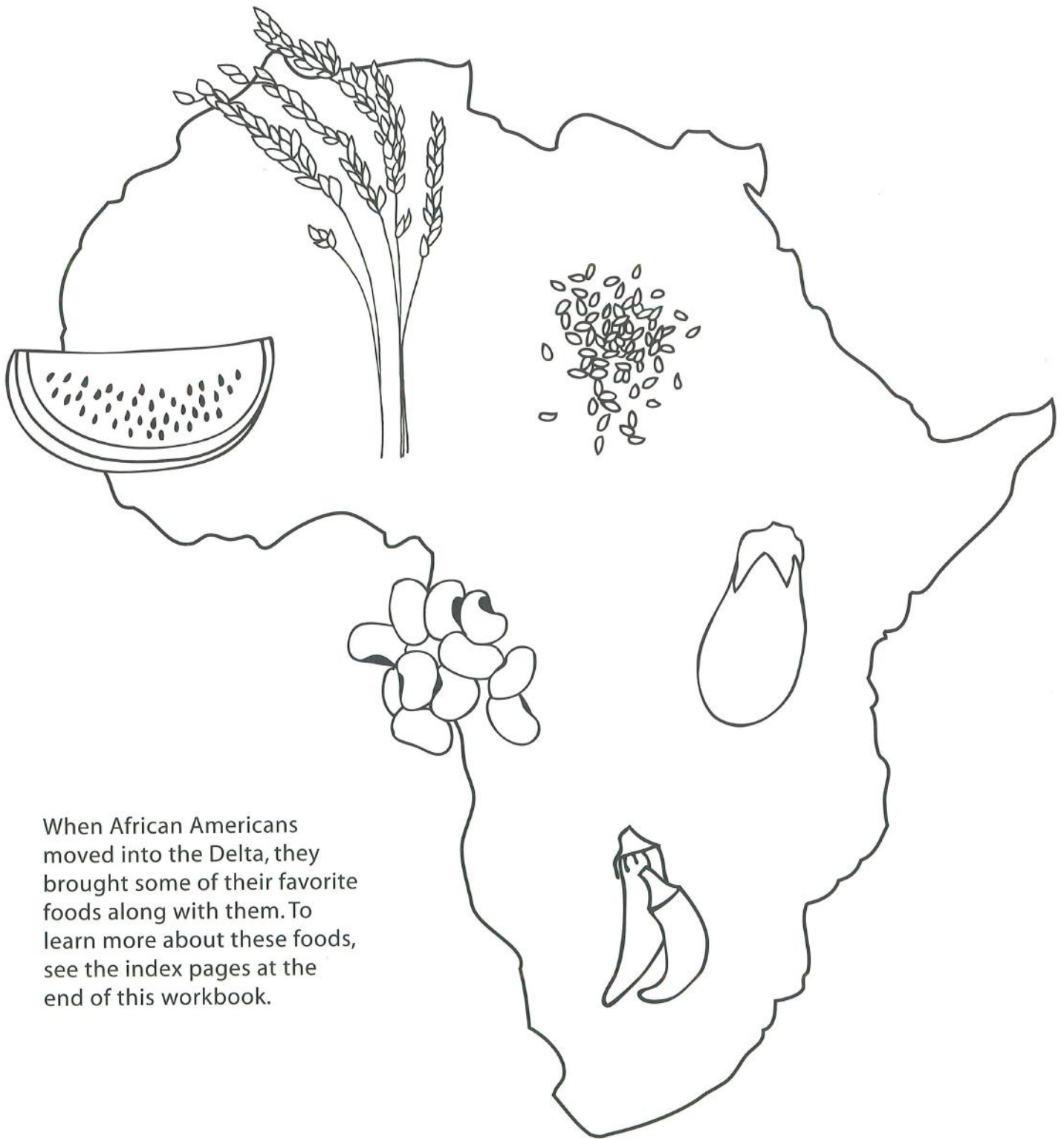
Introduction

The Mississippi Delta is a land peopled by immigrants. Most of the Delta was wilderness at the end of the Civil War, and the region is one of the last American frontiers. African Americans, newly liberated from slavery, flooded into the Delta as the forests were cleared. White farmers and businessmen came from surrounding states, and newly arrived immigrants came from Asia and Europe, especially from China, Italy, Lebanon, and Syria. Additional migrant workers from Mexico have been coming to the Delta for many decades. All of these people have brought along their own tastes, foods, and preparation techniques. Today's Delta foodways reflect the contributions of our immigrant ancestors.

The Delta is also a land that differs from much of the rest of America in terms of health and nutrition. The Department of Agriculture conducted a survey in 2000 that showed that Adult obesity in the Delta was more than twice as common as in the rest of the country. Childhood obesity was also more than twice as common. High blood pressure was almost twice as common, and heart disease and diabetes were also bigger problems in the Delta than elsewhere. Taken as a whole, the people of the Delta eat 30% less dairy products, 21% less fruits, 22% less vegetables, and 22% more added sugar than the rest of the country does.

The goal of this book is to introduce children in the Delta to their rich food heritage by exploring the origins of Delta foods and cooking styles. At the same time, the book focuses on healthy foods, hopefully introducing children to some alternatives that will help improve their diet and health.

Foods from Africa

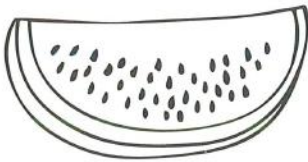


When African Americans moved into the Delta, they brought some of their favorite foods along with them. To learn more about these foods, see the index pages at the end of this workbook.

Name that food!



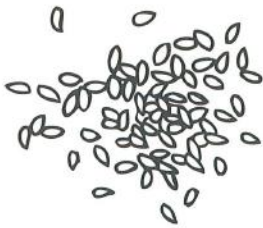
(HINT: this vegetable is a deep shade of purple.)



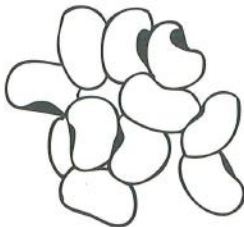
(HINT: this large melon is red on the inside.)



(HINT: this vegetable is a deep shade of purple.)



(HINT: you may have seen these small seeds on your hamburger bun.)



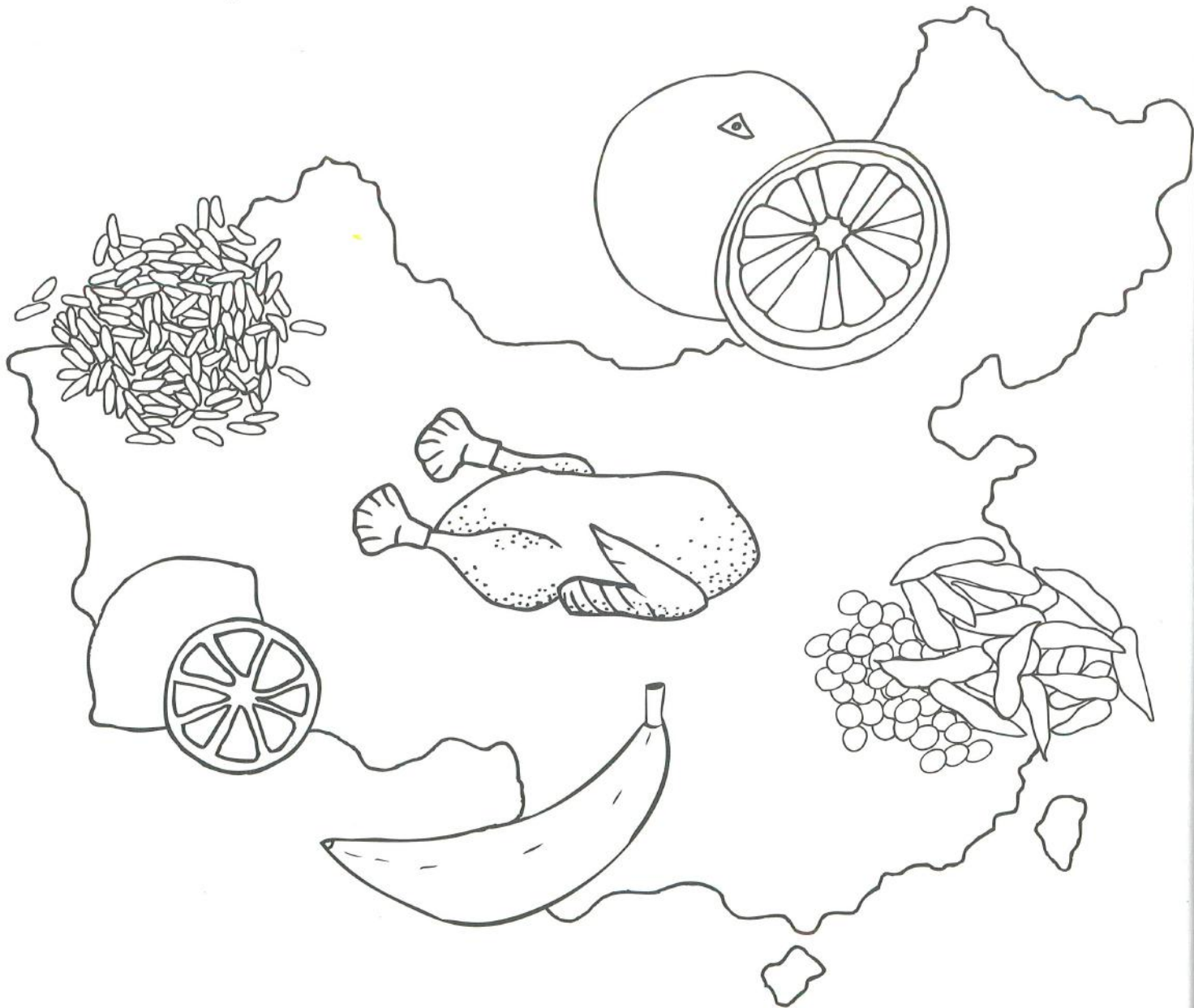
(HINT: these peas are eaten for good luck on New Years day.)



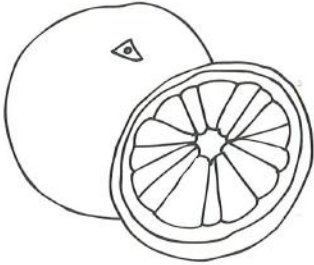
(HINT: the Delta State University mascot looks like this vegetable, but has boxing gloves on!)

Foods from China

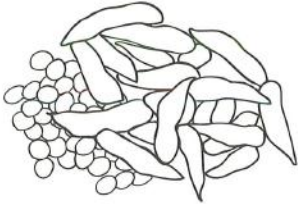
People came from China to the Delta to work in the fields and on the railroads. They opened grocery stores and lived in almost every Delta town.



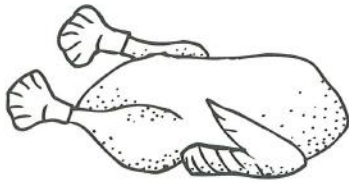
Name that food!



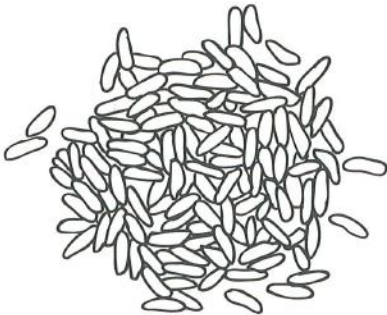
(HINT: the name of this fruit is the same as the name of its color.)



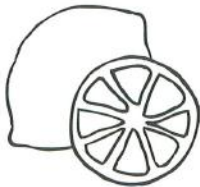
(HINT: these are the miracle crop!)



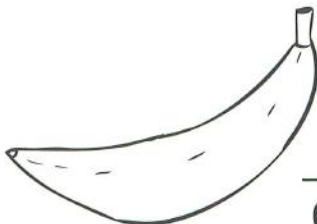
(HINT: quack!)



(HINT: Delta farmers grow a lot of this grain.)



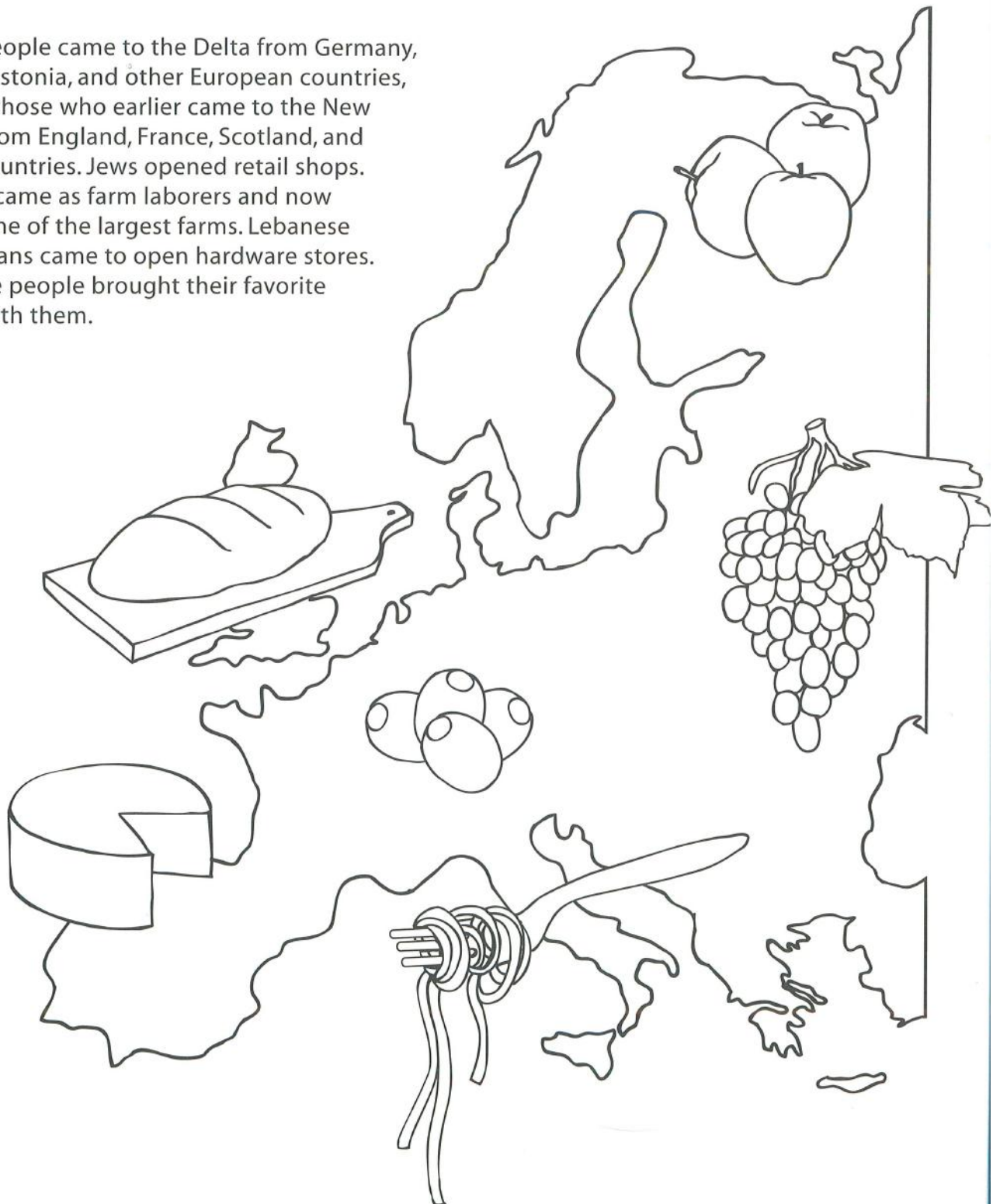
(HINT: these are sour but make good lemonade.)



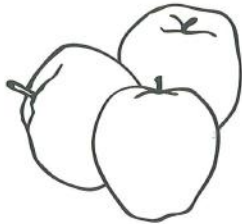
(HINT: in the Delta, they are used to make a "pudding" dessert.)

Foods from Europe & the Mediterranean

Many people came to the Delta from Germany, Russia, Estonia, and other European countries, joining those who earlier came to the New World from England, France, Scotland, and other countries. Jews opened retail shops. Italians came as farm laborers and now own some of the largest farms. Lebanese and Syrians came to open hardware stores. All these people brought their favorite foods with them.



Name that food!



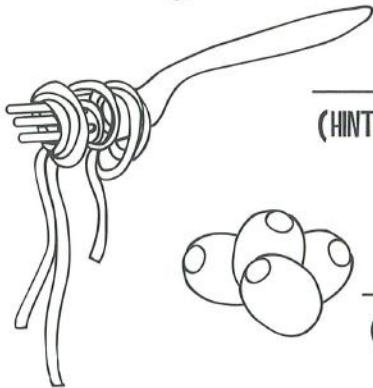
(HINT: one of these every day might help keep the doctor away.)



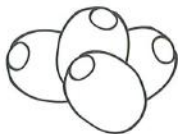
(HINT: I can be made of wheat or corn.)



(HINT: we might be green, red, or purple, but we're always sweet and tasty.)



(HINT: in the Delta, I might be baked up with chicken.)



(HINT: these might be green or black, but the stuffing is usually red.)



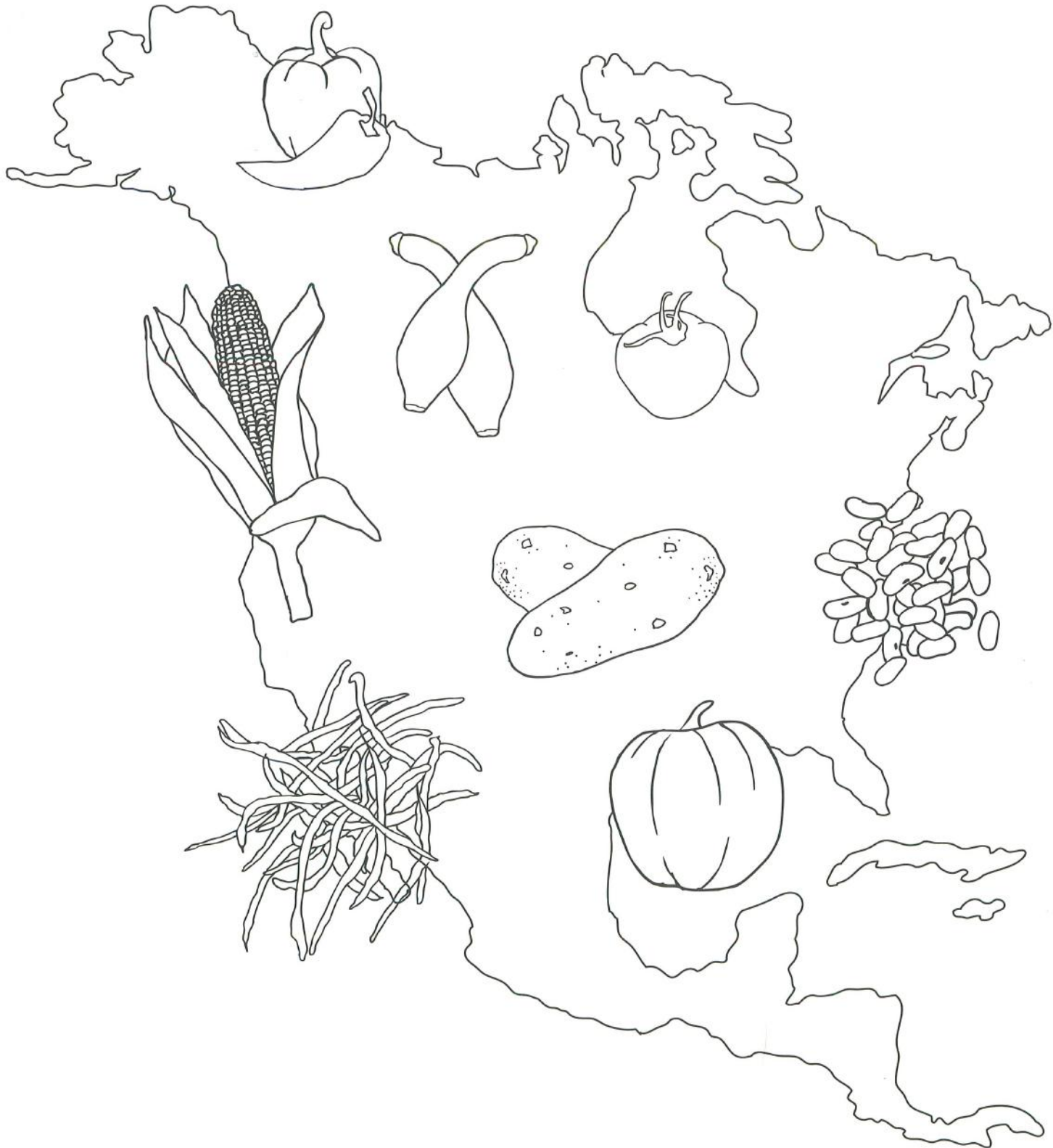
(HINT: varieties include cheddar, Swiss, Parmesan, and cottage.)



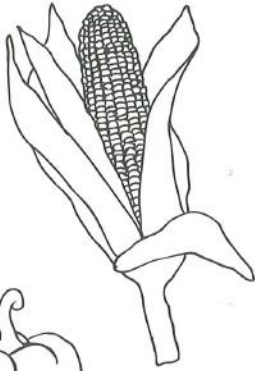
(HINT: the broth they cook in is called pot likker.)

Foods from the New World

Native Americans ate many things that Africans, Chinese, and Europeans never knew existed until they came to the New World.



Name that food!



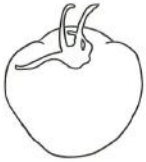
(HINT: I might be eaten right off the cob.)



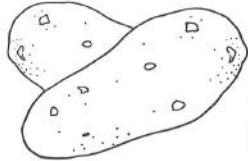
(HINT: red, green, purple, or yellow, I might be sweet, or I might be spicy.)



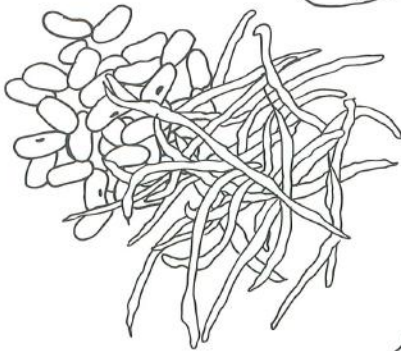
(HINT: goobers)



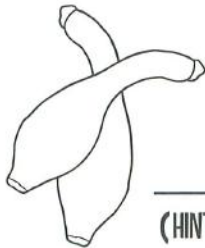
(HINT: in the Delta, we eat these fried if they are green, and fresh if they are red.)



(HINT: french fries come from these.)



(HINT: string, navy, and kidney are all types of this vegetable.)



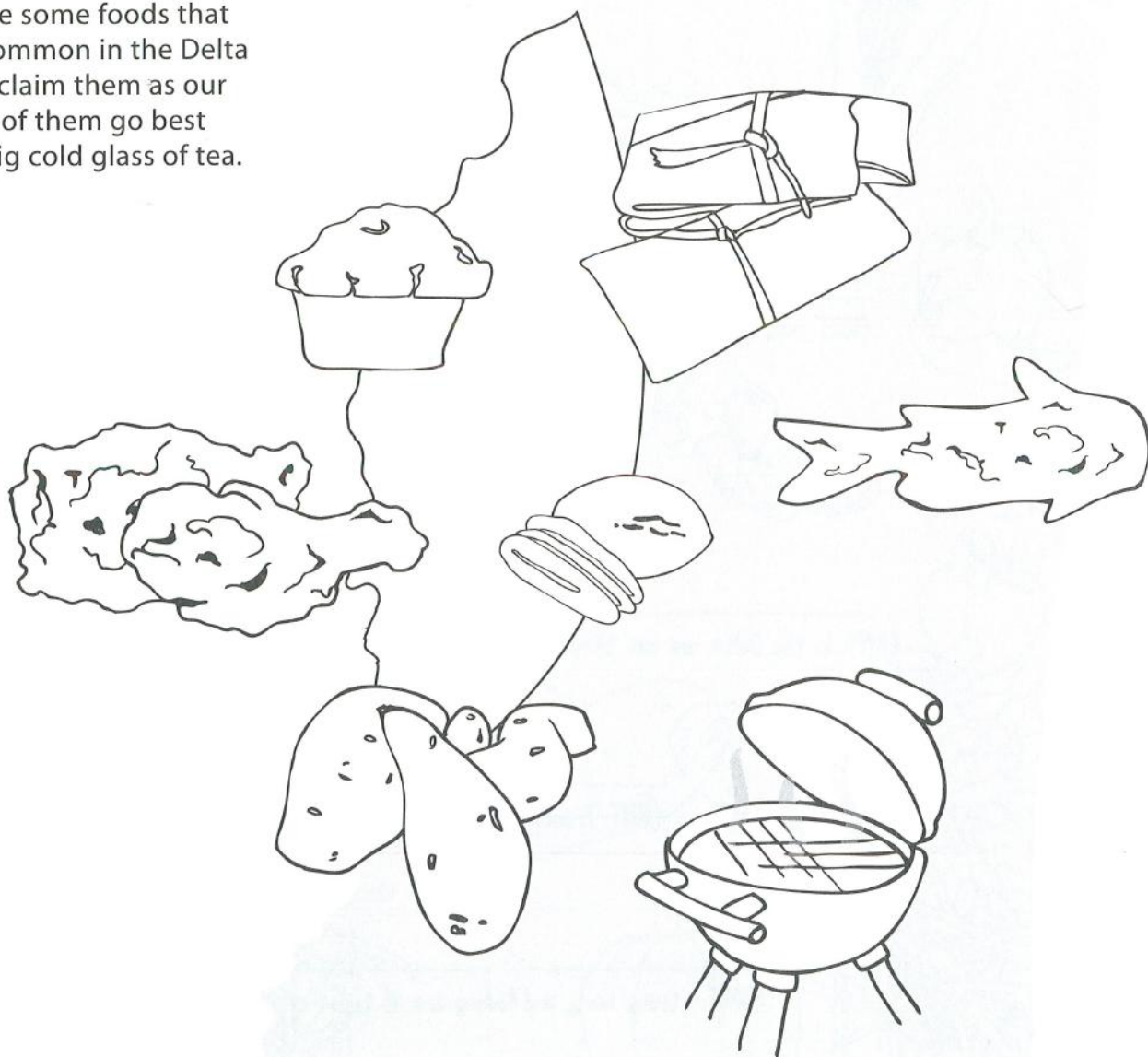
(HINT: in the Delta, these are commonly eaten in casseroles.)



(HINT: we eat these as pies and carve them into jack-o'-lanterns in the fall.)

Foods from the Delta

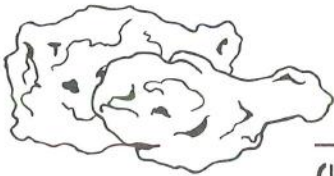
There are some foods that are so common in the Delta that we claim them as our own. All of them go best with a big cold glass of tea.



Name that food!



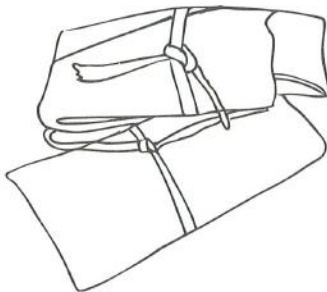
(HINT: A favorite Southern way of cooking that takes a long time.)



(HINT: this is the most common way to eat chicken in the Delta.)



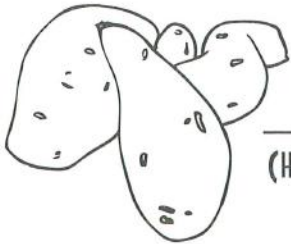
(HINT: I'm a kind of bread made out of meal.)



(HINT: I'm originally from Mexico, but am now found all over the Delta.)



(HINT: a type of nut that can be made into a pie.)



(HINT: in the Delta, we usually eat these boiled or baked, but they are always sweet.)



(HINT: in the Delta, when you say "fish" you mean this.)

Word Puzzle

...find the hidden African food words

WORD BANK:

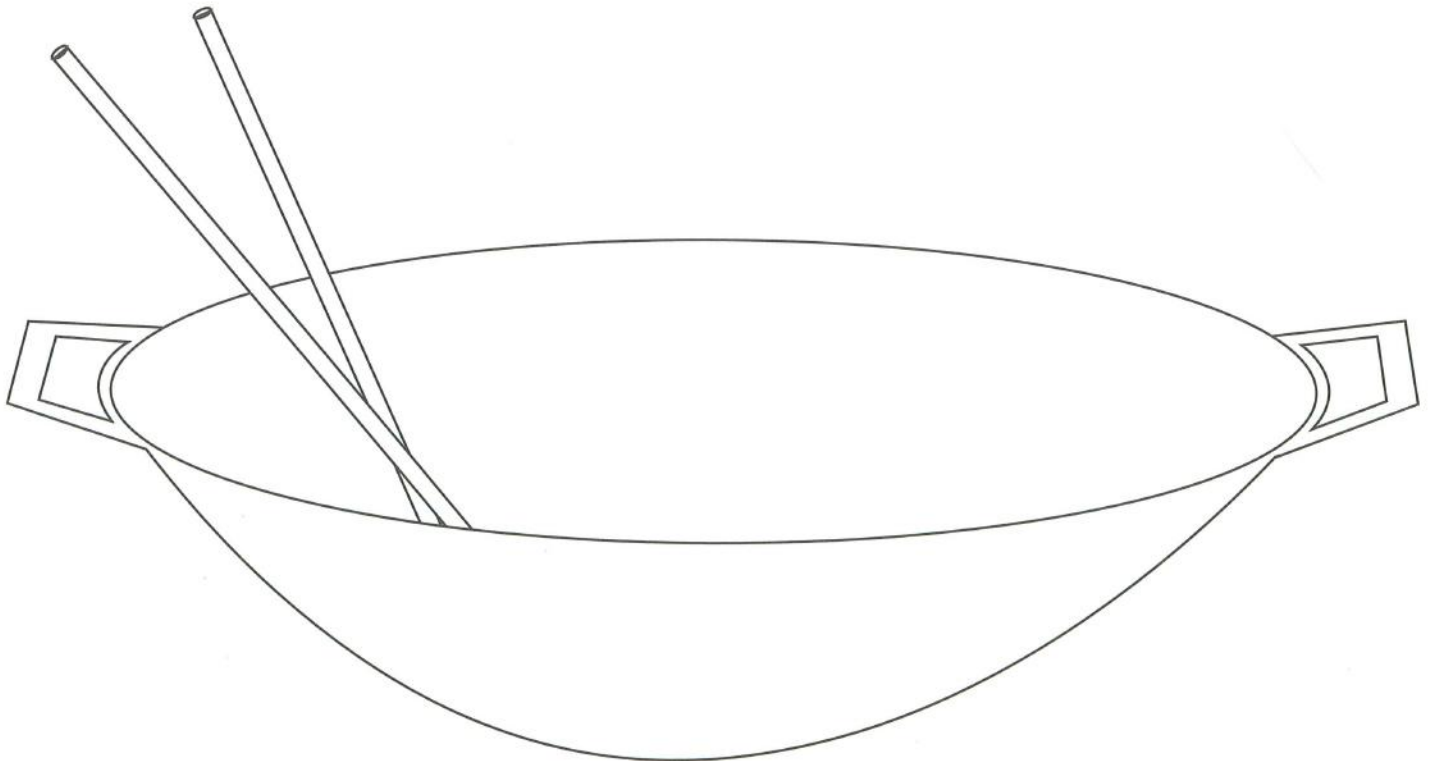
- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> okra | <input type="checkbox"/> watermelon | <input type="checkbox"/> eggplant | <input type="checkbox"/> sesame seeds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> millet | <input type="checkbox"/> sorghum | <input type="checkbox"/> black-eyed peas | |

H V P G G W Y S D C H F B M
B D T C E A W E O G R M U S
K L N Y O T P S W I P H T V
S V A W V E F A M W G W S Y
F G L C N R V M Z R S M K Y
H D P P K M I E O D I E G X
E O G D B E Q S G L F C Y P
B R G B Q L Y E L A U Y C G
F X E V P O D E U X I O V V
G G V T F N T D D J Q K F W
S F D E T X B S P P M R L I
O L I W U N Z P E I E A C S
S S R F Y K P U Q W L A W Z
N I V T D Q R S I O B X S U

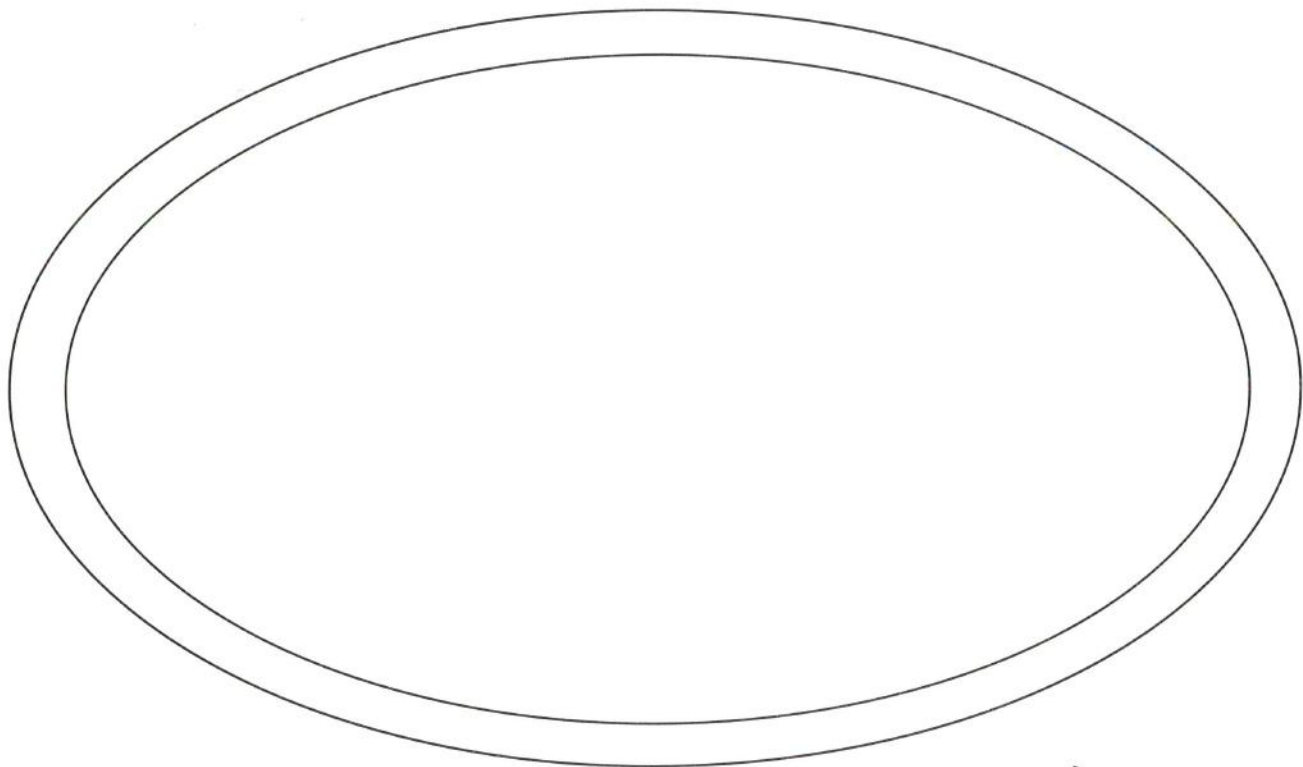
Draw your favorite foods cooking in the wok

You can cook vegetables or catfish in a wok. You can even fry rice in it.

Chinese immigrants to the Delta brought woks with them. Woks are a type of frying pan that is shaped like a bowl. They can be almost any size, and are sometimes 2, 3 or even 4 feet in diameter!



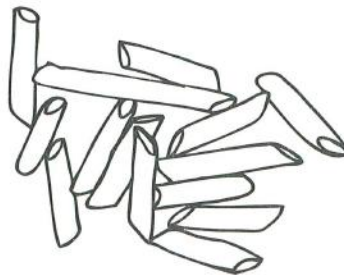
Fill the plate with your favorite pasta & add the sauce



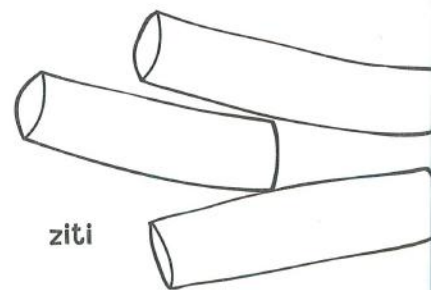
shell



rotini



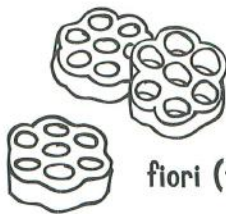
penne



ziti



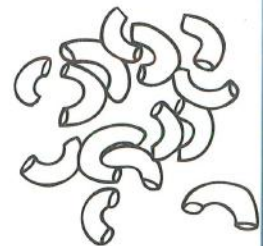
spaghetti



fiori (flower)



farfalle (bowtie)

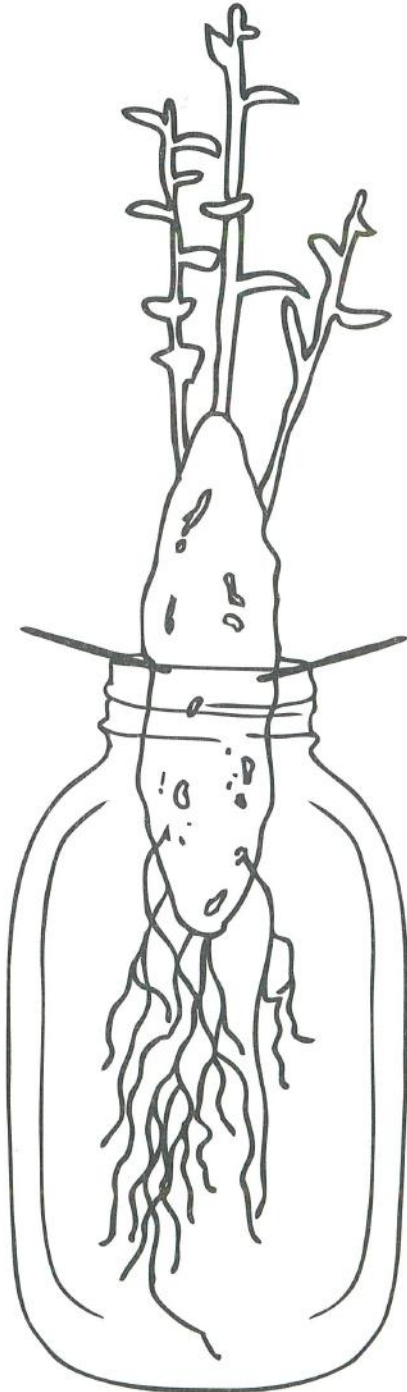


elbow macaroni

Grow a Sweet Potato Vine

Sweet potatoes are tasty vegetables, but they also make interesting house plants.

Can you tell which parts are the roots and which are the shoots?



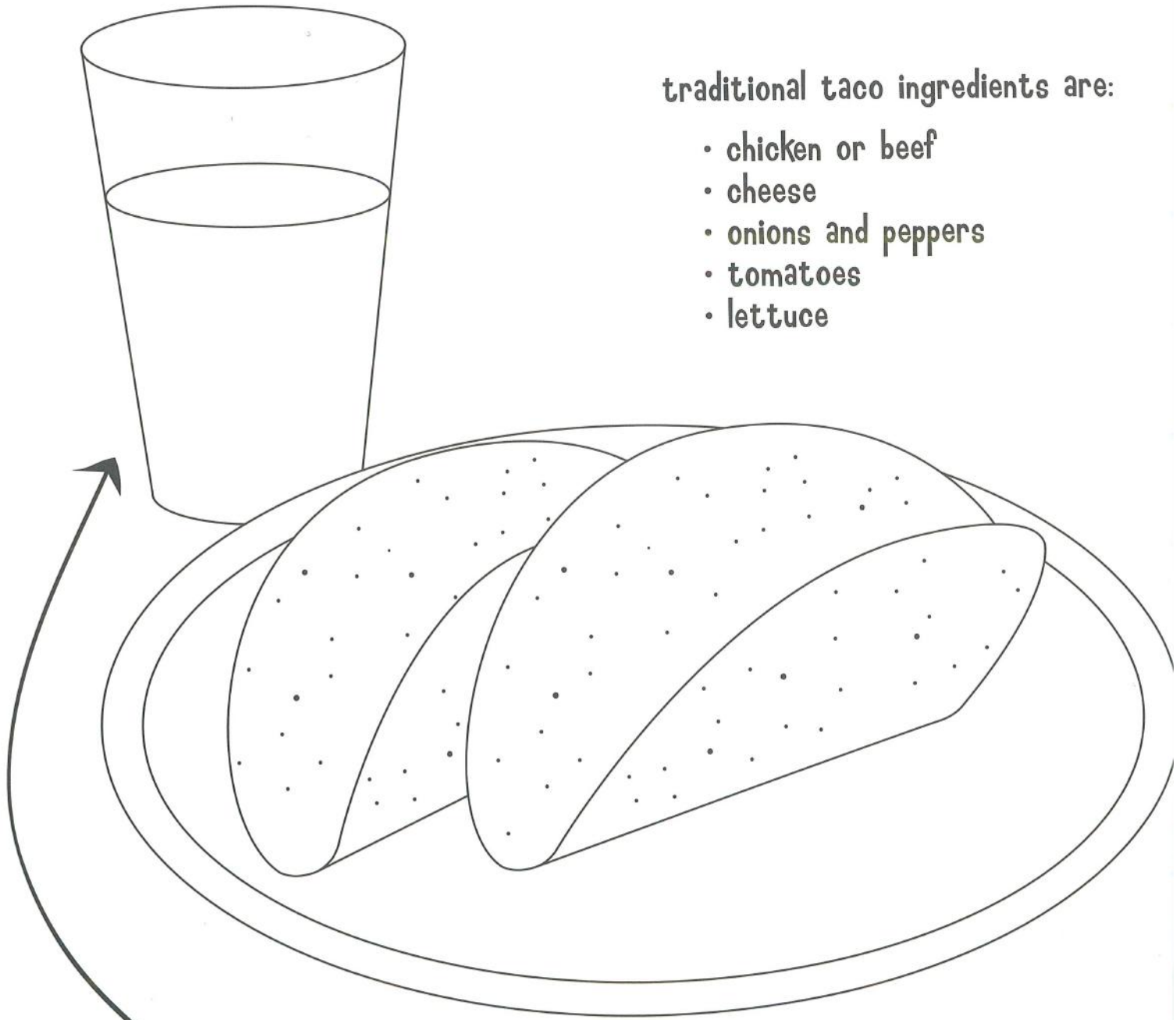
Instructions:

1. get a thin sweet potato
2. stick four toothpicks into the middle of the potato
3. set the potato in a glass jar so that it rests on the toothpicks
4. add water to fill up the jar
5. place the jar on a sunny windowsill
6. watch the potato every day and make sure it has plenty of water

Fill the taco with your favorite foods

traditional taco ingredients are:

- chicken or beef
- cheese
- onions and peppers
- tomatoes
- lettuce



Drinking a glass of milk or water with your taco is a great way to make this meal more healthy.

Word Puzzle

...find the hidden types of bread

WORD BANK:

- corn
- french
- spoon
- biscuit
- rolls
- rye
- scone
- garlic
- banana
- flat
- wheat
- white
- beer
- bagel
- donut
- tortilla
- matzo



G	T	C	N	W	O	R	B	R
A	A	L	E	C	Q	Q	A	Y
R	E	E	B	S	C	O	N	E
L	H	G	X	P	P	Y	A	G
I	W	A	C	O	R	N	N	I
C	X	B	W	O	Z	T	A	M
O	F	R	E	N	C	H	N	W
R	D	O	N	U	T	E	P	H
W	Y	L	K	Z	A	P	D	I
X	F	L	A	T	X	B	J	T
B	I	S	C	U	I	T	T	E
T	O	R	T	I	L	L	A	Q

Write a Blues Poem

The Delta is the birthplace of the Blues. Memphis Minnie wrote a song about food called "Keep on Eating." Why don't you write your own blues song, using Memphis Minnie's refrain?

LINE 1: _____

LINE 2: _____

Refrain: So keep on a-eating
 Oh, keep on a-eating
 Keep on eating, baby, till you get enough

For example, your song might be about greens and sound like this -

Momma cooked my greens and made 'em good and hot
She served them up with cornbread, it really hit the spot
So keep on a-eating
Oh, keep on a-eating
Keep on eating, baby, till you get enough

Hint:

Your blues song can be about any food! Catfish, okra, beef liver, or pork chops. You might even write a song about fresh tomatoes or cucumber salad.

LINE 1: _____

LINE 2: _____

Refrain: So keep on a-eating
 Oh, keep on a-eating
 Keep on eating, baby, till you get enough

LINE 3: _____

LINE 4: _____

Refrain: So keep on a-eating
 Oh, keep on a-eating
 Keep on eating, baby, till you get enough

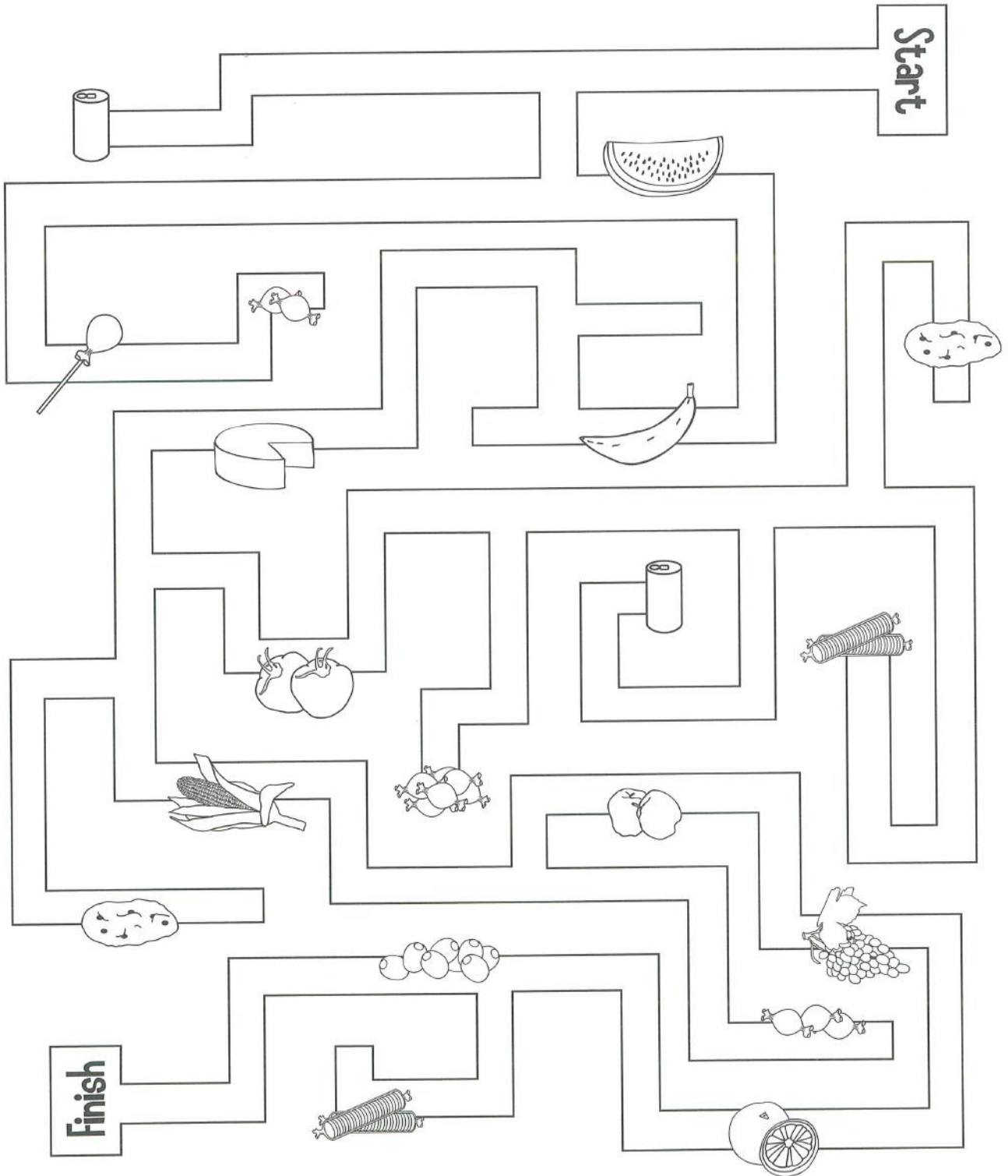
LINE 5: _____

LINE 6: _____

Refrain: So keep on a-eating
 Oh, keep on a-eating
 Keep on eating, baby, till you get enough

Healthy Food Maze

find your way through the maze by following the healthy snacks

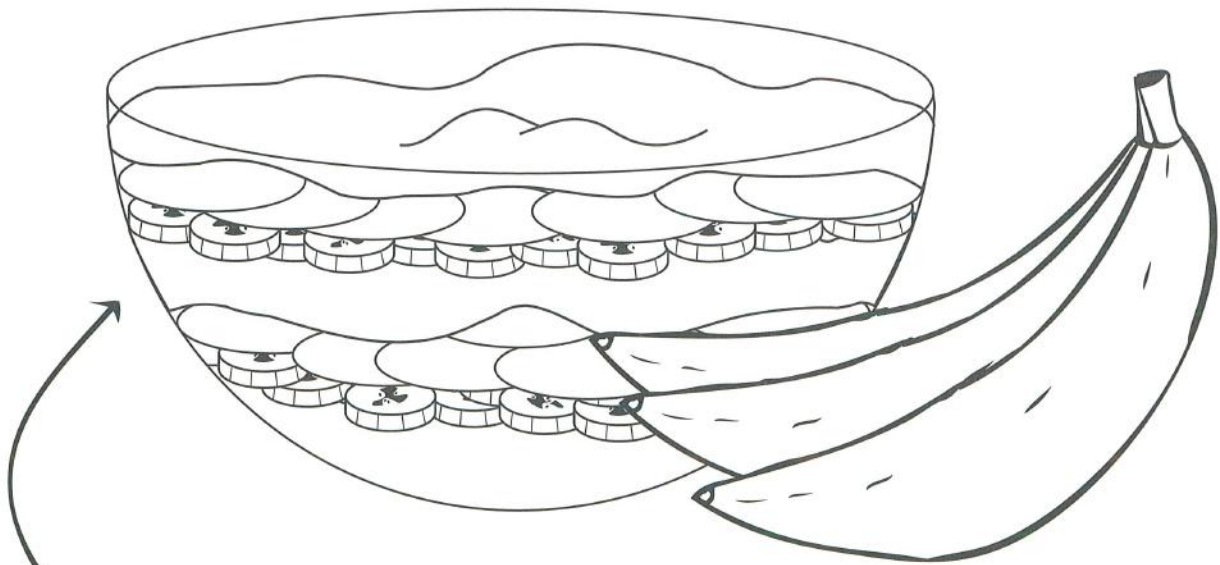


Banana Pudding

ask your grandmother for her favorite recipe

ingredients:

directions:



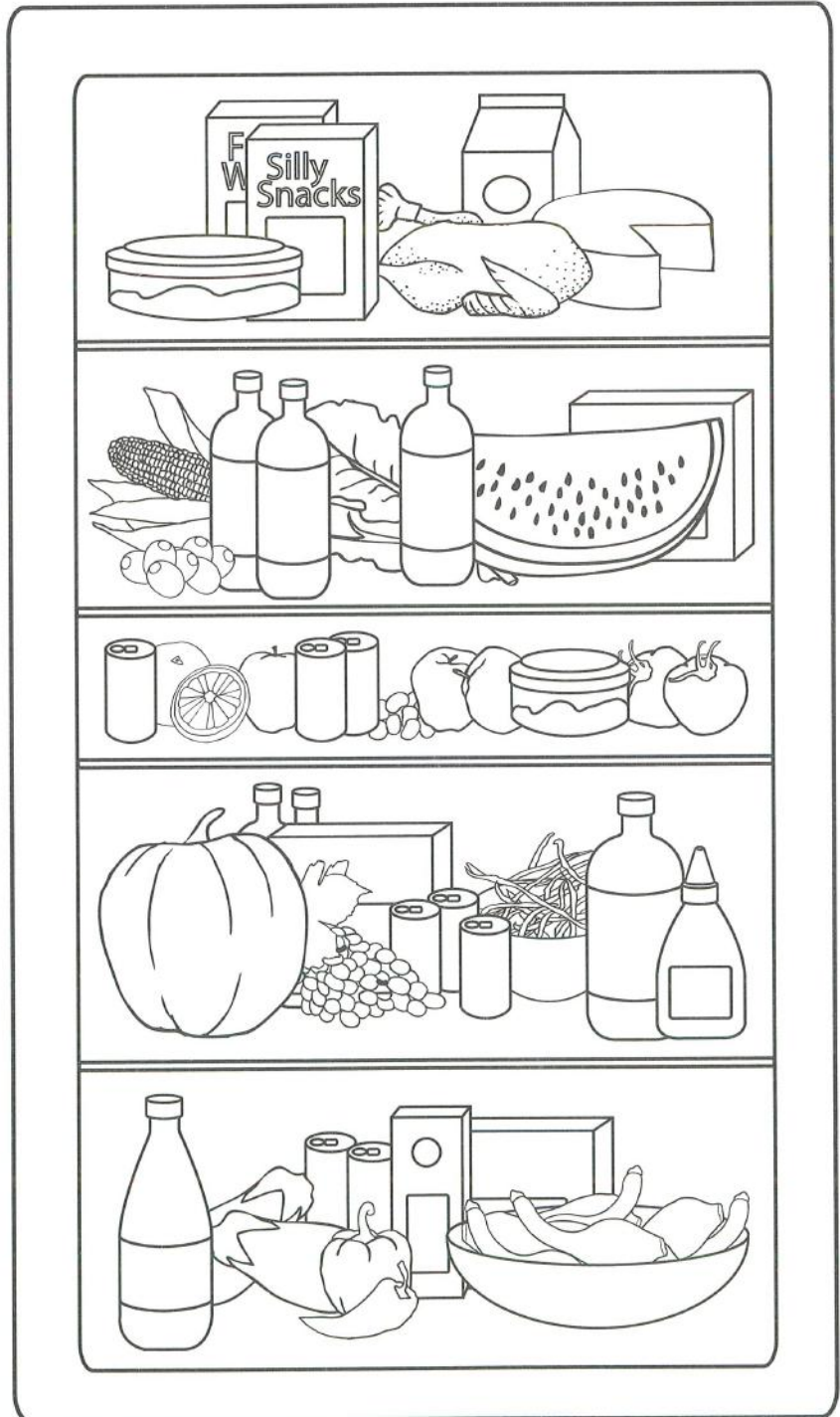
layer pudding, bananas, vanilla wafers and whip topping

Find the healthy foods

Color the healthy foods you find in the refrigerator.

Can you find them all?

- apples
- beans
- cheese
- collard greens
- corn
- duck
- eggplant
- grapes
- olives
- oranges
- peas
- peppers
- pumpkin
- squash
- tomatoes
- watermelon



Fill in the missing letters

t _ _ _ a t _ _ e _ _ _

_ _ u _ _ t _ _ r _ _ e _ _ n s

c _ _ r _ _

_ _ u _ _ p _ _ _ n

_ _ q _ _ a s _ _

L _ _ _ o n _ _

_ _ a s _ _ a

_ _ _ e e _ _ e

_ _ a _ _ e _ _ m _ _ L _ _ _

a _ _ _ L e _ _

_ _ o _ _ n _ _ r _ _ a d

s _ _ L _ _ d

_ _ L _ _ _ k - _ _ y _ _ d _ _ e _ _ s

_ _ _ l l _ _ _ d _ _ _ e e _ _ _

_ _ h _ _ c _ _ e _ _

Word Bank:

watermelon

pasta

black-eyed peas

butterbeans

salad

squash

cheese

corn

lemons

corn bread

collard greens

chicken

apples

pumpkin

tomatoes

Sonnet for Soul Food

by Gabriella Miyaes

Robertson Scholar, University of North Carolina

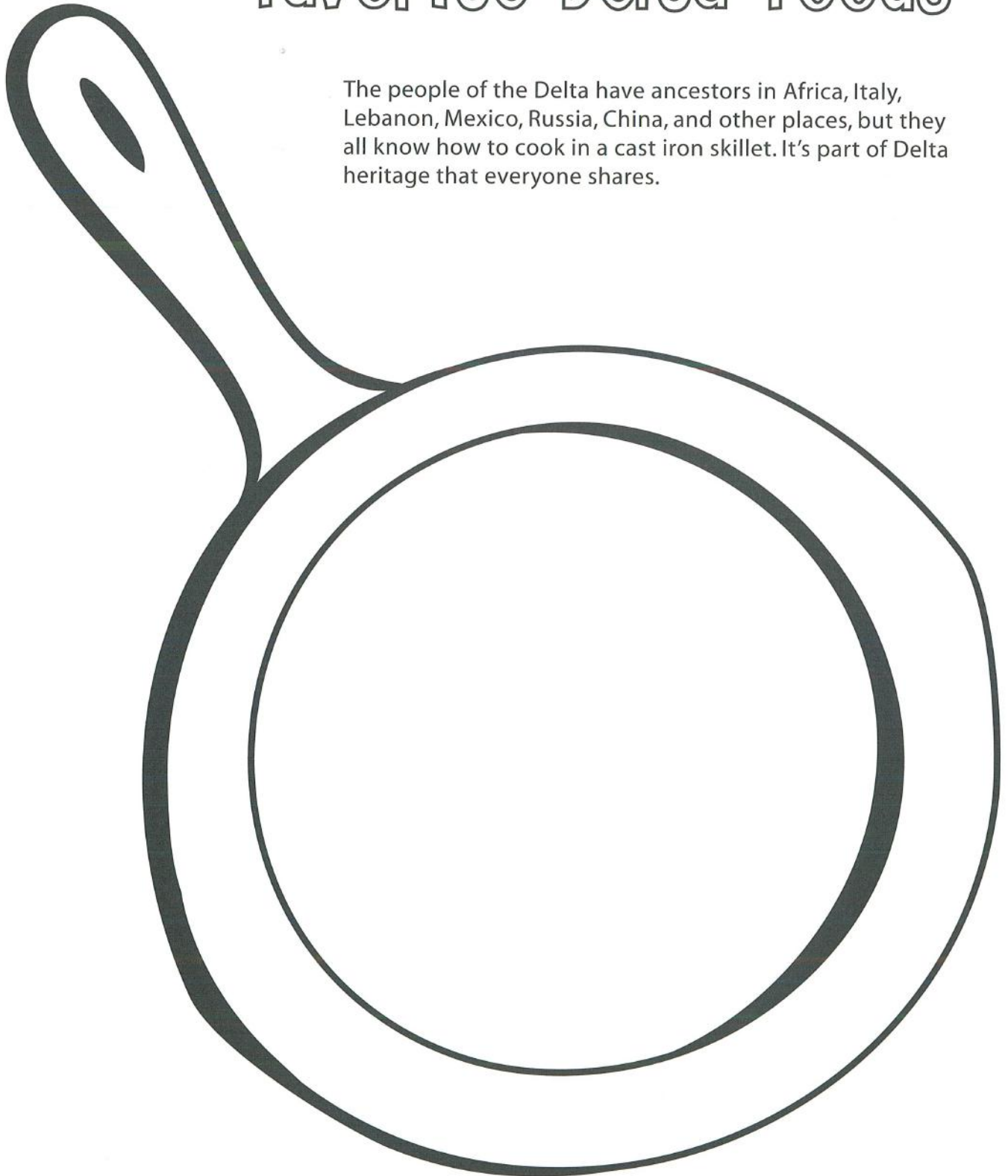
I am not used to eating food like this,
But Something in the salty, greasy crunch
Of chicken fried till tender, the small pop
Of okra seeds between my molars, and
The chill of ice knocking against my teeth
As I sip at sweet tea, the sugar-melt
Of bright red-orange yams, the clean white flakes
Of breaded catfish edged by silvery skin,
The grainy texture of square-cut cornbread,
Yellow and buttery, the creamy gleam
Of gravy topping sticky rice, green beans
Boiled with ham, and cobbler thick with peach
Says home to me, 600 miles from home.
True to its name, this food has fed my soul.

Gabriella wrote this poem after first eating soul food in the Mississippi Delta.

 Circle all the Delta foods you find in the poem.

Fill the skillet with your favorite Delta foods

The people of the Delta have ancestors in Africa, Italy, Lebanon, Mexico, Russia, China, and other places, but they all know how to cook in a cast iron skillet. It's part of Delta heritage that everyone shares.



Foods from Africa



Okra

Okra was originally grown in Northeast Africa. Okra is a good source of vitamins A & C. It is a highly nutritious and edible plant that is related to the hibiscus plant and also to cotton. It grows well in hot weather. The FIGHTING OKRA is the mascot of Delta State University. It looks like an okra pod with boxing gloves and a mean stare.



Watermelons

Watermelons grow wild in parts of Africa, but have been eaten by people since the days of ancient Egypt. They have been grown in Africa, Europe and Asia wherever the climate permits for thousands of years. They may have been brought to America by African slaves. Watermelons are a great source of Vitamins A, B6, and C, and they also contain fiber and potassium, even though they are over 90% water. Watermelons are usually green on the outside and can be red or yellow on the inside. Wild melons are sometimes bitter, but the ones we grow are sweet and taste best when they are eaten cooled on a hot summer day. If you swallow a watermelon seed, it will not grow in your stomach!



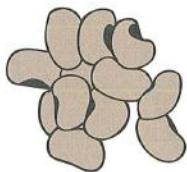
Sesame seeds

These tiny seeds are sometimes called by their African name of Benne. They were first farmed around India, but came to America with African slaves. Sesame is thought to be one of the very first condiment plants. The seeds can be squeezed to make a rich oil, and are used to flavor breads and sometimes baked into sweet candies



Eggplant

Nobody is sure where the eggplant originally came from, but it is clear that the Moors brought eggplants to Europe from Africa. It is a relative of the potato and tomato, and comes in colors ranging from black through purple to yellow and even orange. Eggplants were grown by Thomas Jefferson, who thought they were pretty, but they didn't become popular food in America until Italian, Lebanese and Syrian immigrants arrived.



Black-eyed Peas

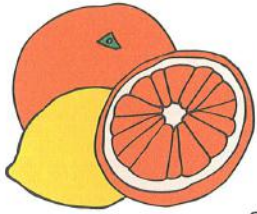
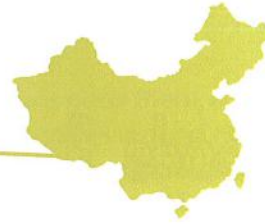
This vegetable originated in Africa thousands of years ago. They were eaten by the ancient Romans, and probably brought to North America by African slaves. In the Delta, they are usually cooked with pork. They are eaten year round, but many people believe they must be eaten on New Year's Day to bring good luck for the next year.



Millet and Sorghum

Millet and Sorghum are two related grass plants that have edible seeds. In Africa, the seeds of these plants are cooked like we cook rice, or ground up to make flour. In the Delta people do not normally eat these seeds, but the plants are sometimes grown to make animal feed. The stalks of sorghum used to be squeezed for their juice, which was boiled down to make sorghum molasses, and sorghum molasses makes the perfect topping for hot biscuits.

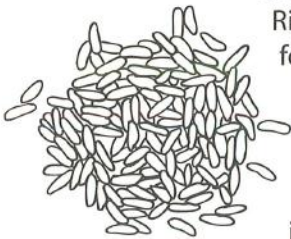
Foods from China



Oranges and Lemons

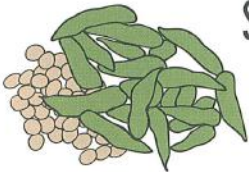
Citrus fruits originated in Asia. They include oranges and lemons, but also limes and many other varieties. Grapefruits are a relative of oranges that originated in Jamaica. Citrus fruits are a great source of vitamin C. They can be eaten fresh or squeezed into juice, but make sure the orange juice you drink is really juice to get the most out of it. There are a lot of citrus flavored drinks that are really just sugar and water with citrus flavoring.

Rice



Rice is a type of grass plant with seeds that are eaten by more people on Earth than any other food. Rice has been eaten for thousands of years, and was first planted in China but spread around Europe, Asia, and Africa long ago. Millions of people eat rice every single day, and sometimes every single meal. Although rice originated in Asia, it was Africans from countries that grew rice who were brought to America to grow it, and the Gullah people in South Carolina are descended from those slaves today. Today, rice is one of the most important crops of the Mississippi Delta, although it has only been grown here since the 1960's. Rice is rich in carbohydrates.

Soybeans



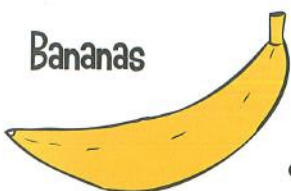
More soybeans are grown in the United States than anywhere else, and the Delta grows more soybeans than any other crop. They are originally from China, and are sometimes called "The Miracle Crop" because they can be used for so many purposes. We don't normally eat soybeans themselves, but we do use them to feed our livestock, and they can be processed into oil, meal, and protein concentrate. Soybeans are relatives of the peanut, and George Washington Carver developed many different uses of both the beans and the nut.



Ducks, Chickens, Pigs, and Cows

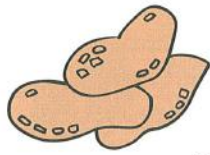
All of these animals were brought to America by European colonists. Ducks and chickens both originated in Asia, but had spread throughout Europe and much of Africa hundreds of years ago. Pigs also probably came from Asia, but were kept in Europe and Africa long before coming to America, and cows are thought to have originally come from wild ancestors that roamed across Europe and Asia. Imagine what food was like in America before these animals arrived! ...no ground beef for tacos, no hamburgers, no fried chicken, no pork barbecue, and no milk or cheese either. In the Delta, fried chicken, pork barbecue, and grilled hamburgers are part of everyday life! Ducks may not be eaten by everyone, but they are still a popular ingredient for Chinese cooking.

Bananas



Bananas originally were grown in Asia. Some people think they are the very first fruit that humans grew. They are so tasty that they were carried along to almost any place warm enough to grow them, and were brought to the New World by the Spanish hundreds of years ago. By the time the Delta was being settled in the 1800's, bananas were being grown in tropical America and shipped to most of the US. Bananas are a sweet treat eaten fresh, and in the Delta, they are very often used to make banana pudding. Bananas are fat free!

Foods from the New World



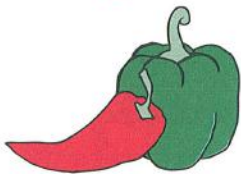
Peanuts

Peanuts are actually not nuts at all. They are relatives of the bean plant, and were originally grown in South America. Spanish explorers took the plant back to Spain, and from there it was sent to Africa, where it became popular. Slaves brought the plant with them to North America. The word "goober" comes from the Congo word "nguba." Peanuts became a popular Southern crop when the boll weevil damaged cotton production. George Washington Carver invented over 300 uses for peanuts, including use in shoe polish and shaving cream.



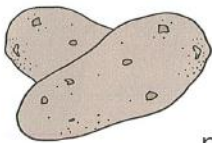
Corn

Corn is a giant relative of grass. It was first grown in Mexico thousands of years ago, but was used widely by Native Americans all over the New World. They called it one of the "Three Sisters" because it was grown together with squash and beans. Corn is low in fat and rich in protein and vitamins, but it needs to be eaten as a vegetable along with other foods. It can be used to make flour for tortillas and meal for bread, or it can be eaten fresh or cooked. Some kinds can even be popped!



Peppers

Peppers were first grown in South America by native people. They come in many shapes and sizes, but are usually either sweet (like a bell pepper) or hot and spicy (like a jalapeno). Sometimes the sweet peppers are called "bell peppers" because they look like bells. Hot peppers are often called chili peppers. Today, peppers are used all over the world to flavor other foods.



Potatoes

The part of this plant that we eat is called a "tuber." It grows under ground and has to be dug up. Potatoes were first grown in South America, but early Europeans took them home with them because of their curious looking roots. It took hundreds of years for potatoes to become popular foods in Europe because people were afraid of their "dirty" tubers! Today, we eat potatoes fried, mashed, boiled, or baked, and of course we eat them as "chips" too. Potatoes are a good source of calories, but eating a lot of potato chips and French fries is bad for you!



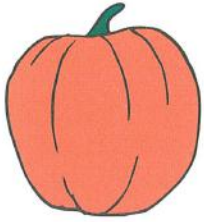
Tomatoes

Tomatoes are relatives of potatoes and were also grown first in South America. Europeans thought they were poisonous, and they weren't popular foods in the US until the 1800's. By that time, they had become popular in southern Europe. Today, tomatoes are eaten fresh and used to make sauces, juices, and other flavorings. Try to imagine life without tomatoes! No ketchup, no pizza sauce, no spaghetti sauce.



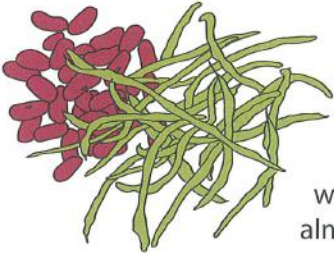
Squash

Native Americans grew squash and gave us its name. There are many varieties of squash, some large, some small, some hard and some soft, but in the Delta, what people usually mean when they say "squash" is the yellow variety with a crooked neck. These are cooked in a casserole and make a wonderful side dish that is filled with vitamins and minerals. Squash are easy to grow during the summer, so you might want to try planting a couple of seeds next to your house.



Pumpkin

These are really just big round squash. Native Americans grew them, and today, Americans usually eat them in pies. We also make them into jack-o-lanterns around Halloween. In other places, people eat pumpkins as a vegetable just like we eat sweet potatoes. Pumpkins are usually orange, but some varieties are green and some are striped. Pumpkin seeds make a tasty snack after they are roasted.



Beans

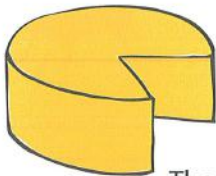
Green beans, wax beans, kidney beans, black beans, pinto beans, navy beans, lima beans, and butter beans all were first grown by Native Americans. Beans come in dozens of shapes and sizes. They are inexpensive and good for you, and can be flavored with pork, eaten on tortillas, or made into soup. Baked beans make a great side dish for almost any meal.

Foods from Europe & the Mediterranean



Olives

Olives are the fruit of olive trees, which are probably the oldest food trees grown by man. They originally came from the Mediterranean region. They are eaten by themselves, or squeezed to give up their rich oil. Olive oil is one of the healthiest kinds of fat to eat. There are olive trees in Israel that are almost 2,000 years old, and their oil was used to anoint the kings of ancient Greece and Israel and the athletes of ancient Rome.



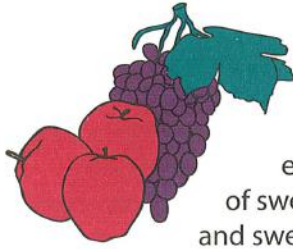
Cheese

Cheese is thought to have first been made in the Middle East thousands of years ago. The story is that a young man put some milk in a saddlebag and rode out into the desert. When he tried to drink the milk, he found it had changed into white lumps and clear watery liquid. These are called the "curds" and the "whey" of cheese. The curd part is usually pressed together and aged so that it develops the flavors of mozzarella or parmesan or cheddar. Today, cheeses are made all over the world and used fresh, cooked, or as flavorings. Cheese is high in fat and rich in protein and makes a great sandwich or taco ingredient.

Pasta

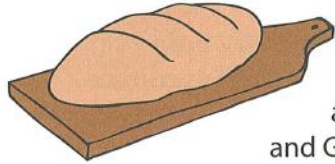


Macaroni, spaghetti, linguini, lasagna, cannelloni, vermicelli, ziti, and ziti are all pasta—and there are many, many, more types too! They differ in their size and shape, but are all made out of wheat flour. Pasta was invented in the Middle East and is most associated with Italy. Believe it or not, the first recipe for pasta with tomato sauce was published only in 1839! Pasta had been around for a long time by then. Even Thomas Jefferson owned a "macaroni maker." And we all know that "Yankee Doodle went to town, riding on a pony. Stuck a feather in his cap and called it macaroni." This song comes from the American Revolutionary War. It originally made fun of the colonists, but became so popular with the colonists that its meaning was reversed. All pasta is rich in starch, and can be a tasty nutritious meal when served with vegetables.



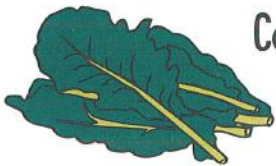
Grapes and Apples

Grapes and apples were both brought to America from Europe. Grapes have been eaten fresh, dried as raisins, and made into wine for thousands of years. Apples are usually eaten fresh or cooked into apple sauce, but can also be dried. Both fruits are also the source of sweet juices and are rich in vitamins, and apples have plenty of vitamin C. They make a tasty and sweet snack, much healthier than sugary cookies or candies or sodas. Grapes and apples are fat free, and we all know the rhyme that "an apple a day keeps the doctor away!"



Bread

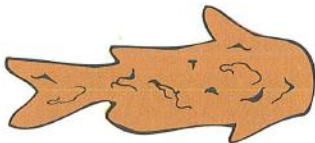
People have been making bread almost as long as they have been growing wheat and other grains. The ancient Egyptians made bread, and so did the ancient Romans and Greeks. Bread is mentioned often in the Old Testament. It is made from flour and water like pasta, but usually has yeast, which is a living microbe that digests some of the flour and gives off gas that fluffs the dough. Bread is then baked, and becomes a nutritious source of energy. Whole wheat bread has more fiber than white bread does. Multi-grain bread is even better for you. Tortillas are a kind of bread that does not have yeast. Matzo is another kind of flat, crisp, cracker-like bread that Jews eat to commemorate Passover.



Collard Greens

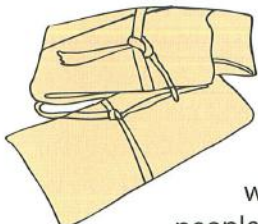
People have been eating collard greens since prehistoric times. The Delta cooking style came from the African slaves. Collards are cooked in water with some pork. The juice left in the pot after the greens have been cooked is called "pot likker." Collard greens are an excellent source of vitamins A and C and are high in other vitamins also. A Pot full of greens is called a "mess o' greens." On New Years Eve it is said that eating black-eyed peas may bring you good luck, but eating a combination of black-eyed peas, collard greens, and hog jowl will bring good luck and financial reward. Some people think that hanging a fresh leaf over the door will ward off evil spirits.

Foods from the Delta



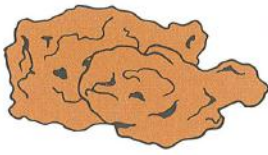
Catfish

This animal is native to the Mississippi River and can still be caught wild. Most catfish today is raised in large ponds, and catfish farming is an important business in the Delta. Belzoni is the "Catfish Capitol of the World" and has an annual catfish festival. The fish is usually fried, but it is healthier to eat it broiled or baked. Catfish has lots of protein and helps build muscles and keep the body healthy. In the Delta, we like to eat hushpuppies with catfish. Hushpuppies are balls of corn meal, onion, garlic and sometimes jalapeño peppers that are fried along with the fish.



Tamales

Every Delta town has at least one tamale stand where you can buy hot tamales. These are usually made by wrapping cooked meat in a layer of cooked cornmeal called "masa." The whole thing is then wrapped in a corn husk and boiled slowly. Tamales were eaten by Native Americans thousands of years ago, and most likely came to the Delta with Mexican farm workers when they came to pick cotton. Delta tamales are filled with either pork or beef, but people in other places make all kinds of tamales, including some that are sweet and eaten for dessert.



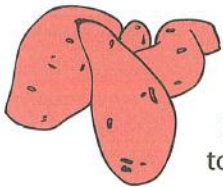
Fried Chicken

Chicken can be baked or boiled or grilled, but throughout the South, a favorite way of cooking chicken is to dip it in breading and spices and fry it in hot oil or fat. Almost everyone has his or her own favorite recipe or restaurant. Fried chicken used to be a Sunday after-church meal. Many African American families used to take fried chicken when they traveled because it tastes good cold and it keeps well. Today, fried chicken is a very common food in the Delta, but baked chicken has less fat and is just as tasty.



Corn Bread

Native Americans ground dried corn into meal and then baked it into bread. Today we do pretty much the same thing, mixing cornmeal with eggs and milk and baking it into squares, muffins or sticks. Sometimes we add jalapeno peppers or cheese or other flavorings. Cornbread is part of any traditional Delta supper and goes great with greens, squash casserole, and butterbeans.



Sweet Potatoes

These are another food first grown by Native Americans. They are not related to the true yam, but many people call them yams anyway. In the Delta, they are almost always cooked with sugar to make them even sweeter than they are, and they are sometimes made into pies.



Pecans

Pecans, are a kind of nut, and they grow on trees. They are native to the Mississippi River valley and were eaten long ago by Native Americans. Pecans are a good source of potassium, which helps the body grow. They can be eaten fresh out of the shell, made into pecan pie, or covered in spices or chocolate.



Barbecue

Barbecue is a way of cooking meat slowly at a low temperature for a long time, sometimes a whole day. Pork, chicken, beef, and fish can all be barbecued, usually with spices and sometimes spicy sauces.

Explore more about nutrition by visiting these web sites!

www.healthychoices.org: An excellent site with all sorts of learning opportunities for kids.

nutritionforkids.com: A source for books about healthy eating.

www.nutritionexplorations.org/kids/main.asp: Fun games and guides to nutrition for kids.

www.ext.nodak.edu/food/kidsnutrition/kids-2.htm: North Dakota State University's kid's nutrition web site.

www.mypyramid.gov/kids/index.html: The US Department of Agriculture site for kid's nutrition with games, posters, and much more.

www.usda.gov/news/usdakids: Another USDA site with plenty of activities for kids.



The Delta Center for Culture & Learning DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Delta Center for Culture and Learning is an interdisciplinary program within Delta State University. Its mission is to promote the broad understanding of the history and culture of the Mississippi Delta and its significance to the rest of the world. Its activities include classes, field trips and tours, oral history projects, historic preservation efforts, and service learning and community outreach programs.

Text and concept by Lee Aylward and Luther Brown. Design by Allison Melton.

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