Fruta Picada
CULINARY RECIPE

DESCRIPTION

Los Angeles is home to thousands of street vendors who offer amazing foods, snacks, and beverages that give us a glimpse of delicious eats from around the world. Many communities, neighborhood parks, and busy street intersections are central locations to find Latin American delicacies such as esquites (Mexican street corn), aguas frescas, and tamales y champurrado. Among these street food options is also fruta picada; chopped fruit that is sold under the large rainbow-colored umbrellas of mobile carts throughout Los Angeles. It typically includes a variety of fruits that offer sweet, tangy, and spicy flavors.

In addition to providing delicious food options, street vendors have also become an important staple in many communities considered “food deserts” by offering fresh fruits, affordable foods, and nostalgic flavors from home countries. This activity will guide you through the process of making classic fruta picada to enjoy in celebration of Los Angeles!

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

1. Why are local food vendors important for our cities and communities?

KITCHEN UTENSILS

• cutting board
• knife
• six 10oz. cups or medium-sized cups
• vegetable peeler

NUMBER OF SERVINGS

4

INGREDIENTS

• 3 mangoes
• 3 cucumbers
• 1 medium watermelon
• 1 jícama
• 2 limes
• chili powder
• salt
• mint, one small bunch

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**PREPARATION**

1. With the help of an adult, cut the mangoes into halves (be careful with the pit at the center). Peel the halves and cut into spears.

2. Peel the cucumber and then cut the ends off. Cut into two halves. Take one of the halves and cut it lengthwise down the middle. Place the flat side of the cucumber on the cutting board and begin cutting into spears. Repeat the same step with the other halves and pieces.

3. Ask an adult to help you cut the watermelon into large slices. Carefully cut the watermelon into spears.

4. This step will need to be done by an adult: carefully peel the thick skin of the jicama with a vegetable peeler or a knife. Trim off the top and bottom of the jicama. Place the jicama, flat side down on the cutting board and cut thick slices. Then cut slices into spears.

5. Cut the lime in half. Then, cut the halves into four wedges.

6. Wash mint and place to the side, you can chop mint or remove the leaves from the stem.

**ASSEMBLE**

1. Take two cups and evenly insert the mango, cucumber, watermelon, and jicama spears. Repeat this step with all the cups until you don’t have any fruit left.

2. Take 2 lime wedges and squeeze a generous amount of lime juice on top of the fruit in each cup.

3. Gently sprinkle 1-2 dashes of chili powder on top of the fruit.

4. Gently sprinkle 2-3 dashes of salt on top of the fruit.

5. Garnish each cup of fruit with mint by either sprinkling some chopped mint on top or decorating your cup with mint leaves.

**RESOURCES TO EXPLORE TOGETHER**


LA Flora and Fauna: Garden Journal

DESCRIPTION

Over time, urban development has impacted LA’s native flora and fauna. Native grasses, for example, were once a main feature of the LA Basin, along with the gray wolf, and the now extinct California grizzly bear. Urban gardens can be powerful places that help nurture local environments. They provide an opportunity for people to connect with nature and each other.

This activity will guide you through the process of making a garden journal using natural materials. Use the completed journal to document your community’s ecosystem.

MATERIALS

- 5 brown paper lunch bags or a notebook
- 3 sheets of lined paper for writing
- washable markers or colored pencils
- pencil
- scissors
- glue stick
- tape
- hole puncher
- ribbon or yarn
- nature finds, such as:
  - leaves
  - flowers
  - feathers
  - seeds

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. Why are urban gardens important in Los Angeles?

2. What are the benefits of planting California native plants in the city?
1. With the bags unopened, fold each brown paper bag horizontally in half.
   - Fold each bag individually.

2. Stack the bags, arranging them neatly.

3. Using the hole puncher, make three holes evenly spaced.
   - Cut three pieces of yarn about five inches long. Tie together to keep in place.

4. Take the lined sheets of paper and fold each paper in half twice.
   - Using the scissors cut along the lines to make 12 pieces of paper.

5. Glue one lined paper on the front and back of the first page of your garden journal.
   - Then, glue one on the front of each subsequent page.
   - Glue the last paper on the back of the last page.

6. Using markers or colored pencils, write "Garden Journal" on the front cover.
   - Then, get creative and draw nature images.
   - Make it your own!
   - Add page numbers, too, and do not forget to write your name.

7. Once complete, use your garden journal to document all your nature finds.
   - Glue or tape flowers, leaves, seeds, or feathers on the back of each page.
   - Use the lined pages to write the date and a brief description of what you found in nature.

RESOURCES TO EXPLORE TOGETHER

1. iNaturalist, A Community for Naturalists: www.inaturalist.org

2. Santa Monica Mountains, Wildflowers of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area: www.smmflowers.org
A Special Place in My Community Painting

 WORKSHOP TITLE

DESCRIPTION

Community is the heart of any city!

As LA Plaza celebrates its 10-year anniversary, it is a moment to share this special celebration by honoring the local communities that share their stories with us.

This activity will encourage you to think about your own community and the people and places that make your community special. From the local panadería, the corner fruit cart vendor, to the postal carrier, your community is special in many ways! In this activity you will draw and paint a place in your community that is special to you!

MATERIALS

- 1 piece of cardboard (inside of a cereal box or packaging box)
- 1 sheet of white paper
- paints or any coloring materials
- assorted brushes and sponges
- cup of water
- pencil
- eraser
- liquid glue or glue stick

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. Can you describe a special place in your community that connects with you?

2. What makes this place special to you?

BOOK READ ALOUD

Listen to the Honorable Gloria Molina (retired), founding board member of LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes, read:

My Papi Has a Motorcycle/Mi Papi Tiene una Moto

Written by Isabel Quintero.
Illustrated by Zeke Peña.

Video available on LA Plaza’s YouTube channel.
1. Create a rough sketch of a special place in your community by first visualizing it! Close your eyes and think about the characteristics of this place:
   - What are the overall shapes?
   - Are the shapes big or small?
   - Begin to sketch them out?

2. After your rough sketch, ask yourself:
   - Does this place have any special markings?
   - Does it have a sign or a flag?
   - Begin to sketch those.

3. Next draw in the surrounding area where this special place is located.
   - Is it located on a corner or in between other buildings?
   - Is it on a busy street with lots of cars or on a quiet street near a park?

4. Go ahead and add any final details to your sketch.

5. Adhere your sketch to a piece of cardboard using glue.

6. Add color by painting. Remember that when painting, carefully add paint to your brush and slowly spread it on the paper.

7. Add water as needed and when changing colors.

8. Add any final touches and let dry.

RESOURCES TO EXPLORE TOGETHER
