

CLUES FROM THE PAST: Daily Life

ANCIENT RECIPES

Meets Illinois State Standards: 7, 15, 17, 18 (Subject Areas: Math, *Social Studies*)

Background Information for Teachers

Instead of going to the grocery store for ingredients, food preparation really started from scratch in ancient times. For a meat dish, such as the stew on the following page, an animal first had to be slaughtered. Then the carcass was cut up, and each piece was singed with fire to make it easier to remove the animal's hair or feathers. Only then could the meat be cooked.

The following page contains a recipe for goat stew. In poorer families, slaughtering and eating an animal like a goat was not done often, since the live animal was so useful for its milk and also its hair, which could be woven into cloth. If it was used for food, no parts of the animal were wasted, which is why the recipe calls for the head, legs, tail, and even the animal's blood.

No one can identify the ingredient called *samidu* (students might make some guesses!). All the rest of the items are recognizable. The family could have grown its own onions, leeks, and garlic, and the women of the house probably made the cheese. It is quite likely that the stew dish was served with bread, much like the recipe that accompanies the stew. This bread was similar to the *pita* bread sold in stores today.

Objectives

- Understand why customs and lifestyles differ in various cultures and time periods
- Gather information from primary sources

Materials

Copies of Student Stuff hand-out: "Ancient Recipes"

Suggested Time Needed

One class period

Suggested Procedure

Hand out copies of the Student Stuff sheet and have students read the ancient stew recipe. Use the background information above to discuss how foods and their preparation can differ over time and from culture to culture.

Extension

Students could make the ancient-style bread recipe in their own kitchens. They could also vary the recipe as the ancient Mesopotamians did, using juices instead of water; adding cut up pieces of dried fruit, such as raisins, dates, or prunes; adding chopped nuts; or adding various spices or honey (the Mesopotamians did not have sugar). Have a "bread-tasting" the next day, when the class brings in various versions of the ancient bread.



Daily Life

STUDENT STUFF

CLUES FROM THE PAST: Daily Life**ANCIENT RECIPES**

The ancient Mesopotamians loved to eat, and archaeologists have found many clay tablets containing recipes. Here is one for a stew. How do you think it might taste?

Stew of a Kid {Baby Goat}

Head, legs, and tail should be singed before putting {them in} the pot to boil.

Bring water to a boil. Add fat, onions, samidu, leeks, garlic, some blood {from the goat}, some fresh cheese.

Beat the whole together.

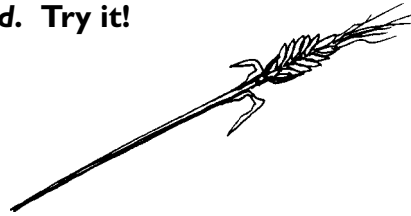
Here is a recipe for Ancient-Style Bread. Try it!

Ingredients:

14 oz. flour

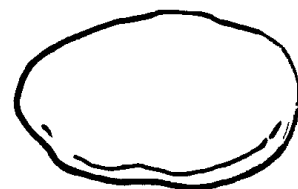
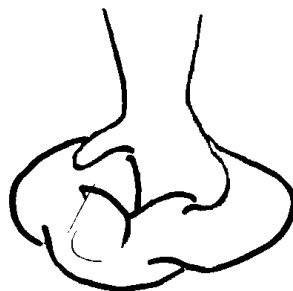
1 cup of water

1/2 teaspoon of salt



Mix the water, flour, and salt together slowly. Then knead the dough and form it into flat round patties.

Cover the dough with a cloth and let it sit overnight. The next day, bake it in an oven at 350°F for 30 minutes. For an authentic Mesopotamian experience, eat the bread with a raw onion!



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