



18th Century Foodways: gender roles, technology & family traditions

Grade Level 3-5, 6-8, 8-12

Subjects: History, Gender, Equality, Technology: simple machines; Oral history

This lesson was designed to supplement reading “A Fine Dessert: Four Centuries, Four Families, One Delicious Treat” by Emily Jenkins. To encourage children to discuss and discover ideas around domestic labor (gender and race), changes in technology, and food traditions/heritage.

Questions to consider:

- Domestic Labor: gender roles & race
 - Who was doing the chores related to cooking and the kitchen?
 - Why do you think that was?
 - How do you think the women and girls felt about being the ones to do all the work related to food making?
 - How would you feel about that?
 - Do you think the mother and daughter in Charleston, SC felt the same way about their work as the other women and girls in the story?
 - Why do you think the author didn't tell us they were enslaved?
 - Would the mother and daughter be smiling while making the Raspberry Fool?
 - Why were they hiding while they licked the bowl?
 - How would you feel if you were in their place?
- Technology
 - How did the technology used to make the Raspberry Fool change over the centuries?
- Food Traditions/heritage
 - Do you have any recipes passed down through your family or special foods you eat on certain holidays/occasions that are family traditions or traditional foods based on your culture?

Activities:

- [18th century gender role activity](#) & [Answer key](#)
- Make a twig whisk
 - Experiment with your twig whisk, a modern whisk and an electric mixer, which beats cream or eggs faster (time how long it takes) and which one beats them to the stiffest cream or meringue?
- Food and Culture Activity:
 - Call or video conference a relative or close family friend and ask them to share a family recipe, including when the recipe is made (a special holiday or event?), and who the recipe came from
 - Make the recipe
 - Write your memories about that recipe if it's part of a family tradition
 - Draw a picture about the memories associated with the recipe and events where its made



Additional Resources:

Gender Roles:

<https://www.lgbtqhistory.org/lesson/early-colonial-gender-roles/>

<http://web.csulb.edu/projects/elizabethmurray/MurrayFinal/pdfs/hsgenderopportunitystudentessay.pdf>

https://www.ducksters.com/history/colonial_america/womens_roles.php

Slavery:

[The Kids' Book 'A Fine Dessert' Has Award Buzz — And Charges Of Whitewashing Slavery](#)

[Tea Cakes for Tosh by Kelly Starling Lyons and E.B. Lewis](#)

[Teaching Hard History by age](#)

Whisks & Refrigeration history:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTxV17C6Wrs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-1aV9kkJAE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omKUqpe5dPA>

<https://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/ice-harvesting-electric-refrigeration>